

Distracted Spectatorship, the Cinematic Experience and Franchise Films

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This thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere

Contents

List of Figures	iv
Abstract	v
Introduction: Distracted Spectatorship and the Cinematic Experience	1
Chapter One: Defining the Cinematic Experience.....	17
Section One: Defining the Cinematic.....	17
Section Two: Defining Experience	22
Chapter Two: Defining Distracted Spectatorship	37
Section One: Defining Spectatorship	37
Section Two: Defining Distraction.....	49
Section Three: Defining Distracted Spectatorship Throughout the History of Cinema.....	65
The Experience of Astonishment as Distraction	66
The Experience of Participation as Distraction	70
The Experience of Escape as Distraction	75
Chapter Three: Self-reflexive Methods for Analysis	80
Section One: Franchises, Fandoms and Fans' Interactions with Film	81
Significance of franchise films	83
New methods of interacting with films	89
Fan cultures.....	96
Section Two: Phenomenology, Affect and the Self-reflexive Approach.....	105
Phenomenology and Affect	106
Self-reflexivity.....	108
Case Study Notebooks.....	113
Frontispieces.....	118
Distracted Analysis.....	121
Chapter Four: A Viewing of <i>The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2</i>	124
Distracted Analysis.....	125
Self-reflexivity making visible certain identities.....	129
Chapter Five: <i>The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2</i> , Gender and Identification.....	131
The Strong Female Lead.....	140
Beyond the Strong Female Lead	144
Chapter Six: <i>The Hunger Games Mockingjay: Part 2</i> and the Significance of Subjective Spectatorship.....	168
The Politics of Spectatorship and the Notion of the Abject Spectator	171
Distracted Spectatorship and Self-reflexivity.....	185

Distracted Analysis.....	189
Summary of Distracted Analysis.....	195
Conclusion.....	197
Appendix i: The Hunger Games Series Synopsis.....	203
Bibliography.....	206
Filmography.....	225

List of Figures

Figure 1 Top 20 films at the UK box office, 1989-2013	86
Figure 2 Annual UK Cinema Admissions, 1935-2013.....	90
Figure 3 Annual UK Cinema Admissions, 2001-2013.....	90
Figure 4 Estimated Value of the Film on VoD Market in the UK, 2002-2013.....	91
Figure 5 Case Study Notebook One.....	114
Figure 6 Case Study Notebook One and Two	115
Figure 7 Identification and Fandom Frontispiece One	132
Figure 8 Identification and Fandom Frontispiece Two	133
Figure 9 from Case Study Notebook One	135
Figure 10 Woodward, Ellie (2015) 'Jennifer Lawrence is the badass woman we all want to be'	153
Figure 12 Woodward, Ellie (2015) 'Jennifer Lawrence is the badass woman we all want to be'	154
Figure 11 Woodward, Ellie (2015) 'Jennifer Lawrence is the badass woman we all want to be'	154
Figure 13 from Case Study Notebook One	162
Figure 14 from Case Study Notebook One	162
Figure 15 Subjective Spectatorship Frontispiece One	169
Figure 16 Subjective Spectatorship Frontispiece Two	170
Figure 17 from Case Study Notebooks One and Two	174
Figure 18 from Case Study Notebooks One and Two	175
Figure 19 from Case Study Notebooks One and Two	176

Abstract

This thesis draws on a reflexive account of embodied female spectatorship in order to re-frame dominant accounts of the cinematic experience. In particular the project shows how distraction, defined as a series of puncta which expand the spectator's cinematic experience, is integral to embodied experience of film spectatorship and fandom. Drawing on theoretical grounding from film theory, classical cultural studies and fan studies, the study sheds light on how inhabiting the position of distracted spectator involves maintaining several identities simultaneously. The thesis used an in-depth contemporary case study, the Hollywood blockbuster franchise *The Hunger Games* (Gary Ross and Francis Lawrence, 2012-2015), to examine how these identities are made visible through distracted spectatorship and its impact on the cinematic experience. By making specific reference to the individual spectator's cinematic experience the thesis re-evaluates how the spectator is presented within theories of fandom and spectatorship. The resultant reading makes visible the ways in which female fans already see. In turn this argument complicates current fandom and spectatorship theory as it calls into question the certain positions that these theories hold. This thesis challenges the more commonly theorised arguments by stating that the inhabiting of multiple identities creates a level of uncertainty within film analysis.

Introduction: Distracted Spectatorship and the Cinematic Experience

In 2011 it was announced that *The Hunger Games* (see Appendix i for synopsis), a trilogy of books written by Suzanne Collins, would be made into a series of films. That year I became involved in a franchise that began with reading all three books in 2011 and culminated in watching the final film adaptation in 2015. Through the course of those four years I encountered adverts, websites, merchandise, musical tie-ins and other promotional materials that kept me linked to the franchise over the four years. Every year my cinematic experience of this franchise was built on and every year there was some new way to interact with the franchise. This extended engagement that I had with a single franchise highlighted for me the subjective nature of spectatorship and how distracted viewing is encouraged through the plethora of materials that can be linked to franchise films.

The aim of my thesis is to draw on accounts of the embodied, and in this case female, spectator in order to theorise distraction as a central component of the contemporary cinematic experience. It is important to note that no spectatorship is undistracted and this thesis is discussing subject positions not individuals. This is not a case of privileging gender above social class, race or age demographic but is acknowledging that the idealised spectator would be a white, middle-class, able-bodied male spectator, a form of spectatorship that few conform to. Therefore, to be positioned as other is to be more open to distraction and gender is one of these approaches; I have chosen to focus on gender given the self-reflexive nature of the thesis as it is the aspect which comes to the fore in my own distracted spectatorship. The aim of the thesis is to make certain forms of spectatorship visible rather than invisible. In reflecting on my own experience as a fan, scholar and spectator it can be understood how a single spectator inhabits multiple identities simultaneously. The thesis demonstrates how inhabiting the distracted subjective position involves an approach which explores how the spectator inhabits several positions simultaneously. This sits alongside theories regarding fandom and spectatorship because it stands juxtaposed to the very certain positions that are held within those disciplines. Through the research the following questions will be engaged with: How does a self reflexive approach make visible certain identities? Is the female-identified spectator always already distracted? How can analysing the cinematic experience contribute to our understanding of popular culture? Answering these questions will make clear how this particular approach makes the way female fans already see visible; using the theoretical grounding drawn from film theory, classical cultural studies and fan studies makes that view intelligible. Bringing together such a diverse range of scholarly materials aids in

making visible the range of identities that are held within a single spectator. In order to discuss the multiple identities theoretical work needs to be included from each distinct discipline that represents each of those identities.

I will argue that the cinematic experience can be understood as an experience which has the anticipation of the spectator at its centre; a spectator who interacts with the promotional material available to create their own subjective experience in relation to a particular film. The thesis will elaborate on how this kind of experience is dependent on distracted spectatorship (Benjamin, 1935; Kracauer, 1926) which, in turn, can change and develop over time. By distracted spectatorship I am referring to when a spectator views, for example, a film and the act of film viewing prompts a moment of recollection to something else. Though the distraction could be something completely different to the original material being viewed the moment of recollection and the film are both inherently linked as they are connected through the individual spectator's cinematic experience. When defining distracted spectatorship it is first useful to think about the cinematic experience in a particular way. If we imagine the experience of going to see a film as a fixed point on a timeline the cinematic experience can extend before and after that fixed point. This means that in the lead up to seeing the film, as well as after seeing the film, anything that the spectator experiences in relation to that film adds to their overall cinematic experience. Distracted spectatorship adds to the cinematic experience through these moments of distraction. This is not a case of distraction being inattention, but as a form of attention that adds to and builds on a particular kind of experience, in this case the cinematic experience. For example, in my lead up to watching the final instalment in *The Hunger Games* franchise I encountered a website that was directly linked to the films, however, it prompted me to think about the music that I had in my iTunes library. This was a moment of distraction that added to my cinematic experience as now when I watch the films and hear a particular piece of music I remember that I have it in my iTunes library. Distracted spectatorship is about acknowledging those moments that branch off from the cinematic experience. In doing so it is important to examine them in order to analyse how they impact the cinematic experience and the implications this has for film analysis as a whole. In this thesis, I propose an understanding of distraction that both builds on previous scholarship and analyses how spectators pay attention; it puts across a way of thinking about films that acknowledges the subjectivity of the spectator as well as using other methods of analysis to do so. In doing so I will highlight how distracted spectatorship makes visible the range of identities that are representative of an individual spectator. This discussion will suggest how we might understand spectatorship

more broadly and in more uncertain terms. This work is vital because spectatorship raises questions of how we encounter texts due to distraction, which is a key mechanism in our activities. There lies a fundamental problem with regards to analysing and writing about distraction as discussing an immediate experience, by its nature, is always done in hindsight. What my thesis does is to open up and acknowledge this paradox when it comes to the analysis of distraction which is essential in the current historical moment.

In my discussions of distracted spectatorship and the cinematic experience I will consider a Hollywood film franchise, *The Hunger Games* (Gary Ross and Francis Lawrence, 2012-2015), to illustrate my argument that the cinematic experience and distracted spectatorship makes visible certain identities. Given the increasing opportunity for distraction with regards to new forms of media the object for study is an unusual one. Choosing a blockbuster franchise allows me to see how distracted spectatorship works to create a cinematic experience through a variety of media while still keeping the medium of film at its centre. I will be looking at how the cinematic experience is built through the visor of various forms of digital media. The originality of the project lies in bringing together diverse literatures drawn from film theory, classical cultural studies and fan studies, among others, in order to be attentive to the ways in which distraction functions as a specific form of attentiveness that is central to the lived experience of embodied (and gendered) spectatorship. This reveals how specific forms of organisation, for example fan works, makes aspects of women's film viewing visible and legible that were previously ignored. Thinking about this in terms of the strong female lead and the contemporary version of female strength that the protagonist of this franchise represents, and the reaction it elicits from audiences, tells us about the cinematic experience in this particular historical moment.

With regards to understanding the immediate experience of film as a subjective one the shift to outlining subjective vision needs to be made apparent. Subjective vision is where visual truth lies in the body of the spectator and can be quantified and measured; this shift in understanding vision took place in the early to mid nineteenth century. Art critic and essayist Jonathan Crary outlines how vision came to be seen as subjective rather than as an objective certainty:

Dominant discourses and practices of vision, within the space of a few decades, effectively broke with a classical regime of visuality and grounded the truth of vision in the density and materiality of the body. One of the consequences of this shift was that the functioning of vision became dependant on the complex and

contingent physiological makeup of the observer, rendering vision faulty, unreliable, and, it was sometimes argued, arbitrary (Crary, 2001: 11-12)¹

Crary's other work focuses on perception and spectacle, as well as vision and modernity which allows his ideas to be used to emphasise how spectators' vision can be understood as subjective. Including aspects such as modernisation in his work underlines how Crary's arguments can be brought to the fore as they aid in highlighting the shift to distraction when it comes to the introduction of new technologies. Crary examines how this new concept of vision created a certain amount of controversy because it implied that seeing was dependent upon one's subjective thoughts. Crary argued how the move from understanding vision as objective to understanding it as subjective became one of the conditions regarding modernisation within cultures which he outlined as being a 'a ceaseless and self-perpetuating creation of new needs, new production, and new consumption' (Crary, 1995: 47). Expanding on this argument Crary outlined how modernisation changed the way culture was viewed more generally:

It was also in the late nineteenth century, within the human sciences and, particularly, the nascent field of scientific psychology, that the problem of *attention* became a fundamental issue. It was a problem whose centrality was directly related to the emergence of a social, urban, psychic, industrial field increasingly saturated with sensory input. Inattention, especially within the context of new forms of industrialized production, began to be seen as a danger and a serious problem, even though it was often the very modernized arrangements of labour that produced inattention (Crary, 1995: 47)

It is possible, then, to understand modernity as bringing about a continual state of inattentiveness. With the constant introduction of new products, new sources of stimulation as well as a variety of media which add to the flow of information came new ways of understanding the managing and regulating of perception. Crary summarised how volatile a concept attention was, as it 'always contained within itself the conditions for its own disintegration; it was haunted by the possibility of its own excess' (Crary, 1995: 50). What I understand by this is that attention does not have to be limited to focusing on a single object; attention can move from one thing to another and as such appears to be inattention. Attention can ebb and flow and built into this is the concept of distraction as an aspect of attention. Inattention is often understood as being caused by a lack of concentration and distraction is

¹ The quotation, from *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, builds on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Theory of Colours*, published originally in 1810. Goethe's concern was not with the analytical treatment of colour but rather with the qualities of how such phenomena are perceived.

recognised in the same terms. Distraction is seen as something that diverts attention and that interferes with concentration or takes attention away from something else. However, distraction is not the same as inattention but instead can be understood as attention that is temporarily placed somewhere else: 'Attention and distraction were not two essentially different states but existed on a single continuum, and attention was thus, as most increasingly agreed, a dynamic process, intensifying and diminishing, rising and falling, ebbing and flowing according to an indeterminate set of variables' (Crary, 1995: 50-51). With regards to modernity attention can, therefore, be understood as much more than viewing vision in terms of the gaze of the spectator. As I have argued, viewing is subjective and as such vision can be recognised as an integral practice that is linked to a body that can be shaped and changed by a range of external factors. A way of approaching attention that brings to the fore the subjectivity of particular viewing practices is to analyse the cinematic experience of an individual spectator. Doing this kind of analytical work from a self-reflexive standpoint will allow a discussion into how distraction has an impact on spectatorship through the examination of film viewing.

Films appeared in the 1890s when the world was undergoing a rapid shift in technologies whilst moving into the twentieth century. The experience of film became part of this technological shift which included an increased bombardment of sensation. Pre-1906 films are seen by film historians as a series of attractions, outlined by film theorist Tom Gunning as 'a conception that sees cinema less as a way of telling stories than as a way of presenting a series of views to an audience' (Gunning, 1990: 57). Gunning's work, *The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde*, illustrates how early cinema can be defined by its ability to show something to the spectator and relates the development of cinema to aspects other than narrative. This is in contrast to arguments put forward by Christian Metz in *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* where the voyeuristic aspects of narrative cinema are emphasised, discussed further in Chapter Two. The cinema of attractions shaped the appeal of early cinematic entertainment as initially the films were theorised as being experienced as a quick thrill; with the introduction of factory gate films and actualities the experience shifted and changed but the act of showing and exhibiting films that solicited the attention of the spectator in order to construct a certain type of relationship remained (Gunning, 1990 and 2004; Gaudreault, 1990). These early films had very little in terms of self-contained narrative as a result because the experience focused on the novelty of this new medium.

The development of the nickelodeon in America altered the way in which films were consumed and they became a major part of entertainment culture, as up until about 1905 the main screening venues were summer shows, travelling exhibitors and fair grounds (Gunning, 2004). Between 1905 and 1907 there was a massive multiplication in the number of nickelodeons and by 1908 they became the main venue in which to watch films. Audiences became more discerning and less tolerant to certain material, which meant that films such as comedies, melodramas and fiction became more dominant. From this discernment a form of cinematic experience developed alongside cinemas which were built specifically to create a sense of occasion and grandeur and a level of spectacle that was not found anywhere else (Abel, 2006; Richards, 1984). This created a sense of occasion and anticipation with regards to the cinematic experience, a trend which continued with the rise of the Hollywood blockbuster. It is the anticipation that the spectator experiences for a particular film which prompts a change to the cinematic experience. Whereas, historically, the experience can be traced as taking place within the cinema itself with the heightening of anticipation through trailers, promotional material, websites etc. the experience can be seen to take place just as much outside of the cinema as it does inside. I argue that the prolonged engagement that spectators have with certain films impacts the way films are viewed. Given the propensity for new forms of media being included in the consumption of films it is logical to question whether or not film in relation to the cinema needs to be analysed at all. The reason for maintaining the connection between film and the cinema throughout the thesis is because, despite the multitude of other media, film remains at the centre of a form of spectatorship that is socially embodied. One of the concerns approached throughout the thesis is what it means to come back to considering film given all the surrounding media phenomena.

With regards to new forms of media impacting on contemporary consumption patterns it is vital to outline how distraction has become an integral part of the spectators' cinematic experience as a result of the expanded opportunities for interaction that new media create. The concept of distracted spectatorship has been present in film theory since the 1920s through the work of theorists such as Benjamin and Kracauer. When I write of distracted spectatorship I write of distraction as Barthes wrote of the punctum (1980), but where he outlines isolated moments I analyse how these moments are connected around a cultural object, this will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Two and Three. When compounded together these puncta create the spectator's subjective cinematic experience. In focussing on these particular areas of research it involves re-embodiment of the spectator through their own lived experiences. This allows for an examination into gendered spectatorship and explores

the question of whether the female spectator is always already distracted. The emphasis on distraction and the cinematic experience is of particular relevance now as the prominence of digital media tends to marginalise film and the cinema as an object for analysis. The argument I put forward in this thesis illustrates how, rather than being subjugated to new media, film and cinema are ever present at the centre of a media landscape that is constantly shifting and re-defining itself.

In this thesis I will argue that distraction is not simply inattention but a form of attention that can be described as the mechanism of thought and interaction between a specific text and the world. In Chapters Four, Five and Six the case study will explore the aspects which extend the cinematic experience beyond the environment of the cinema; these include, but are not limited to trailers, articles in magazines and internet articles. What will also be explored is how the spectator's various identities are made visible through the materials they encounter regarding a particular film franchise. As a franchise *The Hunger Games* is uniquely positioned when it comes to analysing distracted spectatorship and the cinematic experience as it opens up discussions of gender, identification, anticipation and fandom; all of which are factors into how the cinematic experience can be viewed with regards to a single distracted spectator's subjective viewing. Having a concrete example in place will allow all the moments of distraction to be documented and then analysed with regards to how the film is experienced. Though I will be examining the franchise in general terms I have also isolated a single film on which to base my analysis, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* (Lawrence, 2015). The reason for selecting the final film in the franchise rather than one of the other instalments is because of the way it produces distraction from the start. There is no summary of past storylines or a neat prologue to keep the viewer informed. As such the spectator is thrust into a distracted remembrance of the previous films in the franchise while simultaneously watching the action unfold before them. To this end two case study notebooks were put together which trace my own moments of distraction in relation to *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. The reason for this approach was to create a visual representation of distracted spectatorship and to highlight the subjective nature of distraction itself, which will be discussed later on in the thesis. The first book follows my initial encounters with the material that can be linked to the case study and the second book highlights the distractions encountered in relation to this material. The purpose of this was to build a self-reflexive account of distraction and to illustrate how these distractions work in relation to the film but not as a direct product of film viewing. This is emphasised through the distracted analysis of the final film in the franchise that is interspersed throughout the thesis.

This is used to emphasise distracted spectatorship and to demonstrate how the multiple identities inhabited by the spectator can be explored. Social theorists Linda Finlay and Brendan Gough identify how self-reflexivity is defined as ‘thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between research and the researched’ (Finlay and Gough, 2003: ix). They argue that the approach requires ‘critical self-reflection of the ways in which researchers’ social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact on the research process’ (Finlay and Gough, 2003: ix). Presenting the analysis of the case study as a self-reflexive project is valuable in articulating aspects of spectatorship as it displays the multiple identities that I inhabit.

The additional practical element of the thesis was to create a frontispiece for each main chapter, an adaptation of my own distracted spectatorship through a self-reflexive lens (Chapters Five and Six). Literary and postmodern theorist Linda Hutcheon presents her theory of adaptation in such a way as to include all forms of work into the discussion. Hutcheon is writing specifically about the adaptation of novels, I am not claiming that I have made a further adaptation of the film; rather that I have drawn inspiration from the film franchise in order to create the frontispieces. In this way, through the creative process, the frontispieces can be seen as a way of adapting the source material to present my own distracted spectatorship:

In short, adaptations can be described as the following: An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works, a creative and an interpretative act of appropriation/salvaging, an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted text. Therefore, an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing (Hutcheon, 2006: 8-9)

In *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006) Hutcheon presents the many uses of adaptation through an analysis of text-based sources which pulls through commonalities of adaptation present in diverse media such as film, television, theatre, opera, music, video games and amusement parks. The work covers the general phenomenon of adaptation in all its various forms and is important to consider in a project like this which covers a variety of fields and approaches to a single case study. Adaptation and its implications will be discussed further in Chapter Five but it is important to acknowledge it here as it provides a way of examining audience engagement, response and participation by highlighting the viewers’ active involvement with a cultural object. Producing my own visual interpretations of the argument I put forward is a way to create a piece of work which was ‘second without being secondary’ (Hutcheon, 2006:

9) to the overall argument. This method also puts forward a particular way of engaging with film that relies solely on the subjectivity of the individual spectator. As my thesis covers such diverse topics the inclusion of the case study books, frontispieces and distracted analyses highlights the analysis of images and how affective they can be to the viewer through a self-reflexive approach. This leads on to thinking about the question of not only how to look at images but also how they affect the viewer and how they make visible certain identities. If an image has an effect on the viewer then it is never viewed neutrally after that moment as it constantly calls to mind other images and associations. These recollections are what we bring to the surface and whilst they say something about whom we are as individuals it is the ones that we choose to reveal to others which say something about the way we want to be seen. This also fits with the practices of fandom, such as GIFs, which will be explored in Chapter Five.

What the frontispieces, case study notebooks and distracted analyses also do is to consider another method for the research, that of cultural memory. The theory of cultural memory illustrates how memory is not just an individual, private experience but is also part of the collective domain. Considering cultural memory alongside theories of phenomenology and affect is integral because it is necessary to understand how a particular image draws upon other images stored in the individual's cultural memory. Memory has the ability to take root in the solid aspects of our lives, the things that are most tangible to us as viewers (Pierre Nora, 1997). As a result of this when viewers see a certain image they automatically try to recognise the similarities between that image and what is stored in their cultural memory (Weissberg, 1999). This is the purpose for the frontispieces, to take the main themes presented in each chapter and to illustrate them using images stored in my own cultural memory. The way they are laid out also emphasises the nature of distracted spectatorship as there is no central point from which the photographs branch out. The result of this form of analysis is to place my own voice into my research in order to introduce a way of viewing material from a more self-reflexive perspective. This emphasises the subjective nature of distraction with regards to the cinematic experience and has the function of highlighting how spectators view and react to images in a variety of ways. The frontispieces also represent various forms of identity as held by me such as fan, family member and researcher. The way in which these images were read by me as a distracted spectator had an impact on the way that I undertook the research as a whole. The frontispieces allowed me to see how the original research material 'need no longer be conceived as a work/original holding within itself a timeless essence [...] but as a text to be endlessly (re)read and appropriated in different

contexts' (Aragay, 2005: 22). Through the process of documenting and writing about distraction the thesis creates its own distraction. When the experience of such cultural connections might be experienced by other spectators as a part of the viewing process it is necessary to acknowledge how the thesis itself produces distraction. The object of the thesis is to highlight the variety of ways in which the individual spectator can be distracted and then how that distraction influences their overall cinematic experience. This is why several different approaches were taken in the documenting of distraction, as outlined above. Each approach demonstrates how distraction is present in a variety of forms and their inclusion in the thesis explores how distraction is being created in the very methods that are used to study it. This emphasises how the potential for moments of punctum, which I argue distraction stems from, are endless. This builds on the work of Couldry who argues that cultural events have become 'inherently multitextual and involve multiple media' (Couldry, 2000: 86). He goes on to explore how '[c]ountless texts are absorbed in a state of distraction, others are read carefully and then forgotten' (Couldry, 2000: 86), which connects to Benjamin's arguments on distraction discussed further on in the thesis. The implications for Couldry's work in relation to this thesis are that his arguments bring to the fore how the 'density of meanings that can be condensed into one text or set of texts has to be studied in its full cultural, social and historical context' (Couldry, 2000: 86), which this thesis attempts to achieve with *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*.

Including a method such as self-reflexivity as part of the analytical process for the project allows me to argue how interconnecting issues such as gender, identification and fandom impact on distracted spectatorship and how they can be approached with regards to *The Hunger Games* franchise. As well as reflecting on my own embodied experience of watching *The Hunger Games* films included in this discussion will be a reflection upon the specific experience of watching these films as a gendered subject. The importance of this approach is that it allows me to question how the experience of female spectatorship can be written into film theory. Highlighting gender and my own female embodiment is important when it comes to self-reflexivity as I am approaching the discussion from a specifically gendered viewpoint. Approaching self-reflexivity through the inclusion of gender demonstrates how my thesis is doing something with regards to the cinematic experience that other theorists do not account for: thinking through the skin as a female spectator. There are limits to such an approach, such as the difficulty in writing about an immediate experience after the fact as well as writing about distraction which, in turn, creates another layer of distraction. However, by entering into such a discussion it will allow me the opportunity to

discuss how the figure of the fan can be understood as gendered as well as inhabiting multiple identities simultaneously. The argument I put forward in the thesis with regards to gender is my way of starting a conversation with the traditions of thought already in place in film theory and opening it up to include embodied gender and how it impacts on spectatorship theory. I will be examining the points of tension that current theory has established with regards to spectatorship and film theory but will be approaching the same discussion from the point of view of a distracted embodied female spectator.

Chapter One begins by examining and defining the terms cinematic and experience. In defining the cinematic the chapter traces its first use back to 1916 and outlines how the term progressed through to the most common usage as meaning any aspect that relates to the cinema (Kelly, 1964). The chapter also highlights the difficulty in defining the term due to it being appropriated with regards to other forms of media. Cinematic has been used in reference to voyeurism (Denzin, 1995) and the study of architecture (Clarke, 1997) as well as in discussions when considering particular kinds of theatre (Ebrahimian, 2004; Jennings and Maxwell, 2009). Section two, which focuses on defining experience, brings theorists from diverse disciplines into a dialogue to produce a rich account of what experience is and how it can be understood. With regards to film viewing the experience is highlighted as one which is a direct experience between the film and the spectator (Sobchack, 1992; Kuhn, 2010). As such the experience is a familiar one which makes itself directly felt and available on a more sensuous level for the viewer as the film and spectator are connected through the tactile nature of film (Sobchack, 1995; Barker, 2009; Rutherford, 2011). The experience of viewing film is often theorised by other people as taking place within the cinema, where the spectator has gone to be drawn into the images they see on the screen and does not fully account for affect regarding the body of the spectator (Phillips, 2007; Shaviro, 1994; McCalmont, 2012; Miller, 2014). The affects I will be examining are how aspects such as emotions, bodily responses and cognitive responses all affect the experience for the individual spectator.

It is important at this point to acknowledge the work of cognitive film theorists. Cognitivism is often considered a departure from methodologies that have dominated studies of visual media as it employs scientific research. Despite the fact that cognitivism is considered a departure from traditional film theory this the field aims to explain audience comprehension, emotional elicitation and aesthetic taste. Therefore, though it will not be used in my discussion of distraction, as I do not examine the spectator using scientific methods, it is a field that needs acknowledging. Cognitive film theory emerged as a reaction against and a critique of the psychoanalytic-semiotic theories that had dominated the discipline. It is

considered to be a naturalistic discipline in that it discusses concepts that are ultimately grounded in observable evidence. As Joseph Anderson outlines '[s]cience is built upon the assumption that there is a physical world and that it can be known by observation. Science proceeds by the formation of hypotheses about the world that are then tested' (1998: 9). Cognitive theorists, such as Carl Plantinga, discuss how the theory brings to the fore 'what is often forgotten' regarding film viewing, 'that for the vast majority of film spectators, movie viewing is first and foremost a pleasurable experience, suffused with affect' (2009: 2). Torben Grodal states that cognitivism is placed to examine bodily reactions 'such as sweating or trembling from fear' (2009: 5). He goes on to state that cognitivism allows us to 'descend further down the scale to examine the functioning of hormones, neurons, and synapses. In exploring the human mind, it is not possible to draw sharp distinctions between what belongs to the realm of science and what is best described by the tools of the humanities' (Grodal, 2009: 5). Where Grodal examines how there are overlaps between the sciences and humanities Murray Smith argues that when it comes to analysis of the mind there are three key areas that need to be examined: 'the phenomenological (that is, how we experience things), the psychological, and the neural' (Smith, 2017: 11). Ed Tan forms a similar line of argument as he states that 'it is often difficult to distinguish between the cognitive and affective sources of uncertainty created by the film, while experientially they are inextricable' (2013: 92). As mentioned above, though cognitivism will not be carried through the thesis, in favour of non-scientific analytical methods, it is important to acknowledge it as it does serve to demonstrate the range of ways affect can be analysed. These affects are important to consider as they bring us to the understanding of distraction and how it can be theorised in relation to film viewing.

Chapter Two discusses the importance of distraction as an integral part of modernity (Charney and Schwartz, 1995; Singer, 1995). Section one grounds the theory of distraction in current theories of spectatorship and discusses the development of how the spectator has been theorised. In the section I draw together a number of theories regarding how spectators have been understood as passive (Metz, 1977), active (Stam, 2000), emancipated (Rancière, 2009) and obtaining a level of hyper-spectatorship (Cohen, 2001). Through an examination of the work done by Stuart Hall (1973) with regards to encoding and decoding I argue how all experiences require a continual process of decoding. This process is done by the spectator and it is through building on Hall's theory that distracted spectator resonates most clearly. Section two then highlights how distraction has previously been theorised in relation to art, poems and architecture with regards to when viewing becomes a habit (Benjamin, 1936); as

well as how cinemas act as a distraction for people and in doing so take their minds off other things (Kracauer, 1926). To draw these ideas together section two illustrates how analysing film texts can be done through viewing distraction as stemming from a single point and travelling outwards (Barthes, 1975 and 1980). The third section of the chapter traces the historical continuities of distraction and the cinematic experience. I look back through these historical accounts in order to understand how distracted spectatorship can be traced throughout cinematic experience historically. The discussions in this chapter also aid in the understanding of spectatorship more generally and also raise questions of how we encounter text as distraction, which is a key mechanism with regards to viewing activities. Distracted spectatorship is intensified in post-modernity, as mentioned earlier in the introduction, and I examine this by focussing on several historical aspects of spectatorship before centring on the case study. The chapter shows how it is possible to understand the cinematic experience in terms of the ways in which an individual spectator interacts with a particular film in relation to the distractions that stem from it. In order to acknowledge the importance of the spectator Chapter Three elaborates on the methods that will be used to do this.

Chapter Three comprises the methodology and section one includes an in depth examination into the chosen area of study, franchise films. The section outlines the use of the word franchise in relation to film and how it has developed from a term that used to be associated with business models. As well as this the section includes a discussion into franchise films more generally and how the modes of distribution with regards to film changed and made franchise films more of a valuable commodity. Drawn into ideas surrounding franchise films are issues of fandom and how fans are depicted in relation to the films that they view (Jenkins, 1992). In the section I consider the problems that arise when writing on a topic such as fandom as it is often classified as a different and privileged way of reading films. There is an overlap with fandom which involves the research process, attention to detail and over analysis that is similar to academic research. This introduces ideas of 'participation culture' (Jenkins, 1992, 2006 and 2009) where fans have an active part in creating their cinematic experience through the material that they produce in relation to a particular film. Stemming from this the section discusses how there are many different kinds of participation, such as explicit participation and implicit participation (Schäfer, 2011), and the thesis is focussing on one in relation to the case study. Section two builds on the ideas put forward in section one and includes a discussion of the choice of a self-reflexive approach with regards to the case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses. When discussing an experience that is lived through by the spectator the theories necessary to

consider are phenomenology and affect as they can aid in unpacking exactly what the impact on the individual spectator is (Husserl, 1999; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Sobchack, 1992; Shaviro, 1994; Massumi, 1987). As the cinematic experience is being examined from the viewpoint of a single spectator self-reflexivity is of paramount importance with regards to this research. Section two of the methodology highlights how being a subject aware of their own subjectivity allows me to examine how meanings resonate for spectators on a subjective level (Devereaux, 1995; Giroux, 2001). I expand on this approach using self-reflexive strategies to carry out parts of the research that cannot be done solely using written theory (Nöth, 2007; Marks, 2000). For example, given the subjective nature of distraction I created the case study notebooks and the frontispieces to stand as a visual example of my own subjective distractions that build into my cinematic experience of *The Hunger Games* franchise. Due to the nature of this approach it is integral to consider how spectators view the relationship between things and themselves and to illustrate the importance of recognising the emotional impact when analysing certain material, such as the case study (Berger, 1972; Rose, 2006). Chapter Four includes a discussion regarding the importance of this recognition alongside the first of the distracted analyses concerning *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*.

Chapter Five develops a detailed case study of *The Hunger Games* franchise in order to elaborate on the cinematic experience in relation to a specific genre, franchise films. The case study discusses the overall sensation of a cinematic experience that the spectator lives through and has an active part in creating. This chapter also covers issues of fan cultures and the term “franchise film” in order to unpack what makes this particular film worthy of discussion when it comes to this specific genre of films. These discussions include issues of gender representations and identification and the female spectator with regards to the female lead in certain franchise films as a form of identification (Mulvey, 1975, 1989 and 2009; Doane, 1988, 1991; Cowie, 1997). Participatory culture is illustrated throughout the chapter specifically in relation to fandom and Jennifer Lawrence through the analysis of articles on websites such as BuzzFeed. Using these particular articles emphasises how *The Hunger Games* franchise can be analysed in terms of how fandom and distracted spectatorship function throughout the cinematic experience with regards to mainstream versus digital media. This analytical work is also done through a case study of the Honest Trailer videos which are put together by Screen Junkies and posted on YouTube. These forms of participatory culture illustrate how the process of adaptation acts as a form of identification. This links back to how spectators view things in particular ways and illustrates the visual argument made using the frontispieces and case study notebooks.

Developing these ideas Chapter Six, in order to illustrate the variety of ways in which spectatorship is socially and culturally constructed, includes a comparison of film reviews regarding the case study to highlight the subjectivity of the spectatorship experience. The argument I am proposing throughout the thesis involves a mixed method approach, one that is simultaneously diachronic and synchronic as it traces the history of distraction with regards to the cinematic experience and also selects a particular example to illustrate how distraction has an integral role with regards to the creation of the cinematic experience. I put forward this approach in Chapter Two with regards to distraction and continue it in this chapter with a focus on spectatorship and subjective viewing. This chapter outlines how my argument presents a synchronic viewpoint as it slices through contemporary culture to examine the case study. This is done in order to understand how the different approaches to distraction can still be seen in relation to the cinematic experience today. This chapter considers the nature of distraction in relation to the case study and examines how it is shaped and how to understand it as a concept in relation to film analysis. The entire thesis uses *The Hunger Games* franchise as the main example and it is in this chapter that an analysis of the final film in the franchise will come to the fore with regards the experience of distraction. *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* will be approached from a self-reflexive and analytical position to highlight how distraction makes visible the identities that spectators inhabit through their film viewing. The conclusion, Chapter Seven, considers the political significance of distraction, not merely as a retreat or as a concept that is ideologically negative but as a way of understanding subjective spectatorship. The conclusion also examines how distracted spectatorship is not just pertinent when it comes to viewing franchise films. The relationship between distracted spectatorship and franchise films can be expanded and used to view film in more general terms. This concluding chapter also reflects on how the thesis is asking a particular set of questions in order to highlight a particular focus with regards to making certain identities visible within the cinematic experience. It is through asking these questions and using existing methods of film analysis that it is possible to gain an understanding of the contemporary cinematic experience. I maintain that distraction is a key component when it comes to the spectator's attention and is vital with regards to discussing the cinematic experience through a self-reflexive and subjective lens. The purpose of my argument throughout the thesis is to trace how distraction as a form of attention is created, how it is sustained and how it evolves over time in relation to a particular blockbuster franchise.

Chapter One

Defining the Cinematic Experience

Section One

Defining the Cinematic

The first recorded use of the word cinematic appeared in the *New York Times* on May the first 1916. The review discussed the film *The Bugle Call* (Reginald Barker, 1916) and in

particular the leading actor William Collier Jr. who is compared to a young Douglas Fairbanks with regards to his acting prowess: ‘A new star of first magnitude burst upon the cinematic firmament yesterday’ (cited in Shapiro, 1983: 218). This usage is in reference to a new Hollywood actor appearing in films during that particular decade. Given the use of the word firmament after the term cinematic here cinematic can be understood as referring to the world occupied by cinema. This particular coinage of the term could also be referring to a new star appearing on the cinema screen. In this case the phrase ‘cinematic firmament’ could relate directly to the cinema screen itself and the images presented on it. The quotation also highlights how the world of cinema is seen as a separate entity from everything surrounding it. The word firmament refers to the sky which emphasises how the actors and actresses are seen as something to be looked up to. From this brief quotation it is already possible to examine a number of ways in which the term cinematic can be understood. Since this early use the meaning of the term has changed to incorporate a range of other meanings. This section will discuss several different ways in which the cinematic has been defined and in doing so considers the difficulties that arise when using the term.

The cinematic functions as an idea that resists definition and the way it travels across disciplines demonstrates how it is not a fixed term but a slippery one. The examples outlined below illustrate how the term cinematic can move from referring to how the real world is depicted to referring to the more formal and structural ways in which the term cinematic can be appropriated in other disciplines. In order to understand how the term cinematic has been used in direct reference to film I turn to cinema critic John Kelly. The essay on the cinematic by Kelly is the earliest description of the term that explicitly outlines what is meant by the cinematic in relation to film viewing. This makes Kelly’s definition integral within traditions of thought on the subject as it allows us to see how the cinematic is explicitly connected to film and the cinema. Though I will discuss how the term can be appropriated for use with regards to other forms of media for the thesis it is vital that the term be seen to work within the realms of film theory. Writing in 1964 Kelly outlined the term cinematic specifically in relation to film: ‘When we say that a film is cinematic we mean that it has been made in conformity with certain principles arising out of its nature. In order that a film should so conform [...] it should be an expression in the film-medium, its makers (director, writer, cameraman, editor and to a lesser extent actor) must be aware of the possibilities of the medium they are using’ (Kelly, 1964: 421). Here the term is used to describe how films conform to a certain set of guidelines in their construction. A film can be understood and seen to be cinematic if it abides by specific rules of filmmaking, for example the 180° system

where all the action filmed takes place along an invisible line which keeps the shots and the narrative consistent. Kelly expands on how the use of the term cinematic can be broadened to include new methods of filmmaking: ‘The makers of a film must explore with their imaginations the potentialities of their medium: keeping always what is valid in tried techniques’ (Kelly, 1964: 421). This approach focuses on the cinematic as existing in the formal and structural aspects of film which can only be explained in relation to the film and the film-maker, as opposed to the literary or theatrical qualities as discussed above. The implication in Kelly’s argument is that filmmakers will set the trend when it comes to what defines the cinematic. Kelly places filmmakers as the experts of the medium who are there to uncover what the cinematic is and how it can evolve and to show those findings through their films. Kelly goes on to narrow the definition of the cinematic by stating that the term has a separate connotation attached to it: ‘It implies that a film should not strive to be something other than what it is. The film should not try to reproduce precisely the effect of some other art. For example, the film picture is a moving picture so a film is not cinematic if it presents a series of still pictures of great paintings or famous buildings’ (Kelly, 1964: 421). Here Kelly outlines the cinematic in a very specific way, the term means the flat image on the screen which ‘can give the illusion of three-dimensional space [but] it is not a three-dimensional space’ (Kelly, 1964: 421). As quoted above Kelly describes the cinematic as the process in which a film is made, and then as the filmmaker’s ability to change those processes. His argument expands into stating how a film is cinematic if it displays moving images as well as portraying three-dimensional space while being two-dimensional. The selection of theorists used in this section illustrates the complexity of defining the term cinematic, both in relation to film and to other structural concerns. The theorists discussed move between defining the cinematic as a term which can be used to describe an aspect other than the film itself to confining the cinematic to what is being depicted on the screen as well as illustrating how the cinematic can refer to form as well as content. Discussing the variety of ways in which the cinematic can be understood brings to the fore the ways in which the experience in relation to film viewing can be recognised and is not limited to the cinema screen and what is being shown on it. Using the term cinematic is useful for my argument as so much of society has been shaped by cinema.

The complexity of the term is demonstrated through the variety of ways it is used to describe things that are not connected directly with film but are seen as having an inherently cinematic quality to them. The work of Norman Denzin is inter-disciplinary and draws on sociology and film studies; as such his work represents the wider sociological implications of

film (2002, 1991). Within these works and others (1997, 2009) Denzin explores the tension between ideas of the postmodern and traditional ways of analysing society. There exists a complex debate regarding society and cinema in terms of the relationship between the two. Though Denzin's work is being used to demonstrate the broad usage of the term cinematic it is important to make clear that, with regards to the cinema/society relationship, I would argue that it is society that influences cinema rather than the other way round. The discussion in Denzin's work moves between two forms of text: social theory, where he argues for a new approach to qualitative research methods, and cinematic representations of contemporary life. Examining Denzin's work on the cinematic society in relation to the cinematic experience is pertinent as he argues how cinema has contributed to the rise of voyeurism throughout society. Denzin argues that the cinematic gaze can be understood as part of the machinery of surveillance and power which regulates social behaviour in the late twentieth century. He outlines in *The Cinematic Society: The Voyeur's Gaze* how 'cinema not only turns its audience into voyeurs, eagerly following the lives of its screen characters, but casts its key players as onlookers, spying on other's lives' (Denzin, 1995: 3). Denzin argues that a parallel can be drawn between the society shown on screen and society in real life in terms of their voyeuristic qualities. This use of the term cinematic illustrates similarities between the world on screen and the world we live in every day. The way Denzin understands the film spectator as eagerly following the lives of the onscreen characters is how I propose to approach the concept of distracted spectatorship. Distracted spectatorship is similarly voyeuristic in that the spectators are continuously watching and continuously aware with regards to a particular film. The distracted spectator is one who purposefully follows certain aspects of the film in order to build on their cinematic experience. Denzin's work is a preliminary illustration of this as he outlines a society where everyone is watching and following everyone else in order to discover something that was previously unknown.

The social aspects of film have been of interest to scholars in other disciplines such as human geography. As well as examining the relationship between the cinematic and broader concepts, such as voyeurism in society, the term has been used to describe aspects of the world that we encounter every day. Professor in human geography David Clarke states how the cinematic stretches beyond the confines of the screen demonstrating that places such as cities can possess a cinematic quality. This is significant as it connects the term cinematic to aspects other than the cinema itself. Clarke's main body of work has centred on consumerism both in relation to the city and as a standalone concept (2003). His work, *The Cinematic City* (1997), offers an insight into how the city has been shaped by the cinematic form: 'The

role played by the city is central to a wide variety of films. In everyday experience, cities frequently seem to possess a cinematic quality' (Clarke, 1997: 1). Clarke expands his argument to state that cities are portrayed frequently in films and as such the cities experienced every day have begun to bring to mind their filmic counterparts. This use of the term suggests a direct correlation between what is depicted on the cinema screen and what is experienced in real life. Using cinematic in this way shapes my argument to build upon how the role of memory becomes increasingly important when making connections between different kinds of media. The cinematic quality relies on the spectator making the connection between what is on the screen and the object in real life; in relation to Clarke's argument cinema is so ubiquitous that the spectator cannot help but make these associations. This insight builds on the argument that I pursue in the thesis, that the female spectator can be understood as always already distracted.

In a comparable way theatre director Babak Ebrahimian draws on the discussion of cinematic narrative and uses it to describe a particular form of theatre in terms of its cinematic qualities. Ebrahimian defines a theatrical form that uses film theories and aesthetics as its foundation, which he calls cinematic. The significance of his work is that it emphasises how in our film-oriented culture the study of cinema's potential influence on other forms of media has become particularly relevant. Ebrahimian's other work has focused on the importance of theatre design without reference to the influence of cinematic techniques (2006). In *The Cinematic Theatre* (2004) he examines and explores the similarities and differences between cinema and theatre and lays out the basic form and aesthetics that make up the cinematic theatre. Ebrahimian argues how the changes in time and space are a part of defining how theatre can have cinematic qualities, for example time jumps and changes in scenery to depict changes in location: 'This shift and transfiguration of the theatre's time and space becomes the basic definition of the cinematic theatre. On a more formal level, the cinematic theatre can be defined as a theatre that has a cinematic (film) form and structure' (Ebrahimian, 2004: 7). The connection Ebrahimian makes between the theatre and film is relevant to my argument as it illustrates how film theory and aesthetics open new possibilities for analysis. In doing so this heightens films capacity to respond to and engage with contemporary culture.

The examples above illustrate how the term has a wide range of meanings and how the cinematic can be understood as something more than a film being screened in a cinema. As such it is possible to suggest that videogames, books, television shows, art and a range of other things can be considered cinematic. The way I define the cinematic encompasses this

extended experience of consumption which takes place outside of the cinema. The cinematic has a narrative element as it extends beyond the film itself and the spectator can choose which elements to follow more closely than others. We live in an era in which cinema has shaped our experience of the world, so that much of the world is experienced as cinematic. What the theorists referenced in this section do not include in their work is the role of the spectator and how this would impact their arguments. However, my thesis sees the spectator as an integral component in understanding the cinematic experience as, through their distractions, the spectator is shaping and influencing their own cinematic experiences. The cinematic experience is variable, not singular and homogenous. Rather like the punctum (Barthes, 1980), which will be outlined in Chapter Two, the cinematic experience begins with a moment that piques the interest of the spectator to prompt them into a sustained exposure with a particular film before its release which culminates in going to see that film at the cinema. The cinematic experience can then continue afterwards depending on the spectator's level of engagement and participation. In addition, the cinematic experience is not dependent upon actual film-viewing. As many aspects of contemporary life are cinematic then it follows that the cinematic experience can be produced in a number of contexts. Given the level of attention required by the spectator the cinematic experience is also defined by distracted spectatorship, which will be discussed more explicitly in Chapter Two. The inclusion of distracted spectatorship allows the body of the spectator to be brought into focus and enables the lived-body to be understood as central to the cinematic experience. The value of reconsidering the body as a site of perception in this research is that it will reveal the complex relationship between the body of the spectator and the cinematic experience. The importance of reinserting the body of the spectator into film theory is that it examines how the cinematic experience is constructed by the spectator's body, in my case a gendered, social and cultural body. This is what my research will add to the existing literature on spectatorship, discussed in the following chapter, as it moves the analysis beyond the confines of the film as text and allows for an examination into the wider discourses of the spectator's encounter with the cinematic experience. The following section will unpack the notion of cinematic experience in relation to theories of embodied spectatorship.

Section Two

Defining Experience

What I hope to show in this chapter is how the term ‘experience’ has been theorised and discussed in relation to film studies. Extending from this will be a clarification of how the term experience is used in relation to the cinematic and how the two terms together refer to a particular kind of experience. Film studies, in general, is modelled largely on literary and linguistic studies and because of this it is predominantly text-centred, leading films to be seen as texts which are the primary objects of inquiry. As a result of this, textual analysis is often the main method of preference when it comes to analysing films². This chapter calls for a turn away from the film as the main object of analysis and instead moves towards analysing the nature of the cinematic experience in relation to the embodied female spectator. This allows an understanding into how distraction has played a vital role in the cinematic experience and the work is imperative owing to the continual rise of franchise films and the kind of distracted spectatorship that they engender.

A central concern of my thesis is how to acknowledge the multiple identities of the viewer when discussing the cinematic experience. Media and cultural theorist Vivian Sobchack has written extensively with regards to the spectator’s experiences when it comes to film viewing. Sobchack’s work is fundamental to the thesis as it is the first theory I read which recognized that there was a viewer with a body that needed to be acknowledged when discussing film viewing. The significance of Sobchack’s work with regards to theoretical traditions of thought in film studies is that she writes of experience with regards to the body of the spectator. This is important to my thesis as Sobchack’s work enables a detailed discussion on the film experience as being encountered by an embodied spectator. In her work Sobchack discusses topics such as film noir, documentary film, new media, film

² The work of philosopher Gilles Deleuze is significant within the field of film studies as his line of inquiry allows questions such as: what does film do?, instead of isolating analysis to questions such as: what is film? which dominates text-centred analysis. In *Cinema I: The Movement-Image* (1986) Deleuze dismisses the conception of cinema as merely a succession of still photographs: ‘In short, cinema does not give us an image to which movement is added, it immediately gives us a movement-image’ (1986: 2). In doing so he illustrates how analysing a moving image is not the same as analysing something that is motionless. This allows film studies to move away from the literary and linguistic analysis that is based upon the analysis of a text. This is one way to do this work although there are other alternatives, one of which, phenomenology, is discussed below. It is in this way that cinema can embody a modern conception of movement which is ‘capable of thinking [of movement as] the production of the new’ (Deleuze, 1986: 7), as opposed to as a succession of separate elements. Deleuze built on these ideas in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989) and together both books argue how cinema is not an art that represents external reality but rather as a practice that creates different ways of organising time and movement. In *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener discuss how the significance of Deleuze’s work is how he takes issue with the way literary analyses of film creates a split between the subject and object. They explore how Deleuze tries to overcome this split in his work by drawing both subject and object together: ‘for Deleuze, cinema is material and immaterial [...] he posits for it an immanence of being in which matter, motion and consciousness are inseparably intertwined’ (2010: 158). Elsaesser and Hagener expand on this by stating that ‘the cinema is a reality and a way of thinking [...] as we speak about the cinema, we are already in the cinema and the cinema is always already in us’ (2010: 158).

feminism and phenomenological approaches to experiences as visual subjects (1996, 1997, 2000 and 2004). In *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (1992) Sobchack challenges the basic assumptions of film theory that reduce film to an object of vision and the spectator to a victim of a deterministic cinematic apparatus. Sobchack proposes that the cinematic experience depends on two "viewers" viewing: the spectator and the film, each existing as both a subject and an object of vision. This is an integral concept with regards to my own argument as it allows us to see the spectator as an embodied figure who understands film in a particular way. Sobchack describes how the experience of cinema as a representational system is as 'familiar as it is intense, and it is marked by the way in which significance and the act of signifying are *directly* felt, [and] *sensuously* available to the viewer' (Sobchack, 1995: 40). Here Sobchack describes the experience as a direct one between the film and the spectator. The experience is a familiar one as it portrays scenarios that the spectator can directly relate to. This relationship is described as one with no intermediaries or distractions to disturb the overall experience and instead takes place between the spectator and what is on the screen. This view of the cinematic experience as one of immersion into the viewed object is central to spectatorship theory and the cinematic experience as it speaks of a spectator who is enthralled by what they are watching on the screen, discussed further in the following chapter.

Central to Sobchack's ideas are that of phenomenology which is defined as the science or study of phenomena, things as they are perceived, as opposed to ontology, the nature of things as they are. Phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty defined phenomenology as 'the study of essences; and according to it, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences; the essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness, for example' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: vii). It is the philosophical study of the structures of subjective experience and consciousness. There are different forms of phenomenology stemming from various fields: phenomenology of architecture (based on the experience of building materials and their sensory properties, began in the 1970s and was influenced by the writings of Martin Heidegger); phenomenology of archaeology (based on understanding cultural landscapes from a sensory perspective, began around 1994 with the work of Christopher Tilley); phenomenology of philosophy (a method and school of philosophy founded by Edmund Husserl) and phenomenology of psychology (based on subjective experience or their study, Husserl, Jean-Paul Satre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty conducted philosophical investigations of consciousness in the early twentieth century). The work of Husserl explores how phenomenology 'will not try to give a causal account of knowledge and its connection to the world; it will not seek to explain

knowledge as a “natural fact”; it will not engage in theoretical constructions of the hypothetical-deductive sort’ and as such ‘it must remain entirely a matter of reflection, direct intuition, analysis, and description’ (Husserl, 1999: 6). Husserl proposed that the world of objects and the ways in which we perceive them is conceived by a natural standpoint which is characterized by a belief that objects exist distinct from the perceiving subject and exhibit properties that we see as emanating from them. Husserl proposed a radical new phenomenological way of looking at objects by examining how the spectator constitutes the object, which I also argue regarding the cinematic experience. Maurice Merleau-Ponty built on the foundation laid by Husserl and argued how phenomenology is a ‘philosophy for which the world is always “already there” before reflection begins’ he demonstrated how phenomenology tries to ‘give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: vii). At the centre of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy is an argument for the role perception plays in understanding and engaging with the world. He goes on to emphasise the body as the primary site of coming to know and understand the world, rather than placing consciousness as the source of knowledge. Merleau-Ponty maintains that the body and that which it perceives cannot be separated from one another. This is how the cinematic experience is portrayed in relation to distracted spectatorship throughout the thesis, as something which is inherently connected to the spectator. The self-reflexive method, outlined in more detail in Chapter Three, registers this embodied experience through the case study notebooks, distracted analyses and the frontispieces which stand as examples of the individual’s cinematic experience.

The other form of phenomenology that I will draw upon to examine the cinematic experience is semiotic phenomenology, the reason being that in order to examine the cinematic experience and distracted spectatorship it is necessary to examine the structures and origins of each term which is what semiotics allows us to do. Semiotic phenomenology is a term used by Vivian Sobchack:

Semiotic phenomenology [...] focuses on describing the expressions of interpretive structures and activity. It seeks to demythify those structures and activity we take for granted or assume are in some way magical – the first resulting from our “natural attitude” and the second resulting from a romantic and/or theological exaltation of expression without understanding. [...] [S]emiotic phenomenology moves from the *description* of an actual experience of engagement with the world and others to a *reduction* of that experience to its systemic structuring by and within an interpretive activity to an *interpretation* of the significance of that experience as it is lived (Sobchack, 1992: 101)

In this quote Sobchack indicates the three ways in which semiotic phenomenology works when analysing a particular cultural object or experience. It begins with a description of that experience; what follows is a reduction of the experience which focuses on structure; finally there is the act of interpreting the significance of the experience. The relevance of using semiotic phenomenology to investigate the cinematic experience is because as well as enabling the question, what is it to go and see a film? it produces the questions: What is it to see? How does seeing exist and what does it mean to see? How is seeing a part of the experience? The reason for using phenomenology to study the cinematic experience is because it forces us to question things that, according to Sobchack, we usually would not consider taking into account, such as how the body of the spectator impacts the cinematic experience: 'phenomenology calls us to a series of systematic reflections within which we question and clarify that which we intimately live, but which has been lost to our reflective knowledge through habituation and/or institutionalization' (1992: 28). Sobchack examines how phenomenology is a retrospective critical system, a means of reflecting on the viewing process rather than the viewing process itself which forces the spectator to question the viewing habits they have developed. Sobchack continues this line of argument to theorise how a phenomenological approach allows the world to be seen in a more critical way. It is the fresh possibility for reflective knowledge which will enable an in depth discussion of what the cinematic experience entails for the spectator. Through the introduction to her book *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* it is clear that Sobchack ties experience to the body of the viewer as the spectator can see, hear and feel what they are watching: '[m]ore than any other medium of human communication, the moving picture makes itself sensuously and sensibly manifest as the expression of experience by experience' (1992: 3). Experience here is regarding perception on behalf of the viewer and expression on behalf of the film. Sobchack expands on this by arguing that cinema transposes 'those modes of being alive and consciously embodied in the world that count for each of us a direct experience' (1992: 4). In her work Sobchack calls for a move towards the spectator's body when writing on film experience because her definition of the film experience is as a form of communication which takes place between the spectator and the film, this communication is one-way from the viewed object to the viewing subject. A film is an 'act of seeing that makes itself seen, an act of hearing that makes itself heard, an act of physical and reflective movement that makes itself reflexively felt and understood' (Sobchack, 1992: 3-4). Stating that film is an 'expression of experience by experience' illustrates how film presents a

particular and specific view of the world that is reliant on the spectator to be a part of the experience. Films have a view of the world and they also play a role in constructing a world view, as do cinematic ways of seeing in real life, the viewer does too and the experience of watching a film brings the two different views together. For Sobchack the spectator is one who can see, hear and feel what they are watching on the screen and through these bodily experiences the spectator in turn experiences the story that is being played out in front of them.

It is this sense of films working through the body of the spectator that Sobchack focuses on and expands in her analysis of the lived-body of both the viewer and the film. Sobchack argues how ‘the spectator’s body *as it is lived* has been subject to oversight by most contemporary theorists’ as the theorists themselves are ‘alienated from their own embodied, subjective, and intentional activity of vision’ (1992: 302). Sobchack states how the spectator’s body as a lived-body implies a phenomenological term; this demonstrates how the objective body is always lived as “my” body as it is active in making sense and meaning in and of the world. Sobchack goes on to explore how the spectator’s body has been subject to oversight as either film theory has not taken bodies being at the movies seriously or it has not known how to describe how films move and touch the body of the spectator before they provoke conscious analysis. This oversight is a problem that needs addressing as every spectator has a body that is affected in various ways throughout the cinematic experience. Pushing that fact to one side ignores a large component of what constitutes the cinematic experience. At the conclusion of her book she states a longing to recover the body of the spectator: ‘to recover my lived-body in the film experience so that I, too, can claim the ability to respond and, thus, responsibility for what I see’ (Sobchack, 1992: 303). This is important for Sobchack as she deliberates on how the increased use of technology is moving the spectator away from an understanding of their own lived-bodies. As spectators who are part of a world that has become digitised it is increasingly important that the individual asserts the difference of their lived-body. I approach this throughout the thesis by bringing the multiple identities that spectators hold within themselves to the fore. As mentioned in the introduction this is something that feminist theorists discuss in terms of gendered bodies. What my argument demonstrates is the way these identities interact with each other and how, rather than creating a position of certainty, they create a position of uncertainty within the spectator. This allows the body to be seen as one which is lived from within as well as observed from the outside. The event of watching a film is an act of seeing the experience as the activities of two bodies: the spectator’s body and the film’s body which has its own perception of a world.

For Sobchack the filmgoer perceives the film as a perceiving body, therefore, the film experience is lived through the filmgoer's body. This is an aspect of Sobchack's work on phenomenology that will not be used in the discussion of the cinematic experience. My focus is the body of the spectator and how it interacts with the cinematic experience, not how the film can be considered as an entity with its own body which has to be taken into account. The reason for this being that such an analysis would require an in-depth look at specific films, whereas the focus of this research is to theorise the overall cinematic experience in relation to one film franchise and distracted spectatorship. The difference being that it is not a film which is being analysed, rather the experiences that surround the franchise as a whole. Throughout *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* Sobchack does not say how the recovery of the spectator's lived-body can be done. What Sobchack also does is to confine her writing to a discussion of the spectator in the cinema. As established above in relation to semiotic phenomenology this research is concerned with interpreting the significance of the cinematic experience as it is lived through the body of the spectator. The cinematic experience takes on meaning because of the body of the spectator, examining affect and how it works in and through the body of the spectator will allow this to be examined in detail, discussed further below. Sobchack's definition of the film experience is one which takes place exclusively in the cinema auditorium while the film is being shown. What I maintain is how the experience is not restricted to the cinema screen but takes place both before and after it. The importance of Sobchack's research here is how the body of the spectator is integral to the cinematic experience as the spectator uses their bodily experiences to create their own cinematic experience through the influence of distracted spectatorship.

Film theorist Patrick Phillips illustrates this point of the extended viewing space by outlining how the other spectators in the audience impact the experience for the individual: 'the crunchers and the slurpers run the risk of seriously annoying us – we realise we have come here to lose ourselves in the images and sounds of the film' (Phillips, 2007: 144). Phillips' work is significant here as it exemplifies an idealised version of what it means to watch films within a cinema. It also opens up discussion around emotion and if there is a "right" way to be a spectator. The statement by Phillips above implies that when some spectators enter the cinema they dispose of their frames of reference for what is deemed to be "good" cinema conduct. Disposing of these analytical constructs when entering the cinema allows a distinction to be made between what is seen as being a "good" spectator and a "bad" spectator. His other work, *Understanding Film Texts: Meaning and Experience* (2001), emphasises placing meaning between film as text and the spectator's interpretation of that

text through their interactions with it. In the chapter ‘Spectator, audience and response’ (2007) Phillips states how the experience of watching a film is one which should not be interrupted. The spectator’s focus, he argues, should be held by what is on the cinema screen and nothing else:

The technology of cinema exhibition holds us much more powerfully than does television. The size (and shape) of the screen, the quality of the images, the clarity of the sound all invite much more attention – indeed they demand it (Phillips, 2007: 144)

What Phillips outlines is how the “true” experience of viewing films would be to have everyone else sat in silence so that the film can be totally absorbed with no outer interruptions. This way of theorising the experience of film viewing is an idealised one, especially when it comes to watching films in a shared space such as the cinema. Instead of the ‘crunchers and slurpers’ being pushed aside and made to be seen as an inconvenience all aspects of the experience need to be acknowledged to give a more rounded and complete picture of the cinematic experience. Phillips’ argument illustrates how distraction in film theory is often viewed as a form of inattention rather than, as I argue, attention that is placed elsewhere.

This idealised way of understanding spectatorship within the cinema is common in film theory and, according to cultural critic Steven Shaviro, this is owing to the fact that film theory ‘still tends to equate passion, fascination, and enjoyment with mystification. [...] Beneath its claims to methodological rigor and political correctness, it manifests a barely contained panic at the prospect (or is it the memory?) of being affected and moved by visual forms’ (Shaviro, 1994: 14-15). Though important not to overstate Shaviro’s claim as this was over twenty years ago his work on film is significant as it illustrates how being affected by what you watch should not be disregarded but instead is a vital component of the spectator’s experience. Shaviro’s larger body of work focuses on investigating popular culture, new technologies and how new structures of feeling are emerging in tandem with new digital technologies (2003 and 2010). In *The Cinematic Body* (1994), he communicates a sense of the inescapable intensities of contemporary culture. He argues that film theory has purposefully avoided including emotion and experience when it comes to discussing the cinematic experience of spectators. Film is a visually vivid medium and, as Shaviro states, ‘it arouses corporeal reactions of desire and fear, pleasure and disgust, fascination and shame’ (Shaviro, 1994: viii). I embrace the emotional aspects of the experience and explore them in

depth through the case study to analyse how they are a part of the cinematic experience instead of something that has to be ignored in order for the “true” experience to shine through, discussed further in Chapters Four, Five and Six. It is also important to acknowledge these aspects as the multiple identities that the individual spectator inhabits are brought to the fore through a variety of emotional experiences.

Including the embodied spectator into an analysis of film draws on a phenomenological approach which film theorist Jennifer Barker uses to describe the viewing experience in relation to cinema. Barker’s work builds on the foundation provided by Sobchack and, as such, is central to discussions of embodied spectators. In particular *The Tactile Eye* (2009) is relevant to my argument, as it expands on phenomenological analysis and film theory and explores the visceral connection between films and their viewers. For Barker the cinematic experience is a tactile one where the spectator and the film have a ‘muscular empathy for one another, which is derived from similarities in the ways the human body and the film’s body express their relation to the world through bodily comportment’ (2009: 73). To highlight this she draws parallels between the viewer’s body and what she means when she writes of the film’s body: ‘The viewer caresses by moving the eyes along an image softly and fondly, without a particular destination, but the film might perform the same caressing touch through a smoothly tracking camera movement, slow-motion, soft-focus cinematography, or an editing style dominated by lap dissolves, for example’ (2009: 32). In this way the film and the spectator are linked, what takes place on screen affects the spectator and makes them feel as if the same sensations are happening to them, therefore, they are connected through the tactile nature of film. The cinematic experience is one which is felt through the body of the spectator by drawing parallels between how their body performs certain actions in comparison to similar actions depicted on the screen. Barker argues that the experience of cinema can be understood as something which is a sensuous exchange between film and viewer that goes beyond the visual and aural, gets beneath the skin, and reverberates in the body of the spectator (2009: 3).

There is a connection here between Barker’s work and that of Annette Kuhn who illustrates how a link is forged between what is on the screen and the spectator. Kuhn’s work covers topics such as feminism, film, memory, cinema-going culture and image analysis (1990, 1994 and 2002). Her work places the foundation for discussions on the cinematic experience through an embodied female perspective as she argues how feminism and cinema together could provide the basis for new forms of expression. Examining her chapter on ‘Cinematic Experience, Film Space, and the Child’s World’ allows us to understand how the

cinematic experience can be understood as a form of space: '[f]ilms can lay out the spaces of their worlds in such a manner as to invite the viewer to enter them, engage with them and become part of them, echoing the ways in which we negotiate the spaces and boundaries of our inner and outer worlds through transitional processes' (Kuhn, 2010: 96). Here the cinematic experience is outlined as one which constructs and breaks down spaces allowing the spectator to navigate between the real and the imaginary. The implications of this are that the cinematic experience affects the body of the spectator. Torben Grodal in his 2009 work *Embodied Visions: Evolution, Emotion, Culture, and Film* argues how '[s]ublime feelings, or the drive to seek higher goals, represent bodily as well as mental states' (4). He goes on to explore how films 'are often made to elicit strong emotional responses and may be based on stories and situations that activate innate emotional dispositions, whether or not these dispositions are appropriate to a modern environment or linked to skills that enhance survival in that environment' (Grodal, 2009: 6). My thesis embraces these aspects of engagement through the frontispieces, case study notebooks and the distracted analyses which are an example of how the spectator can be directly affected by what they view on screen.

These forms of experience are all fundamental with regards to understanding the cinematic in terms of experience. The range of affective experiences available to the spectator needs to be highlighted and recognized. Social theorist Brian Massumi defines the distinction between affect and emotion as they both 'follow different logics and pertain to different orders' (Massumi, 2002: 27). Shaviro supports this and compares affect and emotion in order to gain a clearer understanding of affect:

affect is primary, non-conscious, asubjective or presubjective, asignifying, unqualified, and intensive; while emotion is derivative, conscious, qualified, and meaningful, a "content" that can be attributed to an already-constituted subject. Emotion is affect captured by a subject, or tamed and reduced to the extent that it becomes commensurate with that subject. Subjects are overwhelmed and traversed by affect, but they *have* or *possess* their own emotions (Shaviro, 2010: 3)

There are a wide variety of theories of affect—from phenomenology, psychoanalysis, psychology, and post-Cartesian philosophies to Marxism, feminism, science and technology studies, queer studies, and various histories of emotion. The concept of affect has been used in a number of disciplines just as phenomenology has. One of the more common ways to approach affect is from a psychological standpoint; it defines affect as the experience of feeling or emotion and confirms how affect is a key part of an organism's reaction to stimuli.

In this particular field some theorists (Lazarus, 1982) consider affect to be post-cognitive, for example such affective reactions as liking, disliking or pleasure or displeasure each result from a different cognitive process that examines them to find value. Other theorists (Lerner and Keltner, 2000) argue that affect stems from an initial emotional response that produces thought which in turn produces affect. The use of affect as an object of philosophy which places emphasis on bodily experience is relevant to my work on the cinematic experience³.

Margaret Wetherell, in her 2012 book *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding*, provides a clear rationale for the term affect and how it can be employed. She argues how examining affect ‘leads to a focus on embodiment, to attempt to understand how people are moved, and what attracts them, to an emphasis on repetitions, pains and pleasures, feelings and memories’ (Wetherell, 2012: 2). The purpose of bringing affect to the fore is that in doing so ‘it brings the dramatic and the everyday back into social analysis’ by drawing attention to ‘moments of resentment, kindness, grumpiness, ennui and feeling good’ (Wetherell, 2012: 2). Research with regards to affect ‘focuses on the emotional as it appears in social life and tries to follow what participants do’ in doing so it ‘finds shifting, flexible and often over-determined figurations rather than simple lines of causation, character types and neat emotion categories’ (Wetherell, 2012: 4). This is what my research brings to the fore, the inherent messiness in trying to examine distraction and how in doing so it makes visible multiple identities within a single spectator.

Examining affect in relation to the cinematic experience I turn to cultural critic Steven Shaviro who emphasises the importance of including affect in film theory, as mentioned above. Shaviro goes on to examine how the film experience centres on affects that are instilled in the spectator whilst watching and experiencing the film: ‘In film viewing, there is pleasure and more than pleasure: a rising scale of seduction, delirium, fascination, and utter absorption in the image’ he argues how the spectator ‘cannot be separated from the bodily agitations, the movements of fascination, the reactions of attraction and repulsion, of which

³ Spinoza (1677) establishes a concept of affect that subsequent philosophers have taken up; he argues how affects are states of mind and body which are related to feelings and emotions and also argues how an affect is a ‘modification or variation produced in the mind and body by an interaction with another body’ (2001: 154). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) build on this stance and tend to distinguish more sharply between affect and emotions: ‘[a]ffects are not simply affections as they are independent from their subject’ (1987: xvi). Affect is an ability to affect and be affected as it is a ‘prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act’ (Massumi, 1987: xvii). What is meant by this is ‘affect is not a personal feeling it is a non-conscious experience of intensity’, it is the ‘body’s way of preparing for action in a given circumstance by adding to the intense quality of an experience’ (Shouse, 2005). The importance of this resides in the fact that in many cases the ‘message consciously received by the spectator may be of less import than the spectator’s non-conscious affective resonance with the source of the message’ (Shouse, 2005).

they are the extension and the elaboration' (Shaviro, 1994: 10). Shaviro's writing supports Sobchack's argument about the sensuous quality of cinema; both theorists demonstrate how the experience of watching a film is rooted in the body of the spectator. Shaviro also challenges the split between the mind and body that is reproduced by much of spectatorship theory. He argues how spectators sit 'in the dark, watching the play of images across a screen' and as such are detached 'from "raw phenomena", from the immediacy of sensation or from the speeds and delays of temporal duration' (Shaviro, 1994: 32). As such, he concludes that cinema 'invites me, or forces me, to stay within the orbit of the senses' (Shaviro, 1994: 32). It is the dual ability to be emotionally affected by what is on the screen as well as being aware of yourself as a spectator with a body that the combination of phenomenology and affect incorporate into my research on the cinematic experience. Shaviro's argument regarding how film theory 'still tends to equate passion, fascination, and enjoyment with mystification' (1994: 14-15) relates to views on fandom, discussed in Chapter Three. He emphasises how film theory opposes 'a knowledge that is disengaged from affect, and irreducible to images' and as such it is as if 'there were something degrading and dangerous about giving way to images, and so easily falling under their power' (1994: 14-15). Shaviro's claim here is that film theory has stayed away from including emotion and experience when cinema is discussed. I draw together aspects such as passion, fascination and enjoyment to show how they are all part of the cinematic experience because of the inclusion of distracted spectatorship and as such should not be ignored.

Given one of the ways in which distracted spectatorship and the cinematic experience will be encountered through my own self-reflexive writings, a parallel can be drawn between the work I do throughout the thesis and the use of blogs as a way to examine the cinematic experience. Blogs can be used as a case study for popular discourse as they are evidence of the fan voice and how experience can be illustrated. Though film theorists introduce us to the variety of ways the cinematic experience can be outlined through affect and phenomenology, it is in blogs which we can examine the most frequently used descriptions of this term as bloggers give an emotive account of experience. Blogs, which can be seen as case studies into how the cinematic experience is defined as they are evidence of shifting popular discourse, illustrate the physically engaging aspects of the cinematic experience in different terms. Blogger Jonathan McCalmont, states that 'it's hard not to feel that cinema chains have lost sight of what it is that made the cinematic experience so special' he goes to argue that the cinematic experience should comprise 'great stories, great performances, great direction and a comfortable and distraction free environment in which to experience all of these things.

That is the core of the cinematic experience; everything else is a fairground ride' (McCalmont, 2012). McCalmont describes the cinematic experience as centring on the stories, performances, direction and a distraction-free environment. Everything which surrounds these aspects is anathema to the main experience as described by McCalmont. Part of the cinematic experience relies on these aspects, but it is not the core as McCalmont claims. McCalmont's view of what the cinematic experience entails is a nostalgic and idealised one as it calls to mind a form of film viewing that never really existed. However, this sense of going to see a film in the cinema in order to be absorbed by what is on the screen is a theme that often comes to the fore on blogs, and in the work of film theorists as has been discussed. A blog such as *Film School Rejects* which highlights how its aim is to 'provide the ultimate commentary track on the world of entertainment' (Miller, 2014) illustrates this. When writing about going to see *Interstellar* (Christopher Nolan, 2014) Neil Miller asks what it is that the audience seeks when they go to the cinema:

[p]lenty of movies in this era are made to be entertaining, but few are made to deliver this kind of experience. There's value to that kind of experience. We want to be wowed. Like Cuarón last year, Nolan hasn't just made a movie, he's created an ambitious ride (Miller, 2014)

Miller outlines two areas of experience here, the first is that of escapism: entertainment that makes it possible to forget about ordinary reality for a while as the spectator marvels at what is on the screen; the second is of an experience which should be seen as a ride, or a journey, implying that there is a definite beginning and a definite end. Here "ride" can be thought about in the same way as the cinematic experience itself, as something that involves anticipation before the fact, as well as memory after, that might be repeated over and over again. The experiences are varied and the crux of my argument is trying to recognize and balance that fact while at the same time demonstrating how these experiences can be used to make visible the various identities of the individual spectator.

In order to understand the cinematic experience with regards to my own case study it is necessary to compartmentalise the types of experience that can be analysed with regards to film viewing. The case study deals with the direct experience of me as a spectator and how I am interacting with a particular film. This direct experience can be understood 'as experience "centred" in that particular, situated, and solely occupied existence sensed first as "Here, where the world touches" and then as "Here, where the world is sensible; here, where I am"' (Sobchack, 1992: 4). This view of the direct experience allows us to see how it is a form of

experience which includes within it a space for the spectator to be included within the analysis. This is integral to my thesis and the self-reflexive approach I will be using for the case study. Due to the self-reflexive approach used throughout the thesis it is important to acknowledge how the case study represents an embodied experience. The act of seeing and interpreting what is being seen is a matter of perception, and all perception is embodied. This means that ‘vision does not and cannot occur apart from the body that enables it, but is necessarily informed by the fleshy, corporeal, and historically specific structures of the way we live in and through our bodies and in and through the world’ (Barker, 2009: 17). Embodied spectatorship suggests that the spectator is a socially and culturally situated subject and as such the concept enables us to account for both the social and individual relations involved in the cinematic experience. The emphasis on the female embodied spectator is paramount to the thesis as perception is so rooted in how spectators come to understand what it is they are viewing. Choosing to focus on the embodied female spectator is a reflection on how the idealised notion of immersive spectatorship outlined in this section produces a certain kind of gendered spectator. This form of spectatorship might also produce an idealised masculine spectator; given the self-reflexive nature of the case study it is the female embodied spectator that will be the focus. The case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses illustrate the intimate experience between spectator and film so that the relationship with cinema can be seen as a close connection ‘rather than as a distant experience of observation, which the notion of cinema as a purely visual medium presumes. To say that we are touched by cinema indicates that it has significance for us, that it comes close to us, and that it literally occupies our sphere’ (Barker, 2009: 2). The examples used throughout the thesis and in the case study are all a reflection of the experience I developed with regards to my own cinematic experience. The final aspect of experience which is fundamental to consider with regards to the case study is how it relies on cultural experience which is located in the ‘intermediate area between the individual psyche and the environment, partaking of both’ (Kuhn, 2013: 4). This enables the spectator’s experiences to draw on the outside environment and to have it reflected in their own individual experiences. This process makes cultural experience an essential part of the way in which the spectator interacts with a particular cultural object and is illustrated through the case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses.

Using both affect and phenomenology aids in examining the construction of distracted spectatorship as it allows, what media theorist Laura Marks dubbed ‘thinking with your skin, or giving as much significance to the physical presence of an other as to the mental

operations of symbolisation' (2000: 190). When writing about affect in relation to cinema Rutherford argues that 'cinema is not only about telling a story; it's about creating an affect, an event, a moment that lodges itself under the skin of the spectator' (2011: 158). Rutherford's work is significant as it examines how the cinema has a particular effect on the spectator and in doing so creates a particular kind of experience. Her work builds on traditions of thought as it examines cinematic affect through close readings of how affective immersion in cinema works to engage viewers. Rutherford draws on the analysis of embodied affect to revise many of the foundational concepts of film studies. In her 2011 work, *What Makes a Film Tick? Cinematic Affect, Materiality and Mimetic Innervation*, Rutherford offers a close study of how film produces sensory-affective experience for the spectator. It argues that we must explore this affective dimension if we want to understand how cinema engages with cultural issues. In the above quotation Rutherford outlines how the experience is meant to leave a lasting impression on the spectator. This is one of the ways in which experience will be incorporated throughout the thesis in relation to distracted spectatorship, as an experience that goes with you when you leave the cinema, a lasting experience that can be revisited again and again. Due to the nature of the case study notebooks, frontispieces and the distracted analyses my argument is also concerned with transient experience in relation to the cinematic experience and distracted spectatorship. It is not only the experiences that linger which are important but also the ones which are temporary that should be a part of the analysis as they form a central part of the cinematic experience in relation to distracted spectatorship. What I highlight through the case study is how these experiences all go towards producing a cinematic experience which has distracted spectatorship at its centre. Including distraction as a part of the cinematic experience shows how diverse the experience is; it can be boredom, frustration, disappointment as well as joy, fascination and wonder. The following chapter will focus on defining spectatorship and will build on theories of spectatorship to trace how distracted spectatorship stems from current theoretical debates.

Chapter Two

Defining Distracted Spectatorship

Section One

Defining Spectatorship

My research explores how spectatorship is a cultural and social construct and needs to be acknowledged as such in order to build a more rounded picture of spectatorship as a whole, as an experience which takes place beyond the cinema screen. This approach involves

an in-depth examination into spectatorship theory and an analysis of the different ways in which spectatorship has been theorised. The dynamic between the audience, spectator, viewer and subject is integral to film viewing and the way identity is shaped and constructed. When an audience is referred to it usually means a body of people who gather to watch a film, be it at the cinema or elsewhere: '[t]he cinema audience comprises people who assemble to watch films in cinemas and other venues, both public and private; and also those who consume films via alternative platforms' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012: 21). Spectatorship is a more abstract concept, referring to an audience member who has an interactive relationship with the film; interactive in that the spectator critiques and participates in an embodied and interconnected experience of film viewing. Though, as has been discussed previously, the experience is not solely dependent on film viewing and includes aspects such as anticipation and identification. As Kuhn and Westwell argue, 'the study of film spectatorship and the study of cinema audiences derive from distinct disciplinary approaches and methodologies', meaning that it is helpful to come to a 'conceptual distinction between the two terms' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012: 22). Further, the notion of the viewer is drawn from reception studies where the '[e]mphasis is on the viewer in her or his interaction with a film or films, on the expectations and interpretive strategies brought to bear on reading films, and on how the latter are shaped' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012: 345). Being a viewer is a way of experiencing film where the emphasis lies on the viewer's interaction with that particular film. Being a film viewer means interpreting the film and being shaped by what you have watched. Interaction, as I define it, is when the audience member actively searches for information on a particular film with the goal to acquiring an increased knowledge of that particular film. This is of particular relevance when discussing fans as the fan will actively seek out information on a franchise in order to interact with it. Though this does present a methodological problem with regards to knowing whether an audience member actively seeks out information or not I base this statement in the knowledge that this level of research was present throughout my own tracing of distracted spectatorship. Having the case study notebooks in place as an example of the self-reflexive process allows the cinematic experience to be seen as an experience which is mediated and framed by concerns and agendas which, in turn, impact spectatorship. For this reason the term spectator is preferable for this research as it implies that interactive relationship on which distracted spectatorship relies.

Spectatorship is, with regards to film theory, approached in a specific way and through a series of metaphors, as Sobchack argues:

The first two, the frame and the window, represent the opposing poles of classical film theory, while the third, the mirror, represents the synthetic conflation of perception and expression that characterizes most contemporary film theory. What is interesting to note is that all three metaphors relate directly to the screen rectangle and to the film as a static *viewed object* (Sobchack, 1995: 45)

Sobchack emphasises here how the cinema screen is presented as the viewed object, with the spectator as the subject who is doing the viewing. The preoccupation for Sobchack is often the importance of illustrating that the screen and the spectator have a kind of relationship to one another; what is not addressed is how this relationship is not confined to the cinema screen and not confined to a set timeframe. As discussed previously I define the cinematic experience as taking place both before and after the spectator sees the film which opens up the timeframe regarding experience. This timeframe is not set and one could conclude that all experience can be related to the cinematic. Expanding from this is how the experience does not only take place within the cinema, as the case study notebooks demonstrate, and the experience is spread across a variety of media. What this thesis emphasises is that the focus on the cinema screen and its relationship with the spectator is not the only way of approaching film analysis and that filmic terms are open to a number of meanings and have the capacity to be developed in new ways.

Writing on cinema and spectatorship, Judith Mayne examines and assesses major theories and ways in which these terms have developed. She does this in order to explore how the analysis of a dialogue between history and theory can establish how cinema engages its viewers. Mayne explains that spectatorship consists not only of the act of watching something but also ‘the ways one takes pleasure in the experience, or not’ (1993: 1). The term thus suggests that the act of ‘film-going and the consumption of movies and their myths are symbolic activities, [and] culturally significant events’ (1993: 1). An audience member or a viewer watches a film and then leaves the cinema; however, spectatorship is a question of ‘not just the relationship that occurs between the viewer and the screen, but also and especially how that relationship lives on once the spectator leaves the theatre’ (Mayne, 1993: 2-3). Mayne sees spectatorship as a two-way relationship that requires the viewer to interact with what they are watching: it includes ‘the acts of looking and hearing inasmuch as the patterns of everyday life are dramatized, foregrounded, displaced, or otherwise inflected by the cinema’ (Mayne, 1993: 31). This is brought to the fore in my discussions of distracted spectatorship which emphasises how the acts of viewing and interpreting are affected throughout the cinematic experience.

Rather than just interacting with films as though they are a passive medium whose purpose is merely to show the viewer things spectatorship allows us to understand that this relationship ‘involves an engagement with modes of seeing and telling, hearing and listening, not only in terms of how films are structured, but in terms of how audiences imagine themselves’ (Mayne, 1993: 32). The way audiences imagine themselves requires us to consider ideas of identification, which are discussed in Chapter Five, and can be used to discuss the ways in which the viewer and the subject can be understood. Mayne examines the area in which spectatorship occurs within the discussion of the subject and viewer relationship:

Spectatorship occurs at precisely those spaces where “subjects” and “viewers” rub against each other. In other words, I believe that the interest in spectatorship in film studies attests to a discomfort with either a too easy separation *or* a too easy collapse of the subject and the viewer (Mayne, 1993: 37)

The language Mayne uses suggests physical or embodied interaction between the two terms this is significant to the thesis as the distracted spectator is both subject and viewer. Mayne’s use of the term spectator is a reflection of both of these concepts and exposes the interplay of the cinematic institution on the real person. Distracted spectatorship involves a unique and specific combination of individual fantasy and social ritual. Individual fantasy relates to those elements of distracted spectatorship which impact the film viewing and lead the spectator to create their own personally and socially constructed cinematic experience. Expanding on how the cinematic experience is a combination of social ritual and individual fantasy are Mayne’s discussions of how spectatorship needs to be seen as ordinary. This is of importance to the thesis as distracted spectatorship is theorised as potentially occurring in all situations and as such should be seen as an integral part of the film viewing process:

Instead, spectatorship needs to be treated as one of those ordinary activities, and theorizing this activity can open up spaces between seemingly opposing terms, thus leading us to attend more closely to how stubbornly our pleasures in the movies refuse any rigid dichotomies (Mayne, 1993: 172).

Mayne uses the term ordinary here to emphasise how spectatorship is a way of life and should be understood as such. The argument presented in this thesis builds on this to argue that spectatorship of film should be seen as an activity that can leave the confines of the cinema and extend outwards into the everyday life of the spectator. This is an important point to make as it emphasises how the cinematic experience is not confined to the cinema itself.

By extending it outwards allows for an increased understanding of how the individual spectator understands the world around them in relation to a particular film franchise. This matters as it allows for the inclusion of the multiple identities that the spectator holds within themselves. Limiting the spectator to being understood in terms of the way they view films in the cinema in turn limits our understanding of that spectator. This makes spectatorship even more of an ordinary activity than that as examined by Mayne because if spectatorship can take place within the cinema, directed towards a particular film, then spectatorship can also take place when the film is not being directly viewed.

Spectatorship is not only the act of watching a film, but also the ways one is affected by the experience, or not. As explored by Mayne earlier on spectatorship refers to the way in which film viewing is invested with watching and listening. As well as this the cinema functions as a form of pleasure, entertainment and socialisation. As such spectatorship is not rigid but fluid and distracted spectatorship can aid in it being recognised as such. One way of theorising how audiences view films is through the theory of the passive spectator. Introducing terms such as this allow the concept of distracted spectatorship to be understood alongside other methods of spectatorship. Spectators have been theorised as having no involvement in what they are watching, as sitting immobile in their seats facing the screen. According to Christian Metz, a French film theorist who pioneered the application of Ferdinand de Saussure's theories of semiology to film, spectators take in 'everything with their eyes, nothing with their bodies: the institution of the cinema requires a silent, motionless spectator, a *vacant* spectator at once alienated and happy' (Metz, 1977: 96). Here Metz proposes that the institution of cinema requires a motionless and inactive spectator as then no attention will be drawn away from what is on the screen. Robert Stam, a theorist of semiotics and poststructuralism alongside film theory, expands on this argument by stating how the spectator is shaped by what they view:

Any truly comprehensive ethnography of spectatorship must distinguish multiple registers: (1) the spectator as fashioned by the text itself (through focalization, point-of-view conventions, narrative structuring, *mise-en-scène*); (2) the spectator as fashioned by the (diverse and evolving) technical apparatuses (Cineplex, IMAX, domestic VCR); (3) the spectator as fashioned by the institutional contexts of spectatorship (social ritual of moviegoing, classroom analysis, *cinématèque*); (4) the spectator as constituted by ambient discourses and ideologies (Stam, 2000: 231)

Stam emphasises the ways in which the spectator is constituted by what they watch on the screen as well as through the environment with which they come into contact within the

cinema. Stam is proposing a different way of studying spectatorship by taking the above aspects into account. In order to truly acknowledge and understand how spectatorship has changed and shifted the aspects Stam mentions in the above quotation need to be analysed alongside the use of analytical film theory. Film theory, using an analytical approach, means the ways in which films are analysed as texts and the techniques related to this. For example, analytical film theory may focus on the impact of mise-en-scene, cinematography, sound and music on the audience rather than the reactions on the individual spectator. What the case study notebooks show is how the cinematic experience relies on the social and cultural background of the individual spectator. Though the case study notebooks are specific to my own cinematic experience as a PhD student undertaking a certain kind of research it stands as an example of how distracted spectatorship works throughout the cinematic experience. In stating how spectatorship should not be solely reliant on analytical film theory but should also take into account the spectator themselves, Stam goes on to discuss how other theorists have explored particular forms of viewing and what they do to make the spectator a part of the image, expanded on in the following:

Any contemporary analysis of the processes of spectatorship, furthermore, must deal not only with the fact of new venues (films seen in planes, in airports, bars etc) but also with the fact that new audiovisual technologies have generated not only a new cinema but also a new spectator. A new blockbuster cinema, made possible by huge budgets, sound innovations, and digital technologies, favoured a “sound and light show” cinema of sensation. What Laurent Julier calls “concert films” foster a fluid, euphorical montage of images and sounds reminiscent less of classical Hollywood than of video games, music video, and amusement park rides. Cinema of this kind becomes “immersive”, in Biocca’s expression; the spectator is “in” the image rather than confronted by it. Sensation predominates over narrative, and sound over image, while verisimilitude is no longer a goal; rather, it is the technology-dependent production of vertiginous, prosthetic delirium. The spectator is no longer the deluded master of the image but rather the inhabitant of the image (Stam, 2000: 317-318).

Alongside the advancement of technology and shifting condition of film viewing, theorists such as Stam begin to deliberate how spectators are moving away from being merely passive, as theorised by Metz, to interact with their own spectatorship. The spectator metaphorically becomes a part of the image rather than merely viewing it as sensations are emphasised which in turn make the spectator an active part of the spectatorial process. All the information which is sent through the screen to the spectator has to be interpreted in some way, each image brings to mind other images and all have a plethora of meanings that can be interpreted by different spectators in different ways.

It is because of this act of decoding, as identified by cultural theorist and sociologist Stuart Hall, that the theory of the passive spectator is untenable with regards to the cinematic experience. Hall theorised that, through the analysis of culture, connections can be made between the structures of society and their processes and the analysis of the more formal or symbolic structures, both are pivotal when it comes to analysing culture. He related his theory to television and argued how the “object” of production practices and structures in television is the production of a message: that is, a sign-vehicle, or rather sign-vehicles of a specific kind organised, like any other form of communication or language, through the operation of codes, within the syntagetic chain of discourse’ (Hall, 1973: 1-2). What Hall meant by this was that television is the product of a particular kind of message and was used as the form from which to put that message across to the spectator, the quotation below elaborates on this process:

The apparatus and structures of production issue, at a certain moment, in the form of a symbolic vehicle constituted within the rules of “language”. It is in this “phenomenal form” that the circulation of the “product” takes place. Of course, even the transmission of this symbolic vehicle requires its material substratum – video-tape, film, the transmitting and receiving apparatus, etc. It is also in this symbolic form that the reception of the “product”, and its distribution between different segments of the audience, takes place. Once accomplished, the translation of that message into societal structures must be made again for the circuit to be completed (Hall, 1973: 2)

The process described is a cyclical one in which a particular message is taken up, transmitted, received and then translated by the spectator. This process was dubbed by Hall as encoding and decoding as at a ‘certain point in this particular dialogue the broadcasting structure must yield an encoded message in the form of a meaningful discourse to the waiting spectator’ (1973: 3). Hall argued that ‘for anything to be done with the message which has been encoded it first needs to be decoded’ and it was ‘this set of de-coded meanings which “have an effect”, influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences’ (Hall, 1973: 3). It is only through the act of decoding that the message can have an impact, if it has not been decoded then it will not carry any meaning for the spectator. Hall relates this to specific codes surrounding the definition of genres in film, he uses the example of the Western film genre to demonstrate his point:

It means that a set of extremely tightly-coded “rules” exist whereby stories of a certain recognisable type, content and structure can be easily encoded within the

Western form. What is more, these “rules of encoding” were so diffused, so symmetrically shared as between producer and audience, that the “message” was likely to be decoded in a manner highly symmetrical to that in which it had been encoded. This reciprocity of codes is, indeed, precisely what is entailed in the notion of stylization or “conventionalization”, and the presence of each reciprocal codes is, of course, what defines or makes possible the existence of a genre (Hall, 1973: 6)

It is when the encoding and decoding are not in synchronisation with each other that a multitude of other interpretations can take place, this is where distracted spectatorship can be seen to work, to fill the gap where the decoding process has not been in line with the message at the encoding. This conveys the subjective nature of the cinematic experience as each spectator will decode the messages differently in relation to their own responses to what is shown on the screen. Even if the encoded message is decoded by the spectator in the “correct” way there is still room for the spectators own interpretation on what they are viewing. For example, Hall uses the Western which could show the spectator a landscape that is then decoded as a desolate and inhospitable environment. Hall expands on this with regards to the negotiated reading of films where the reader partly believes the code and broadly accepts the preferred reading but modifies it in a way which reflects their own position, experiences and interests. A theory of distracted spectatorship builds on this theory of spectatorship and adds how the spectator decodes the images in relation to their own subjective experiences and as such builds a self-reflexive account of their cinematic experiences. This is the central argument with the distracted spectator, how the decoding of messages is still taking place but is inherently connected to the spectators own subjective experiences. Hall does not disregard this aspect of spectatorship but only sees it as a part of the experience whereas I theorise distracted spectatorship as constituting the cinematic experience through the spectator’s subject experiences.

Within spectatorship theory there are opposing views of how to regard the spectator, as discussed above the variety of theories that discuss the passive spectator are not tenable when it comes to distracted spectatorship, especially in light of the theory of spectatorship as examined by Hall. Below will be a discussion on the active spectator and how the theories regarding it lend themselves more readily to be developed and incorporated into distracted spectatorship. Laura Mulvey establishes in her book, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, how a new kind of spectator is created as viewers exhibit more control over the films they consume through the consumption of videos and DVDs. These new

technologies enabled spectators to stop and pause what they are watching and, therefore, take control over their viewing experience as the spectator can ‘control its flow, to repeat and return to certain sequences while skipping over others’ (Mulvey, 2005: 165). Mulvey starts by explaining the concept of the punctum in Barthes’ work and expands on it to emphasise how this kind of spectator, who has more control over their viewing experience, is formed. Mulvey writes that the theory of the punctum relies on how a ‘detail, probably unnoticed by the photographer, suddenly captures the viewer’s attention and emotion. The detail is poignant precisely because its presence is a mark of the camera’s indifference, its inability to discriminate between its subject and the subject’s surrounding’ (Mulvey, 2005: 61). Using this example Mulvey shows how it is the indifference of the photographic image which gives the viewer space to interpret it and to see something within it, in this way they become active as they are not being explicitly told what the most poignant detail of the image is. According to Mulvey Barthes did not get the same appreciation out of films as he did from photographs as ‘the cinema’s relentless movement, reinforced by the masquerade and movement of fiction, could not offer the psychic engagement and emotion he derived from the still photograph’ (Mulvey, 2005: 66). This is a familiar argument as Benjamin makes a similar point in his essay on mechanical reproduction, discussed in the following section. A level of decoding is necessary when both viewing a photograph and watching a film, however, when presented with a constant stream of images it is necessary to be continually decoding what is on the screen in a way that does not happen when viewing a still image. When the decoding has taken place and something is revealed the audiences’ reaction is markedly different, it is ‘the gap between the unselfconscious “I see” and the self-consciousness of “*I see!*” The audience reacts as it might to gags or jokes, for which decoding is not only essential to the very process of understanding but also involves a similar moment of detachment, a moment, that is, of self-conscious deciphering’ (Mulvey, 2005: 149). It is the interaction between spectator and text which allows the active spectator to create this moment of deciphering; they see the moving images but also make connections that go beyond the text. This builds into the spectator having an increased level of control with their experience as they are able to skip, pause or rewind scenes. This ability to skip scenes or begin the film from a certain point reflects how the punctum works within a still image as it demonstrates how specific scenes have seized hold of the spectator’s attention. Aspects of the film have held the viewer’s attention more than others and as such they act like the punctum drawing the spectator back to the same point, giving the spectator power and control over their own experience. These concepts explored by Mulvey feed into the theory of distracted spectatorship by emphasising

that the spectator can be in charge of their own cinematic experience. Though spectators are not necessarily consciously in charge of the experience as cultural and social aspects impact on how the individual spectator changes their own experience through what they chose to view as important and what they dismiss as unimportant.

The theories above have focused on how the spectator is viewed in relation to the screen on which they are watching the film. The following theory demonstrates how the spectator is understood in relation to the way they interact with films as cross-referential texts. The spectator can be conceptualised in another way as, what psychoanalyst and semiotician Alain J. J. Cohen dubs, the 'hyper-spectator' (2001: 157). The hyper-spectator moves 'cross-referentially from film to film, from one director to another or from genre to genre, and into trans-national cinemas' (Cohen, 2001: 161) as if they were hyper-texts. This way of seeing the spectator allows for a lattice-work of film experiences to be accessed at the time of one's own choosing. The hyper-spectator, in a similar way to how spectators use hypertextuality, makes connections between different films to expand their knowledge, specifically with regards to the history of cinema and connecting particular iconic shots back to their original source. In some cases the connections are placed into the films deliberately making this theory of spectatorship the closest to the distracted spectator as it includes a level of research and interaction on behalf of the spectator. Film theorist Anthony Ferri explores how the concept of the hyper-spectator allows for a freeing of the spectator from traditional viewing contexts. The rise of the DVD, for example, works in much the same way as 'the computer [which] has allowed authors the ability to increase their efficiency of time and space' (Ferri, 2007: 64). Ferri goes on to argue how these 'ever-emerging visual and filmic technologies allow a viewer to experience something beyond th[e] core of viewing' of watching films in a cinema, for example '[v]irtual reality allows the audience member to have a sense of the experiential or sense of being in the story' (Ferri, 2007: 64-65).

Below are some examples of how this core viewing has expanded through films which have elements deliberately placed in them for spectators to discover for themselves. For example, in Pixar animations there is always the number A113 hidden somewhere within the film. This is a reference to the name of the room in which the Pixar team started animating before they became an independent company. Pixar films are animations and, therefore, the number is placed deliberately within the film and is not a contingent photographic detail. However, I argue that it still constitutes the potential for punctum as some spectators will be aware of what the number means but not all. Websites are dedicated to finding these references and posting the stills from the films online so that the spectator

can impart their commitment to particular franchises (<http://pixar.wikia.com/A113>). Another example of hyper-spectatorship is in the Marvel universe. With the release of *Iron Man* (Jon Favreau, 2008) Marvel set up a series of films which not only encourage but also demand the attention of a hyper-spectator. Following swiftly on from *Iron Man* were *The Incredible Hulk* (Louis Leterrier, 2008), *Iron Man 2* (Jon Favreau, 2010), *Thor* (Kenneth Branagh, 2011) and *Captain America: The First Avenger* (Joe Johnston, 2011). Though each of these films stood alone and can be watched in isolation they were all leading up to the release of *The Avengers Assemble* (Joss Whedon) in 2012. Each film has references to the other within it and in *The Avengers Assemble* all the characters are pulled together into one film, a different kind of spectatorship comes from knowing and understanding the references and jokes which are present within the individual films and the ensemble film. During the course of writing the case study this came to the fore when looking at comments underneath the YouTube trailer for the final instalment in *The Hunger Games* series. What many of the comments show is how one needs to be taking part in a particular kind of fan spectatorship in order to understand the references from other fans. There needs to be a certain familiarity with the subject and as such the fan spectator will have an increased knowledge regarding any references and in jokes which take place. This also allows new narratives to be constructed as they are built upon the base of the original but stem off of it in a multitude of directions. In this way the spectator with a 'deep knowledge of cinema, can reconfigure both the films themselves and filmic fragments into new and novel forms of both cinema and spectatorship, making use of the vastly expanded access to films arrived at through modern communications equipment and media. The hyper-spectator is, at least potentially, the [...] creator of his or her hyper-cinematic experience' (Cohen, 2001: 157). This builds on the concepts of participatory experience, which will be outlined in Chapter Three, as it allows the spectator to construct their own cinematic experience and in doing so are participating in a specific culture which has its own rules and guidelines. Cohen states it is the spectator who constructs their own cinematic experience by building their deep knowledge of cinema. Construction is meant in terms of building a subjective experience which is culturally and socially reliant on the individual spectator's way of viewing the films. The experience is the spectator's own as it relies upon the social, historical and cultural facets which the spectator brings to the experience. The concept of the hyper-spectator still validates the act of watching films to analysing them, what brings it closer to distracted spectatorship is the freedom the hyper-spectator has to move from one cultural object to another. These aspects promote the creation of the hyper-spectator and give spectators a space to actively research into specific films. The

way my thesis builds on these aspects of spectatorship is to acknowledge that the spectator can be just as active outside of the cinema. As the case study notebooks show, a spectator can be active by visiting websites, researching filming locations and discovering details about the actors. These are just some of the examples presented through my own cinematic experience; the wider issue is about recognising that the cinematic experience extends outwards and away from the confines of the cinema screen and in doing so how it makes the multiple identities of the spectator visible.

This recognition of the spectator as an active part with regards to film viewing is reflected by Jacques Rancière who wrote in 2009 about the emancipated spectator. His work, which builds on that of Stuart Hall, can be used to establish spectators as an active participant of the viewing experience. In the context of this thesis' argument his work can be used to unpack the theory of the distracted spectator and how it directly relates to current film theory:

What makes it possible to pronounce the spectator seated in her place inactive, if not the previously posited radical opposition between the active and the passive? Why identify gaze and passivity, unless on the presupposition that to view means to take pleasure in images and appearances while ignoring the truth behind the image and the reality outside the theatre? Why assimilate listening to passivity, unless through the prejudice that speech is the opposite of action? These oppositions – viewing/knowing, appearance/reality, activity/passivity – are quite different from logical oppositions between clearly defined terms (Rancière, 2009: 12).

It is these distinctions which enable Rancière to interrogate the passive/active binary when it comes to the spectator and their viewing experience. He specifically explains how it is necessary to challenge the opposition between acting and viewing and to understand that these terms are themselves structured according to language of subjection and domination. This is taken a step further when Rancière speaks of the viewer and how the emancipation of the spectator begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms the positions of active and passive spectatorship. The spectator acts like a pupil or a scholar as they observe, select, compare and interpret what they view on screen. They are thus both distant spectators and active interpreters of the spectacle offered to them. It is within this power to interpret what they are presented with that the emancipation of the spectator lies. Rancière is primarily critically analysing the dominant concepts of spectatorship. It is about recognising that the spectator cannot be branded as passive as there is a level of activity which takes place with regards to the spectator and their viewing. What this thesis demonstrates is how distracted spectatorship is a theory of emancipated

spectatorship but with regards to every viewer and one which takes place automatically and can require minimal input from the spectator. The decoding which occurs with each moment of distraction takes place automatically and requires an actively engaged spectator. Though it adds another dimension to the cinematic experience it is not purely a case of acting like a pupil or a scholar; all spectators view images through the filter of distracted spectatorship. As explored above with the example of the Marvel films franchise films are a particularly good example to discuss distracted spectatorship as they promote a certain amount of research based viewing, especially if the spectator is viewing the material as a fan, as discussed in Chapter Three. This makes franchise films a strong illustrative example as they lend themselves to research which in turn makes distractions more readily available. Franchise films also build in redundancy to engage with viewers who have not done the research and who are approaching the franchise for the first time. This encourages distracted spectatorship for all spectators and not solely fan spectators. The following section will build on theories of distraction in order to see how they stem from the theories of spectatorship discussed here.

Section Two

Defining Distraction

This section will focus on classical cultural theory through the work of philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin, sociologist, cultural critic and film theorist Siegfried Kracauer and theorist Roland Barthes and his work on photography. Their work is important for its influence on how distraction is theorised and understood in relation to cinema. In order to understand how distraction can be appropriated regarding the cinematic experience today it first needs to be viewed in terms of how it has been theorised and used previously. Doing this work will allow for a clear understanding of the term as well as opening up discussions of how distraction can be used in relation to reading texts more generally, how it impacts the spectator's cinematic experience and what identities it reveals regarding an individual spectator. Kracauer and Benjamin were principally concerned with questions of politics and culture which needs to be acknowledged as an aspect of their arguments. For Benjamin distraction was directly related to the effects of capitalism on the growing leisure classes. Humanity was becoming a spectacle or an object to itself which was alienating, reactionary and a reflection of fascism. Film as a medium stands as an example of this as it succeeds in distracting a large number of the population at the same time. In Benjamin's work he discusses how distraction relates to the confusion and manipulation of the masses by helping

them cope with the overwhelming and overburdening stimuli faced by industrial civilisations. He exemplifies this in his arguments, detailed below, by indicating how art is coming to resemble economic production. Both Kracauer and Benjamin view film as an intensification of sensational leisure and distraction as a manifestation of the anarchy of nature. Where the theorists share some views on distraction, for example both see cinema as a distraction from the real world, Kracauer places more emphasis on the elements of distraction. Kracauer theorised distraction as an element that, rather than hindering the message of the film through effects, should instead depict the disintegration of society rather than hiding it. Kracauer is critical of capitalism and sees distraction on similar terms with propaganda, discussed further below. Though, as mentioned above, for both theorists distraction through film viewing offered a release from the dehumanisation of an industrial society. Kracauer's views on capitalism are similar to Benjamin's as he argues how, beneath the capitalist ideology, film production both emulates society and reproduces its hierarchy of domination. Benjamin and Kracauer perceived cinema as a distraction from the real world, but, whereas Kracauer saw film as a way to expose the characteristics of modern life by emphasising the fragmentation of society through the fragmented images presented on screen, Benjamin understood the ideological need for the masses to be kept distracted so that they could not see through the domination of society. The three theorists discussed in this section, though their approach to distraction differs, all use politics as a basis for their arguments. Roland Barthes' theory of the punctum can be interpreted as political as it seeks to rupture and confront the established structures of viewing. He examines how the studium is the realm of cultural information, historical scenes and political testimony, whereas the punctum is political as it is disrupting those elements. In order to theorise distraction it needs to be understood as the mechanism of thought and interaction with text and the world. The theorists mentioned above examine distraction as a way of viewing in a particular way. For Benjamin film audiences watch films to be distracted from their day-to-day lives, for Kracauer distraction draws the audience's attention to certain parts of the film, making it akin to propaganda, and for Barthes the punctum (which I interpret as a form of distraction) breaks the traditional structures of viewing images. My thesis uses the term distraction to understand how, in the process of being distracted from the main object that is being viewed (in this case a film) multiple identities are brought to the fore which aid in understanding spectatorship and the individual's cinematic experience more generally. Through this research I question how the spectator makes sense of texts and argue that distraction is a key mechanism in the cinematic experience.

Though I am using non-scientific methods in my research it is important here to acknowledge other ways in which distraction can be analysed. The growing body of literature studying eye-tracking, which builds on cognitive film theory mentioned in the introduction, traces how we make three to five eye movements per second. These movements are crucial in helping us deal with the vast amount of information we encounter in our everyday lives. Theorists such as Giorgio Biancorosso state that this technique offers ‘exceptionally precise reconstruction of eye movements’ and it offers a new way of examining ‘the relationship between saccades and moments of fixation’ (2016: 202). The research tool is growing in popularity and is used by ‘analysts, sports scientists, cognitive psychologists, reading researchers, psycholinguists, neurophysiologists, electrical engineers’ all of which ‘have a vested interest in eye tracking for different reasons’ (Holmqvist, Nyström, Andersson, Dewhurst, Jarodzka and van de Weijer, 2011: xii). Andrew Duchowski goes into detail regarding how eye-tracking can be used in film theory:

First-order editing errors refer either to small displacements of the camera position or to small changes of the image size, disturbing the perception of apparent movement and leading to the impression of jumping. Second-order editing errors follow from a reversal of the camera position, leading to a change of the left-right position of the main actors (or objects) and a complete change of the background. With third-order editing errors, the linear sequence of actions in the narrative story is not obeyed. Experiment shows that there is an increase of eye movements from 200 to 400 ms following both second- and third- order editing errors. Such an increase is not obtained after a first-order editing error, suggesting that the increase of eye movements after second- and third-order editing errors is due to postperceptual cognitive effects (Duchowski, 2017: 264)

As can be seen from this quote eye-tracking provides a detailed account of where and when the spectator has been distracted during the course of film viewing. The reason this research will not be used throughout the thesis is that, though it provides a base from which to understand distraction and where it stems from in the film viewing process, it does not acknowledge how distraction can be analysed beyond the immediate viewing experience.

As I argued in the introduction, following Crary, the potential for unintended distraction is intensified in post-modernity due to the greater number of new technologies that can cause distraction, such as photography, film, radio and, later on, television and then the internet. Miriam Hansen in her book *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* outlines how Benjamin’s work is closely linked to the idea of modernity as the ‘[q]uestions of modernity, the aesthetic, and technological reproduction are nowhere as tightly entwined as in the artwork essay’ (Hansen, 2012: 76).

Benjamin considered how modernity was a multifaceted phenomenon that consisted of a number of individual components that worked together to make the state more powerful. This was done by the working classes becoming more independent on leisure activities, which in turn made consumer goods a more vital part of the economy which led to mass consumerism. In a similar way Hansen argues how ‘Kracauer understood the cinema as a symptomatic element within a larger heuristic framework aimed at understanding modernity and its developmental tendencies’ (Hansen, 2012: 3). Through his work on distraction Kracauer attempted to ‘understand contemporary cultural phenomena in relation to the social and economic conditions that gave rise to them and to which they were thought to respond’ (Hansen, 2012: 3). In order to discuss the nature of distraction we first need to understand how it is shaped through the use of technology. As discussed previously, Crary showed how distraction is a mode of attention that is intrinsically bound up with modernity.

Modernity is a term that illustrates certain aspects of social change, such as technological advancements, defined by Raymond Williams as ‘a kind of alteration that needed to be justified’ (2015: 156). In their 1995 book *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, film theorists Leo Charney and Vanessa Schwartz outline the relationship between the emergence of film and the broader culture of modernity. This work associates the popularity of cinema in the late nineteenth century to emerging cultural phenomena such as window-shopping, mail-order catalogues and wax museums. Their argument illustrates how distraction, in relation to modernity, as a concept can be understood across a wide array of different media:

“Modernity”, as an expression of changes in so-called subjective experience or as a shorthand for broad social, economic, and cultural transformations, has been familiarly grasped through the story of a few talismanic innovations: the telegraph and telephone, railroad and automobile, photograph and cinema. Of these emblems of modernity, none has both epitomized and transcended the period of its initial emergence more successfully than the cinema (Charney and Schwartz, 1995: 1)

The quotation examines that numerous forms of media and technology can be associated with modernity. However, cinema is the one that most effectively exemplifies the concepts of distraction that are manifested through modernity. The below quotation establishes six elements that emerge as central to both the cultural history of modernity and also to modernity’s relation to cinema:

the rise of metropolitan urban culture leading to new forms of entertainment and leisure activity; the corresponding centrality of the body as the site of vision, attention and stimulation; the recognition of a mass public, crowd, or audience that subordination individual response to collectivity; the impulse to define, fix and represent isolated moments in the face of modernity's distractions and sensations, an urge that led through Impressionism and photography to cinema the increased blurring of the line between reality and its representations; and the surge in commercial culture and consumer desire that both fuelled and followed new forms of diversion (Charney and Schwartz, 1995: 3)

In this thesis, I aim to understand distraction more comprehensively by focusing on *The Hunger Games* franchise, and expanding the concepts that are associated with it. The case study notebooks, discussed further in Chapter Three, are a method of tracing the distractions associated with the film to examine how the cinematic experience is not confined to being analysed in the cinema itself. In order to do this I trace the concept of distraction back to film theory in the 1920s and 30s through readings of two of the most important theories of distraction.

In tracing theories of distraction back to the early 1900s, then, it is possible to understand how distraction is an effect of technological change. Film theorist Ben Singer's work on early sensational cinema uncovers a fundamentally modern cultural expression, one which reflects transformations in the sensory environment due to rapid urbanisation as well as illustrating the exploitation of the thrill in popular amusement:

Modernity implied a phenomenal world – a specifically urban one – that was markedly quicker, more chaotic, fragmented, and disorientating than in previous phases of human culture. Amid the unprecedented turbulence of the big city's traffic, noise, billboards, street signs, jostling crowds, window displays, and advertisements, the individual faced a new intensity of sensory stimulation. The metropolis subjected the individual to a barrage of impressions, shocks, and jolts. The tempo of life also became more frenzied, sped up by new forms of rapid transportation, the pressing schedules of modern capitalism, and the ever-accelerating pace of the assembly line (Singer, 1995: 72-73)

Singer emphasises the bombardment of sensation that accompanies modernity and accounts for distraction within the new forms of media that supplement it. The difficulty in describing distraction is that it exists neither as a form nor as an object of study for Film Studies: it is a non-linguistic immediate experience that is fundamental to both affect and emotion. I argue this because I define distraction as an emotional and affective experience, as outlined in chapter one, which will be expanded on below through Barthes' concept of the punctum.

According to cultural critic and film theorist Siegfried Kracauer, one component of cinematic distraction is the production of intentionally distracting environments. Throughout the course of his work, Kracauer explored the genealogy of film theory and cultural studies. Kracauer explored the distinctive qualities of the cinematic medium and provided a framework for appreciating the significance of the theory of film analysis (1960/1997). As well as this, his work took up central themes of modernity such as isolation, and explored a variety of topics in relation to alienation and urban culture (1963/1995). An examination of Kracauer's 1926 essay, 'Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces', illustrates how the most revelatory facets of modern life and distraction lie on the surface and argue that cinemas themselves, rather than films, were the main source of distraction. As he argues,

The large picture houses in Berlin are palaces of distraction; to call them *movie theatres* (*Kinos*) would be disrespectful. [...] Elegant *surface splendour* is the hallmark of these mass theatres. Like hotel lobbies they are shrines to the cultivation of pleasure, their glamour aiming at edification (Kracauer, 1926: 91)

Kracauer draws a parallel between the sumptuous surroundings of the cinema interior and the luxury of hotels of the time. He describes how lights and music heightened the level of distraction as '[s]potlights shower their beams into the auditorium, sprinkling across festive drapes or rippling through colourful growth-like glass fixtures' (Kracauer, 1926: 92). Kracauer states that 'finally the white surface descends and the events of the three-dimensional stage imperceptibly blend into two-dimensional illusions' which has the effect of raising 'distraction to the level of culture; they are aimed at the masses' (1926: 92). In his 1929 work, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*, Kracauer defined distraction as a form of diversion: 'society by no means drives the system of its own life to the decisive point, but on the contrary avoids decision and prefers the charms of life to its reality. Society too is dependent upon diversions' (Kracauer, 1929/1998: 89). The sumptuous surroundings that Kracauer describes with regards to cinema architecture are there to actively encourage a certain level of distraction from what is on the screen. The interior design of cinema, he argues, serves one purpose: to 'rivet the audience's attention to the peripheral so that they will not sink into the abyss' (Kracauer, 1926: 94). 'The stimulations of the senses', he argues, 'succeed each other with such rapidity that there is no room left for even the slightest contemplation to squeeze in between them' (Kracauer, 1926: 94). Contemplation is a danger for Kracauer as it leads to, according to sociologist Graeme Gilloch, 'the complete collapse and obsolescence of traditional cultural values and concepts,

of a fundamental evacuation of meaning in urban life' (Gilloch, 2015: 84). Using distraction to avoid contemplation is a way to avoid this abyss which causes 'a forlorn preoccupation with all that is left: externality and surface' (Gilloch, 2015: 84). What is at stake here is, as outlined by Schlüpmann and Levin, an attempt to 'rescue the receptivity which is the lifeblood of any art. Instead of focusing on the genius of the artist which provides the measure for the artwork according to classical aesthetics, Kracauer defends the masses' addiction to distraction produced by modern working conditions' (1987: 109). Kracauer writes as if the architect who constructed these buildings did not want the audience getting lost in the multitude of emotions and images on the screen, and so to prevent this provided as much visual stimulation as possible to distract from the moving images. Kracauer goes on to examine the politics of distraction: he argues that distraction has the potential to uncover the failings of society by drawing the audiences' attention to these same failings: 'Distraction [...] is festooned with drapes and forced back into a unity that no longer exists' (Kracauer, 1926: 95). Kracauer sees the movies, specifically in Germany, as part of a complicated cultural dynamic that makes a profit by either invoking the seemingly higher art of theatre or by removing the audience from the real world around them. The architecture of cinemas brings the audience out of the real and places the emphasis on the external environment surrounding them. However, he argues that because distraction is cultivated in the guise of a luxurious theatre, instead of focusing on the failings of society the audience marvel at the extravagance surrounding them. Kracauer argues that 'the movie theatres are faced with more urgent tasks than refining applied art' as 'they should free their offerings of all trappings that deprive film of its rights and must aim radically towards a kind of distraction which exposes disintegration instead of masking it' (Kracauer, 1926: 96), distraction draws your attention to something else and in doing so films provide a kind of distraction that exposes societies social inequalities. In doing this work Kracauer underlines how 'film is of interest not as a technological or artistic medium but in terms of its significance for the relationship of human beings to reality' (Schlüpmann and Levin, 1987: 110). Kracauer is acknowledging that films and their exhibition spaces are designed to minimise distraction not to maximise it, as such distraction is a potential but unrealised possibility of film exhibition. Kracauer is stating how though films appear to be distracting from the disintegration of society they do in fact have the power to expose it, but this will not be achieved while films are shown in buildings which allude back to opera and theatre with regards to their opulent surroundings. The kind of distracted experience that Kracauer criticises is one of escape which is centred in the surrounding environment rather than the film itself. Kracauer is concerned with a historically

specific form of spectatorship, perception and experience as well as with a new form of social behaviour that emerges as a result of a particular cinematic environment. Distraction, as understood by Kracauer, is a form of attention that has little to do with concentration or contemplation as it does not remain focused but rather moves from one sensation to the next. This understanding of distraction is reflected in Walter Benjamin's work through his discussions of art and architecture in relation to spectatorship and distraction.

Cultural critic Walter Benjamin wrote on a broad range of subjects including, but not limited to, essays on Charles Baudelaire and the nature of modernity as well as questioning how art can survive in tumultuous times (2003). His final, unfinished work, *The Arcades Project* (1999), focused on the commodification of things and how the process can be located in the shift to the modern age. Examining 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936) opens up a space for understanding how the age of mass media means that audiences can listen or see a work of art repeatedly, and what the social and political implications of this are. Benjamin's writings on film have been influential for their theses of the transformation of the concept of art by its technical reproducibility and the new possibilities for collective experience this contains. In the essay Benjamin discusses the concept of authenticity, particularly with regards to its application in the process of reproduction: 'Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be' (1936/2008: 3). He argues that the original work stands as independent from the copy and it is through the act of reproducing the original that something is taken from it. Benjamin introduces the idea of aura into his work to describe the aspect which the original has that the copy lacks. He argues that with regards to cultural objects when 'confronted with its uniqueness, that is, its aura' (Benjamin, 1936/2008: 12). Benjamin explains this using the example of film and stage actors where the film actor, through the replicating nature of film production forgoes his aura for 'aura is tied to his presence; there can be no replica of it. The aura which, on the stage, emanates from Macbeth, cannot be separated for the spectators from that of the actor' (1936/2008: 14). Expanding on these ideas in his essay Benjamin also discusses changes in societal values over time, 'the manner in which human sense perception is organised, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well' (1936/2008: 5). Benjamin is stating here that human perception is shaped by society and goes on to describe shifts in taste and style in art history and how this interacts with his concept of aura. This discussion expands into how art is a means of distraction, but the distraction is dependent on the kind of art that is being viewed:

‘Before a painting of Arp’s or a poem by August Stramm it is impossible to take time for contemplation and evaluation as one would before a canvas of Derain’s or a poem by Rilke’ (1936/2008: 17). Here, Benjamin draws attention to certain art works and poems which actively encourage distraction by forcing the viewer away from prolonged contemplation to a briefer interaction with the cultural object in question; the artists Benjamin discusses did this by responding to a culture in which auratic uniqueness can no longer be imagined or aspired to. Benjamin pinpoints this change in interaction between spectators and images as being largely to do with the popularity and mass appeal of films. He argues that the ‘greatly increased mass of participants has produced a change in the mode of participation’ and the act of watching a film is not the same as that of viewing a painting or reading a poem because ‘the masses seek distraction whereas art demands concentration from the spectator’ (1936/2008: 18). Benjamin explores this change as connected with the different ways in which art is typically viewed and the way film is presented. He draws a parallel between the way films are created to the ways painters create and in this comparison underlines their differences:

There is a tremendous difference between the pictures they obtain. That of the painter is a total one, that of the cameraman consists of multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law. Thus, for contemporary man the representation of reality by the film is incomparably more significant than that of the painter, since it offers, precisely because of the thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment, an aspect of reality which is free of all equipment. And that is what one is entitled to ask from a work of art (Benjamin, 1936/2008: 14)

As well as their differing modes of creation, Benjamin explores how the different media are received by the viewing public. He states that a ‘painting has always had an excellent chance to be viewed by one person or by a few’ a large crowd viewing a single painting ‘is an early symptom of the crisis of painting, a crisis which was by no means occasioned exclusively by photography but rather in a relatively independent manner by the appeal of art works to the masses’ (Benjamin, 1936/2008: 14). Art is to be looked at and contemplated in small groups, film too is made to be looked at but Benjamin’s implication is that film encourages a more distracted level of concentration from the spectator as well as encouraging larger crowds. Benjamin also approaches the question of whether or not distraction could be a platform from which to analyse films. In order to unpack the question he expands his argument to include architecture and how parallels can be drawn between the reception of buildings and that of films: ‘Architecture has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of

which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction' (1936/2008: 18). Benjamin argues that '[d]istracted and concentration form polar opposites' (1936/2008: 18); using architecture as the example Benjamin outlines how the appreciation of architecture has become a habit, something which people do not actively participate in during their day-to-day lives. Though not a specific phenomenon of modernity, people have become used to seeing buildings all around them so the architecture is simply not noticed anymore: 'As regards architecture, habit determines to a large extent even optical reception. The latter, too, occurs much less through rapt attention than by noticing the object in incidental fashion' (1936/2008: 18). This is connected to the concept of distraction as Benjamin argues how 'the ability to master certain tasks in a state of distraction proves that their solution has become a matter of habit' (1936/2008: 18). Here Benjamin is making an important point about the political function of art where the transformations of art are an effect of changes in the economic structures of society. The movement within art from contemplation to distraction creates changes in how people sense and perceive the world around them. This is then emphasised through the consumption of films while in the cinema because the constant viewing of images naturally leads to a state of distraction in the spectator:

Reception in a state of distraction, which is increasing noticeably in all fields of art and is symptomatic of profound changes in apperception, finds in the film its true means of exercise. [...] The public is an examiner, but an absent-minded one (1936/2008: 19)

Distraction for Benjamin is outlined as the triumph of habit: actions are repeated often enough and cultural objects, such as films, are viewed regularly so that the spectator is able to focus on them absent-mindedly, with some part of them never truly focussing on what is being viewed.

The arguments of Kracauer and Benjamin illustrate how distraction can stem from several different sources; despite this, both theorists explore the reactionary nature of distraction. As mentioned above Kracauer examines film as a way to expose certain characteristics of modern life and Benjamin explores the ideological need for the masses to be kept in a state of distraction so that they do not see the failures within society. In political terms literary theorist and semiotician Roland Barthes' work can be read in conjunction with Benjamin's and Kracauer's to understand distraction as a space for transformation. All three theorists discuss distraction, though in different ways, and all three in their discussions are connected to film theory. Barthes' ideas explore a range of fields and contribute to the

development of structuralism, semiotics, social theory and post-structuralism. Barthes' earlier work, *Mythologies* (1957) and *S/Z* (1974), was focused on the concept of codification and how these codes, or myths, must be carefully deciphered in order to uncover the fabrication of consumer society. In these works it is possible to understand how Barthes indicates that the reader is an active producer of the interpretations that lie in the text rather than a passive consumer of them. His later works, *Image, Music, Text* (1977) and *The Pleasure of the Text* (1976), discuss the structural analysis of narrative and the semiotics of photography and film as well as asking how we enjoy texts and where exactly pleasure in reading comes from. The work I draw from is *Camera Lucida* (1980) in which Barthes presents photography as being outside the codes of language and culture as it acts on the body as much as on the mind. In doing so Barthes moved towards a purely affect driven approach when it came to viewing images. This is made clear as his focus is now on the body of the viewer rather than the interpretation of signs within the image. This shift took place in his final work, *Camera Lucida* (Barthes, 1980), where Barthes uses photographs as the basis for his research into affect and cultural objects. I will outline the ideas that Barthes put forward in *The Pleasure of the Text* (Barthes, 1976) and *The Rustle of Language* (1975) as they lay the foundation for looking at Barthes' later work on photography. These arguments lead into his theory of the punctum, where attention can be caught by a single characteristic which prompts further recollections for the viewer, which is integral to the concept of distracted spectatorship and how it is used throughout the thesis. The basis for the punctum, and my basis for distracted spectatorship, is first developed in Barthes' work on how to approach and analyse texts.

In order to understand how Barthes viewed certain texts it is first necessary to begin by defining what he meant when using the word 'text' to describe the written word. Rather than confining himself to simply meaning the written word in front of him Barthes approaches the word "text" from a different point of view:

[W]ith the logic of reason (which makes this story readable) mingles a logic of the symbol. This latter logic is not deductive but associative: it associates with the material text (with each of its sentences) *other* ideas, *other* images, *other* significations. "The text, only the text", we are told, but "only the text" does not exist: there is *immediately* in this tale, this novel, this poem I am reading, a supplement of meaning for which neither dictionary nor grammar can account (Barthes, 1975: 30-31)

Here Barthes divides what he means by the text, there is the text that is the literal words we are reading and then there is the text that is the meaning behind these words. This second

form of text relies on the reader to decode it as it allows them to call to mind other ideas, images and associations. This definition is a good starting point from which to understand distraction as it stems from Barthes' work on semiology, and that of other writers, and introduces ideas of decoding which was discussed previously. Barthes expands on this by arguing that reading a text does not mean you have to be 'necessarily *captivated* by the text' reading a text can be 'an act that is slight, complex, tenuous, almost scatterbrained: a sudden movement of the head like a bird who understands nothing of what we hear, who hears what we do not understand' (Barthes, 1976: 24-25). Though Barthes does not use the term distraction, here or in his discussion of the punctum below, this is how I interpret what he means regarding how texts can be read or how images can be viewed. It is described in almost fragile terms, as if it is a thought at the back of the mind which cannot be examined directly or it will vanish. It is this sense of being aware of the text, or cultural object, whilst at the same time having the ability to focus on something else that I will draw on throughout the thesis. Barthes' work is important, then, as it highlights the difficulty in explaining a concept that relies on immediate experience. As mentioned in the previous chapter the terms experience and cinematic are slippery in their usage as they hold within them a number of possible meanings. The same can be said of distraction but here the complication is twofold. There is the difficulty in defining the term due to its complex nature but then there is also the difficulty in discussing its practical applications once it has been defined. Discussing distraction brings with it discussions of the immediate experience and, as explored in the introduction; there is a paradox when writing about the immediate experience as it is always explored in hindsight. Similarly writing about distraction is an act of distraction itself as it creates multiple possible layers of analysis through the act of writing, this will be explored throughout the thesis.

The thesis argues that a state of distraction is unavoidable when it comes to the cinematic experience and does not just come in the form of pleasure but a multitude of other emotions that need to be acknowledged in their impact on the cinematic experience. As I have suggested, the cinematic experience moves and changes, sometimes extending years after the film itself has been viewed. This is due to the moments of punctum that make the spectator branch off from the main experience and be prompted into recollection of something else, expanded on in Chapter Three. The way the experience can be extended is due to the spectator being prompted to recall the film and the experience associated with it after the fact. In this way the cinematic experience can extend for years after the film has been viewed if the spectator is prompted to remember it and the experience associated with it.

The cinematic experience can be understood, in relation to a specific film, as a process of recollection for the spectator, which in turn is a form of distraction. In order to understand how this works, I draw on how Barthes' concept of the punctum as an element which captures the viewer's interest: something that is not sought out by the viewer, but is instead an aspect which affects the viewer in a particular way:

The second element will break (or punctuate) the *studium*. This time it is not I who seek it out (as I invest the field of the *studium* with my sovereign consciousness), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me. A Latin word exists to designate this wound, this prick, this mark made by a pointed instrument: the word suits me all the better in that it also refers to the notion of punctuation, and because the photographs I am speaking of are in effect punctuated, sometimes even speckled with these sensitive points; precisely, these marks, these wounds are so many *points* (Barthes, 1980: 26-27)

Barthes illustrates how the punctum rises up from a photograph in such a way that it allows the viewer to think about it in more detail, particularly with regards to what it means to them and why. I discuss the cinematic experience in the same terms, as being speckled with these moments of punctum, or distraction, which build together to create the spectator's overall cinematic experience. Barthes discusses how viewing a photograph to draw the punctum out of it is a swift process and one which says as much about the viewer as it does about the image: 'Very often the *Punctum* is a "detail", i.e., a partial object. Hence, to give examples of *punctum* is, in a certain fashion, to *give myself up*' (Barthes, 1980: 43). Given the personal nature of the punctum in order to discuss its effects on the viewer it is necessary to divulge private reflections to facilitate an in-depth examination of the punctum for that particular individual. This is why using a self-reflexive approach to the case study is necessary with regards to the cinematic experience and distracted spectatorship. To analyse the cinematic experience in these terms requires a certain amount of willingness to give oneself up through the process of writing of these moments of distraction and how they build together for the individual. It is when Barthes discusses photographs in terms of the punctum that they hold that his theory places the viewer to the fore of the analysis, this is because the image animates the viewer and the viewer animates it through the puncta that are discovered. Barthes does not speak of animation in terms of movement, but is instead speaking of how a person brings photographs to life through the punctum:

In this glum desert, suddenly a specific photograph reaches me; it animates me, and I animate it. So that is how I must name the attraction which makes it exist:

an *animation*. The photograph itself is in no way animated (I do not believe in “lifelike” photographs), but it animates me: this is what creates every adventure (Barthes, 1980: 20)

My thesis understands cinematic experiences in the same way as Barthes outlines the photograph in this quotation, as each individual spectator’s own ‘adventure’ into that particular film. The spectator breathes life into the photograph in a way that could potentially be different from another spectator’s experience. This approach is similar to my argument regarding the cinematic experience in that distraction through the experience makes visible the multiple identities that are held within a single spectator. These identities are potentially different from spectator to spectator, hence the similarity with Barthes’ “adventure”. The quality that Barthes stated was essential in the analysis of photography is one in which he also argued was lacking from film viewing: ‘in front of the screen, I am not free to shut my eyes; otherwise, opening them again, I would not discover the same image; I am constrained to a continuous voracity; a host of other qualities, but not *pensiveness*’ (Barthes, 1980: 55). In using Barthes’ work to analyse films the issue of movement needs to be discussed as Barthes argues that it is the quality of movement which does not allow space for the punctum to take shape: ‘in the Photograph, something *has posed* in front of the tiny hole and has remained there forever (that is my feeling); but in cinema, something *has passed* in front of this same tiny hole: the pose is swept away and denied by the continuous series of images’ (Barthes, 2000: 78). The issue Barthes has with cinema in relation to the punctum is that the continual series of moving images does not provide an adequate space for reflection on what is being viewed.

Film theorist Raymond Bellour argues how this is not completely true, he outlines how ‘[w]ith all the great filmmakers of fiction cinema, there have always been examples of breaks during which filmic fascination seems to turn against itself in order to produce (more or less visible) effects of contemplation and thought’ (Bellour, 2012: 83-84). The example he uses is that of the freeze-frame which he argues ‘does in fact create the conditions of another time: it invents, right when the work is carried out, the conditions of reading’ (Bellour, 2012: 83-84), which is what Barthes claims only the photograph can do effectively. Bellour goes on to explore the terms Barthes uses in relation to photography and how, in using terms such as punctum and studium, Barthes creates a parallel between photography and cinema:

But what, in fact, do all these words do to the photograph they accompany? They endow them with a point of view (dividing itself from the one shown in the photograph); they give indications (biographical, aesthetic, moral etc) that the

photograph often does not; they organize sequences, relationships, between the photographs; they impart movement to them, with a sort of double depth field; they temporalise them [...] In a word, they screenwrite them. I almost want to write: they bring them to life (Bellour, 2012: 83)

Social theorist Philip Watts takes up this argument outlined by Bellour and states that Barthes' theory regarding the punctum 'adds off-screen action to the still', therefore 'at the very moment he seems to be claiming that cinema spectatorship is necessarily unthinking, he also arrives at the opposite conclusion: in giving a "cinematic" quality to the still photograph, he continues to reflect upon the imaginary potential of the cinematographic image' (Watts and Dudley, 2016: 47). Building on these arguments that claim that still photographs can possess a cinematic quality several theorists have examined how the punctum can be applied to analysing films. Film theorist William Brown explores the punctum in relation to home videos and silent cinema in terms of the sense of loss and the remembrance of the dead that they both produce (2016: 115). In doing this the punctum 'points to the moments when a film evades our linguistic capacities, suggesting an engagement with film that is less intellectual and more physical' (Brown, 2016: 115). Brown finds it a productive term to apply to film as he 'can write at length about what a film supposedly means, yet say nothing of that moment when the actor half-smiles and turns away, and which is the most memorable and hard-to-explain moment of my actual viewing experience' (Brown, 2016: 116). Film scholar Murray Pomerance outlines how analysing the punctum in terms of film studies 'is already a self-identification, both striking out at us and forcing us to admit something of ourselves' (2005: 111). He argues how 'punctum of a film is some variously defined element – a scene, a moment, a word, a prop, a character' and if a 'photograph could be speckled with puncta and surely a film can be, too' (Pomerance, 2005: 111). Pomerance explores some ways in which the punctum can be used to discuss film:

A punctum in John Ford's *Stagecoach* is Andy Devine's hysterical voice. His is a character nether masculine nor feminine, but both; midway between what John Wayne represents and what Claire Trevor does [...] It is a mistake to think of Barthes's punctum as a solitary item, a flaw or deflection, a misalignment or exaggeration for effect, since in the end it is not by accident that it resides in the image. Similarly, in cinema, where one finds an element that stands out from the perceptual range of the film itself – I would prefer to think of such a thing as a point of view – one can have a clue to a reinterpretation of the entire work, a reinterpretation, at least, insofar as it requires an interpretation that does not exclude it as a purposeless decoration (Pomerance, 2005: 111)

My thesis argues that the punctum can be discussed in relation to cinema because it allows a multitude of puncta to be uncovered through the cinematic experience, as Pomerance outlines above. Roger Cardinal is another critic who has written about the punctum in relation to film and argues that ‘identification of these privileged moments is a subjective, even “self-reflexive” act’ (Keathley, 2005: 31). In his essay ‘Pausing over Peripheral Detail’ (1986) Cardinal explains how ‘[w]hat I notice, or elect to notice, is necessarily a function of my sensibility, so much so that a list of my favourite details will equate to an oblique mirror-image of myself, becoming more noticeably idiosyncratic the longer it extends’ (cited in Keathley, 2005: 31). He continues by listing some of the key moments of punctum in films that exist for him as a spectator:

Who else but I will have taken note of the black glasses worn by the man who sounds the curfew horn in Robinson’s *Warning Shadows* (1923); Lauren Bacall’s hand clutching and unclutching at the back of the chair in the background in a tense scene in Huston’s *Key Largo* (1948); the painting on A’s bedroom wall of the mad Ludwig II of Bavaria out for a nocturnal sleighride, in Resnais’s *Last Year at Marienbad* (1963); and of the author’s name (“Juan Luis Echevarria) on the pink book shown to the camera at the climax of Ruiz’s *Letter from a Library Lover* (1983)? (Cardinal cited in Keathley, 2005: 31)

Cardinal highlights the self-reflexivity of these moments by stating that ‘[w]hile any one of these collector’s items could figure in someone else’s inventory, the fact of their being grouped by me implies a characteristic angle of vision governed by my individual tastes and fetishes’ (cited in Keathley, 2005: 31). Cardinal’s work reveals an affinity with my own approach which explores the individual’s tastes and how the subjective nature of them impacts the cinematic experience. Expanding on this is Barthes’ theory of the punctum which will be used throughout the thesis to discuss those moments of individual taste as distraction that add and build on my individual cinematic experience. This will allow me to argue how the spectator is always already distracted when it comes to the cinematic experience and film viewing. The puncta encountered and explored throughout the thesis are personal to me and as such will be discussed using self-reflexive methods of analysis. On account of this, one of the main issues my thesis will be discussing is how an embodied female spectator encounters distraction in relation to a cultural object and how this impacts the reading of that object.

The theorists discussed in this section illustrate the variety of interpretations regarding distraction. Kracauer outlined distraction in terms of its social and political intentions as well as how it is fashioned from the surrounds in which cinema audiences find themselves. His

argument on distraction is integral to my thesis as it opens up the space for thinking of distraction as a political term that has wider implications for the cinematic experience. Benjamin discussed how distraction is a state in which spectators view certain objects absent-mindedly and is cultivated through film viewing. The aspect of Benjamin's argument that I will be carrying forward throughout the thesis is the concept that the spectator can split their attention between different cultural objects. For the purposes of this thesis I do not view the spectator as absent-minded, rather they are capable of sustaining attention with regards to several cultural objects at once. This links back to the argument outlined by Crary whereby distraction is a form of attention that has been placed elsewhere. Finally, Barthes understood distraction in terms of the punctum and how it is an integral part of the viewed object. Though the theorists in this section outline what it means to be distracted, only Barthes touches upon the direct impact this distraction has on the spectator. In order to understand how distraction has been directly connected with film viewing the following section will trace how distraction has previously been theorised using case studies from a variety of film eras. This is done in order to highlight how distraction is a complex issue and needs to be examined as such. This will also serve to make clear the different types of distraction which are possible, all of which have a part in the makeup of the cinematic experience.

Section Three

Defining Distracted Spectatorship Throughout the History of Cinema

In this section I will outline how the term distracted spectatorship has implications when writing about film from a historical context. The status of distraction has changed throughout the course of cinema's history and has become an increasingly important aspect of popular culture; as such it needs to be addressed as an integral aspect of the cinematic experience. Examining the history of distraction is important as it helps us to understand cinema more generally, but it also helps to see how distraction has become a part of the texture of contemporary life. Exploring the history of film in relation to distraction is crucial to an understanding of cinema as it illustrates how distracted spectatorship is intensified in post-modernity, as discussed earlier in the thesis. This section will focus on different eras to trace the development of the cinematic experience and the problems and issues in relation to studying the experience. In order to do this, I will draw on both historical and theoretical accounts. The term cinematic experience is rarely used in these accounts, if at all: it is therefore necessary to infer from the writings what kind of cinematic experience can be

associated with each era. This raises the important question of how the cinematic experience is an amalgamation of a variety of experiences.

Throughout the historical accounts I discuss below, distraction is located in several places: as stemming from specific properties of the films themselves or as a product of the film screening context (architecture and decor for example). It is important therefore to acknowledge that distraction is full of complexity, and that there are a variety of different types of distraction, such as: astonishment, participation and escape. The value of examining the history of distraction is that it enables us to classify these different types of distraction, and to produce a fine-grained account of the nature of distraction in relation to the cinematic experience. This will progress into discussions of spectatorship and the impact of distraction on the cinematic experience of individual spectators. Throughout the thesis I use the term distraction to describe a particular cinematic experience which centres on the subjective viewing of the distracted spectator: the spectator's experience extends beyond the cinema and is subjective and constantly fluctuating. The section explores initial ways of thinking about distraction in terms of space, in terms of who is watching the film and in terms of a form of entertainment with a sense of participation and interaction. The section also explores a different way of thinking about distraction, it is not a monolithic term and the emphasis here is on the variety of ways in which distraction can be approached as a form of spectatorship.

The Experience of Astonishment as Distraction

Film stemmed from a fascination with technology and images: the twentieth century's dominant art form was born out of the nineteenth-century predilection for machinery, movement, optical illusion and public entertainment (Parkinson, 1997: 7). The earliest uses of moving images were by Eadweard Muybridge in the 1870s, he used them for scientific benefit in order to analyse movement. It was a brand new technology and, therefore, a novel thrill for scientists to work with. Working film cameras were produced in the late 1880s and a hand cranked camera was developed, such as the compact Parvo camera which was first made in Paris in 1908, that allowed forty to fifty seconds of film to be filmed on a single reel. The camera was portable and hand powered so that it could be operated from anywhere. It also doubled as a projector and a film developer so was a very flexible device; the camera ran at sixteen frames per second and was the layout of the model for film cameras over the first thirty years of film production, this made films easy to screen and could be shown anywhere.

The initial impact of a film was recorded by French illusionist and film director Georges Méliès when he went to a Lumière film screening:

[A] *still* photograph showing the place Bellecour in Lyon was projected. A little surprised. I just had time to say to my neighbour: “They got us all stirred up for projections like this? I’ve been doing them for over ten years.” – I had hardly finished speaking when a horse pulling a wagon began to walk towards us, followed by other vehicles and then pedestrians, in short all the animation of the street. Before this spectacle we sat with gaping mouths, struck with amazement, astonished beyond all expression (cited in Gunning, 1995: 118)

Méliès became famous for leading many technical and narrative developments in the earliest days of cinema. From this description the experience of cinema as astonishment can be illustrated as a yearning for something different, something that has the effect of amazing the audience into coming back to the cinema for more. The concept of amazement in relation to astonishment is central to early accounts of cinematic experience. Analysing astonishment as a form of distraction illustrates how the distraction stemmed from what was being shown on the cinema screen, as the above quotation demonstrates. To highlight the experience of astonishment I turn to film and cultural theorist Elizabeth Ezra who describes early cinema as ‘more “show” than “tell”’ (2000: 3). Ezra has written and edited books in the fields of European cinema, transnational cinema, early French cinema and French cultural studies (2004 and 2006). She locates the roots of modern narrative cinema in Méliès’ work and identifies techniques such as editing which aid the narrative structure of his films. When cinema was a new medium it took inspiration from several sources and media, one of which was vaudeville theatre, one of the most popular forms of entertainment at the time. Unlike theatre, which ‘pretended there was a fourth wall and that the audience wasn’t really there’, music hall and variety performers stood on the ‘stage and [spoke] directly at the audience’ (Merton, 2007: 12). Early films illustrates this ‘different relationship [that] the cinema of attractions constructs with its spectator’ (Gunning, 1990: 57). Film theorist Tom Gunning’s concept of the ‘cinema of attractions’ is useful for considering the emergence of modern visual culture. His concept relates the development of cinema to other forces than storytelling, such as new experiences of space and time in modernity, and an emerging modern visual culture which is where his importance lies in relation to the thesis. The “cinema of attractions,” he claims, frames ‘the attraction with a variety of gestures of display’ (Gunning, 2004: 45).

With vaudeville performances the spectator felt directly addressed by the spectacle and it was this illusion of the presence of a large, appreciative audience that the films endeavoured to recreate (Gunning, 1990: 59; Merton, 2007: xii). The term “cinema of attractions” came from ‘early cinema’s fascination with novelty and its foregrounding of the act of display’ (Gunning, 2004: 42). It is a form of cinematic entertainment that bases itself on its ability to show something which the audience has not seen before. Attraction as a term is the opposite of distraction. Yet, the way Gunning uses it can be understood in a similar way to that as outlined by Benjamin and Kracauer in the previous section, as something which draws the audience away from their own lives. According to Gunning in the earliest years of exhibition the cinema itself was an attraction as people went to the cinema to see the theatrical effects played out in front of them rather than a comprehensive story (1990: 58). The language used in the following quotation, from film maker George Pearson, shows how fleeting these moments of astonishment were and why the audience would want to keep on coming back for more of this new distraction:

A furtive youth did things to a tin oven on iron legs and a white sheet swung from the ceiling ... Suddenly things happened ... the tin apparatus burst into a fearful clatter and an oblong picture was slapped on the white sheet and began a violent dance. After a while I discovered it was a picture of a house, but a house on fire. Flames and smoke belched from the windows, and – miracle of miracles – a fire engine dashed in, someone mounted a fire escape, little human figures darted out below and then ... Bang! The show was over. Exactly one minute and I had been to the cinema (Pearson, 1957: 14)

This quotation illustrates how brief and quick the cinematic experience was: it centred on the astonishment that the images were moving and what they were capable of showing instead of a comprehensive narrative. This exemplifies Gunning and Gaudreault’s argument that pre-1906 films were experienced as a series of attractions. Understanding films as a series of attractions enables them to also be seen as a series of distractions. Examining films in terms of multiple attractions allows it to be approached in a way that takes into account the variable nature of those attractions, much the same when defining film in terms of multiple distractions.

Experiencing film included an increased bombardment of sensation, as discussed in terms of modernity earlier on in the thesis. These ideas have been expanded on in relation to Cray and his discussions on modernity. Cray considers how an integral aspect included in the ‘cultural logic of capitalism demands that we accept as *natural* the rapid switching of our attention from one thing to another. Capital, as accelerated exchange and circulation,

necessarily produces this kind of human perceptual adaptability and becomes a regime of reciprocal attentiveness and distraction' (Crary, 1995: 48). Examining the increased bombardment of sensation, therefore, becomes invaluable within discussions of distraction as they are both a vital component of viewing film itself. In the early days of cinema the Lumière brothers initially showed their films at the Grand Cafe in Paris to a paying audience of thirty-three customers (Wenden, 1975: 10). The following quotation from film historian D. J. Wenden illustrates what the expectations were of the cinematic experience:

For the first audiences the novelty of movement on the screen was enough in itself. They cried out as the train entered the station towards them, mercifully stopping in time, or jumped back to avoid the splashing waves at the foot of Dover Cliffs. Even the great Russian novelist Maxim Gorky was surprised by the realism of Lumière's *Watering the Gardener* and wrote: "You think the spray is going to hit you too and you instinctively shrink back" (Wenden, 1975: 15)

Though the account may be exaggerated to put across the strangeness and novelty of films, this shows how the cinematic experience was one of astonishment. The cinematic experience as involving distraction through astonishment is further demonstrated in an article from *The Scotsman* in 1896 which reviews a Lumière cinématographe being shown in Edinburgh:

The cinématographe, seen in its full perfection, seemed to come to the audience as something of a revelation. When the first of the series of pictures appeared on the screen they applauded heartily, and as one picture after another was exhibited their enthusiasm grew. [...] The series opened with a view representing the dinner hour at a factory gate at Lyons, in which the hurry and bustle of the operatives leaving their work at mid-day was admirably depicted. A most effective view was the arrival of the Paris mail at an intermediate station; in another the troubles of a photographer with a fidgety patron was admirably hit off. Particularly attractive also, was the representation full of life and movement of the Champs Elysees; and the sea pieces were wonderfully fine. Altogether, the Cinématographe under Mons. Trewey's direction proved one of the greatest attractions which has been seen at the Empire for some time, and the audience were so enthusiastic in their applause that the curtain was raised and a beautiful sea-scape under moonlight, the waves dashing upon the rocks, was shown (*The Scotsman* (2 June 1896) cited in Popple and Kember, 2004: 35-36)

For these early audiences the spectacle and wonder of the moving images which were being projected on the screen had more significance for the audience than the content of the films themselves. This is emphasised through the above quotation as it states the variety of clips the audience were shown. The clips do not link together, although the account suggests that they were viewed as a series of progressively engaging effects, and they all serve to show how the

focus of the screening was centred on astonishment rather than a comprehensive narrative being depicted on the screen. The accounts discussed so far in relation to astonishment illustrate that these films focused on showing one effect after another with no, or very little, narrative connecting the effects together. When a film includes a comprehensive narrative it can still have aspects of astonishment running throughout but the focus shifts as attention is now on the narrative running throughout rather than the series of astonishments. As such, with regards to astonishment, the attraction is not just offered to the audience, but rather it is ‘displayed with the immediacy of [exclaiming] “Here it is! Look at it!”’ (Gunning, 2004: 44). Examining astonishment as an example of distraction, then, illustrates how distraction has become a part of the texture of contemporary life. This is not to say that astonishment as distraction did not become removed from other forms of media, merely that cinema remediated them for its increasing audience. The following sections elaborate on the diverse ways in which distraction can be theorised in relation to the cinematic experience.

The Experience of Participation as Distraction

As mentioned above distraction has a variety of sources and in this section I will turn to another source of distraction: the spectators themselves. Though the term participation refers to a sharing or coming together, distraction means being pulled away towards something else. Here I explore how it is through the act of participation that spectators are distracted by what they are viewing on the screen, expanded on below with regards to local films. While participation culture has been much discussed in the context of contemporary franchise film, it has its origins in the earliest forms of film spectatorship. Participation links to the fan’s interactions with franchises, as theorised by Jenkins, which will be discussed in Chapter Three. The term participation has a variety of meanings, it can refer to the process of spectatorial identification with a film; Popple and Kember write of how the cinema of attractions, as outlined in the section above, demands an audience’s creative response to unfamiliar and disturbing material rather than the spectator’s passive response to familiar and comfortable material (2004: 43-44). Participation can also mean the process of interpretation and decoding the film as the spectator, bombarded by a sequence of images onscreen, participated in the production of meaning through their participation (Popple and Kember, 2004: 43-44). The term can also refer to the experience of the spectator being a part of a community through the film viewing process. With early cinema the audiences may have felt themselves solicited by the performers on the screen, but they also knew ‘no one could hear

their applause or catcalls, only the local films could truly heal this breach, or rather exploit it' (Gunning, 2004: 53). These local films were initially put into circulation by Mitchell and Kenyon who worked in Edwardian Britain and filmed everyday scenes, such as workers leaving factories, and then screened them in the towns that they had been filmed in. These films illustrated how the camera does not select things; it simply records what is in front of it. As discussed with regards to distraction and astonishment one of the features of early cinema is that the frame is like the proscenium arch of a stage and all the action takes place within it. The implication in Mitchell and Kenyon's films is that we are just seeing one part of a huge and complex reality. Local films are perhaps most important for bringing the phenomenon of film to universal prominence through travelling showmen. In the UK, France, Australia, and Germany especially, but also in the US and numerous other countries, travelling shows ensured that film reached a remarkably wide public long before rural audiences were easily able to travel to the city (Pople and Kember, 2004: 65). In this way the spectators experienced participation as being a part of a wider imagined community of fans and viewers, or even of a social class. This section will focus on how participation relates to the sense of community that early cinema instilled in the spectators.

Pople and Kember have described how these early screenings were always accompanied by sound (such as a piano), there would also be a host who built up the suspense of what was happening on the screen and would ask the audience to guess what happens next. On top of this audiences would laugh, sing and join in with the film, it has been historicised as a raucous and participatory environment. This participation also came from the fact that people were given the opportunity to recognise themselves and their family and friends on the screen:

The most popular cinématographe film in a travelling show is ALWAYS A LOCAL PICTURE containing portraits which can be recognised. A film showing workers leaving a factory will gain far greater popularity in the town where it was taken than the most exciting picture ever produced. The workers come in hundreds, with all their friends and relations, and the film more than pays for itself the first night (*The Showman* (August 1902) cited in Pople and Kember, 2004: 37)

The kind of participatory experience I am referring to is shown through accounts of audiences' reactions at the time. Recognition is an important factor here as in order to fully participate one has to be able to recognise and identify with what is on the screen. This is done literally with local films as audiences could see their friends, family, neighbours and

themselves on the screen: ‘The big draw was a local film of the Belper mill hands leaving work; and I must say it was rather amusing to be inside when they were showing this one, as you kept hearing the refrain, “O there’s our Mary!” “O, that’s little Sally Smith!” etc.’ (*The Showman* (December 1900) cited in Popple and Kember, 2004: 37). This quotation is written from an outside perspective but it does give a brief insight into what the cinematic experience included for the audiences of local films. This participatory experience enabled the audience to personally recognise what was on the screen and to feel that they had played a role in bringing the film to fruition, because without their participatory input the films would not exist at all.

Mitchell and Kenyon sold their films all over the world but were most active in Britain because of the more dense population; also because, as cinema was not a global industry yet, it made sense to ply their trade where they lived. These local films had a long life and were still being made after World War One. These types of films and the experiences that went with them were initially overlooked by film historians because they did not fit in with economies of scale: the films had a short shelf life due to the lack of widespread interest and the showmen were limited in the number of screenings they could exhibit. It was an extremely rapid process of production and exhibition:

A record in photography or rather cinematography was achieved by Messrs Mitchell and Kenyon of Blackburn, on Sunday last, on the occasion of the homecoming of the Liverpool Volunteers. An animated picture of the arrival of the troops was taken by Messrs Mitchell and Kenyon a few minutes before 6 o’clock p.m. and was developed and ready for exhibition between 9 and 10 o’clock on the same evening. It was shown to a crowded audience at Hengler’s Circus by the North American Animated Photo Co. (*The Showman* (1901) cited in Toulmin, 2004: 59)

This quotation demonstrates how the participatory experience demanded immediate viewing so that audiences could see themselves and their friends, family and neighbors on screen straight away. This type of participation centres on the spectator feeling as though they are a single presence in a large and accepting group, the spectator feels part of a mass and as such gains a stronger sense of participation in the cinematic experience. This sense is exemplified through local films but also extends into other forms of cinema exhibition, such as the rise of nickelodeons. Nickelodeons fostered the experience of participation as they were seen as a cheap and affordable form of entertainment which catered to the masses (Patterson, 1907: 10). These early cinemas forced a shift so that films became a major part of entertainment culture, up until about 1905 the main screening venues were, as has been mentioned, summer

shows, travelling exhibitors and fair grounds. Between 1905 and 1907 there was a massive multiplication in the number of nickelodeons and by 1908 they were the main location in which audiences watched films. This transformed the media landscape at that time as the nickelodeons offered an economic democracy by giving the public a one price for all cinema ticket. The first nickelodeon opened in the US on the sixth of November 1905. The name was the creation of John P. Harris and Harry Davis who used it to describe a shop-front cinema they were running in Pittsburgh which charged a nickel for admission. The name subsequently became synonymous with cinema in the US (Popple and Kember, 2004: 16). The popularity of the nickelodeon spread rapidly as the experience of sitting in a darkened room with dozens of others, friends and strangers alike, to watch images on a screen reached millions of Americans in every corner of the country; for the first time the movies were more than just a novelty, they had become a mass medium (Alberti, 2015: 41).

With the increased popularity of the nickelodeon there was an explosion in the variety of films available as well as the choice of venue you could watch them in. Audiences became more discerning and less tolerant to certain material, such as local films like the ones Mitchell and Kenyon made, and film genres including comedies, melodramas and fiction became dominant. For the urban, working-class audiences who made up the majority of nickelodeon patrons, the moving pictures were an inexpensive and entertaining way to spend a lunch hour or to relax after work (Alberti, 2015: 46). It was inclusive because anyone could go to the cinema and enjoy what was on the screen, it opened cinema up to a new audience. In many towns, when the first permanent moving-picture show opened, even if it were a nickel house, according to Bowser all classes of people attended (1994: 2). For the millions of urban working-class people and new immigrants, going to the movies represented an affordable amusement and it is possible that motion pictures have never had such a devoted and enthusiastic audience since these early years. People went night after night, or from one show to another. Frank Howard, a prominent New England exchange man, defined a motion-picture fan as 'one that attends one theatre every day, at least once a day, if not two or three times' (Bowser, 1994: 2). Patterson provides a detailed description of a nickelodeon which enables us to understand the participatory cinematic experience they fostered:

The nickelodeon is usually a tiny theatre, containing 199 seats, giving from twelve to eighteen performances a day, seven days a week. Its walls are painted red. The seats are ordinary kitchen-chairs, not fastened ... The spectatorium is one story high, twenty-five feet wide and about seventy feet deep. Last year or the year before it was probably a second-hand clothier's, a pawnshop or cigar store. Now, the counter has been ripped out, there is a ticket-seller's booth where the

show-winder was, an automatic musical barker somewhere up in the air thunders its noise down on the passersby, and the little store has been converted into a theatrelet. [...] The nickelodeon is tapping an entirely new stratum of people, is developing into theatregoers a section of population that formerly knew and cared little about the drama as a fact in life ... Incredible as it may seem, over two million people on average attend the nickelodeons **every day of the year** (Patterson (his emphasis), 1907: 10-11)

At several points in this quotation the experience of participation is illustrated, firstly that this particular nickelodeon seats nearly two hundred people, allowing more people to participate in the experience of watching films. Secondly, Patterson highlights how the room had probably previously been a shop of some kind, illustrating that there was no barrier as to where films were shown. Anyone could get involved in the running of a nickelodeon as the management of them required minimal expertise and training, at least early on. A trade journal printed a guide to opening a nickelodeon in 1907, it began with the ingredients: one storefront shop seating two hundred to five hundred persons, chairs, a phonograph, one 'young woman cashier', one electric sign, one projector and projectionist, one screen, one piano, one barker, and one manager. Then you 'open the doors, start the phonograph, and carry the money to the bank' (*Moving Picture World* in 1907 Ward Mahar, 2006: 36). Film exhibition was the most important branch of the industry during the nickelodeon era and it serves to emphasise the experience of participation as spectators could become exhibitors and be a part of the cinematic experience, though this was only possible for a small number of people. Exhibiting films meant blending elements from travelling shows as there was live entertainment as well as accompanying lectures to explain what was happening on screen. The experience of participation even went as far as the exhibitors being encouraged to manipulate the films to suit their audiences: "If the piece grows dull at any point", noted *Moving Picture World* in 1907, "the manager can take a pair of shears and cut out a few yards" to liven it up (*Moving Picture World* in 1907 Ward Mahar, 2006: 36). The nickelodeon audience was neither monolithic nor immutable. Most discussions of early cinemas and their audiences have centred around the little store show in the entertainment districts of the big cities (Bowser, 1994: 2). This sense of distraction as participation, which was fostered both by local films and the rise of the nickelodeon, recognises both the audience and the surrounding environment as the catalyst for distraction; the following section will move into a discussion of picture palaces in order to understand how distraction can be theorised as a form of escape.

The Experience of Escape as Distraction

The relationship between escape and distraction is similar to that as outlined by Benjamin and Kracauer in the previous section. Audiences turn to the cinema to escape from their own lives and be distracted by the cinemas and the images that they are presented with on screen. Compared to the experience in a nickelodeon some cinemas were opulent picture houses which drew their architectural design from theatres; elaborately decorated with gold they created a sense of occasion and grandeur. In the course of tracing distraction throughout historical cinematic experiences studying escape allows us to see this particular aspect of distraction in relation to the architecture and apparatus of film theatres. These theatres fostered the experience of escape to allow audiences to get away from the ordinary of everyday life by exhibiting films in buildings that instilled a sense of occasion. This allows us to think of distraction in terms of space, for example at a particular cinema in England the customers were presented with services to provide additional comfort:

for their “comfort and convenience”, [...] “well-appointed reception room[s]... with checking facilities, writing desk and telephone service”, maid service, a “men’s smoking room”, and young women as ushers in “uniforms of gray nun’s veiling, caps, kerchiefs, and aprons”. Among its amenities, [...] “a playground for the children [presumably the very young] with all kinds of toys” and a “rest room... for shoppers where hot tea and cocoa [were] served by coloured matrons after the matinee free” (Abel, 2006: 89)

This creates an image more of a hotel than a cinema and goes to emphasise the opulence that was associated with certain cinemas from the 1920s. It also raises important questions about whose body is “allowed” to be a spectator as bodies are both raced and classed. Though smaller and less opulent cinemas could be an escape in this section I focus on the cinemas that seemed to be built to purposefully create a certain experience for the spectator. It is a start to understanding the experience of escape that these cinemas fostered. The aim was to create an environment in which the spectator could leave their own life behind and enjoy the sumptuousness around them as well as the film they had come to see. According to film historians by 1915 the movies had travelled a long way from their early role as music-hall novelty or as a diversion for predominantly working-class audiences in travelling fairs or nickelodeons. They were becoming a more respectable entertainment in more luxurious cinemas whose customers were called patrons (Wenden, 1975: 108). The films became more wholesome and the cinemas more colourful and luxurious, to some extent becoming even

more important than the films themselves. On city sites throughout America and Western Europe rose cinemas in which for a few hours any customer, rich or poor, could enjoy a standard of comfort and lavishness unknown in everyday life. Luxury hotels, opera houses, Broadway, or West End theatres were closed territories to the average working man or woman, but the picture palace provided a classless entertainment with comparatively little difference in comfort between the cheap seats at the front of the stalls and the most expensive range in the circle, unlike the sharp contrast between the expensive stalls and the primitive, wooden bench seats in the galleries of most theatres (Wenden, 1975: 120). The buildings were the first step in enhancing the experience of escape. Fawcett gives a detailed account of one cinema in 1927:

built in elaborate style, marbled pillars, decorated arching roof, mirrored walls and cut glass electric chandeliers, enormously thick carpet on the floor, and all around the walls vast divans and luscious arm chairs. There they sit ... as comfortably as if they were in a private suite in the Biltmore or the Ritz Carlton. It is their club without their even asking for it. They paid their money for the movies and all this wonder was thrown in free. At the door more attendants meet them. If the story is a film of Argentine adventure, the ushers are garbed in wide-brimmed beaver hats, black large velvet plus-fours, high boots, coloured neckware and cattle whips. If sheik-business is afoot, they may be Foreign Legionnaires, and the programme girls may veil their beauty with a yashmak. Thus are Abie and Rosie prepared spiritually for the great adventure they are to undergo in the darkness beyond (Fawcett, 1927: 80)

The image Fawcett creates through the language used evokes a particular sense of occasion. The luscious, elaborate and decorated style set up the cinema as somewhere different, unique and luxurious to visit. Parallels are drawn here between being given your own private suite at the Ritz with ushers on hand to attend to your every need and to aid in the sense of wonder that was being created. In this particular description we can examine how the cinematic experience was seen as something to pamper yourself with where you could be absorbed by the surroundings and allow the illusion to sweep you away. As mentioned above this particular form of distraction can be seen to stem from the surroundings, this is in contrast to the earlier sections which illustrated how distraction developed from what was on the screen as well as who was watching the film. Highlighting the different areas which distraction occurs from illustrates that it is not a singular autonomous type of spectatorship but instead incorporates a multitude of aspects which all serve to provide a more comprehensive image of the cinematic experience.

The experience of escape is central to this era of cinema; firsthand accounts highlight what audiences longed for when they went to the cinema: ‘Asked “What attracts you to the cinema?”, interviewees replied: “The pictures help you live in another world for a little while. I almost feel I’m in the picture”; and “[Pictures] make you think for a little while that life is all right”’ (Kuhn, 2002: 216). Key points about the attraction of the cinema are encapsulated in the experiences of the informants interviewed by film historian and theorist Annette Kuhn. Her 2002 work, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory*, explores cinema going in the 1930s and draws on interviews with the filmgoers. Kuhn’s research into cultural history discovers how cinema brought a sense of enjoyment to the daily lives of a generation of young men and women growing up in an austere climate of making-do. The book throws light on issues such as cinema spectatorship, childhood, adolescence, ageing and film reception, and provides a contribution to understandings of both the role of cinema in its heyday and the nature of popular memory. The interviewees describe a sense of entering or living in another world; a sense of being inside the picture; a feeling that life seems better while one is at the pictures; and an acknowledgement of the temporariness of this escape. Though this could be interpreted as the opposite of distraction, namely immersion, it can also be seen as a form of distraction from the outside world that is drawing these audiences to the cinema. This illustrates again how distraction can stem from several different places and is not a static concept. As well as providing escape cinemas are also spoken of as a form of comfort for the viewer:

The cinema offered us a temporary haven of comfort. They were our “Dream Palaces”, a make believe world, a glittering kaleidoscope of movement, magic and madness. For a couple of pence we could exchange our drab surroundings of an unheated home for the luxury of the super cinema and fulfil our wildest dreams (Bernard Goodsall cited in Kuhn, 2002: 219)

Here is an acknowledgement from a spectator that they know the experience offered was a make believe one but that was also the purpose of going to the cinema, to exchange their current surroundings for somewhere which glittered with luxury. Even if the escape was only temporary it would have drawn audiences back to the cinema to recapture the experience again and again. The experience was also spoken about as if the spectator was going on a journey, it provided a way of getting away without actually leaving:

“So the cinema just was your only real [*pause: 2 seconds*]. To take you away from life as it was. As your life was. You went in there and then you were into another world, looking at people clothed and dressed”

“I was [in] a family of ten, youngest but two, as you can imagine not very well off. At the cinema I lived in a fantasy world for [a] few hours. It was great” (the quotations are Helen Smeaton and Doris English cited in Kuhn, 2002: 226-227)

This experience of escape is expressed at several levels, from memories that reference an abstract sensation of being transported (the pictures, says Mickie Rivers, “transported you to another world”, it gave you “a break from life. It transported you away from the dull things” (Kuhn, 2002: 226-227)), through memories expressing a sense of passing through the veil of the cinema screen and stepping into the world of the film. The phrases used such as, “carried away” and “transported”, which arise repeatedly in memories of the experience of watching films in this particular era, imply both movement or travel and passivity: the film takes you on a journey, and you let it happen. The journey, in another recurrent turn of phrase, is to “another world”, a world utterly different from the “dull things” of everyday life. Most commonly in 1930s cinemagoers’ accounts of their investments in cinema, a narrative of a sort emerges: one of anticipation, transportation and elevation:

“I can still remember the excitement of eventually going through the door after waiting in the rain or snow for an hour ... For three hours the outside world was forgotten, worries ... disappeared as we lived through the screen. Standing in the street queuing in pleasant anticipation of what the next couple of hours had to offer, as the lights dimmed and the screen lit up away we went transported into a world of fantasy” (Margaret Houlgate cited in Kuhn, 2002: 233)

This is a story of a journey from “real life” to the pictures and back again, from outside the cinema to inside and then back to an outside world which, for a while at least, will be imbued with the magic encountered and left behind in the cinema: an outside which then becomes the starting place for another journey, another cycle of return and (temporary) uplift and transformation (Kuhn, 2002: 233). This emphasis on moving from one space to the other, from outside to inside the cinema, illustrates how the two worlds impact and play on each other to allow the audience to be immersed in each world and to have both of the spaces appear independent from one another. Discussing how the architecture of cinemas impacts on the cinematic experience allows for a wider understanding of the nature of distraction and begins to build a thorough account of distracted spectatorship. The spectator can be distracted by the surroundings but the surroundings are not the starting point for distraction. What I argue throughout the thesis is how distracted spectatorship also stems from the internal thought processes of the individual spectator. In order to discuss the embodied spectator

effectively the following chapter expands on the methods of analysis that will be used throughout the thesis.

Chapter Three

Self-reflexive Methods for Analysis

Section One

Franchises, Fandoms and Fans' Interactions with Film

The study of franchise film opens up discussions into fandom which is a central phenomenon in understanding distracted spectatorship. This is particularly relevant because being a fan is one of the identities which distraction makes visible throughout the frontispieces, notebooks and distracted analyses. The fan has been negatively perceived and recent theories have set out to recuperate fans which this section will demonstrate with regards to the chosen franchise. This chapter will examine the rise in popularity of franchise films over the last twenty-five years and the ways in which it has been studied by film scholars. According to film theorist Kristin Thompson, whose work on *The Lord of the Rings* has been influential in this field, a franchise film is 'a movie that spawns additional revenue streams beyond what it earns from its various forms of distribution' (Thompson, 2007: 4). In this way franchises differ from serial genre production that has characterised much international commercial film production since the 1910s. Fans and franchises are often connected as franchise films encourage a different way of reading that is synonymous with fandom in that they provide a space that allows fans to engage with films in a particular way. This raises issues with analysing franchise films as fandom can be classified as a privileged way of reading. This means there is a certain amount of overlap between fandom and academic study due to the research processes involved in both. When examining fan cultures in relation to distracted spectatorship it is also necessary to identify how fans themselves are depicted within film theory.

In his 1992 book, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, media scholar Henry Jenkins depicts the various fan stereotypes, specifically in relation to *Star Trek* fans:

- a. Are brainless consumers who will buy anything associated with the program or its cast;
- b. Devote their lives to the cultivation of worthless knowledge [...]
- c. Place inappropriate importance on devalued cultural material [...]
- d. Are social misfits who have become so obsessed with the show that it forecloses other types of social experience [...]
- e. Are feminized and/or desexualized through their intimate engagement with mass culture [...]
- f. Are infantile, emotionally and intellectually immature [...]
- g. Are unable to separate fantasy from reality (Jenkins, 1992: 10)

Jenkins' point about the feminisation of the toxic fan figure has been taken up in feminist fan studies; his work has also included discussions of old and new media and analysis of how

producers and consumers interact in unpredictable ways (2006). As well as this Jenkins is at the forefront of fan studies and his work promotes the idea that fans are active, creative and critically engaged consumers of popular culture who are involved in participatory cultures through a variety of digital media (2006, 2009). The above quotation, though not Jenkins' opinion, serves to demonstrate the negative connotations associated with the image of the fan. Film theorist Matt Hills explains what a fan is in relation to the media that they consume and how they interact with that media:

Everybody knows what a “fan” is. It’s somebody who is obsessed with a particular star, celebrity, film, TV programme, band; somebody who can produce reams of information on their object of fandom, and can quote their favoured lines or lyrics, chapter and verse. Fans are often highly articulate. Fans interpret media texts in a variety of interesting and perhaps unexpected ways. And fans participate in communal activities – they are not “socially atomised” or isolated viewers/readers (Hills, 2002: 1)

Hills' work is important to this thesis because he establishes how media fans have been conceptualised in cultural theory. In particular, Hills' 2010 work on *Doctor Who* explores the television show through the analysis of words such as “cult” and “mainstream”: as a fan of the show Hills also considers the role that fandom plays with regards to the television show's return. The above quotation shows the variety of ways fans approach cultural material and the different ways they express that material to others. Alongside this, Hills considers the possibility that the development of digital media can create new forms of fandom. Sociologist John B. Thompson further discusses the importance of acknowledging the self in the field of fan studies: ‘the deep personal and emotional involvement of individuals in the fan community is also a testimony to the fact that being a fan is an integral part of a project of self-formation’ (Thompson, 1995: 224). Thompson has studied the influence of the media in the development of modern societies and has discussed the unequal relationship between media producers and the audience. The significance of the quotation is that it acknowledges the way fandoms produce and enable particular fan subjectivities. The relationship between the self and community is integral to fan studies as the individual fan is understood in relation to the wider fan community. In turn, the fan also understands their own relationship with a particular franchise through that fan community. This chapter will draw parallels between how both fandom and academia place emphasis on in-depth analysis of a single cultural object. The following section will discuss the methods that went into creating the case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses in terms of self-reflexivity. This is done to

indicate my own reflexivity and how it will reflect on my own position, not only as a gendered subject, but as a scholar and as a fan. As I am a female researcher the self-reflexive process considers how gender impacts on distracted spectatorship and the cinematic experience. Through this work the thesis contributes to the canon of fan studies and feminist fan studies to explore some of the key mechanisms through which fans interact with the mediated world which shape our cultural realities and identities. In order to productively discuss the relationship between franchises, fandoms and fans' interactions with film the following section will unpack the significance of franchise films as an object of analysis.

Significance of franchise films

The term franchise is often used unrelated to cinema and is a term most associated with the field of business: 'most franchise agreements grant the franchisee the right to use one or more of the franchisors trademarks in connection with certain goods and services' (Barkoff and Selden, 2008: 4). Franchising means that authorisation is granted by a government or company to an individual or group which enables them to carry out certain commercial activities, for example acting as an agent for a company's products. It is mainly used to describe businesses such as McDonald's which look to extend their corporate footprint. This is similar to media licensing where film rights-holders extend production responsibilities for tie-ins such as videogames or comic books. It is an important connection to draw between the two business models because there is a large amount of literature on organisational communication, business and other non-media related fields that have written about the social dynamics of the structures of franchises. According to Henry Jenkins in a recent interview, 'retail franchisors and franchisees have not always worked in unison; instead, franchisors are always working to assert their authority over independent outlets they cannot fully control, and franchisees seek to assert their local agency in a larger corporate culture' (Jenkins, 2014). Jenkins reflects on the way the notion of the franchise has shaped how the production of media entertainment has been imagined, because the franchising metaphor also shapes the audiences' critical approach to these entertainment brands. As Jenkins states, 'calling something a "franchise" is not a neutral declaration: it prompts us to think about the media in the same terms that we think about McDonald's. There is a recognition of the industrial basis for that culture and its hyper-commercial, systemic mode of multiplication and maintenance over time' (2014). This often comes with an implied critique,

whereby to acknowledge something as a franchise product suggests that its existence is based on a calculation of the market more than a form of creative expression.

The term franchise gradually shifted from being used solely in the field of business to being included in the discussion of certain films. The first recorded instance, in relation to film, was in 1992 with the release of the Disney sequel *Honey, I Blew Up the Kid* in 1992: ‘The ‘Honey’ franchise is Disney’s contemporary equivalent of its successful 1960s special effects comedies featuring Fred MacMurray’s absent-minded professor’ (*Variety* cited in Johnson, 2013: 54). This suggests that franchise discourse began to have purchase in the early 1990s and emerged into far more significant usage by the end of the decade. Media theorist Derek Johnson does a search for every available full-text document from 1991 to 2008 which refers to a franchise, eighteen thousand and seventy-nine articles were returned from *Variety* and from *Hollywood Reporter*. Of the ninety-three *Hollywood Reporter* articles returned for 1991, for example, only twenty-eight significantly referred to media content such as, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Saved By the Bell*, *America’s Funniest Home Videos* and *Batman*, as franchises. The remaining majority referred to franchising in the context of distribution, regulating cable franchises, growing Blockbuster video franchises, and media licensing deals signed with fast food franchises. From 1992 onward franchise discourse began growing and by 1993 that discourse centred more on the production content like *Star Trek*, *Terminator*, *Mr. Bean*, *Look Who’s Talking*, *Matlock*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *Today*, *NBC Nightly News* and the Super Bowl than franchise regulation or niche network identities. The balance of franchise discourse shifted towards describing the ongoing production of content across a range of genres and industrial contexts. There were one hundred and fifty-seven total discussions of media franchises across both publications in 1992, but that ballooned to five hundred and thirty-two in 1993, and reached more than a thousand by the year 2000. The initial imagination of multiplied media production as and through franchising certainly may have occurred prior, but the expansion evidence here suggests that it came into discursive dominance in the media industries in the 1990s. So, although we could look today at something like the *Star Trek* television series and the films connected to it and consider it a franchise, and even look back to the 1960s and 1970s to uncover the origins of that franchising, it was not until the 1990s that expansive productions like these were rendered widely legible as franchising in both industrial and popular discourse. The significance of this difference comes from the realisation that media industries have been worked upon by this discourse; and this particular cultural work has its own effects (Johnson, 2013: 56).

According to film critic Tim Dirks, franchise films ‘normally have at least three significant films in the series, [and] usually have a combined gross box-office (domestic) revenue income (adjusted for inflation) of at least \$450 million’ (Dirks, 2015). There is a distinction to make between sequels and franchises as sequels exploit the ability for an extension of narrative and can be found in all media including plays and books. When the sequels become a part of a franchise is when the series becomes a marketable brand or is seen to be an event, such as indicated in the trailer for *The Hunger Games Mockingjay Part Two*: ‘The event the world has been waiting for’. A brand is more sustainable than a series of sequels as once the brand has been established and turned into a consumer franchise the brand image takes a long time to decay. This is because the image is maintained more by the audiences’ familiarity with the usage of the brand than by external marketing stimuli. Professor of advertising John Philip Jones elaborates on this by arguing how the brand can be strengthened through advertising strategies:

The image of a brand can never be improved by promotions – a matter directly related to the stability of the consumer franchise. There is a vicious circle sometimes described as “promotion-commotion-demotion”. On the other hand, the image is very often strengthened by consumer advertising. This reinforcement represents a long-term effect in addition to short-term sales generation. It leads to an increasing perceived differentiation of the advertised brand from rival brands. This differentiation, in turn, reduces their ability to substitute for it, thus leading to greater stability of consumer demand for the advertised brand (Jones, 2000: 80)

As well as his work on brands Jones focuses on the importance of reducing wastage in advertising and thereby increasing efficiency (1998, 1999, 2003 and 2004). The above quotation mentions consumer advertising which is one of the ways this efficiency works. This rise in franchise films can partly be attributed to how films are advertised, according to film producer and author Lynda Obst ‘[y]ou can’t pay for television advertising in every city in the world, so you become dependent on pre-awareness of the movie’ (Obst, 2014: 12). Obst uses her own industry experience to explain how Hollywood has changed its movie-making practices in recent years and discusses why studios are making more sequels or recycling ideas. The pre-awareness Obst examines is created by studios through the production of sequels, which build up the franchise and the ‘more the international audience is familiar with a title, the more they look forward to seeing it again. In Hollywood, familiarity breeds success, not contempt’ (Obst, 2014: 15). Consumer advertising includes print, social media, television, radio and various other forms of media that are designed to address the consumer directly.

Figure 1 Top 20 films at the UK box office, 1989-2013
(from the BFI Statistical yearbook 2014)

	Title	Country of origin	office total (£ million)	Distributor	Year of release
1	Skyfall	UK/USA	102.9	Sony Pictures	2012
2	Avatar	USA	94.0	20th Century Fox	2009
3	Titanic*	USA	80.1	20th Century Fox	1998/2012
4	Toy Story 3	USA	74.0	Walt Disney	2010
5	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2	UK/USA	73.1	Warner Bros	2011
6	Mamma Mia!	UK/USA	68.5	Universal	2008
7	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	UK/USA	66.1	Warner Bros	2001
8	The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring	USA/NZ	63.0	Entertainment	2001
9	The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	USA/NZ	61.1	Entertainment	2003
10	The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	USA/NZ	57.6	Entertainment	2002
11	Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*	USA	56.4	20th Century Fox	1999/2012
12	The Dark Knight Rises	UK/USA	56.3	Warner Bros	2012
13	Casino Royale	UK/USA/Cze	55.6	Sony Pictures	2006
14	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	UK/USA	54.8	Warner Bros	2002
15	Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	USA	52.5	Walt Disney	2006
16	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1	UK/USA	52.5	Warner Bros	2010
17	The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey	USA/NZ	52.3	Warner Bros	2012
18	The Full Monty	UK/USA	52.2	20th Century Fox	1997
19	Marvel Avengers Assemble	USA	51.9	Walt Disney	2012
20	Quantum of Solace	UK/USA	51.2	Sony Pictures	2008

Source: Rentrak, BFI RSU analysis

Notes:

Figures have not been inflation adjusted.

Box office gross = cumulative total up to 23 February 2014.

* The box office grosses for Titanic and Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace include the grosses from their original releases plus the grosses from their 3D re-releases in 2012.

This reduces wastage by being cost efficient in the long term and has the benefit of both being seen directly by the consumer and promoting the franchise's brand. In effect, this means that strongly advertised brands can justify and command a premium price. This is a powerful and often measurable long-term effect of successful advertising. This is reflected in the re-emergence of the major Hollywood studios in recent years. Through the use of reboots to keep a franchise alive it has become clear that no star is bigger than the franchise. The purpose of studying franchises is to examine why the hyper-commercial realm of media franchising is so critically delegitimized and even why those involved in franchises might position themselves as distinct. According to Jenkins the 'commercialism of franchising raises the stakes for media workers to position themselves as creative and as different from

all the others that use the same idea or premise or property toward this ongoing commercial end' (2014). As a result media franchising almost gives an imperative for differentiation, sometimes that differentiation comes from the explicit gendering of a franchise's identity, as will be discussed later on in Chapter Five. Given the level of interaction that franchises can create, it is necessary to examine how this participation begins.

In 2002, Alan Horn, president and chief operating officer of Warner Bros. Entertainment, stated in *Variety* that he planned to reduce the number of Warner Bros. films produced each year in order to concentrate resources into fewer but bigger films. To offset the risk of placing more resources into fewer films, Horn planned to create more franchise films – films with an instantly recognisable brand identity that spawn sequels (or prequels), merchandising, a must-see status, and huge profits. Warner Bros.' *Matrix* and *Harry Potter* franchises are examples that maintain this philosophy (Buckland, 2006: 16-17). One of the reasons for selecting a film for the case study which is from a franchise is because from 1989 to 2013 the top twenty films which have dominated the UK film market have been released into a market that already has an established fan base (see Figure 1). As can be seen from this table seventeen out of the top twenty films from the past twenty-five years have come from established franchises: *James Bond* (the longest running film franchise on the list, *Dr No* (Terence Young) having been released in 1962), *Toy Story 3* (Lee Unkrich, 2010) (which would have attracted fans of the trilogy as well as fans of Pixar), *Harry Potter* (adapted from books by J K Rowling four of the eight films in this franchise made the top twenty), *Mamma Mia!* (Phyllida Lloyd, 2008) (which would have gained spectators because of the stage show as well as the music of ABBA), *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* (both works of J R R Tolkien and all three parts of *The Lord of the Rings* made it into the top ten), *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* (George Lucas, 1999) (which would have attracted fans of the original films), *The Dark Knight Rises* (Christopher Nolan, 2012) (which would have attracted fans of DC Comics as well as the Christopher Nolan trilogy), *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* (Gore Verbinski, 2006) (the film on the list is the sequel to the successful *Curse of the Black Pearl*, an interpretation of a ride at Disneyworld) and Marvel's *Avengers Assemble* (Joss Whedon, 2012) (the film is a culmination of *Iron Man* and *The Incredible Hulk* both 2008 as well as *Thor* and *Captain America: The First Avenger* both 2011). The reason for examining this area is that adaptations which already have a large fan base encourage the kind of cinematic experience that I am examining more than any other genre of film. Franchise films open themselves up to engagement by fans because they present a variety of possibilities for identification to take place. This is of interest in relation

to my argument regarding how distracted spectatorship makes certain identities visible. Exploring the various forms of identity that franchises present through their films allows me to examine how distracted spectatorship makes these identities visible.

The two main examples of film franchises that began the saturation of the film market were *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* which were deliberately created to gain a long-term audience, they were made to be ‘movie sagas that would sustain their event status in and between instalments over a period of three or more years. This meant generating a form of hype that would create anticipation but that would not exhaust itself in the first round’ (Grainge, 2008: 135). Film theorist Paul Grainge’s work discusses the growth in merchandising and product placement to the rise of the movie franchise where branding has become central to the film economy. His research concentrates on contemporary film, television and media culture and he has written on memory in relation to exploring the relationship between film culture and the past (2003). Including Grainge’s work on the logic of branding and how it has propelled specific approaches to the status of film allows for the analysis of how the process of branding impacts the individual spectator. The creation of anticipation that Grainge indicates relies on the films’ appeal to the audience and also the success of that appeal. The strategies were clearly thought out, particular with regards to the *Harry Potter* franchise, as the New Line marketing strategy outlines below:

[They] sought to establish a base of consumer loyalty, preparing the way for the frequent, near annual, re-promotion of the *Harry Potter* brand throughout the coming decade. Central to this strategy was the idea that (child) consumers would grow with the franchise and its characters as sequels were produced, a principle of maturation that combined with the periodic re-release of the first film, geared to audiences previously too young to consume *Harry Potter* content (Grainge, 2008: 140)

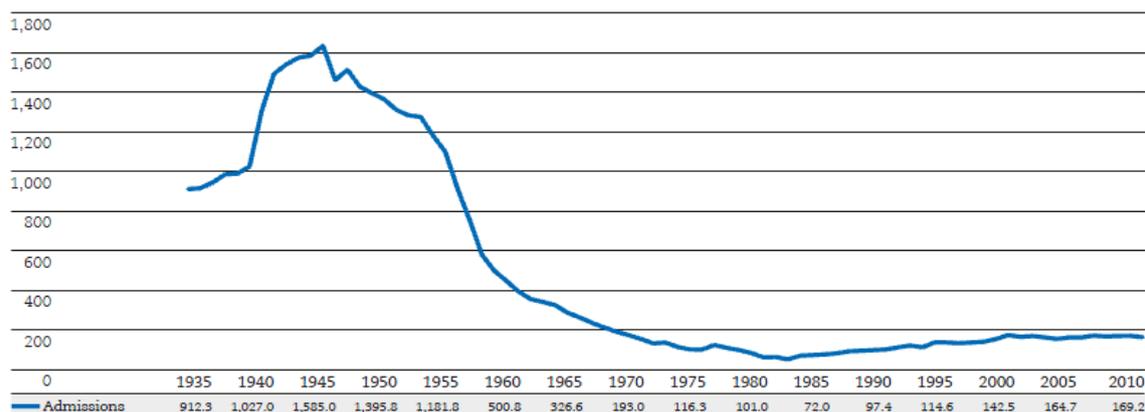
Wanting to build on the success of the franchise film New Line optioned Philip Pullman’s fantasy series *His Dark Materials* in 2002. This sense of hopefulness with regard to the momentum of franchise films ‘points towards a core issue within discussions of Hollywood hegemony, namely the degree to which the corporate blockbuster, like Frodo’s ring, has become a bewitching, all-powerful force, a cinema “to rule them all”’ (Grainge, 2008: 147-8). This is the kind of viewing that franchise films encourage, a fixation with each particular film brand that grows and grows and is led by the fan spectator’s yearning for more knowledge regarding narrative elements that are related to the film’s main storyline. Due to the nature of franchise films a significant part of the spectator’s interaction with them does

not take place within the cinema. Through the process of franchising and, therefore, the branding of a film allows for a multitude of ways in which the spectator can relate to a particular franchise.

New methods of interacting with films

The overall thesis is putting forward a way of viewing spectatorship which includes acknowledging the importance of aspects such as consumption and promotional culture; the thesis builds on current film theory which states how the cinematic experience is one which happens entirely within a cinema (Sobchack, 1992; Barker, 2009). The rationale for focussing on how films are consumed in the cinema as well as on DVD, iPhones, laptops etc. is because cinema-going has not been replaced by these newly available forms of media. The most significant drop in cinema admissions took place from the late 1950s to the early 1980s (see Figure 2), but since then the numbers have been steadily increasing and from 2001-2013 the number of people going to the cinema has remained very steady (see Figure 3). Given the sharp increase in video on demand (see Figure 4) the assumption is that cinema-going would be negatively affected but, as can be seen from Figure 3, the number of people attending the cinema has remained fairly constant over the last ten years. The result of this is that a new kind of spectator has been created alongside the abundance of audio and visual technology and information which is now available. Examining how all of these aspects are viewed and taken in by the spectator it is possible to see how film production is changing to compensate for this new form of distracted spectatorship by encouraging a specific kind of cinematic experience. It needs to be acknowledged that there is not one kind of cinematic experience, there are many. For example, a cinematic experience where the film has been selected on a whim will differ to a cinematic experience which has been anticipated and thought through in advance. This is because, in relation to my argument, the spectator would not have had time to interact with a large number of promotional materials when the film has been selected on an impulse. Another difference is that with regards to a film chosen on the spur of the moment much of the cinematic experience will take place during and after the film, whereas with a film that has been singled out months in advance the cinematic experience takes place before as well as during and after viewing the film.

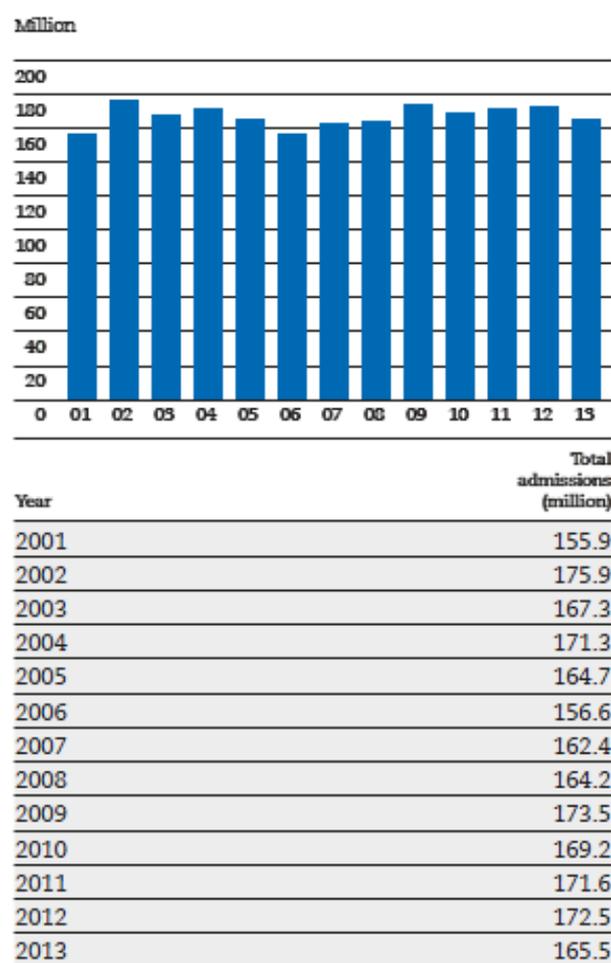
Figure 2 Annual UK Cinema Admissions, 1935-2013
(from BFI Statistical Yearbook 2014)



Source: BFI, CAA, Rentrak

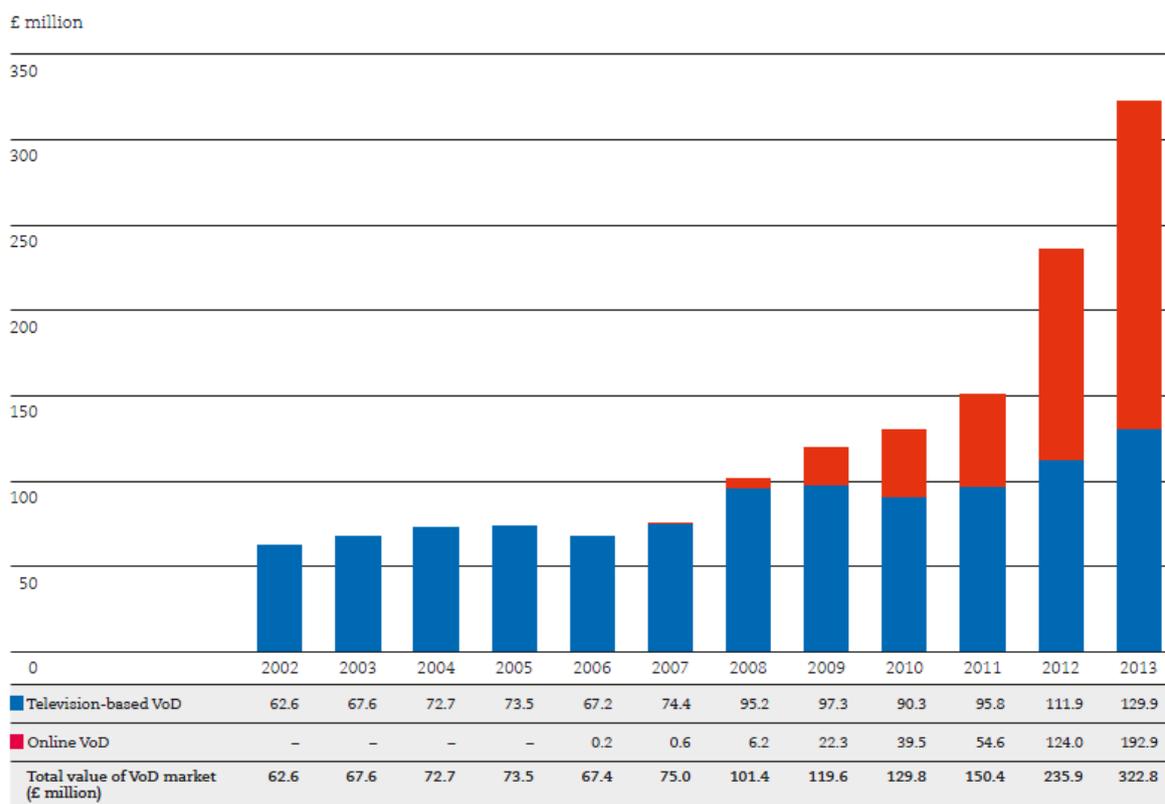
Year	Admissions (million)								
1935	912.3	1949	1,430.0	1963	357.2	1977	103.5	1991	100.3
1936	917.0	1950	1,395.8	1964	342.8	1978	126.1	1992	103.6
1937	946.0	1951	1,365.0	1965	326.6	1979	111.9	1993	114.4
1938	987.0	1952	1,312.1	1966	288.8	1980	101.0	1994	123.5
1939	990.0	1953	1,284.5	1967	264.8	1981	86.0	1995	114.6
1940	1,027.0	1954	1,275.8	1968	237.3	1982	64.0	1996	123.5
1941	1,309.0	1955	1,181.8	1969	214.9	1983	65.7	1997	138.9
1942	1,494.0	1956	1,100.8	1970	193.0	1984	54.0	1998	135.2
1943	1,541.0	1957	915.2	1971	176.0	1985	72.0	1999	139.1
1944	1,575.0	1958	754.7	1972	156.6	1986	75.5	2000	142.5
1945	1,585.0	1959	581.0	1973	134.2	1987	78.5	2001	155.9
1946	1,635.0	1960	500.8	1974	138.5	1988	84.0	2002	175.9
1947	1,462.0	1961	449.1	1975	116.3	1989	94.5	2003	167.3
1948	1,514.0	1962	395.0	1976	103.9	1990	97.4	2004	171.3

Figure 3 Annual UK Cinema Admissions, 2001-2013
(from BFI Statistical Yearbook 2014)



Source: CAA, Rentrak

Figure 4 Estimated Value of the Film on VoD Market in the UK, 2002-2013
(from BFI Statistical Yearbook 2014)



Source: IHS

With regards to my particular case study I discuss a cinematic experience which begins with the conscious choice of going to see a particular film. When I describe the cinematic experience as starting with the conscious choice of going to see a film I mean this as a choice made by a fan. Any spectator can choose to go to the cinema and select a film but the fan spectator makes the decision based on a particular kind of yearning for knowledge.

Film and media researcher Sarah Atkinson, whose work on spectatorship is closely related to mine, considers the role that yearning to know more about the film plays in the cinematic experience: 'This move towards liveness in the cinematic realm signals a significant aggrandizement of cinematic consumption in an expansion and deepening of what can now be perceived to constitute a "cinematic" experience' (Atkinson, 2014: 49). Atkinson's research allows for an understanding into how films can be viewed alongside digital technologies as she includes considerations of mobile, web, social media and live cinema, illustrating the variety of new methods that are available when it comes to interacting with film. Some of these aspects, such as social media, are explored through my own

research, expanded on in Chapter Five. Atkinson deduces how film companies are releasing promotional materials which, more and more, are being watched alongside the film. Regarding my own argument this has the effect of extending the spectator's cinematic experience and opens up a space for distracted spectatorship to occur. She writes of one example in which the audience is encouraged to download an app before seeing the film in the cinema:

The app's preferences can be set to automatically freeze the main screen feature when a second screen video clip is available to view which disrupts the narrative flow and leads to a subjugated viewing experience; it creates moments of punctum, a kind of wound opened up by the automaton leads to the film's mechanism, to the 'inside', which, like the inside of the beautiful doll, needs to be disguised to maintain its credibility. Film subjected to repetition and return, when viewed on new technologies, suffers from the violence caused by extracting a fragment from the whole that, as in a body, 'wounds' its integrity. But in another metaphor, this process 'unlocks' the film fragment and opens it up to new kinds of relations and revelations (Atkinson, 2014: 84-85)

As Atkinson notes, there are direct parallels here between the way the app works and the way Barthes discusses the punctum. The app is described as having the ability to wound and puncture the film, to open it up to new forms of scrutiny and new ways of visual understanding when it comes to the cinematic experience. This method of interacting with the film both opens up new kinds of viewing and new ways of recording that viewing when in the cinema. There are direct parallels between what Atkinson explores and my own research into the cinematic experience and the ways in which it can be considered using distracted spectatorship. The example Atkinson examines is the 2012 film *Looper* (Rian Johnson) which used this strategy, where an app could be downloaded direct to your mobile phone, and provided a commentary track to the film being viewed:

Looper (2012) released an in-theatre audio commentary track online during the theatrical release phase of the film, encouraging viewers to download it onto their mp3 players to listen to in the cinema during the film screening. This was done to encourage repeat viewing (and an increase in box office revenue). At the beginning of the film, the director states: "Please do not do this on your first viewing of the movie, that's maybe a little bit of a ploy to get your extra theatre-going dollars, but regardless please, it will spoil it entirely, see it clean once first" (Atkinson, 2014: 85)

The above quotation explores these external strategies which expand the cinematic experience in a way that promotes distracted spectatorship. Alongside this there is the

statement here that a film can be seen “clean”, with no other interruptions, as though it were possible to view the film and have no external factors intruding in on the experience. I draw on Atkinson’s work to demonstrate how the cinematic experience balances these two aspects, that of the idealised experience where the spectator has nothing else to focus on other than the film and that of an experience which centres on distraction as its main identifier. It is the cinematic experience which includes these elements of distracted spectatorship that the thesis brings to the fore. Discussing the methods that are available for interacting with film allows it to be seen how these methods then expand the cinematic experience in a variety of ways.

The cinematic experience that Atkinson indicates, one in which the spectator longs for an increased level of knowledge with regards to what they are viewing, has the result of expanding the experience. The extra forms of media, such as the apps described by Atkinson, gives cinema a sense of extending the experience outwards to make it last longer and to give it a more tangible connection to the spectator:

Perhaps the desire to go behind-the-scenes is symptomatic of the attempt to transform cinema into a live process, to find a sense of something unfolding through time. [...] Whether through combining cinema with other media, or through the lengthening attention to cinema’s backstage, the search for something not made but in the making aspires to recapture a relationship to culture in which its unique performances mark us as unique too, for having been a witness (Nicola Jean Evans cited in Atkinson, 2014: 51)

The description here is similar to that of trying to capture the immediate experience of film viewing, attempting to capture something that by its nature is always in a state of flux. Wanting to view the behind-the-scenes footage builds on the cinematic experience and adds another dimension to the film in the moment that it is being watched. It also increases the opportunity for distraction as the footage can be recalled by the spectator during the course of watching the film. The increased knowledge made available to the spectator through the backstage footage builds on both the cinematic experience before and during the viewing of the film. The availability of promotional photos and interviews that are published before a film’s release, and which include information regarding the shoot, provide the spectator with methods of interacting with the film before it is shown in cinemas. Incorporated into these methods of interacting with films is a sense of curiosity, of wanting as much information as possible and to have nothing hidden in order to create a truly expansive cinematic experience:

[W]e all want to know how the pictures were made. We like to see the work done. We like to see the producers directing the actors and actresses acting. On the

ordinary stage, there is no greater privilege coveted than that of a seat in the wings while the performance is in progress. We all like to be privileged spectators of anything. We are all curious (Lux Graphicus cited in Atkinson, 2014: 80)

Franchise films also foster this kind of viewing as the spectator is aware of the existence of sequels or potential sequels and as such is involved in a continual process of expectation and anticipation. This way of engaging with films gives the spectator an opportunity to experience film in different ways:

These communication modalities and the opportunity to engage with additional digital devices during a fictional experience is at odds with prior conceptions with fictional immersion in which the characters exist within a curtained environment, as is the distracted attention modality upon which many of the examples of emerging cinema operate. Emerging cinema as conceptualized as a “cinema of disruption” operates within a logic of what Linda Stone has referred to as Continuous Partial Attention (CPA). She describes this mode of “how many of us use our attention today. It is different from multi-tasking. [...] When we multi-task, we are motivated by a desire to be more productive and more efficient. To pay continuous partial attention is to pay partial attention – continuously” (Atkinson, 2014: 218-219)

The discussion of continuous partial attention is a reflection of Benjamin’s arguments regarding architecture from the 1930s, discussed in Chapter Two. Psychologist Linda Stone extends Benjamin’s line of reasoning to discuss how distraction in the form of continuous partial attention is not the same as multi-tasking. Stone’s work, which covers trends and consumer implications as well as how relationships with technology can evolve, describes how continuous partial attention is an automatic process that is motivated by the desire to be a part of a wider network. As spectators we pay continuous partial attention in order not to miss anything. It involves being always receptive to places, time, behaviour and as such the spectator is always on high alert. This is particularly relevant to distraction in relation to fan spectators and franchise films where the fan is on alert for information regarding the films that are soon to be released.

The argument put forward by Stone maintains Jenkins’ theory of participatory culture. In the same way that Stone portrays how spectators are connected to a wider network participatory culture is a term that is often used to describe the connection between accessible digital technologies, user-created content and a shift in the power relations between media industries and their consumers. A participatory culture is one with ‘relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby experienced participants pass along

knowledge to novices' (Jenkins, 2009: xi). The members believe that their contributions matter and they feel a degree of social connection with the other members in that culture in that they care about the opinions of what they have created. As shown by Jenkins' different forms of participatory culture include certain affiliations:

Memberships, formal and informal, in online communities centred around various forms of media, such as Friendster, Facebook, MySpace, message boards, metagaming or game clans; expressions: Producing new creative forms, such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan videos, fan fiction, zines or mash-ups; collaborative problem solving: Working together in teams, formal and informal, to complete tasks and develop new knowledge, such as through Wikipedia, alternative gaming, or spoiling; circulations: Shaping the flow of media, such as podcasting and blogging (Jenkins, 2009: xi)

Participatory culture moves the focus of fan studies from the expression of an individual to a more community led involvement where some produce and many consume media and everyone has a more active stake in the culture that is produced. This type of culture existed before the internet in the form of zines, newsletters and fan clubs; the main difference through the use of the internet is that these cultures have now moved online. The website BuzzFeed operates as a contemporary way of doing fandom at this particular moment in time as it allows media to be re-circulated in a variety of ways, the most dominant in relation to fan studies being in the form of lists. In his work on fandoms film theorist Paul Booth discusses the importance of creating lists for fans to connect with the object of their fandom. When done online this allows the fans to participate in a digital culture that allows them to re-appropriate images from their chosen fandom; as well as this it gives the fans the opportunity to 'simultaneously memorialize, influence, and argue [while using] list-making as a tool for observing commonalities between the different practices of media, music, and sports fans' (Booth, 2015: 85). In this way Booth compares the creation of lists to a form of language where order is made out of disorder and a narrative forms in relation to the specific database of information (2015: 90). Booth dubs these articles that constitute lists 'listicles' and theorises how they 'make organization fun, and create a lighthearted (and thus palliative) hierarchy of value. This fun sense is mirrored, in professional sources, by the use of memes, funny images, GIFs, or other irreverent content' (Booth, 2015: 91), discussed further in Chapter Five. This creation of new material provides fans with a new way of interacting with films and allows changing forms of social media and fandom to be discussed in relation to the fan-producer relationship. In their 2013 work on new media and fandom Bury, Deller, Greenwood and Jones state how 'participatory fandom has altered the traditional relationship

between fans and producers, making the fan-producer boundary more leaky' (Bury, Deller, Greenwood and Jones, 2013: 299). This builds on Jenkins' theory of participatory culture as it makes the once clear distinction between fan and producer slightly harder to define as fans can now become the producer in a variety of ways.

Considering the new methods fans have of interacting with films is vital as the internet and social media have allowed for the development and fragmentation of fan networks and communities. In a 2014 article, fan studies and cultural theorist Lucy Bennett examines audiences and their use of the internet, with particular focuses on fandom, music and social media. Bennett's work focuses on digital cultures, media, society as well as audiences and fandoms. She establishes how the rise of social media 'had a strong impact on some online forums, with some members connecting via these platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram, and communicating and sharing news there in a more instantaneous manner' (Bennett, 2014: 7-8). Bennett's research discusses how fandom and audiences are being impacted by technology and the implications that arise from this, such as changes in communication between fans. As well as BuzzFeed Bennett examines how websites such as YouTube, Tumblr and Twitter allow for greater creativity with fan communities. On YouTube she considers how 'fans can create videos of themselves performing, compose fanvids, remixes and mashups and upload these to video platforms' (Bennett, 2014: 8) where the information can be widely circulated. These new methods of interacting with film have also created space for the visual arts to be produced by new platforms. With the example of Tumblr, according to Bennett, the website has facilitated 'a strong visual creativity in fandom, with fans creating and sharing images on this platform. Likewise, Twitter has also permitted the practice of role playing in some fan cultures, where fans tweet performing as characters from the programmes' (Bennett, 2014: 8). Both the internet and social media have made it possible for activities within fandom to be circulated more easily and quickly than before. This allows for the potential of reaching greater audiences and, within fan studies, creates a new space from which to view and analyse films from.

Fan cultures

In discussing spectatorship in relation to fan cultures, also known as fandom, it is important to distinguish between a fan's reception and consumption of a film and that of a more general film-viewer's. Watching a film as a fan involves a sustained affective

consumption with that particular film. This relationship is demonstrated through the case study which traces my own affective consumption with *The Hunger Games* franchise. The case study approaches the cinematic experience from a self-reflexive perspective and it is important to note here that though I see myself as a fan of *The Hunger Games* franchise I do not see myself as belonging to its fandom. This distinction is because fandom refers to ‘a social hierarchy where fans share a common interest while also competing over fan knowledge, access to the object of fandom, and status’ (Hills, 2002: 46). Hills identifies how fandom is an interactive process involving the exchange of knowledge and the sharing of particular interests among fans, which I do not participate in, hence my status as fan but not as a part of *The Hunger Games* fandom. Cultural theorist Cornel Sandvoss’ work discusses the interplay between popular media, fan cultures and identity. His research focuses on fandom, media reception and use as well as how fans participate in their textual premises and the cultural, social, economic and political consequences of this. Sandvoss defines fandom as:

the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text in the form of books, television shows, films or music, as well as popular texts in a broader sense such as sports teams and popular icons and stars ranging from athletes and musicians to actors (Sandvoss his emphasis, 2005: 8)

Sandvoss indicates the broad range of ways in which fandoms can be created. Unlike Hills who discusses how fandom impacts on large groups of fans and how they share common interests Sandvoss’ work focuses on the experience and identity on the individual fan. In addition, he proposes a new perspective on fans and popular culture arguing that the modern self is reflected and constituted through media consumption, in much the same way as the cinematic experience is constituted through distracted spectatorship. In using my own experiences for the case study, frontispieces and distracted analyses the parallel of how fandoms are reflected in academia is brought to the fore.

Media theorists Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse establish in their 2006 work, *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, that the book is itself a reflection of how fan communities work:

The community-centred creation of artistic fannish expressions such as fan fiction, fan art, and fan vids is mirrored in the creation of this book, with constant manipulation, renegotiation, commenting, and revising, all done electronically among a group of people, mostly women, intimately involved in the creation and consumption of fannish goods (Hellekson and Busse, 2006: 6)

Focusing on fan fiction Hellekson and Busse introduce how, from a sociological standpoint, fan fiction is and has been a mostly female enterprise. Their work traces fanzines from the 1960s to recent online forums to discuss how and why people become fans and what the difference is between liking something and being a fan of it. In his 2012 work, *Approaching the Hunger Games Trilogy: A Literary and Cultural Analysis*, Tom Henthorne examines how *The Hunger Games* trilogy has generated at least more than ten times the number of fan fiction stories than other popular series', such as *His Dark Materials* and *The Uglies*. Henthorne discusses how *The Hunger Games* was timely in the sense that it was 'written in a way that is particularly appealing to contemporary readers – that is, readers accustomed to digital texts' (Henthorne, 2012: 145). The first person narrative in which the books are written, though not unique, affects the way the reader identifies with the main character of Katniss, discussed further in Chapter Five. In *Fan Fiction Studies Reader* (2014) Hellekson and Busse address the relationship between fandom, identity and feminism as well as the role of creativity and performance in fan activities. They consider how fan works, such as fan fiction, pose important questions about the nature of authorship and the meaning of originality. What the above quotation demonstrates is the similarities between performing fan identities and performing academic identities. Through displaying their own fandom Hellekson and Busse demonstrate that the two identities support each other:

By remaining fan-scholars at the same time that we become scholar-fans, we hope to shift the concerns from a dichotomy of academic and fannish identify to subject positions that are multiple and permit us to treat the academic and fannish parts as equally important. Our identities are neither separate nor separable (Hellekson and Busse, 2006: 24)

Their work establishes the dual possibility of being both a fan and an academic simultaneously. This is vital with regards to the frontispieces, notebooks and distracted analyses as they were produced by both a fan and an academic and are viewed as both an expression of fandom and as an expression of an academic argument, therefore they stand as an example of these two identities simultaneously. Analysing fandoms is significant because being a fan becomes part of one's identity and being connected to particular fandoms forms that identity in particular ways. According to Sandvoss it is, therefore, necessary to focus 'on the role of fandom in constructing fans' identity, in order to understand its social and cultural implications' (Sandvoss, 2005: 157). Given Sandvoss' definition of fandom it is clear how 'it has become impossible to discuss popular consumption without reference to fandom and fan theory, just as it has become next to impossible to find realms of public life which are

unaffected by fandom' (Sandvoss, 2005: 3). Booth, writing five years after Sandvoss, expands on how fandoms are now an integral part of gaining an awareness and insight into digital cultures: 'In an era when the mass media saturate our lives, and the boundaries between cult and mass cultures have blurred, fandom becomes one way to understand contemporary digital culture' (Booth, 2010: 20). Booth expands on this by stating that the reason fandoms are a vital part of understanding cultures is precisely because of their academic approach to culture: 'Fans typically utilize their technological capacities, their communal intelligence, their individual knowledge base and their social interaction skills to investigate and explore media. Fans lie at the forefront of our rapidly changing media environment' (Booth, 2010: 20). *The Hunger Games* is positioned by theorists as unique in its ability to allow readers and viewers a space to enter into as fans: '*The Hunger Games* trilogy proffers a fictive world that readers can not only engage with but enter into, supplementing it with their own imaginings as they fill in gaps or develop suggestions and possibilities that are left open by the text' (Henthorne, 2012: 150). Curwood and Fink expand on this in their 2013 work on *The Hunger Games* by describing how the online spaces it makes available for people to interact with the literature is a 'pioneering a new paradigm for young adult literature in a digital age' (Curwood and Fink, 2013: 417). They explore how, through the use of technology, rather than encouraging a more passive form of participation or replacing the books altogether the online fan spaces promote 'critical engagement with literature and fostered [...] development of advanced literary practices and leadership skills' (Curwood and Fink, 2013: 417). Through their discussions on fandoms and fan cultures Curwood and Fink emphasise the way in which technology can be used as part of critical inquiry to examine the ways in which fans take certain aspects of a particular fandom and reappropriate it in a variety of ways that take into account their own creative process:

[Fans] engage in multimodal composition to express their identities, and participate in social networks to develop and maintain relationships. Research on fan culture, in particular, has examined how young adults use the characters, settings, and themes within literature as inspiration for their own creative work (Curwood and Fink, 2013: 417)

Just as Sandvoss explores how fandom can be defined in terms of consumption with a cultural object, Jenkins maintains that fan cultures are a 'complex, multidimensional phenomenon, inviting many forms of participation and levels of engagement' (Jenkins, 1992: 2). Through the increase in theoretical autoethnographic approaches to fans Jenkins shows that the relationship between fans and consumption is not simply a result of one stemming

from the other. Though, as Hills attests, the relationship between fan cultures and consumption cannot be ignored: ‘fans are always already consumers’ (Hills, 2002: 3). Fan cultures are seen as a specific kind of focused experience and the way in which the cinematic experience fosters connections between different films and different genres of films means that in holding all of the connections together the spectator becomes a fan spectator on an implicit level. I argue that distracted spectatorship and the way cinematic experiences are created means that it is possible to view every spectator as a fan. As indicated by Jenkins above the image of the fan can still constitute a denigration of what it means to be a spectator. The fan is depicted as ‘a neurotic fantasist, or a lust-crazed groupie [...] whose interests are fundamentally alien to the realm of “normal” cultural experience’ (Jenkins, 1992: 15). Claiming that everyone is in some way a fan goes a step towards removing this negative image. Jenkins also explores how fans can be construed with regards to certain levels of activity regarding fandom. As franchise films can be explicitly connected to fan culture it is necessary to consider whether or not there are certain types of film that are designed to produce puncta when it comes to distracted spectatorship. Franchise films are particularly well suited to this as they are trying to produce a certain spectatorial effect via aspects such as self-reflexivity, citation, intertextual allusion and narrative seriality. However, those characteristics do not necessarily produce the affect with the spectator that Barthes considers in his work on photographs. Even though franchise films are deliberately trying to employ the aesthetic of distraction this does not naturally lead into the spectator being engaged, excited, upset, disturbed or have any feeling at all towards what they are watching. As commercial cinema is actively trying to broaden its audience it will, almost inevitably, fail in producing a deep engagement with fans. If, on the other hand, we widen the definition of what it means to be a fan and understand that the cinematic experience exists before, after and during the film it is then possible to suggest that distracted spectatorship relies on all aspects to do with the cinematic experience and is not confined to an analysis of the film itself. Jenkins examines a particular set of fan cultures which allow us to see how restrictive the definitions can be:

- a. Fandom involves a particular mode of reception [...]
- b. Fandom involves a particular set of critical and interpretive practices [...]
- c. Fandom constitutes a base for consumer activism. Fans are viewers who speak back to the networks and producers, who assert their right to make judgements and express opinions about the development of favourite programs [...]
- d. Fandom possesses particular forms of cultural production, aesthetic traditions and practices. Fan artists, writers, videomakers, and musicians create works that speak to the special interests of the fan community [...]
- e. Fandom functions as an alternative social community (Jenkins, 1992: 277-9)

Viewing the distracted spectator as a part of fan culture shows how the image of the fan as a fanatic (the origin of the word) is no longer relevant. Another way of viewing fans, and which the thesis discusses implicitly, is as aca-fans; it is the term used to describe ‘both a fan and an academic’ (Jenkins, 2013: viii). Though Jenkins does not use the term in his book *Textual Poachers* (2013) he is often credited with coining it. Jenkins argues that there are three things at stake when using the aca-fan concept: ‘the acknowledgement of our own personal stakes in the forms of popular culture we study, the accountability of the ethnographer to the communities we study, and the sense of membership or affiliation with the populations at the heart of our research’ (Jenkins, 2013: xiii). As such aca-fans recognise that ‘what we put into print matters, that academic claims carry cultural weight and can have consequences for those depicted in our accounts’ (Jenkins, 2013: xiii). With a term such as aca-fan that combines both being a fan and an academic it is possible to see the multiple ways it is possible to be acknowledged as a fan. With franchise films flooding the market more and more spectators watch and interact with the material and can be called fan spectators without the negative connotations associated with the word. Fandom is increasingly becoming a part of everyday life, as Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington show it is the ‘particular mode of reading that marks the way in which fans approach (media) texts, the particular and conspicuous patterns of fan consumption and the specific forms of social interaction that take place between fans’ which have become integral to modern societies (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007: 9). Fan culture is not separate or different to spectatorship and one could argue that what Jenkins is describing as fan culture is the recognition of the allusion and reference as part of the spectatorial experience. It is important to note that fans are not limited to a single definition and are a ‘compelling, ever-changing audience with multiple layers that are often more dimensional than the overarching and limited ways they have been historically represented in media and popular culture’ (Bennett and Booth, 2016: 1). Bennett and Booth explore how the different representations of fandom have ‘become a multilayered portrait of an ever-changing audience’ (Bennett and Booth, 2016: 8). This exploration is linked to the work I am doing in this thesis, making those multiple identities visible through distracted spectatorship. They also argue that in the process of discussing fans it becomes ‘more than just observation; it is a constant process of critique and comparison’ (Bennett and Booth, 2016: 8).

The Hunger Games is particularly rich in terms of this analysis since it can be read as a text about media and fandom as the main character functions as a figure of identification for female fans, explored in Chapter Five. This does not foreclose the possibility or likelihood

that male viewers can identify with this character and that male identification with the protagonist is intended by filmmakers. I am approaching the character from my own subjective gendered position and as such, given the self-reflexive nature of the research, the focus is on female fans that are gendered in a particular way. Katheryn Wright in her 2012 work on *The Hunger Games* explains how the character of Katniss can be compared with a fan as she ‘acts as both producer and consumer’ (2012: 103). Before the first book Wright argues that Katniss ‘is part of the television audience that has watched the Hunger Games each year’ and when she is made a part of the Games ‘she is part of the television broadcast and made over into a proper tribute for the competition’ (Wright, 2012: 103). Just as Katniss can be understood in terms of being a fan Shannon Mortimore-Smith considers how Katniss takes control of her own situation just as fans take control when involved in fan cultures. Mortimore-Smith argues how ‘Katniss first seizes control when she spins her arrow into the gluttonous judges’ roast pig’ and through this defiant act she ‘fearlessly demands recognition and pause’ (Mortimore-Smith, 2012: 165). This way of understanding the character of Katniss emphasises aspects of participatory culture as explored by Jenkins earlier on. Bennett suggests how the communication and connection that is necessary for participatory culture has been made simpler with the rise of digital cultures as the ‘[i]nternet and social media has allowed for the development, and fragmentation, of networks and communities comprised of fans even further’ (Bennett, 2014: 7). These changes in digital technologies are displayed through the concept of convergence:

By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. Convergence is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural and social changes depending on who’s speaking and what they think they are talking about. [...] In the world of media convergence, every important story gets told, every brand gets sold, and every consumer gets courted across multiple media platforms (Jenkins, 2006: 2-3)

In this way convergence represents a shift as consumers are encouraged more and more to seek out new information and make connections among the levels of dispersed media content. Convergence serves as both a top-down corporate driven process as well as a bottom-up consumer driven process. Participation and convergence combine through the fans and how they rewrite or remake certain materials in relation to a particular franchise. This is one of the reasons that fans are so integral to this approach, because of the way they play an active role in extending their own cinematic experience:

Fandom, after all, is born of a balance between fascination and frustration: if media content didn't fascinate us, there would be no desire to engage with it; but if it didn't frustrate us on some level, there would be no drive to rewrite or remake it (Jenkins, 2006: 247)

Jenkins goes on to argue how this rewriting is done not by destroying the commercial cultural object but by 'modding it, amending it, expanding it, adding greater diversity of perspective, and then recirculating it, feeding it back into the mainstream media' (Jenkins, 2006: 257). However, as stated earlier, participation can exist in other ways that do not require such an explicit level of interaction. Rewriting media is not the only way that consumers and fans can be involved in the cinematic experience, and what Jenkins suggests is a level of activity that most spectators do not take part in. Fan fiction is one of the activities that is discussed in relation to fan cultures though will not be a significant practice for most fans. What the inclusion of fan fiction allows for is the understanding that fan analysis with regards to texts is constantly changing. Hellekson and Busse draw on Barthes' identification of a writerly text, in *S/Z* (1974), where the text is 'is traversed, intersected, stopped, ... which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages' (Barthes, 1974: 5). Examining this approach Hellekson and Busse argue how fan fiction allows 'the viewer to enter, interpret, and expand the text' as a process of interpretive fan engagement the fan 'not only analyses the text but also must constantly renegotiate her analysis' (Hellekson and Busse, 2006: 6). Fan fiction, therefore, confirms that fan cultures are constant works in progress that offer 'an ever-growing, ever-expanding version of the characters' (2006: 7).

As Hellekson and Busse have argued those processes take place in a space that is always gendered. From as early as 1994 female fans made separate spaces for themselves online as '94 percent of users were male' (Bury, 2005: 1-2). Bury emphasises how because of this female fans chose to 'stake out and colonize cyberspaces of their own in the form of private mailing lists' (Bury, 2005: 1-2). There are now multiple ways to connect with fandoms, both online and offline and gender is intrinsically connected to the way one behaves in relation to fan cultures. Exemplified by Bury who states that it is 'not only what I do that makes me recognisable as a woman but what I say and how I say it' as such even online 'the body continues to signify gender intelligibility *linguistically*' (Bury, 2005: 8). The inclusion of gender with regards to this thesis is integral as even though the case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses are not a way of interacting with fandoms online the way I write and express myself as a fan is gendered. Just like fan cultures gender and

feminism are constantly in flux, as indicated by cultural theorist Rosalind Gill in her 2007 work *Gender and the Media*. Gill explores the contradictory character of contemporary gender relations and states that ‘feminist ideas are constantly transforming in response to different critiques, to new or previously excluded constituencies, to younger generations, to new theoretical ideas, and to the experience of various kinds of struggle’ (Gill, 2007: 2). This supports the shifting ideas on fandom discussed above and emphasises how if ‘media representations of gender have changed, then so too have the feminist ideas used to understand and critique them’ (Gill, 2007: 2). Henthorne argues that *The Hunger Games* “queers” normative gender roles and explores what possibilities this opens up as the series calls into ‘question the very practice of identifying people as male and female, masculine and feminine, heterosexual and homosexual’ (Henthorne, 2012: 54). The books, and the films, defamiliarise gender and as such it is easier to see how the character of Katniss ‘metamorphoses from being a young woman playing a sexy warrior for propaganda purposes into something entirely new and unaccountable’ (Henthorne, 2012: 54). The way the character of Katniss can simultaneously represent different genders makes it easier to identify with her and making her a key figure with regards to gender, discussed further in Chapter Five. Similarly Day, Green-Barteet and Montz examine how the novels feature a female protagonist who contends with threats from society and the government at the same time as she is navigating young adulthood. They argue how ‘the desire to resist the limitations of gender and age can be found in many contemporary girl protagonists, particularly in the dystopian novels’ (Day, Green-Barteet and Montz, 2014: 3). In these novels the female protagonists ‘occupy liminal spaces as they seek to understand their places in the world [and] to claim their identities’ (Day, Green-Barteet and Montz, 2014: 3). This is a reflection of the work I am doing in this thesis of making these identities visible and, therefore, enabling them to be claimed by the distracted spectator. Valerie Frankel explores how the character of Katniss is a dystopian heroine, a warrior woman, a reality television star and a rebellious adolescent all at the same time. As a child soldier she faces trauma when her father dies and as a growing teen she faces literal battles in the Games. Discussing gender in relation to fandom aids in the understanding of fan cultures more generally as studying fan audiences tells ‘us something about the way in which we relate to those around us, as well as the way we read the mediated texts that constitute an ever larger part of our horizon of experience’ (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007: 10). Gender is one of the ways in which fans can engage and identify with certain fandoms and examining that engagement through gender can be done in an emotionally involved and invested way. This approach throughout the thesis is based on self-reflexivity as

the way fans read and understand gender, as stated above, is constantly shifting and changing. Therefore, in order to gain an insight into issues of gender and fandom a self-reflexive case study is used to account for the voice of one fan and how they identify with *The Hunger Games*. Booth argues that fan studies should ‘refocus attention back onto fans themselves’ which would have the result of bringing a ‘fannish voice into scholarship on fans’ (Bennett, 2014: 11-12). The following section discusses the methods the thesis uses to attempt to achieve this.

Section Two

Phenomenology, Affect and the Self-reflexive Approach

This chapter will expand on how the thesis is informed by phenomenology and affect and as such why a self-reflexive approach was chosen in the approach to the case study. When it comes to the cinematic experience, and film more generally, it is never a case of looking at a single object and analysing it; as art critic John Berger stated ‘we never look just at one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves’ (Berger, 1972: 13). Berger, whose work derived from Benjamin’s essay ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, emphasises feminist readings of popular culture and particularly focuses on how women are portrayed in advertisements as well as paintings. The above quotation emphasises the importance on the spectator when it comes to the analysis of images and brings to the fore how the spectator is a part of that analysis. This idea is also explored by philosopher and sociologist Gillian Rose in her 2006 work, *Visual Methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials*. Rose explains how spectators deal with the visual by using diverse approaches such as semiotics, discourse analysis, psychoanalysis and content analysis. When Rose writes about images she identifies how ‘what is important about images is not simply the image itself, but how it is seen by particular spectators who look in particular ways’ (Rose, 2006: 7). She expands on this to outline how audiences will bring their own interpretations when it comes to understanding an image’s meaning and effects. Rose outlines how the different ways of looking have been interpreted as ‘there have been many studies which have explored how different audiences interpret the same visual images in very different ways’ (Rose, 2006: 24). Rose explores the work of Morley (1989), Gray (1992) and Walkerdine (1986) as examples of this. Walkerdine in particular uses ethnographic research to explore the different reactions to audiences while watching *Rocky II* (Sylvester Stallone, 1979). Rose goes on to argue that ‘these differences

have been attributed to the different social identities of the viewers concerned' (2006: 24). What can be concluded by Rose's argument, and what Rose herself states, is that 'audiences make their own interpretations of an image' (Rose, 2006: 23). Self-reflection is a vital aspect of research as it allows us to understand the cultural object in a different way, one that takes into account the viewer's own responses. One of the difficulties in this kind of research is not generalising when it comes to discussing spectatorship and audiences. In many ways the case study, frontispieces and distracted analyses as well as the discussion of them will overcome some of these problems as the thesis presents a close analysis of one person's individual cinematic experience. Though I am limiting my discussion to my own fan works here, aspects such as digital materials including GIFs and Tumblr posts will be explored in relation to identification in Chapter Five. When it comes to writing about the distracted spectator as a concept, generalisations will occur as they are unavoidable. In confining the discussion of the cinematic experience to one distracted spectator this is another strategy implemented to try to clarify as many of the generalisations as possible. It can be argued that textual analysis often relies exclusively on the formal and technical aspects of the cinema; as a result it isolates a single film and ignores the complex nature of the cinematic experience. As mentioned previously, reflecting on affect and phenomenology through self-reflexivity will allow for the cinematic experience to be analysed as dependent on distracted spectatorship instead of restricting that analysis to the formal and technical conventions of one particular film.

Phenomenology and Affect

The work of film theorist Jennifer Barker, discussed in Chapter One, offers an instructive example of how affect and phenomenology can be read in conjunction with each other when discussing the cinematic experience. Focusing on the sensation of touch Barker approaches the cinematic experience from a predominantly physical perspective, considered below:

[I]ove, desire, loss, nostalgia, and joy are perceived and expressed in fundamentally tactile ways, not only by characters but also, even more profoundly, by film and viewer. These embodied, emotional experiences / may begin in and on the surface of the body, but they come to involve the entire body and to register as movement, comportment, tension, internal rhythms, and a full-bodied engagement with the materiality of the world (Barker, 2009: 1-2)

Barker explores how the film enables the spectator to understand both the world of the film and their own world through the tactility that is shown on screen and, as a result, what they

feel in their own bodies. This line of argument builds on Sobchack's theory of how the film is felt through the spectator's lived-body. Using touch as an example of how certain sensations are shared between viewer and film Barker explores how 'cinema's tactility thus opens up the possibility of cinema as an *intimate* experience and of our relationship with cinema as a *close* connection' rather than theorising film as 'a distant experience of observation, which the notion of cinema as a purely visual medium presumes' Barker shows how certain structures of human touch correspond to particular structures of the cinematic experience (Barker, 2009: 2). I have found through the process of researching into the cinematic experience that when theorists mention either the cinematic or film experience rarely is there a definition accompanying the term. One of the clearest definitions is in the work of Barker through her discussions of phenomenology:

The phenomenon of feeling, if not being, physically in two places at once is a hallmark of the cinematic experience. [...] The film experience is predicated upon a kind of "ambidexterity" of the body's self-perception. [...] The film experience rests on the viewer's simultaneous ability to *not feel where I am*, and to *feel where I am not* (Barker, 2009: 84)

Here she suggests the most integral aspect of the cinematic experience is the ability to feel yourself in two places at once. The cinematic experience is about being aware that you are in a building sat down and watching a film, and you are aware of your own body and the bodies of those around you; whilst simultaneously you are also living in the world on the screen and are equally aware of that world around you. Barker expands on this by illustrating how in horror films when something suddenly appears on the screen you have a physical reaction that causes you to jump in your seat, even though you know there can be no way that the figure is in the cinema with you. Barker explores this phenomenological connection between the body of the spectator and the history of cinema by arguing how 'the spectator seeks entertainment through a medium that cannot operate without his or her continuous participation', historically with regards to the mutoscope 'the speed of the spectators' bodily movements determines the speed of the images' (Barker, 2009: 134). This example demonstrates the 'remarkable extent to which the human body is figured as an intimate and integral component of the cinema' (Barker, 2009: 134). In a sense this way of discussing cinema as reliant on the body of the spectator can be extended to understanding the cinematic experience in relation to distracted spectatorship. What Barker does is to look at specific moments from a variety of films to understand how affect and phenomenology work towards affecting the spectator. What my research does is to look at the cinematic experience as a

whole, from the moment it has been decided that the spectator will watch a particular film straight through to going to see the film and potentially beyond. The combination of affect and phenomenology relate to my research on distracted spectatorship as it is concerned with placing the body as a presence in the research, as cultural theorist Judith Mayne indicates,

[f]or many scholars working in film studies, the study of spectatorship has provided a way to understand film in its cultural dimension, while avoiding the simple determinism of the reflection hypothesis, whereby films “show” or reflect in relatively static ways the preoccupations of a given society. Instead, the study of spectatorship involves an engagement with modes of seeing and telling, hearing and listening, not only in terms of how films are structured, but in terms of how audiences imagine themselves (Mayne, 1993: 32)

This thesis is putting forward an approach to the cinematic experience that is embodied, affective and produced by the spectator. As such it is necessary to include self-reflexivity in order to examine the experience and break the homogeneity of the film theory generalisation.

Self-reflexivity

Feminist theorists, such as Rose discussed above, emphasise how ‘audiences make their own interpretations of an image’ (2006: 23) and how ‘identity is the pure product that we consume, either as information or as image’ (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001: 228). Self-reflection has been seen as important for feminist research in particular as the emphasis here, and by theorists discussed below, is on how self-reflection is grounded in the rejection of masculinist modes of scholarship based on the notion of objectivity. In the case of Rose she argues that knowledge and entertainment are increasingly visual and suggests that there is a move to a more visual medium. This is because whereas written language must persuade visual language speaks more directly to the spectator. It is through culture that we understand this visual language as our society is one that is saturated with images. Visual images not only evoke affects and contribute to our cultural experience, they are part of the cultural practices which ‘both depend on and produce social inclusions and exclusions’ (Rose, 2007: 12). Following the traditional idea that in Western art the ‘ideal spectator’ (Berger, 1972: 64) is always male and the female body has been depicted as passive and made ‘to be pleasing to look at’ (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001: 84). In fact the body is free to become whatever it wants it just needs to follow one rule: to “emit signs”, that is, to signify its relation to social norms’ (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001: 97). This leads into a more self-aware approach to seeing as we need to be more critical of how arguments and opinions are formed in a visual

culture. In a postmodern visual culture asking what the real meaning of the image is is not the right question to ask, the more productive question is: what does this image do? This maintains Berger's argument, explored above, that there is a connection between seeing and knowing and examining the visual means being attentive to the ways that we see.

In combining the punctum and self-reflexivity we create a 'hybrid text, part image and part literate criticism that reveals self-knowledge and knowledge of culture' (Mauer, 2005: 112). As stated in the introduction, Finlay and Gough identify how self-reflexivity is defined as the process of analysis between the research and the researched (2003: ix). They argue that the self-reflexive approach requires the researcher to be critical of the ways their background, assumptions and behaviour impact on the research (2003: ix). This position is supported by sociologist Michal Pagis who maintains that 'self-reflexivity refers to the conscious turning of the individual toward himself' (Pagis, 2009: 266). The process of self-reflexivity demands that the spectator is 'simultaneously being the observing subject and the observed subject, a process that includes both self-knowledge and self-monitoring' (Pagis, 2009: 266). With regards to understanding the cinematic experience, using a self-reflexive approach allows for the experience of the individual to be looked back on in order to recognise how it relates to distracted spectatorship.⁴ The value of this approach is not purely that it allows me to understand my own cinematic experience but also that it produces distance between myself and the object of study. As such I am simultaneously writing about distraction whilst producing another layer of distraction into the analysis. This enables me to examine how distraction is seen and produced and to reflect on my own self-reflexivity. In this way the thesis creates its own distraction through documenting and writing it, this is a necessary component in producing this kind of knowledge around distracted spectatorship. A potential problem with the self-reflexive approach is outlined by critical theorist Susan Sontag who claims that being aware of something can make the spectator stunt their own emotional response to the material, she argues that 'to the extent that we are conscious of form in a work of art, we become somewhat detached; our emotions do not respond in the same way as

⁴ A reflexive approach differs from an autoethnographic one as an autoethnographic approach features 'concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection portrayed in dialogue, scenes, characterisation, and plot', in this way Carolyn Ellis argues that the approach 'claims the conventions of literary writing' (Ellis, 2004: xix). There are similarities between the two approaches as they both include 'research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political' (Ellis, 2004: xix). The reason this project does not use autoethnography as its main method is that in order for a project to be autoethnographic the field notes, interviews, artefacts etc. are described 'using facets of storytelling (e.g., character and plot development), showing and telling, and alterations of authorial voice' (Ellis, Adams and Bocher, 2011). This is not how the cinematic experience is approached within this thesis; the case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses stand as examples of distraction and the cinematic experience rather than being used as a fundamental part of the analysis.

they do in real life' (Sontag, 1967: 179-180). The question of method when it comes to analysing film audiences and spectators is an obstacle as there are a variety of approaches to take:

For decades, academics have struggled with issues of spectatorship in relation to film reception. How was one to know just who "ordinary" spectators were, and how could one make general claims about their responses to particular films when there was so little direct evidence available? In some instances, scholars followed the tradition of "reader response" literary theory – positing either an ideal (or hoped for) spectator, or a hypothetical "spectator in the text", constituted from formal cues in the film itself, or, alternatively an "oppositional spectator", who viewed the film against the grain of culturally dominant tastes and interpretations. More recently, scholars have turned to discourse analysis: gleaning from a range of archival sources evidentiary bits and pieces of spectator responses as well as contextual clues with which to understand the "interpretive communities" to which these filmgoers belonged. In fewer instances (in the sociologically inclined thirties, and more recently), scholars have also conducted interviews and focus groups, but their questions, however open-ended in intent, are also significantly framed; moreover, interviews and focus groups involve only a small number of people. Indeed, as scholar Janet Staiger writes in her 2000 study *Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception*: "Film and television have never been more prevalent or watched than they are now, yet we still have little understanding of how people process and make use of what they see" (Sobchack, 2013: 40)

This emphasises the difficulties in establishing a particular method when it comes to film and spectator analysis. Using a self-reflexive method means creating self-narratives which 'involve looking back at the past through the lens of the present' and given the 'ambiguous and open-ended quality of experience, stories give a measure of coherence and continuity that was not available at the original moment of experience' (Bochner, 2000: 270). Bochner goes on to argue that the purpose of self-reflexivity is not to depict experience as it was lived but to extract meaning from that experience:

These narratives are not so much academic as they are existential, reflecting a desire to grasp or seize the possibilities of meaning, which is what gives life its imaginative and poetic qualities. The call of narrative is the inspiration to find language that is adequate to the obscurity and darkness of experience. We narrate to make sense of experience over the course of time. Thus, narrative is our means of fashioning experience in language. Narrative is true to experience in the sense that experience presents itself in a poetic dimensionality saturated with the possibilities of meaning, however perishable, momentary, and contingent (Bochner, 2000: 270)

Using a self-reflexive method allows for a level of introspection and as such enables the analysis to ‘use personal revelation not as an end in itself but as a springboard for interpretations and more general insight’ (Finlay and Gough, 2003: 8). This allows for a self-reflexive approach that takes into account how spectators process and make use of what they see. Ellis and Flaherty explore how subjectivity can be ‘both unpleasant and dangerous; unpleasant because emotional, cognitive, and physical experiences frequently concern even that, in spite of their importance, are deemed inappropriate topics’ and ‘dangerous because the workings of subjectivity seem to contradict so much of the rational-actor worldview on which mainstream sociology is premised’ (1992: 1). They go on to argue that through the process of telling one’s experience the experience itself is changed: ‘[w]hen one describes one’s experience, the text is always transformed by the telling of it; clearly demarcated, linear story lines cannot be used to convey lived experience’ (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992: 104). Instead they examine how the telling of an experience ‘is a circular process of interpretation that blurs and intertwines both cognitive and emotional understandings’ (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992: 104). Not everyone will have the same interpretation of an experience and so it becomes necessary to examine how an individual’s interpretations bear on the overall interpretation of the cinematic experience. Cultural critic Henry Giroux argues that there is an important distinction ‘between the attempt to simply read a text and make claims for it and to read it in light of a whole assemblage of social relations’ (Giroux, 2001: 16). Rather than examining how the cinematic experience relates to public discourses as a whole I have narrowed the focus and will examine how it affects one person as both a fan and a spectator. Doing this will enable me to focus on the cinematic experience and analyse it in great detail before discussing how it affects spectatorship as a whole.

That is why it is important to note that this particular research is about my own experience and revealing the identities that I embody. Though the self-reflexive approach will be used to comment on analysis in Film Studies more generally the discussions of distracted spectatorship are limited to my own cinematic experience. In order to overcome this potential gap in knowledge the self-reflexive approach is combined with other methods of analysis of film and spectatorship. A ‘formalist approach’ examines the film itself and its structure and form which focuses on internal evidence; a ‘narrative analysis’ analyses how a film employs formal elements (setting, character, structure etc.) to convey meaning; exploring formal techniques such as ‘mise-en-scene, photography composition, camera movements, editing

choices, sound in relation to image etc' will allow for an investigation into those techniques and how the viewer perceives and interprets the scenes because of them; a 'contextualist approach' examines how the film is part of a broader context and how it is a part of that 'particular culture, time and place that created it' (Jacobs, 2013: 3). As self-reflexivity refers to 'behaviour in which an individual confronts himself in responding to some object and makes an inference about himself as an active self on the basis of that confrontation' (Woelfel and Haller, 1971: 76) using the method in conjunction with analytical methods will provide a space in which the experiences of the individual can be used to understand the cinematic experience with regards to distracted spectatorship. This expands on the work of Couldry who argued that cultural studies has 'often failed to take account of the non-conformity of the individual voice – the dissenter, the person who works against the grain, the person who is angry, confused, hurt by the ways in which he or she is addressed by wider cultural forces' (Couldry, 2000: 127). He explored how the way round this failing was to use a self-reflexive approach in order to 'integrate into our accounts of culture an awareness of what people "inside" culture actually do: what cultural flows reach them, what they actively consume, what they feel or think about the wider cultural space they inhabit, and so on' (Couldry, 2000: 127). In doing this work from a self-reflexive standpoint it allows it to be seen how culture works on individuals in particular ways.

As has been discussed in Chapter One, writing about immediate experiences is complex because of the nature of distracted spectatorship which makes the experience disjointed and hard to trace. Woelfel and Haller argue that in the event of analysing an 'ambiguous or nonobservable objects, reliance on interpersonal influence and other related attitudes should increase' (1971: 76). According to Pagis self-reflexivity is closely linked to language as it is 'dependant on the capacity to communicate via symbols' and as such is 'anchored in language, communication, and social interaction' (Pagis, 2009: 266). One of the processes Pagis establishes when using a self-reflexive method is through language 'since it has an easily accessible reflexive capacity', he argues that by just 'saying the word "I", a person turns herself into an object which she can relate' (Pagis, 2009: 266). Through language one can be turned into the object of analysis and this emphasises how, ultimately, the value of the case study is that it helps us understand the individualised nature of spectatorship and aids in acknowledging the ordinary aspects of my own cinematic experience. A self-reflexive mode of research is to take the object of research and to use 'self-reflexive strategies and practices' (Nöth, 2007: 125) to relate to them in a different way. Withalm explores some of the possible strategies by arguing how there are many 'forms,

functions, devices, and textual strategies of self-reference or self-reflexivity' he goes on to state the strategies available for the writer, such as, 'creating an ironic or critical distance or even a sense of alienation, the mere fascination with cinematographic possibilities, the device of creating emotional bonds between the audience and the movies or movie stars, the device of humour, or the attempt at attracting the attention of an audience sated with watching the media' (Withalm, 2007: 125). Using self-reflexivity with regards to fan studies enables the researcher to 'map the complex material and immaterial locations in space and time embodied by both academic and research communities, and where those fold over into people's everyday media/fan engagement' (Evans and Stasi, 2014: 18). The practices I use to do this work entailed the creation of the two case study books, three frontispieces and two written distracted analysis texts.

Case Study Notebooks

Through the theory of distracted spectatorship there can be a discussion on how the spectator can be both immersed in the material and distracted from it at the same time. The case study notebooks are an example of how the fan can balance these two states simultaneously. The notebooks I have created have a different status from normal notes as they are partway between fan work, note taking and autoethnography. The notebooks provide an insight into my own cinematic experience and the reflections on them aids in drawing conclusions on wider spectatorial issues. They also identify the variety of ways in which the spectator can interact with films as well as being the starting point for academic writing. The act of creating a notebook is methodologically interesting as they enable you to see the multiple layers of writing on a particular subject. The books I have created also serve as a visual illustration of distracted spectatorship. They also connect back to Rose's work on how different spectators look in different ways. My way of looking at things is illustrated through the moments of distraction in the notebooks. The aim of the notebooks was not to produce a neat and seamless finished object, instead they serve to demonstrate how the terms discussed in relation to the thesis are slippery, changeable and difficult to trace.

Regarding a franchise, with each new film comes the chance to learn more about the story and the characters within it. The fan actively wants to know more about the fictional worlds of which they are a fan and so makes the conscious choice to go and see each new instalment in order to know what happens next. The conscious choice of going to see the film comes from the fan that is interacting with the franchise long before the final film is released.

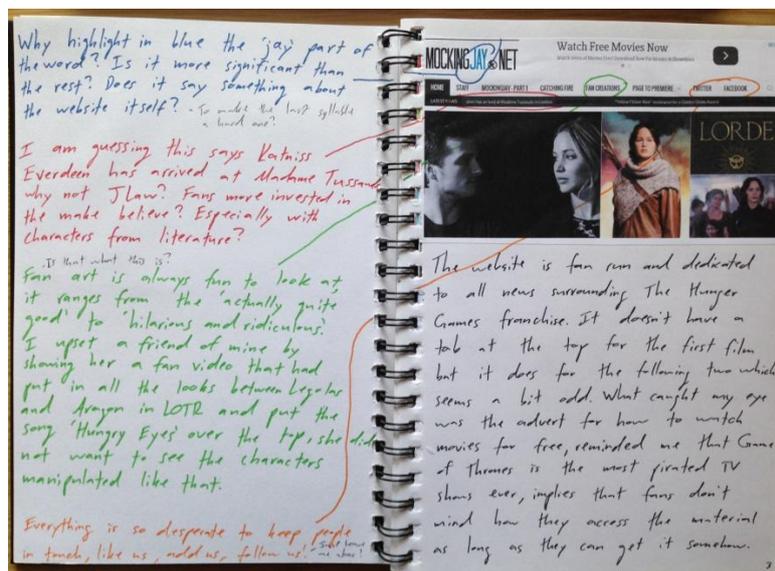


Figure 5 Case Study Notebook One

This moment is identified through my own film viewing as when I attended *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1*. The case study notebooks begin with a cinema ticket for this particular film as the beginning of my own cinematic experience. Though the cinematic experience does not necessarily have a definable starting point, this allowed a clear timeframe to be set as there was a year between the release of *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1* and *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. Beginning my case study notebooks with my record of buying the cinema ticket created a definite start and a definite end to tracing my own cinematic experience in relation to the franchise. This enabled me to capture a particular moment in time rather than attempting to trace the entirety of my cinematic experience, for that to be done the project would be ongoing. The layout I had chosen for the notebooks dictated the dominant topics that would be discussed. An example of the layout can be seen in Figure 5 which shows, on the right hand side of the book, the cultural object being discussed is a website dedicated to *The Hunger Games* franchise. This main narrative is exemplified in the first case study book by isolating it to the right hand side of the double page and using black pen in the discussion related to it. This was done to make the main narrative of the cinematic experience easy to see and allows for the moments of distraction branching off it in sub-narratives clearer to understand. In the first book the topics covered on the right hand side of each double page are in relation to *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. Every time I came across a cultural object, such as the website mentioned, that explicitly connected to the final film in the franchise I would place it in the notebook. I did not limit myself to a topic for the moments of distraction that took place.

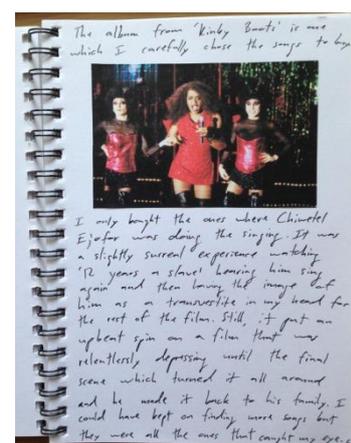
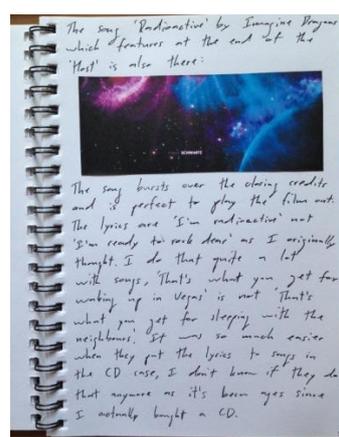
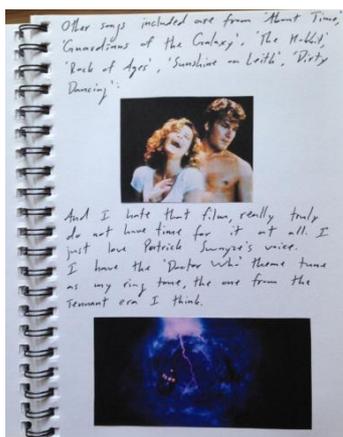
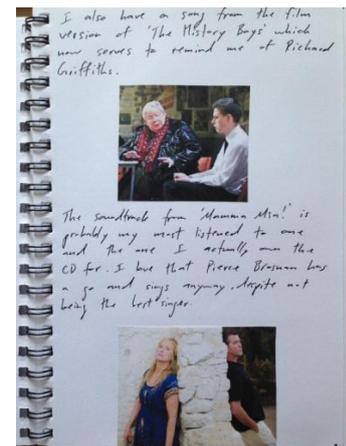
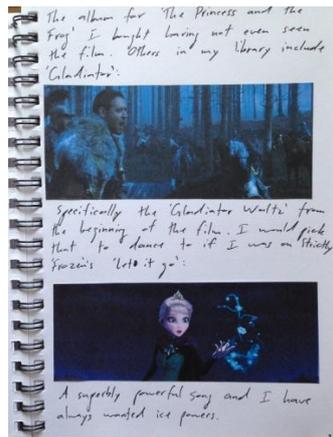
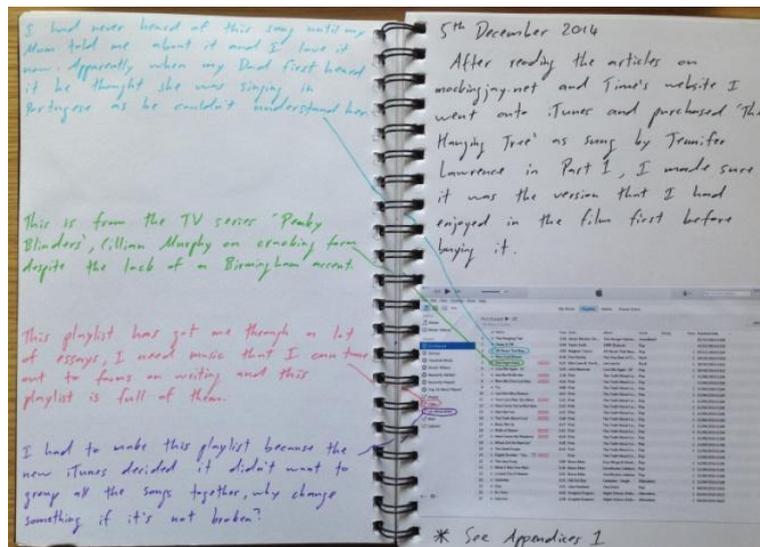


Figure 6 Case Study Notebook One and Two

These were about capturing the immediate moment of distraction when it occurred so the topics are wide-ranging and do not necessarily link together. When the moments of distraction occur they branch off as tangents from the main narrative (shown on the left hand side of the book in Figure 5). The distractions are always connected to the main narrative as they can always be traced back to the initial moment of distraction that prompted them. This

is shown through the creation of sub-narratives as exemplified in the second case study notebook. Figure 6 shows how throughout the case study books there are distractions that warrant their own sub-narrative. In these cases the distractions were recorded in the second case study notebook. Though the initial connection to the main narrative may not be clear through the writing and the thought process connected to the distractions each section in the second case study notebook can be linked back to the main narrative. I limited the writing to immediate distractions from the main narrative and sub-narratives to try to keep the framing of the project compact. As the point was to emphasise the distractions around the main narrative I wanted to demonstrate how many of these there could be instead of having one distraction that took up the entire notebook. Keeping these notebooks also served as a way of focussing my thoughts on distraction and forced me to think about the material in a particular way.

The notebooks included material taken from a number of sources. The first book, which traced the main narrative regarding *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*, included screenshots from the internet, screenshots from my iTunes account, lists from the Vue website, comments from YouTube, magazine articles from Empire, pages from Facebook, photos from the film premiere and film reviews. As mentioned previously these moments were an attempt to capture the times I came directly into contact with the final film in the franchise which is why the content of the notebooks is so disparate. In a similar way the second notebook includes screenshots from my iTunes account, film stills, cinema tickets, extracts from books, cartoons, images of food, products from Amazon and pages from Facebook. What this material does is demonstrate the various layers of research that were required for this project. Included in the notebooks are instances of historical, archival, textual, analytical, digital as well as autobiographical research. These all fit together to make a bricolage effect in order to re-assemble a faceted and nuanced account of the way spectators engage with films.

In terms of frequency every time the final film in the franchise came across my path, whether this was from browsing online, reading magazines or seeing an advert on a bus, I made a note of that instance in the notebook. This means that the entries are sporadic and not evenly spaced from one another as I did not know when I would encounter the film again. In terms of the distractions encountered, I would write the main narrative in the notebook and then read back over it. In the process of re-reading I would write down my immediate distractions on the left hand side of the double page in felt tip pen. In the instances where there is biro next to the felt tip these are the distractions encountered when re-reading my

own distractions. In book two I included the distractions which were too unwieldy to include on the left of the double page spread. These I wrote as a stream of consciousness and did not censor myself through the writing process. This was to capture the immediate experience of that particular moment of distraction. Writing in this way meant that the tone of the writing became less academic and reflected my own speaking style and my own internal monologue. I tried to not censor this to make the writing as honest as possible and to capture the immediate moment of distraction as it was taking place in my internal monologue. This writing process was done to demonstrate how scattered the distractions can be, they do not follow logically from the original material and can lead to thoughts that seemingly have no connection to one another.

Focussing on my own experience was essential for this process so that I could make a note of my own distractions and draw from images stored in my own cultural memory. The images that I placed throughout the second notebook are an attempt to demonstrate which images I called to mind through the process of writing. Though this work could be done using a different spectator using interviews the end result would not have the same immediacy that the notebooks do. They demonstrate my experience at a particular moment in time, under particular circumstances and following a particular train of thought. If I were to undertake the task again different things would distract me and the notebooks could be, visually, very changed. One of the problems I encountered when writing as both an academic and a fan was the difficulty in juggling the two identities at the same time. There were moments when constructing the notebooks that I felt I was being overly analytical which did not feel right with my fan voice; equally the fan voice at times felt too personal and often not relevant enough in comparison to the academic voice. This is what this particular method brings to the fore that examining other fan works, such as digital ones from <https://archiveofourown.org/>, does not. Other fan works would account for individual identities but they would not demonstrate how these identities react with each other and are made visible simultaneously. This adds to the existing scholarship in fan studies as it builds on the theories that outline the complexities of the fan, the notebooks literally demonstrate that through distracted spectatorship. The notebooks also build on the feminist methods discussed above because they make my own voice visible, they explore how I am a subject with my own body that is being written into this account of distraction.

The notebooks are both a device for concentrating on critical thinking and viewing as well as a way of informing that film viewing. The case study notebooks do not depict an authentic experience, but rather one that is mediated and framed by a certain set of concerns

and agendas which is why they stand as an example of distracted spectatorship and exemplify how the spectator can be both distracted and immersed in the cinematic experience. The way digital media is used and consumed in relation to film plays a large part in these moments of distraction and the way they converge with the main narrative of the cinematic experience; this will be examined in relation to GIFs in Chapter Five. The notebooks are a record and a journal, they track the process of the cinematic experience and document my thoughts as well as my history of consumption of the film and they stand as an archive to my own cinematic experience. If one thinks of the cinematic experience as a series of narratives this becomes clear. The main narrative (book one of the case study notebooks exemplifies this) is the series of experiences the spectator has that can be directly linked to the film. In this way the notebooks capture the internal and individual experience of spectatorship. As discussed above, the first notebook follows the main narrative regarding the final film in the franchise and the second highlights those instances where an aspect of the main narrative has caused me to branch off and be drawn into a secondary narrative. In order to unpack the self-reflexive approach the notebooks give insight into how I create associations and how distraction works for me as a spectator. The reflections that take place during the thesis in relation to the notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses aid in drawing conclusions on wider spectatorship issues as all are a crucial part of self-reflexive spectatorship. What the notebooks do is to serve as a record and tracking process to document thoughts in relation to the case study. As such they are an archive and a way of focussing thoughts which in turn forces the material to be thought of in a particular way. As mentioned above the case study does not illustrate an authentic experience as it is mediated and framed by concerns and agendas. Rather one could argue that the notebooks are an example of importing fan practices into academic research, as they are a form of note-taking that is part fan/part academic.

Frontispieces

An integral part of the case study notebooks and the frontispieces is the use of visual images. Viewing images is affective because they can be associated with other images as well as other sensations, viewing multiple images exemplifies distracted spectatorship as the theory stems from moving from one connection to the other. This is a particular way of viewing that needs to be taken into account as 'it is necessary to reflect on how you as a critic of visual images are looking' (Rose, 2006: 12). Through positioning myself into the case study it will show how spectators never look at an image, instead they always look at the relation between images and themselves. Critical theorist and gender studies scholar Eve

Sedgwick outlines how affects ‘can be, and are, attached to things, people, ideas, sensations [...] and any number of other things, including other affects’ (Sedgwick, 2003: 19). This is of particular importance with regards to viewing the cinematic experience in relation to its intertextuality as affects are constantly reacting with each other to bring forth new images and create new affects. I created the frontispieces so that they had images as their central focus. I chose a title for each one (Identification and Fandom; Spectatorship, Distraction, Subjectivity) and built the images around these titles. I had a different approach for each frontispiece as I wanted each one to do a slightly different thing in relation to depicting distracted spectatorship. The first one (Identification and Fandom) was made to reflect my own thoughts regarding both identification and fandom. I used specific images to make up those two words on the front of the frontispiece to reflect my thoughts regarding celebrity identification and also the fandoms that I had knowledge of. The writing around each of these words demonstrates the immediate thoughts I had on completing the words and on re-reading them. As with the notebooks this was done to capture the immediate experience of distraction in relation to viewing images. With the back of the first frontispiece I wanted to create something that was visually distracting to look at. I took images from online as well as photos from my own life to create a bricolage effect of how I view identification and fandom. I built the images up and layered them on top of each other to emphasise this effect. I also wanted to add my own voice to the frontispiece so I tore up pieces of paper, wrote on them, then stuck them over the images. These fragments of thoughts are there to emphasise the distractions I had when looking back on the images. I wanted to use the second frontispiece (Spectatorship, Distraction, Subjectivity) to explore how different spectators look in different ways. The front of the frontispiece was built around its title. I looked up the three terms I was using and if an image appeared online that I thought illustrated that term I put it in the border of the frontispiece. They are images created by other people which demonstrates how people look at things in different ways, but they still captured my attention so I still felt that there was a connection between me and that image. For example, one of the images I chose to demonstrate subjectivity was a work by the artist M C Escher. On one level I feel like this accurately represents subjectivity and on another it reminds me that I used Escher as inspiration for my A Level Art project. To examine subjectivity in relation to *The Hunger Games* franchise I placed, on the back of the frontispiece, four film reviews for the final instalment, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. Having read the reviews before and after placing them on the frontispiece I drew over them in felt tip pen to demonstrate the connections or differences between each review. I also highlighted anything that prompted a

distraction for me as the reader of the review. Each review was allocated its own colour, Forbes was pale blue, The Daily Telegraph was purple, Variety was green and Empire was red. This was done to emphasise the connections or differences between each review. For example, The Daily Telegraph referred to Katniss as the Chosen One. I circled this in purple and blue as Forbes used the same phrase in their review, I then drew a line in these two colours connecting the words to the same words in the Forbes review. For me reading about the 'chosen one' called to mind characters such as Harry Potter and Frodo Baggins so I wrote this next to the Forbes review. On re-reading Variety's review I noticed that they also compared Katniss to Frodo so I circled this in green for Variety as well as blue and purple as it connected to The Daily Telegraph and Forbes. I then drew a line in these three colours connecting the Variety review to my own words mentioning Frodo and Harry Potter. Just as with the notebooks the frontispieces are not an attempt at a neat representation of distracted spectatorship. They are instead a way of representing the messiness of the process and the subjective nature of distraction.

The frontispieces reinforce the feminist theories discussed above as viewer and image work together so that the image can be interpreted and given meaning, the viewer and the viewed are seen as mutually constitutive. With regards to this it is 'important to consider how you are looking at a particular image' and, through self-reflexivity, to 'write that into your interpretation' (Rose, 2006: 26). The act of interpreting images changes depending on who is viewing them as spectators look in different ways to one another. As the images that are viewed have a direct impact on the individual this leads on to the question of what images can do rather than how we should look at them. If an image is affective it calls to mind other images and associations that are social as well as personal for the viewer. In these recollections we can see something about who we are as, through positioning ourselves into the study of affect, we need to take into account how researching a certain image draws upon other images which are stored in our memory. It is possible for an image to 'have its *own visual effects*' but, as Rose argues, 'these effects always intersect with the social context of viewing and with *the visionalities spectators bring* to their viewing' (Rose, 2006: 12). Images are polysemic as they do not close off around a single interpretation. Affect allows us to view images from one perspective and then self-reflexivity allows us to view them from another, in this way affect is transversal as it crosses across a range of material. This is how distracted spectatorship is analysed through the thesis, as a series of potentially endless memories and affects that can be linked back to previous images and experiences.

Distracted Analysis

Employing a self-reflexive method and demonstrating my own responses reflects Barthes' work with regards to the punctum. The punctum creates links and draws out certain aspects of the image which requires an 'active and directed work of memory' (Kuhn, 1995: 3) to understand the intertextual implications of the image. Images do have their own affects but this does not mean that they produce their own meanings, they also do 'something unique to their visuality which is also something excessive to meaning itself' (Rose, 2006: 22). In combining the punctum with film a new object is created, one which reveals self-knowledge and knowledge of culture. In order to explore this aspect of feminist theory I created two forms of distracted analysis for *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. I wanted to identify what a distracted analysis would look like in relation to a particular film. The first step I took was to rewatch the film, I was not trying to recreate cinema conditions as it was more about the process of viewing something in terms of distracted spectatorship. While watching the film every time a distraction took place, in any form, I made a note of it and when it occurred throughout the film viewing process. The first piece of writing I did was not structured as an analysis. I gave myself an hour and wrote whatever came to mind having seen the film again. This was to try to capture the immediate experience of having just seen a film and to transcribe all the thoughts that were being associated with it. This meant that the writing, just like in the notebooks, is more in the form of an internal monologue. It moves from one subject to another and has no introduction or conclusion. In this way it stands almost like a written photograph of a particular moment in time, one which demonstrates my own distracted spectatorship in terms of my own cinematic experience. With the second distracted analysis I wanted to give it more structure whilst at the same time incorporate into it the specific distractions I encountered throughout my film viewing. To this end I decided to write the analysis as if I were answering an essay question: How does *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part Two* emphasise the isolation of Katniss? This enabled me to write a more structured analysis as I was trying to answer a particular question. I placed the examples in chronological order so that they reflected my own film viewing experience. While writing the analysis I referred back to my notes on distraction and whenever I came to discussing a part in the film where I had been distracted I wrote that distraction in the analysis. I did this in italics so that they could be identified clearly in relation to the more structured analysis. These two distracted analyses are placed strategically throughout the thesis in order to break up the theoretical writing and to stand as an example of distraction and to produce distraction

in the reader. What these analyses also do is to reflect upon the importance of narrative writing as a mode of critical analysis. This is not a mode that is normally taken up in academic film and media studies, but these pieces suggest that a narrative account of viewing may be a way of making visible certain aspects of the spectatorial experience. The notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses differ from standard note-taking as self-reflexivity is ‘frequently referred to as an internal conversation, and language assumed to be the main channel through which individuals can relate to themselves’; as Pagis argues studies of the self have ‘focused on conversations, confessions, and diaries – all discursive tools that serve as anchors for self-reflexivity’ (Pagis, 2009: 265). This method enables distracted spectatorship to be highlighted as the notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses are a record of the individual distractions that have taken place through the course of the case study. How this will work with regards to film analysis is to provide a broader framework for the analysis without restricting it to the film as a text. When looking at visual media it is important to take into account that it is ‘not fundamentally verbal and thus does [...] not carry out lines of reasoning the way written theory does’ (Marks, 2000: xvi).

These two forms of distracted analysis explore how intertextuality is a key feature as the memories which are evoked do not spring out of the viewed material, they are ‘generated in a network, an intertext, of discourses that shift between past and present, spectator and image, and between all these and cultural contexts, historical moments’ (Kuhn, 1995: 12). I have mentioned earlier about how the punctum can only be personal to a certain extent as the personal is always socially and culturally constructed, the intertextual approach that I used aided in uncovering the plethora of ways in which the visual is part of social life. I am the product of the social histories that I have come into contact with over the years, speaking of the personal is not a case of saying how we all react as individuals it is a case of seeing how a single person balances the social, cultural and the personal. What I present throughout the thesis is one way of thinking about the cinematic experience with a close analysis of one distracted spectator. The case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses illustrate the nature of distraction in relation to the cinematic experience. They demonstrate both the relationship between the academic viewing experience and the experience that fans and spectators go through. This is because, as Evans and Stasi argue, ‘self-reflexivity has the critical capacity to call into question the ways in which fan studies researchers represent “the fan” when the researcher and the fan are often the same thing’ (Evans and Stasi, 2014: 14). When academics watch and analyse films the process is simply a more exaggerated version of what all viewers do and the case study is an extreme example of that. The frontispieces,

notebooks and distracted analyses are included in a PhD that, by definition, has to fulfil a particular set of characteristics. The cinematic experience presented through my own self-reflexivity is not drastically different to other spectators' cinematic experiences but the case study becomes a performative element of the research as it is both a role and a process, a deliberate and structured one, which allows the research to take place. Through the case study I shall be examining how the practice of viewing is shaped by personal aspects as well as cultural aspects. We define ourselves as spectators because once we 'cease to "stand against" the world, we think we cease to exist' as such we are capable of creating for 'ourselves the distance that establishes us as subjects fully conscious of our own subjectivity' (Merton cited in Devereaux, 1995: 73). I have decided to place myself and my own responses at the centre of the research as including self-reflexivity will enable me to read images in 'light of a whole assemblage of social relations to understand how some meanings resonate' (Giroux, 2001: 16) more than others, such as identification which is discussed further in Chapter Five. The following chapter includes a discussion of one of the distracted analyses in order to bring to the fore the complex relationship between distraction and the cinematic experience.

Chapter Four

A Viewing of *The Hunger Games:* *Mockingjay Part 2*

This chapter includes one of the two distracted analyses as outlined in the previous chapter. As stated earlier these distracted analyses are used to demonstrate how distracted spectatorship makes visible certain identities as well as demonstrating how particular bodies are always already distracted, with a focus on female spectatorship. Outlined in Chapter Two was how distractions take the form of puncta. These puncta are where the cinematic experience branches off from the main narrative of film viewing to create another layer alongside the overall experience. In this way the cinematic experience can constitute multiple layers that rely on the personal, social and cultural experiences of the individual spectator. This chapter draws on Jenkins' notion of the aca-fan, as discussed in Chapter Three, as it highlights 'the acknowledgement of our own personal stakes in the forms of popular culture we study' (Jenkins, 2013: xiii). Jenkins also outlined how the fan is often depicted as a fantasist or crazed groupie whose interests are 'fundamentally alien to the realm of "normal" cultural experience' (Jenkins, 1992: 15), explored further in Chapter Three. What the below analysis does is to demonstrate how being a fan, and a distracted spectator, is a fundamentally "normal" way of viewing film. The distracted analysis below uses a stream of consciousness style to exemplify how the moments of distraction often move away from the film completely. In this way the analysis does not involve a more traditional semiotic analysis of the film but instead serves as an example to demonstrate the complex play between distraction and contemplation. The distracted analysis also illustrates arguments put forward by Couldry who states that it is necessary to be 'sceptical about all attempts to reify culture, that is, to see it as a unified "object" rather than a mass of open-ended processes' (Couldry, 2000: 3-4). He goes on to argue that cultural studies should 'take seriously the full complexity of being "inside" culture', in other words, to think about culture in a 'non-dominative way, to recognise it as a space of multiple voices and forces' (Couldry, 2000: 4). Couldry advocates for a 'theory of cultural complexity, but without lapsing into excessively complex language' (Couldry, 2000: 4) which this thesis brings to the fore through the discussion of distracted spectatorship.

Distracted Analysis

The optician I go and see in Guildford has his own cinema, well a cinema room. He hates going to the cinema with a passion, so he waits for the films to come out and then buys them on DVD and watches them with his family in the comfort of his own home. I've always thought that sounded quite lonely and isolating but the more I go to the cinema the more I

think he's got a point, and the money. Last film I saw was Assassin's Creed, film was alright, quite good actually, but by god the people! Why go to the cinema and talk? It irritates me like someone is rubbing sandpaper on my skin. I've only asked people to be quiet once, in Star Wars: Force Awakens, two girls had been talking solidly for the first ten minutes, I crept over and asked them to be quiet. They didn't hear me coming so jumped out of their skins, kept schtum for the rest of the film though. It's a balance really, I love the inclusivity of going to the cinema, watching a film at home is different. And yet the annoyance I feel that the other people in the cinema aren't there for the same things I am there for baffles me.

Watching Mockingjay Part 2, for what felt like the hundredth time, gave me almost too much space to think. I was at home, I was relaxed, I'd seen the film before, I was typing up notes at the same time. So of course I was on the internet in half an hour, I am amazed I held out that long. Checking emails, on buzzfeed, on facebook. Lots of notifications coming in as I got engaged on the Friday and people were messaging to congratulate so obviously had to reply to them. Then I would peer over my laptop and realise that "oh yeah, should probably be watching". But I never missed anything, I knew exactly what had happened and what was going to happen because I had seen the film so many times before. It was a damn sight better than when I last watched it. That was on my laptop with an, alleged, HD version that you got free with the blu-ray. It was so fuzzy it was like I had downloaded an illegal copy. So at least I could see what was happening which was good. And I don't think the right hand speaker dropped out at any point like it's started to do. We had to change all the cables round the back of the TV at Christmas to make room for the extension and the Christmas lights. Plugging them all back in again after the decorations came down was a pain and moved all the cables round again. That shifted the speaker cables and now the right hand speaker has a habit of dropping in and out. It's not noticeable until it comes back in and then suddenly it's like, oh I can hear again! Though Mockingjay 2 is one of those films that plays havoc with the sound on my blu-ray and TV. People speaking is super quiet so you turn the volume up, then any action scenes, and in this film they are loud and usually involve explosions and machine guns, the speakers blast it out and you can feel the bass through the sofa, so you turn it down, and then you can't hear them speaking. I am sure there is a way to fiddle with the settings to get it all perfect but I have no idea how and wouldn't want to be unable to get them all back to where they were to start off with. I could note down all the settings I guess but Jesus, too much effort and a half, and each DVD might be different too. I'm not going to sit down and make sure the settings are perfect for each film before I begin. Firstly because that would involve a lot of trial and error and I don't want to get half way

through a film before I realise that the settings actually do need changing. I'll stick with turning the volume up and down. I probably wouldn't mind so much but the TV backs on to the wall that connects us to the next house. I've got this image of them sitting there watching something genteel and then the sound of rocket launchers fills the room. I wouldn't be surprised as you can hear them laughing through the wall sometimes so they aren't exactly soundproof.

I should probably read the books again. Can't remember the last time I did. The problem with them is that Collins ends each chapter on a mini cliff-hanger which makes you want to read just one more page, just one more chapter, well now I know that I have to find out what happens next. And I can't leave it there! Just one more. Before you know it it's three in the morning on the day you have to teach four seminars and there is no hope in hell you're going to get enough sleep to feel like a human being. Just one more. I re-read all the Harry Potters recently, that was glorious and made me even less inclined to buy all the films. They've been on sale as a blu-ray box set for only £25 on Amazon for years now, each time I go on to have a browse I work my way round to them and hover over the add to cart button. But then I remember just how disappointed I was with each and every one. Every time a new film came out my hopes were raised again only to be dashed having watched it. Why did they cut out Peeves? What about the headless hunt? Where is all the detail that I loved about the books?? The best one is the first one, in my opinion, but even then I was disappointed by the actors they chose. Don't get me wrong I think Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and (to some extent) Rupert Grint have really grown and gone on to have great careers and be good and what they do, but that doesn't really come through in the earlier films. Very stilted would be putting it mildly, but by god the sets were fantastic, brilliantly realised and almost what I imagined in places. Then Cuarón got to the third one and it all went "darker" and more "serious" and they changed the castle. I know it's a magic castle and all but there was no need. I never felt that in the same way with *The Hunger Games*, what was in the books was what they put on screen. I didn't have any niggles and nothing annoyed me about the adaptations, they were good, they were true, they captured the essence of Katniss and the Games. Maybe that's why I haven't re-read the books, no need if the films can be watched as a replacement. I can't even remember how I imagined the characters in the books. It took me two books before I got Stephen Fry's voice out of my head when re-reading *Harry Potter*. All those years listening to the audiotapes did their work. And it took about three-four books before I finally got my original image of the characters back in my head, I'd been seeing the actors until that point. I would probably do the same with *The Hunger Games*. Even reading

that Rue was small with long blonde hair I would just imagine Amandla Stenberg instead. I'll have to give it a go and find out.

I forgot that Jeffrey Wright was in *Mockingjay 2*, barely noticed him at all until a scene right at the end where they were all sat round a table voting on whether or not to have another symbolic Hunger Games for the capitol's children. Then my brain kicked forward and screamed "don't trust him!". Because of course him being a robot in *Westworld* means that he is being manipulated by Hopkins in this film too. God that was a good TV series, fucking creepy and unnerving and no idea where it's going to go next but utterly brilliant. James Marsden as ever perpetually failing to get the girl and dying in the process, over and over again. Ed Harris was just a joy to watch, a bit like his character in *The Truman Show*. I got a few episodes into *Westworld* and had to watch *The Truman Show* again. I get that sometimes, it's like a pull towards one film where, even though you've seen it over and over playing it in your head isn't enough and you need to see it in front of you. Got it with *Wall.e* the other day too, was watching a TV show about the evolution of the Hollywood musical (BBC 4, Neil Brand, really interesting despite his seriously dull voice) and all the chirpy tunes reminded me of *Hello, Dolly!* that's featured in *Wall.e* so dominantly (that very nearly rhymes...). It's a mission looking for DVDs in my house, if my fiancé had his way they would all be in alphabetical order. When I moved in I just shoved them all onto shelves and left them, they've been that way ever since. I did have a half hearted attempt to order them by genre but that went out the window as soon as I started watching them and putting them back anywhere. It's because you need to move the sofa to access two of the bookcases, I move it, take a DVD out and fill the gap with a DVD from the case you don't need to move the sofa to access. That way when I've finished the film I can just pop it back on a shelf without moving the sofa again, perfect! For the alphabet conscious not the best system. My defence is that when I am in the mood for a film I don't feel in the mood for a particular film necessarily, more of a genre, so I browse until a film catches my eye. I feel like you can't do that if they are all neatly alphabetised, then there is pressure of knowing exactly the film you're in the mood for, which works some of the time but not all of the time. The concession is that his DVDs have their own case, which is neatly alphabetised, so if we want to watch *Alien* or *Terminator* we know exactly where to go. Fantasy and rom-coms are more my domain so that's where the browsing comes in.

I really jarred my knee watching *Mockingjay 2*, I had my legs stretched out on the sofa with my feet on the armrest and with the laptop on my lap (appropriately enough). After about fifteen minutes I moved into a different position and my left knee wouldn't move, it

had stiffed up from being stretched out with nothing supporting it. When I did manage to move it a shooting pain felt like someone had stabbed me in the back of the knee. Had to jiggle my leg about to make it feel normal again and then get back to watching the film. Never saw any of the characters on screen react to being cramped up for a bit. Mind you with all the running they had to do they're probably in peak condition. I just about manage to go swimming three times a week. Judging on how most of them handled the games in *Catching Fire* I would probably have been fine there though, until the running and the fighting kicked in anyway. Films always make everything look so easy. I was watching a TV series about the use of weapons and how they've changed from clubs etc right through to explosives (another BBC 4 one). One of the episodes focused on the long bow, they got a long bow expert into show the presenter how to fire one. The expert was built like a brick shit house and the presenter was tiny in comparison. The presenter couldn't even get the string to pull back half way to his nose because of the force needed to fire the arrow, he just wasn't strong enough. Cue the massive guy using his entire body and every ounce of muscle to stretch the string back and wing the arrow forward. Katniss does it all so easily in the films, I know they give her that posh metal bow but in the first one she has a normal wooden bow, makes me think what they made it from to enable Jennifer Lawrence to pull it right the way back.

Self-reflexivity making visible certain identities

This analytical description of the film makes visible several identities through distracted spectatorship. There is the fan voice, social voice, and personal historical voice. The way in which the analysis is incorporated into my thesis demonstrates the inclusion of the academic voice as well. As well as these identities what is also made clear is the reactions of the embodied spectator build into the experience. I write about how people talking in the cinema feels like sandpaper against my skin, a physical reaction impacting on my film viewing. Alongside this embodiment I discuss how my knee hurt while moving it during the film which led me to discuss how the characters on screen do not show such forms of discomfort. These examples demonstrate how I am a spectator with a lived-body that does not stop experiencing things when I am watching a film. The same point is made clear with my emotional reactions, such as annoyance, as I do not solely experience what the characters do on screen. The distractions encountered prompt me to recall as well as experience a range of emotions that might not be connected to the immediate film viewing. Linked to these experiences are my personal concerns in relation to the experience. I mention above how I

got distracted from the film by answering people's messages who were congratulating me on getting engaged. This impacted on my film viewing when two of the characters in the film got married I was not thinking about the film in that moment but rather of all the planning I had to do in relation to my own wedding. This is not to say that male spectators could not have the same concerns, but in my personal experience these issues are gendered as I am the one planning the wedding not my fiancé. This drew into my societal voice as I felt I had to reply to all the messages otherwise it would have come across as rude to those who had taken the time to congratulate me. The societal voice impacted on the experience in several ways, the above being one, the other was the worry that the neighbours could hear the loud explosions through the connecting wall. These moments show that the cinematic experience is made up of a plethora of distractions which build together to create the overall experience of film viewing. It is the fan voice that comes through most strongly in the above analysis as I discuss the books in relation to the films. I also draw comparisons between other franchises and other books in my cultural memory. These moments explore the range of emotions fans can go through during the process of films viewing, such as excitement and disappointment. The fan identity does not stand in isolation but can be seen as linked to other identities, shown through the connection between Stephen Fry and re-reading the *Harry Potter* books. At this moment the fan identity and cultural identity link together through the cinematic experience. The above distracted analysis demonstrates how distraction can build from distraction, further exploring its complex nature. At points during the writing I included in brackets small moments of distraction which I encountered while writing. This exposes how distraction is not a single layer that is once removed from the film but can be multi-layered and complex in its impact on the cinematic experience. What the above piece does is to explore how the spectator is always already distracted. One thought leads to another so that, by the end of the piece, several topics have been included with the only connection being that they have stemmed from a particular spectator in relation to viewing a particular film. This examines how distraction is a perpetual state for the spectator and not something that can be dipped in and out of. To expand on how distracted spectatorship affects the interpretation of certain images the next chapter will focus on issues such as gender and identification in relation to fandom in order to examine the impact on distracted spectatorship.

Chapter Five

***The Hunger Games: Mockingjay* Part 2, Gender and Identification**

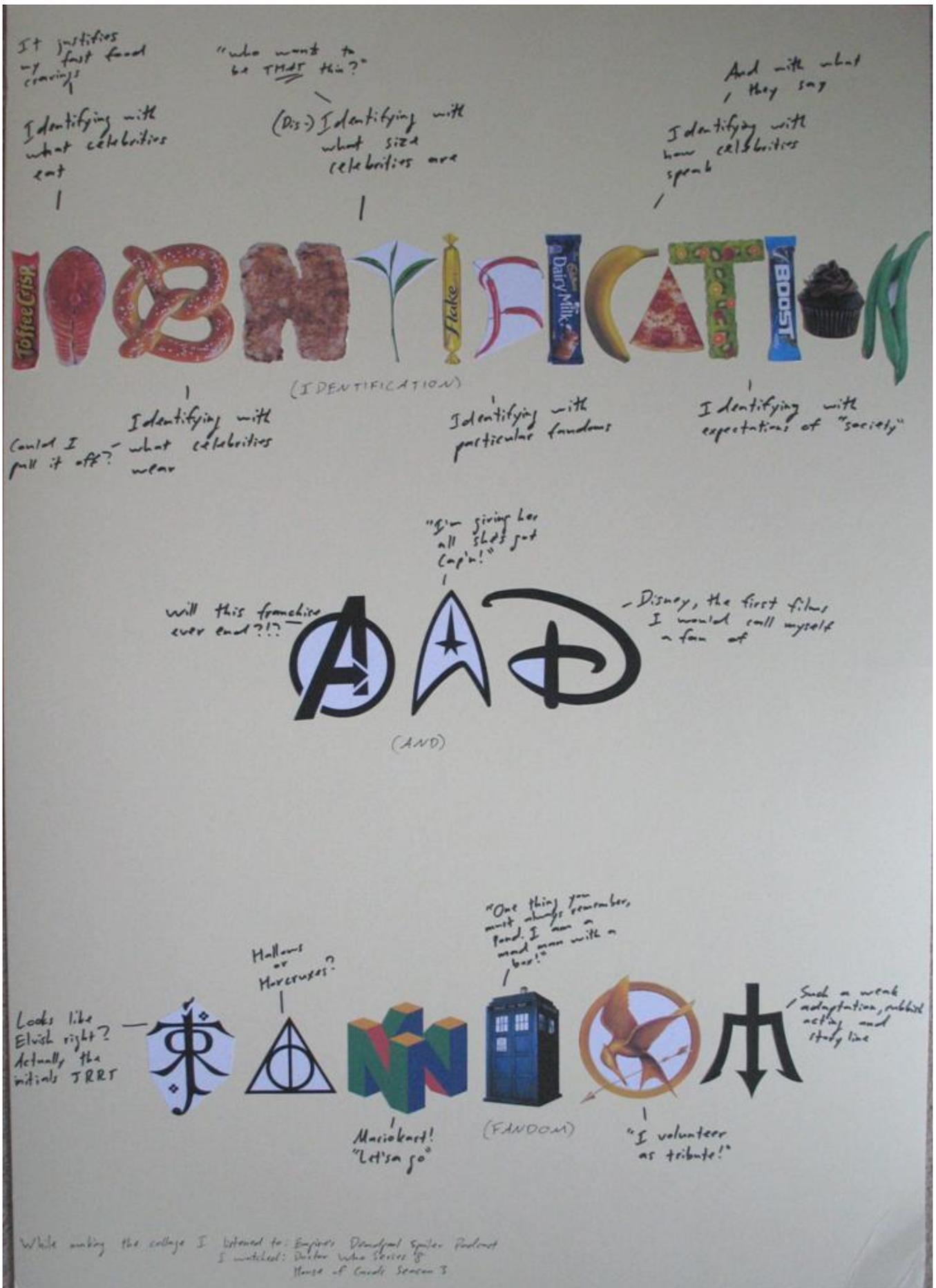


Figure 7 Identification and Fandom Frontispiece One

Franchise films are integral to fan studies as they are dedicated to building and maintaining a fan base, as discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter will examine how franchise films are an important aspect of fan studies as they instil a sense of identification in the spectator. As I have argued, films are not watched in a vacuum: they are experienced in the context of a wider social, cultural and subjective frame of reference. *The Hunger Games* franchise allows for a discussion to exemplify how aspects such as interacting with the film through digital media have an impact on film viewing and the cinematic experience, as well as being an integral and continuous component of distracted spectatorship. Franchise films are a particularly good example when it comes to this kind of film viewing as the fan spectator is aware of the scheduling release often years before it comes to cinemas and, as such, can be tuned in and aware of any news regarding the film leading up to its release. The fan spectator is a spectator who anticipates the release of particular franchises; they are aware of the film even before trailers are released and search for information regarding it before the film comes out in cinemas. This role of fan spectator is portrayed through the case study notebooks as they serve to display the self-reflexive nature of spectatorship. One of the ways identification can be discussed in relation to film is through analytical examples of the different ways filmic language makes it possible to identify with the characters on screen. As mentioned in previous chapters regarding distraction and the spectator it is easy to make assumptions that all spectators react in similar ways. The film analysis done in this chapter is as a result of when I found myself identifying with the characters on screen through the filmic language used. This is not the only way identification is possible, as explored below, but it is important to reference it here as being explicitly linked to the subjective cinematic experience of a single spectator. In doing this work the chapter demonstrates Couldry's arguments that it is necessary to bring 'together two aspects of studying culture which are often kept apart: the "objective" and the "subjective" – the scale of social and cultural production, and the scale of individual sense-making and reflection' (Couldry, 2000: 5). Couldry expands on this by stating that both objectivity and subjectivity are two aspects of the same picture and 'how we speak about others and how we speak personally must be consistent with each other, if our theory is to be fully accountable' (Couldry, 2000: 5).

There is a temporality associated with fandom which plays out through the co-construction of a sense of anticipation. Anticipation and distraction relate to one another as two elements which move towards forming the cohesive whole that is the cinematic experience. Anticipation, which I define as the expectation of a future event, prompts the spectator into certain modes of research in relation to the film in question and distraction

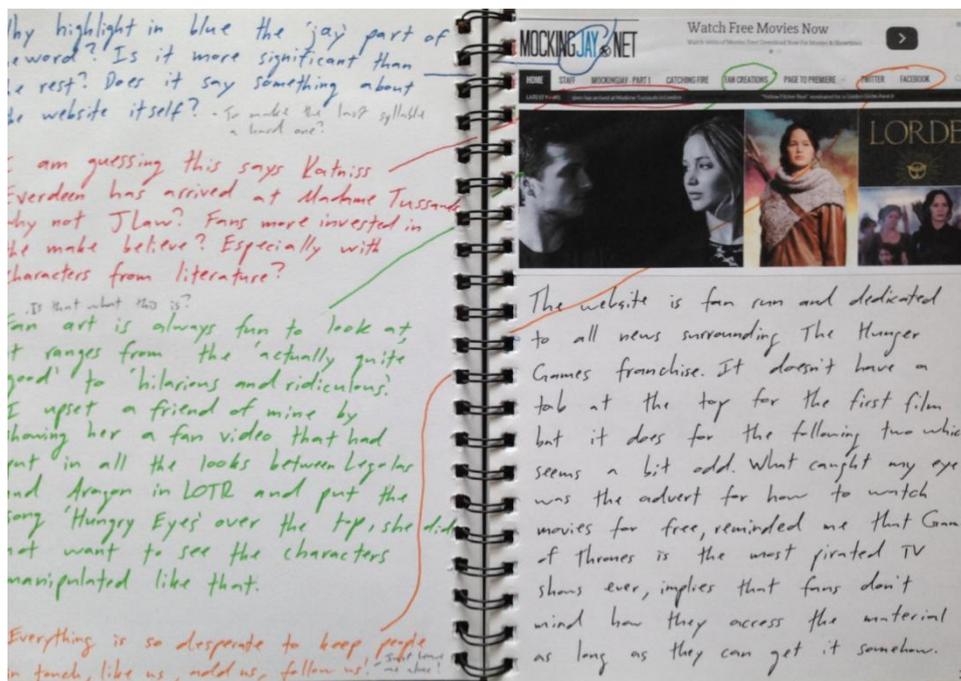


Figure 9 from Case Study Notebook One

demonstrates the self-reflexive nature of the experience as one which relies on the cultural and social experiences of each individual spectator. As a fan spectator myself I am aware of the temporality of franchises and as such, when encountering a franchise I feel a connection to, I try to garner as much background information about that franchise as I can before it ends (see Figure 9). This example from the notebooks depicts this as it demonstrates how I was connected to the franchise through digital media before the release of the final film. *The Hunger Games* franchise has been selected as the focus for this research as spectatorship includes issues of identification which need to be discussed. This is because the process of identification makes visible certain identities connected with the spectator. As a gendered researcher doing a self-reflexive study into franchise film *The Hunger Games* series was chosen as the object for analysis due to the way it presents its strong female lead, Katniss Everdeen. This choice leads into the question of whether, and to what extent, strong female characters are of value and is itself a question of contemporary importance. In 2014, the film and literary critic Nicola Balkind published *Fan Phenomena: The Hunger Games*. This book provides an insight into the primary concerns of fan culture with regards to this particular franchise. Balkind argues that the heroine Katniss is 'perhaps the most strong, stereotypically masculine and atypically gender-defined hero of any recent book or film, particularly in the young adult genre' (Balkind, 2014: 39). When I refer to Katniss, and film characters like her, as a strong female lead it is not the physical strength of the character that is being referred to.

Instead it is the acknowledgement that these characters have flaws, are human, are not defined by a single adjective (strong, smart, funny etc.) and as such are free to react, respond and make their own choices. This is important because it implicitly challenges the reductive images of women more commonly associated with particular cinematic genres. *The Hunger Games* franchise is not just an illustrative example but integral to the argument because of its protagonist and the way in which the series adopts a post-feminist stance. Post-feminism encompasses a set of assumptions that feminism is now a thing of the past as it has achieved its goals. Post-feminism reacts against feminism by trading ‘on a notion of feminism as rigid, serious, anti-sex and romance, difficult and extremist’, whereas, to contrast this, post-feminism ‘offers the pleasure and comfort of (re)claiming an identity uncomplicated by gender politics, postmodernism, or institutional critique’ (Negra, 2008: 2). The field presumes that women are unsatisfied with their social equality and can only be fulfilled through practices of empowerment and transformation. It encompasses the youth and white middle-class demographic and excludes class, age and race; expanded on by Tasker and Negra who explore how ‘postfeminism is white and middle class by default, anchored in consumption as a strategy (and leisure as a site) for the production of the self’ (Tasker and Negra, 2007: 11). Gill defines post-feminism as ‘the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; and a resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference’ (Gill, 2007: 147). She argues that these notions of choice ‘of “being oneself”, and “pleasing oneself” are central to the postfeminist sensibility that suffuses contemporary Western media culture’ as they ‘resonate powerfully with the emphasis upon empowerment and taking control that can be seen in talk shows, advertising and makeover shows’ (Gill, 2007: 150). The character of Katniss takes up some of these tropes during the course of the series, as discussed later in the chapter. Katniss is central to the discussion of post-feminism as, according to Gwynne and Muller, ‘the figure of the girl has been resurrected in contemporary popular culture and utilised to demonstrate the empowering possibilities of reconfigured femininity’ (Gwynne and Muller, 2013: 3). Using this particular character to celebrate the power of the individual can be seen as a wider trend whereby the celebration of power in general ‘is part of a more insidious process whereby the social constraints placed upon contemporary girls and women are deemed inconsequential’ (Gwynne and Muller, 2013: 2). Tasker and Negra define how post-feminist ‘culture works in part to incorporate, assume, or naturalise aspects of feminism; crucially, it also works to commodify feminism via the figure of woman as empowered consumer’ (Tasker and Negra,

2007: 11). This is integral to the character of Katniss, as previously discussed, because she is a consumer whilst at the same time being commodified by the culture she once consumed as a viewer. This relates closely to post-feminist discourse as it ‘attaches considerable importance to the formulation of an expressive personal lifestyle and the ability to select the right commodities to attain it’ (Negra, 2008: 4). This is exemplified through the character of Katniss when she, and those around her, have to make stylistic choices regarding her appearance throughout the franchise. Due to the number of personal lifestyles available the franchise does not use unconventional methods to encourage identification, rather it uses a character type that is a blend of elements which allow for identification from a variety of spectators. This shows how franchise films are a gendered phenomenon with *The Hunger Games* franchise being gendered in a slightly different way. In examining this aspect of the franchise it brings together the act of watching franchise films, gender and issues of spectatorship as well as fandom.

Using the term identification to describe what spectators go through when they view the images presented to them on the cinema screen has specific implications as ‘the term refers to a process of making oneself the same as, to identify oneself with something else (the Latin root of the word means literally “to make the same”)’ (Cowie, 1997: 72). This is produced not through imitation of the image but through relating yourself to parts of that image. British academic and professor of Film Studies Elizabeth Cowie, whose research addresses political and cultural questions of gender and sexual difference, explores this in terms of Lacan’s mirror stage and the ideal ego:

The cinema does indeed offer visual representations of the other as an idealised image. Do we not identify with these ideal egos with all the narcissistic investment of the mirror stage? Are not film stars – those perfect and perfected images presented on the cinema screen – embodiments of our ideal egos? (Cowie, 1997: 102)

Cowie expands on how the ‘ideal ego is that image which restores to the subject its original narcissism, of being without flaw’ and it is ‘not a set of ideal contents so much as a position in which the subject is placed beyond reproach and therefore becomes, in a sense, super-human’ (1997: 103). To understand this illusion we can look at how French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan speaks of the ‘mirror stage’ (2004: 442). When a child looks in a mirror and sees themselves and understands the image as ‘me’, this process creates the ego. Lacan defines this as ‘an *identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image’ (2004: 442). In this

process a self is created as there is now a connection to the person in the mirror. Once this identification with the self has taken place identification can be transferred to other objects or subjects. Bringing psychoanalysis into a phenomenological debate has implications with regards the body as both areas of theory conceptualise the body in particular ways. As can be seen from Lacan's theory this involves identification with the body and, as has been discussed, with regards to phenomenology it involves recognising the body as it is lived by the spectator, with regards to film theory. The link between the two is further expanded on below with regards to femininity and the masquerade. As Lacan describes, when looking in a mirror the person reflected is not the real person standing before the mirror: 'the total form of the body by which the subject anticipates in a mirage the maturation of power is given to him only as Gestalt, that is to say, in an exteriority in which this form is certainly more constituent than constituted' (Lacan, 2004: 442). As such a certain amount of fantasy is employed in order for the subject to identify with the person in the mirror before them. The word fantasy derives through Latin from the Greek term meaning to make visible. However, as Cowie argues, rather than a notion of revelation and making visible what we would not otherwise be able to see 'fantasy has come to mean the making visible, the making present, of what isn't there, of what can never *directly* be seen' (Cowie, 1997: 127-8). Focussing on a fantasy franchise emphasises the idea of identification as the word fantasy is usually understood as an imagined scene, with the associated meanings of: fabulous; fancy (now a separate meaning); imagination, mental image; love, whim; caprice; fantasia; preoccupation with the thoughts associated with unattainable desires. Though, in some respects, all film involves imagined scenes I write of fantasy in regards to the film genre which understands fantasy as taking place on imaginary worlds where supernatural elements are included in the plot, theme or setting. In the case of *The Hunger Games* franchise elements of science-fiction are relevant too due to the speculative nature of the futuristic setting.

Due to the subjective nature of the cinematic experience there are many ways in which one can identify with films. Identification is the process 'whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, property or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, after the model the other provides', therefore, it is 'by means of a series of identifications that the personality is constituted and specified' (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973: 205). The process of identification, as defined by Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis, involves 'assimilation by the subject of an other, [...] either in its totality (as in identifying with an individual), or [...] partially (as in the assumption of a physical trait of characteristic)' (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis, 1992: 149). It includes the ability to

see from another person's position as it is a process that the spectator is not necessarily fully aware of. The purpose of the notebooks is to make visible the subjective nature of distracted spectatorship and the cinematic experience in order to understand how spectators look and see things in different ways. I demonstrate the differences in Chapter Six when comparing my own experience of watching *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* with the writing of film reviewers. Identification aids in the understanding of how these different identities are made visible through this research. This work is integral to film studies as it firstly acknowledges that spectators are continually analysing what they see and, secondly, that this analysis is constituted by the subjective ways spectators view the film. The object of identification changes and adapts alongside the cultural shifts in society, an example of this shift can be identified through the use of gender roles in film. Feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey wrote of spectatorship in the 1970s and argued that the cinematic apparatus of classical Hollywood films addressed a masculine spectator. The figure of the woman on screen was only seen as the object of desire and appropriated for, what Mulvey dubbed, 'the male gaze' (Mulvey, 1975: 9). In the era of classical Hollywood cinema that Mulvey was writing about viewers were encouraged to identify with the protagonists who were predominantly male. Mulvey's work was influenced by theorists such as Freud and Lacan and her essay, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975), was part of the shift orientating film theory towards a more psychoanalytic framework. Prior to Mulvey theorists such as Baudry and Metz had used psychoanalytic ideas in their accounts of cinema but Mulvey's contribution inaugurated the intersection of film theory, psychoanalysis and feminism. Regarding feminism and the cinematic experience Mulvey argued in 1975 that the world depicted on screen is closed to the spectator:

[T]he mass mainstream film, and the conventions within which it has consciously evolved, portray a hermetically sealed world which unwinds magically, indifferent to the presence of the audience, producing for them a sense of separation and playing on their voyeuristic fantasy. [...] Although the film is really being shown, is there to be seen, conditions of screening and narrative conventions give the spectator an illusion of looking in on a private world (Mulvey, 2009: 17)

The way in which Mulvey writes of the diegetic world is as a world in which the spectator cannot ever truly be a part of as it is closed off and viewing it can only be done voyeuristically. Though the voyeur is outside the world on the screen there is a compulsion to look; it is not, therefore, a completely detached state between spectator and screen. This is a

specific effect of mainstream cinema as avant-garde and feminist cinema explicitly set out to confront and challenge this, through techniques like breaking the fourth wall which destroys the voyeuristic nature of film. The model of analysis I have proposed in earlier chapters is to view the cinematic experience as one in which the spectator can be included in right from the start. Included in the sense that all of their individual moments of punctum stem from a single cultural object which, in turn, creates a cinematic experience with the experiences of the spectator at the centre. As such, the spectator's puncta create the sense of inclusion as the spectator feels as though they can identify closely with the cultural object in question.

The Strong Female Lead

In the past ten years there has been a shift in the depiction of gender roles within Hollywood Blockbusters, from the fixed gender roles as discussed by Mulvey to a more fluid concept of gender. This is not a case of assuming a simple historical model of progress, the ubiquity of the strong female lead in action cinema has older precedents and strong identifiable women themselves are not a new concept in film. In her 1994 book *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* Jackie Stacey argues how female spectators of the 30s and 40s 'described their pleasures in Hollywood stars in terms of "identification"' (127). Stacey explores how the spectator 'remembers "the semi-magical transformation of screen identification"', suggesting that her own identity is indeed transformed through processes of spectatorship' (1994: 126). One of the interviewees Stacey quotes mentions how she preferred the stars on screen 'to have more charm and ability than [she] did' (1994: 126). In the era Stacey is discussing the stars on screen were required to be more than the spectator, introducing 'the contradictions of similarity and difference, recognition and separateness' that Stacey states characterised 'the relationship of female spectators to their star ideals' (1994: 126-127). In a similar way, through the strong female lead in action films, female spectators identify with the star on screen because they appear to be the same, or at least have more similarities than differences.

It is crucial to bring to the fore that while the thesis deals with the embodied spectator feminist film theory has often proposed a position or masquerade when it comes to femininity. Drawing on psychoanalysis Stacey argues that 'feminists have claimed that the masquerade is not only closely connected to femininity but is also inextricable from its cultural ascription within patriarchal representation systems such as Hollywood cinema' (2010: 119). Both Stacey and Doane draw on the 1926 work of Joan Riviere to discuss femininity:

Womanliness therefore could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it – much as a thief will turn out his pockets and ask to be searched to prove he has not the stolen goods. The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the ‘masquerade’. My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial they are the same thing (Riviere cited in Stacey, 2010: 120)

Film and feminist theorist Mary Ann Doane builds on the work of Riviere to show how feminists are given a way of reading femininity differently. Doane wrote of how the masquerade ‘in flaunting femininity, holds it at a distance. Womanliness is a mask that can be worn or removed. The masquerade’s resistance to patriarchal positioning would therefore lie in its denial of the production of femininity as closeness’ therefore ‘to masquerade is to manufacture a lack in the form of a certain distance between oneself and one’s image’ (cited in Stacey, 2005: 1858). Stacey discusses this in her work in terms of how the ‘masquerade suggests a “mode of being for the other” which might destabilise the image by challenging the relation between lack and absence in Lacan’s theory of language and in his theory of sexual difference’ (Stacey, 2010: 109). What is highlighted throughout Stacey’s work, as well as Doane’s, is how the problem with psychoanalysis and the cinema is that femininity is defined as closeness whereas with theorising femininity as a masquerade ‘might be deployed to explain to constraints of the place of “women as image” within the sign system governed by the law of the paternal signifier’ (Stacey, 2010: 109). By offering a way to find the contradiction within psychoanalytical theory the masquerade for Doane ‘attributes to the woman the distance, alienation, and divisiveness of self required to refuse to read femininity conventionally’ (cited in Stacey, 2010: 109).

This connects back to strong women in franchises as they have come to represent a form of identification which plays upon the spectator’s longing to be what they see on the screen. The character the spectator identifies with is like them in a number of ways but in other ways is a more idealised version of what the spectator wishes themselves to be; because of this the figure is always unattainable and identification can be understood more as a struggle to identify with the images presented rather than an instant form of identification. The struggle for identification with the characters on screen is ongoing as for women ‘[t]here are no images either *for* her or *of* her’ (Doane, 1988: 216). Doane’s work supports Mulvey’s as she explores the notion that women are too close to the object of the gaze as they feel themselves inextricably bound up with the image before them, and as such they struggle

between feminine and masculine viewing positions. Doane was writing in 1988 when the strong female lead, regarding mainstream Hollywood blockbusters, was only in its infancy and this quote reflects the lack of identifiable female characters on screen in the 1980s: *Alien* was released in 1979 and *Aliens* in 1986, but *Terminator 2* was not until 1991 and it was only in the late 90s and early 00s that the role of strong female lead in action franchises really came to the fore, as discussed below. The strong female action hero is not a recent development, franchise films have attempted to create a satisfactory female lead, films such as *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979) and *Aliens* (Ridley Scott, 1986) are examples of this. The protagonist of these films is Ellen Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) who, through her fight with the alien invading her ship, shares traits with Katniss such as self-interest and disrespect for authority. Typically strong female leads have been more apparent in films which can be categorised as either science-fiction or fantasy. Franchise films of this type include: *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2001), *Kill Bill, Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2* (2003, 2004), *Underworld* (2003, 2006, 2009, 2012), *Resident Evil* (2002, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2012), *Salt* (2010), *Hannah* (2011) and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012).

According to professor of popular culture Jeffrey A Brown '[f]ictional women in contemporary popular culture are just as likely to be super-spies, superheroes, monster slayers, avengers, detectives, kung fu masters, and revolutionary leaders as they are damsels in distress or romantic leads' (Brown, 2015: 5). Brown's book, *Beyond Bombshells: The New Action Heroine in Popular Culture*, discusses how action heroines are now more popular in movies, comic books, television and literature than they have ever been; some of the television shows include: *In Plain Sight* (2008-current), *Nikita* (2010-current), *Covert Affairs* (2010-current), *Homeland* (2011-current), *Revenge* (2011-current), *Revolution* (2012-current), *The Blacklist* (2013-current) and *Killer Women* (2014-current). While women in action roles are still sexualized and objectified they also challenge the preconceived myths about normal or culturally appropriate gender behaviours, though sometimes through reactionary masculine stereotypes: '[t]he modern action heroine can fight, shoot, solve mysteries, and save the world as well as Rambo, James Bond, or Indiana Jones ever did' (Brown, 2015: 5). The below quotation emphasises the augmentation the strong female lead presents to the male-dominated fictional ideal of heroism:

It would seem that female characters have finally established more than just a foothold in action genres. The action heroine is no longer just an anomaly or a novelty, she is a full-blown character type and a financially dependable one at that. Audiences in this new millennium have demonstrated that they want to see

women kick ass, and they are willing to pay to enjoy the heroic exploits of female characters (Brown, 2015: 6)

However, the strong female lead is a complex figure, particularly with regards to the character of Katniss as a figure of identification for fans as she both fits into this image of women, but also deviates from and complicates it as the character incorporates several gender roles into one. This means that the character of Katniss can encourage male as well as female identification. However, as mentioned earlier in the thesis, the focus will be on gendered female spectatorship given the self-reflexive nature of the research. Identification with a character such as Katniss allows for a discussion into how it makes multiple identities visible within a single spectator. This has implications for the gendered politics of representation that Mulvey discusses in her research as it allows for a wider variety of gendered identifications.

The Hollywood action heroine is a character that has finally succeeded in establishing a record of popularity and profitability after uneven success at the box office. There has been a resurgence of strong female action heroes, particularly in young adult films such as *The Hunger Games* franchise. Other films from the young adult genre which have embraced the strong female lead include: *City of Bones* (2008), *Paranormalcy* (2011), *Firelight* (2011), *Divergent* (2012), *Delirium* (2012) and *Dustlands* (2012). This confirms that the role of the strong female lead has established more than just a foothold in the young adult genre. In film and literature young adult genres are defined as being marketed to adolescents and young adults, usually in the age range twelve to eighteen. The term was first used by G. Robert Carlsen in 1980 in relation to literature ‘wherein the protagonist is either a teenager or one who approaches problems from a teenage perspective’; he argues how such ‘novels are generally of moderate length and told from the first person’ and they typically ‘describe initiation into the adult world, or the surmounting of a contemporary problem forced upon the protagonist(s) by the adult world’ (56). Through this quotation parallels can be seen between the description of young adult literature and that of the young adult genre with regards to film. *The Hunger Games* series is a prime example of teenagers trying to surmount a problem forced upon them by the adult world. *The Hunger Games* franchise is worth examining because it attempts to do something different with the strong female lead and introduces several identities and gendered roles which a young adult audience can identify with. It is important to make clear that the thesis is not proposing distracted female spectatorship in an uncritical way. Dubrofsky and Ryalls bring this to the fore in their discussion of Katniss and race where, in the films, ‘altered bodies—bodies marked as surgically transformed or adorned

with makeup and ornate clothing—are constructed as deviant, in opposition to Katniss's natural, unaltered white femininity, dangerously entrenching notions of naturalized embodied feminine whiteness' (2014: 395). As such the films are troubling in their 'seamless privileging of an unconscious production of observable trustworthiness and earnestness of character, instantiating a new ethic of whiteness and femininity' (Dubrofsky and Ryalls, 2014: 395). This is partly done through the casting of Jennifer Lawrence as 'Collins describes Katniss as having olive skin, gray eyes, and black hair, leaving her racialization open to a few possibilities (such as mixed race, Middle Eastern, Latina), but the film portrays Katniss as white' (Dubrofsky and Ryalls, 2014: 399). They go on to argue that the world of *The Hunger Games* is one where issues of inequality and disenfranchisement are centred and as such 'race does not factor into questions of equality: white and Black people are likewise disenfranchised or privileged, and people of other races appear briefly as background characters' (Dubrofsky and Ryalls, 2014: 398). Dubrofsky and Ryalls also argue that the way Katniss is presented is 'premised on her authentic whiteness, her naturalized heterosexual femininity, and her effortless abilities as a potential future wife and mother' (Dubrofsky and Ryalls, 2014: 409). What I explore below is how Katniss, in embodying multiple gender roles simultaneously, moves beyond her heterosexual femininity and becomes more than a potential wife and mother.

Beyond the Strong Female Lead

According to Scott and Dargis, Katniss recalls the character of Ripley as they are both women doing a job that they need to do in order to survive, but in contrast it is the maternal aspects which Katniss lacks that aids in rationalising the violence in the later Alien films: 'The definitive encapsulation of this occurs in the second film when Ripley, in protecting a little girl, clomps up to the alien and says, "Get away from her, you bitch!"' (Scott and Dargis, 2012). It is Ripley's maternal aspects which strongly come to the fore in order to protect the girl in the film. Gender and film theorist Yvonne Tasker in her 1993 book, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, genre and the action cinema*, identifies Ripley as representing a 'significant development in the portrayal of action heroines, combining icons of the action narrative with borrowings from the horror film' (1993: 15). Tasker goes on to argue how the 'persona of the action heroine borrows on well-established images such as that of the tomboy', in this way the heroine 'can be read as a girl who has not accepted the responsibilities of adult womanhood' (1993: 15). In contrast Katniss embraces several identities and embodies different roles simultaneously which makes her, as a character, feel

new to an audience that has grown up expecting something else from the female leads on screen. Though the scene analysis discussed below does not necessarily lead to identification with the spectator it is a way of demonstrating how Katniss embodies several roles simultaneously. Exploring the various parts of Katniss' personality allows for a discussion into how the image of a "woman" is not a fixed, essential identity, which is examined in feminist media theory throughout the thesis. The scene analysis shows how the character is a socially and culturally situated subject and in doing so operates to re-produce gendered relations of looking as well as potentially disrupting them.

Scott and Dargis expand on this potential disruption in relation to gender: 'Katniss isn't locked into gender. She has assumed her dead father's responsibility as the family provider and is also a mother surrogate for her sister, Prim. But Katniss doesn't shift between masculinity and femininity; she inhabits both' (Scott and Dargis, 2012). This is shown through the series as Katniss equally portrays stereotypically feminine traits (such as vulnerability and attractiveness) as well as stereotypically masculine traits (such as physical strength and bread winner). Her vulnerability comes to the fore in the first film in the franchise during a flashback. After Katniss volunteers for the reaping the name of the male tribute is called: Peeta Mellark. As he walks towards the stage Katniss remembers when she first met Peeta. The scene cuts to a grainy shot, showing the scene is a memory as it is in contrast to the starkly lit reaping just witnessed, where Katniss is collapsed against a tree in the rain. Katniss appears weak and disorientated, which is reinforced by the handheld camerawork and out of focus shots used. The character is depicted as helpless and the use of low angle shots in relation to Peeta when he throws her a burnt loaf of bread indicate that he is the one who has control over her fate in this scene. The visible weakness shown here is something which Katniss must come to terms with throughout the course of the films. In relation to this particular scene we can see her lack of hunting skills as a feminine trait. Her feminine traits are presented as a double threat as she navigates the feminine sides of both her personality and her physical appearance under the public gaze. In the interview that the tributes have to go through before the games Katniss is shown as being uncomfortable in her long dress with her hair and make-up done. We can tell this as her body language is in stark contrast to the character of Glimmer. Whereas Katniss is restrained and taut throughout the interview Glimmer is at ease with her sparkly outfit and with being interviewed by Caesar Flickerman. Rapid editing and muffled diegetic sound accompany Katniss as she walks on to the stage, reflecting her unease at being in the public eye and attired in such a feminine way. *The Hunger Games* sets up the interplay between her feminine and masculine traits and they

both come to the fore at the end of this interview process. After Peeta announces his love for her in his interview Katniss pushes him against the wall and demands to know why he did that as she argues that he has made her look weak. Haymitch points out that he has made her look desirable, a trait that will aid in getting sponsors and ultimately help both her and Peeta win the Games. The scene is shot predominantly using mid shots using a handheld camera, this emphasises how both Katniss and Peeta are trapped by their circumstances and are forced into putting forward aspects of their personalities that they are not necessarily comfortable in presenting. *The Hunger Games* franchise challenges the notion of heroism that has been present in other young adult films, such as the *Twilight* series (Meyer, 2005-2008). Katniss is a tomboy and her masculine traits often act as a protective barrier against the world. This is especially clear in *The Hunger Games* when she has been selected as tribute and is speaking to her mother for what could be the last time. In this scene Katniss verbally admonishes her mother for succumbing to depression and tells her she cannot do that again as Katniss will not be there to take care of Prim if she dies in the games: ‘You can’t tune out again. No, you can’t. Not like when Dad died. I won’t be there any more, you’re all she has. No matter what you feel you have to be there for her. Do you understand? Don’t cry, don’t cry. Don’t’ (*The Hunger Games*, 2012). The shot is framed in such a way that the over the shoulder shot of Katniss’ mother’s face is partially blocked by Katniss’ shoulder, whereas Katniss is in full view during the scene. This, accompanied with the slight high angle shot used when Katniss’ mother speaks to her, gives the impression that Katniss is the one in charge of this relationship. In this scene we are shown Katniss being the strong figure who is charged with keeping her family together and safe, thereby occupying a paternal role. The harsh words spoken to her mother when she thinks she might not be there to continue this role show how ruthless she is willing to be, even to those she loves, in order to ensure they remain safe and cared for.

This may have the result that in the end neither Katniss’ masculine traits nor her feminine traits truly fit her. That could be what is appealing to her as a character, she inhabits an in-between space where she cannot be defined as one gender or the other allowing for an increased sense of identification with the character as there are no strict boundaries as to how she is defined in terms of her gender. Sigourney Weaver’s Ripley and Linda Hamilton’s Sarah Connor are presented as vessels for maternal rage and as adults who are weaponising their protective instincts, in contrast, Jennifer Lawrence as Katniss seems to be channelling a different kind of anger and as such enables identification with a different set of fantasies. Examining the strong female lead in a franchise such as *The Hunger Games* validates how

ways of looking have changed, contemporary ideas around identification and strong female characters problematise Mulvey's account of objectification and voyeurism in the cinematic experience. Hollywood actress Natalie Portman has reflected on the role of women in action films and was quoted on website *PolicyMic* as saying:

The fallacy in Hollywood is that if you're making a "feminist" story, the woman kicks ass and wins. That's not feminist, that's macho. A movie about a weak, vulnerable woman can be feminist if it shows a real person that we can empathize with (cited in Balkind, 2014: 39)

What *The Hunger Games* series does differently to films which have violent female protagonist dressed in masculine qualities and tight fitting clothing (*Catwoman*, 2004; *Salt*, 2010; *Aeon Flux*, 2005) is to show all of Katniss' qualities, the masculine and the feminine, instead of confining the character to a single definition.

This way of framing film spectatorship in terms of identification opens up thinking of images in terms of what knowledges, understandings and experiences that they make possible. Images do not merely reflect the world but they also structure it in certain ways and in turn frame particular ways of seeing. Doane wrote of the ways in which women are misrepresented and alienated in films, 'the female spectator is given two options: the masochism of over-identification or the narcissism entailed in becoming one's own object of desire, in assuming the image in the most radical way' (Doane, 1991: 31-32). Because of this Doane claims that 'womanliness is a mask which can be worn and removed' (1991: 25) and as such it is often 'the female spectator who, in the popular imagination, repeatedly "gives in" to its fascination' (Doane, 1988: 2). Identification with a strong female lead breaks down the traditional framework where the female spectator is understood as passive and narcissistic and creates a space where the strong woman becomes a fantasy of agency for the female spectator. Doane's work exposes how the gap between the body and the image can be dissolved as in a visual culture where women are not only the subject but the objects of film she argues that there is no spatial gap between the female spectator and the film image. Expanding on this are Doane's views of how identification is inherently narcissistic:

For the female spectator there is a certain over-presence of the image – she is the image. Given the closeness of its relationship, the female spectator's desire can only be described in terms of a kind of narcissism – the female look demands a becoming (1992: 231)

In order to develop another way of framing women's spectatorship we need to consider how all of the traditional distinctions set up by Mulvey, as discussed above, collapse when we think about how women look at images of women. According to Doane, female spectators are both subjects and objects simultaneously. Mulvey suggested the presence of a gap which allows for a voyeuristic look at the image on screen, in contrast, Doane emphasises how through the female look the female spectator identifies with and becomes the image on the screen. Female spectators are not subjects that transform themselves into objects, rather they are simultaneously the subject and the object. The frontispiece at the beginning of this chapter is an example of that as through it I make myself both the subject and object. This allows for discussions into exactly how moments of identification are made possible. Given the expanse of promotional material, articles and interviews connected with Katniss Everdeen (as played by Jennifer Lawrence in the franchise) the process of identification can extend beyond the cinema screen, making the distinction between the strong female lead on the screen and the spectator in the cinema even smaller. This is aided through licensed tie-in products that use Lawrence's likeness to promote them such as: games, fashion, make-up and toys.

Fantasy and science-fiction franchises allow the spectator room to identify with the characters as they portray a world removed from our own, not necessarily more so than any other genre. Regarding *The Hunger Games* franchise the world depicted has similarities with our own, in terms of societal structure, but is a more extreme version. This provides the spectator with similarities in which they can begin to build their identification with the world and the characters. This is especially the case with a character such as Katniss Everdeen, as her personality is portrayed in such a way that people can see aspects of it reflected in their own personalities. Katniss is an independent strong survivalist, lethal, but good at thinking outside the box. Katniss' past hardships (her father's death, mother's depression, and near starvation) have made her a survivor, and she will endure hardship and hard work to preserve her own life and the life of her family. She has shown she will protect those she loves no matter the cost to herself. This is demonstrated when she volunteers for the Games to save her little sister Prim, when she shields Gale to keep him from being whipped, and when she decides during her second Games to die in order to keep Peeta safe. Katniss quickly adapts to the kill or be killed philosophy of the games and coldly considers how she will kill her fellow competitors during the first Games, at one point rationalizing that she is already a killer due to her hunting experience, though she is briefly disturbed after her first direct kill, Marvel. By the end of the first Games, she is prepared to shoot Cato, and attempts to do so only to be

interrupted by Peeta being attacked by the muttations. Despite her cold-bloodedness, she is nonetheless extremely relieved at not having to kill her allies Rue and Peeta. As the series progresses, however, she becomes increasingly cold-blooded, to the point where she objectively discusses how to kill everyone (but Peeta) involved in her second Hunger Games in *Catching Fire* (though she ultimately has to kill only one combatant), and by the third novel is depicted killing an unarmed female civilian during a mission, with apparent remorse. This progression can be traced through her choice of weapon, a bow and arrow. In the first book and film Katniss uses a wooden bow made by her father for survival and to hunt; in the Games and in the Quarter Quell she uses a silver bow made to kill and designed by the Capitol; in *Mockingjay* District 13 provides her with a bow which has been designed only for destruction as its arrows can explode and cause damage to others as well as the target Katniss is aiming at. Laying down the evolution of the character by using a visual object demonstrates how identification can change. It is not a case of wholly identifying with a single character throughout the films, because of the variety of ways Katniss is portrayed this complicates the way she is identified with.

As mentioned above, the character of Katniss is constructed as being fiercely protective of her younger sister and is more responsible than anyone else for her family's wellbeing. Katniss is put across to the spectator as being responsible for feeding her family which she does by hunting and foraging, skills she learned from her father before his death in a mine explosion years earlier. Hunting is illegal in Panem and punishable by death. This disregard for the rules that the character has conveys how Katniss will go to extreme lengths to protect her family which developed out of necessity rather than an inherent defiance as after her father died her mother sank into a depression, leaving Katniss to take care of the family. As a result of these conditions, I as the spectator understand how Katniss grew into a character who is tough, unsentimental, and practical. As the scene analysis above showed this change took place even before Katniss went through the games as she tells her mother to take care of Prim. The hardships faced as a result of her impoverished upbringing work to her advantage once she is in the arena. The skills and qualities she developed to cope with the everyday challenges of being poor, including her ability to hunt, her toughness, and her resourcefulness, are what keeps her alive through the Games. The Hunger Games do not turn her into an unfeeling killer, and the only times she kills she does so out of necessity, and to some degree in Cato's case, pity. Her sense of compassion is depicted as remaining intact through the way she treats Rue after the younger tribute is killed. When the tributes die in the arena they are left to be collected by helicopters. In contrast to this when Rue dies Katniss

cradles her in her arms and their eye contact is maintained which we can see through the shot-reverse-shot between the two characters. In this scene there is also a point of view shot from Rue as she is dying. The scenery fades in and out and gets increasingly out of focus until it goes white so we know when she has died. This is not used with the death of any other tribute which serves to increase our compassion in reflection of Katniss' own. As well as this we see Katniss place white flowers around Rue, signifying her innocence, and in doing so demonstrating the emotional connection they both had. The shot after Katniss kisses three of her fingers and salutes at the camera shows an uprising in Rue's district, according to Dubrofsky and Ryalls, 'suggesting that Katniss's devotion to Rue leads to the uprising' (2014: 398). They go on to argue how the 'scenes of unrest in District 11 are mostly of Black men tipping silos, setting fires, and fighting with troops' and this 'animates a common racialized trope: Katniss as the great white saviour' (Dubrofsky and Ryalls, 2014: 398). These actions also serve to 'highlight Katniss, the white hero, as someone with uncommon integrity and humanity, risking her life for those she loves' (Dubrofsky and Ryalls, 2014: 398). This lack of change in the character of Katniss can be seen as a victory as Katniss maintains her sense of identity and integrity, just as Peeta at one point says he would like to despite the horrible ordeals they both face in the Games. All of these aspects combine together to create a character which is multi-layered and complex. An interview between Dargis and Scott from 2012 discusses the appeal of Katniss as a character that can be identified with. Dargis establishes how Katniss represents an alternative to a cultural type described by R. W. B. Lewis as the American Adam:

Lewis saw this type as "an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources." Katniss, by contrast, is never liberated from history or ancestry, but deeply formed by them and they, as much as her awesome archery skills, help her through the slaughter of the games. (Scott and Dargis, 2012)

Katniss is set apart from this archetype because she is not a free and rootless figure, as well as being an example of socially and culturally constructed gender. Throughout the films Katniss bears with her multiple symbolic identities: in *The Hunger Games* she is depicted as an athlete through her hunts with Gale, her identity as celebrity is emphasised in *Catching Fire* through her role as champion, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1* and *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* demonstrate her warrior side as she joins the resistance, and

throughout the franchise Katniss is depicted as a sister, daughter, friend and potential love interest. In terms of genre she combines the western hero, action hero, romantic heroine and a tween idol. All of these aspects make her a believable character that audiences can relate to; she is not defined by one singular aspect but incorporates many into her one being. In a way they also lead to her becoming a mythic figure as through the multiple facets of her personality Katniss exemplifies a number of different and contradictory gender stereotypes. She occupies both masculine and feminine traits and as such is not locked into either, leading towards the conclusion that gender absolutes depicted in films are not so much confusing as inapt, as Dargis states:

[I]s killing masculine? Is nurturing feminine? Katniss nurtures and she kills, and she does both extremely well. Katniss is a fantasy figure, but partly what makes her powerful — and, I suspect, what makes her so important to a lot of girls and women — is that she's one of the truest feeling, most complex female characters to hit American movies in a while. She isn't passive, she isn't weak, and she isn't some random girl. She's active, she's strong and she's the girl who motivates the story. (Scott and Dargis, 2012)

Katniss is also not simply an individual hero but a relational subject. This is interesting regarding how she is taken up in fan cultures and in theory as a new form of heroine. In creating a specific kind of personality, a process that stardom has been doing since the 20s, Lawrence reflects several different gender roles which goes on to create mechanisms for identification. Identification is an intrinsic part of consumption and film has other sets of mechanisms in order to create identification in comparison to books, there are different modes of identification that need to be discussed in relation to the character of Katniss and the persona of Jennifer Lawrence when it comes to *The Hunger Games* franchise. To make this kind of strong female lead identifiable when adapting from book to screen an actress who is relatable needs to be chosen in order to enhance the complicated nature of Katniss. Dargis condemns the selection of Jennifer Lawrence in the role as she states how it is 'hard not to think that they cast a woman with a rocking body instead of a young girl partly because they were worried that guys wouldn't turn out for a female-driven story' (Scott and Dargis, 2012). Scott, on the other hand, extols how the performance she gives is what makes Lawrence an ideal representative of Katniss: 'Her features are grave and somewhat inscrutable, and she is at once a watchful, reactive presence in the world of Panem and a determined, free-thinking actor within it' (Scott and Dargis, 2012). These aspects make Lawrence, as the female star, an object of projection so the spectator perceives the dystopian world through Lawrence's eyes.

This is reinforced during the films as the camera follows Katniss, usually at eye-level, to emphasise that she is the focus of the film and the one character our attention should be drawn to. In *Catching Fire* this is shown when Katniss enters the arena for the seventy-fifth annual Hunger Games. She is standing in the lift and the camera remains on her face as she rises up out of the ground, as she comes to a stop the camera pans round her so we can see what she sees. This is done swiftly and the scenery does not come into clear focus, which serves to reflect Katniss' own confusion at where she is. As Katniss scans the arena there are two eye-line matches showing the other tributes standing on their pedestals. In this way the film reinforces the audiences' connection with Katniss and draws our attention to her throughout the films. Identification is not a single autonomous thing but can change and move from viewed object to viewer, discussed above. Identification is blurred between character and star personae as often celebrities are portrayed as having similar characteristics to the characters that they play. This enables identification to move between the real person and the character that they portray.

Moving on to focus on star personae this form of identification is aided with an actress such as Jennifer Lawrence. Her relatable nature, produced through films and marketing, comes to the fore in interviews as well as fan websites such as BuzzFeed. Lawrence represents a certain kind of gender identification that is slightly different to that which is normally shown in relation to franchise films. Su Holmes has written on the relationship between celebrity and femininity and Sean Redmond researches in the areas of stardom and celebrity. In 2006 they edited *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture* which shows how emulation, adulation and identification are all key motifs when it comes to the study of celebrity culture: 'The *desire* for fame, stardom, or celebrification stems from a *need* to be wanted in a society where being famous appears to offer enormous material, economic, social and psychic rewards' (Holmes and Redmond, 2006: 2). They go on to suggest how those who are not famous take on the role of the fan who celebrates the famous. As well as this if you are not famous then 'you exist at the periphery of the power networks that circulate in and through the popular media' (Holmes and Redmond, 2006: 2). It is being on the periphery that allows fans to produce a particular kind of impression regarding the image of the celebrity. This makes the celebrity and how they are perceived by their fans a key figure with regards to identification especially as, argued by Holmes and Redmond, the modern self is 'marked by a great deal of anxiety, doubt and confusion over who- and how-to-be in a world where identity is felt to be more malleable, more questionable, and much more decidedly manufactured' (Holmes and Redmond, 2006: 2).

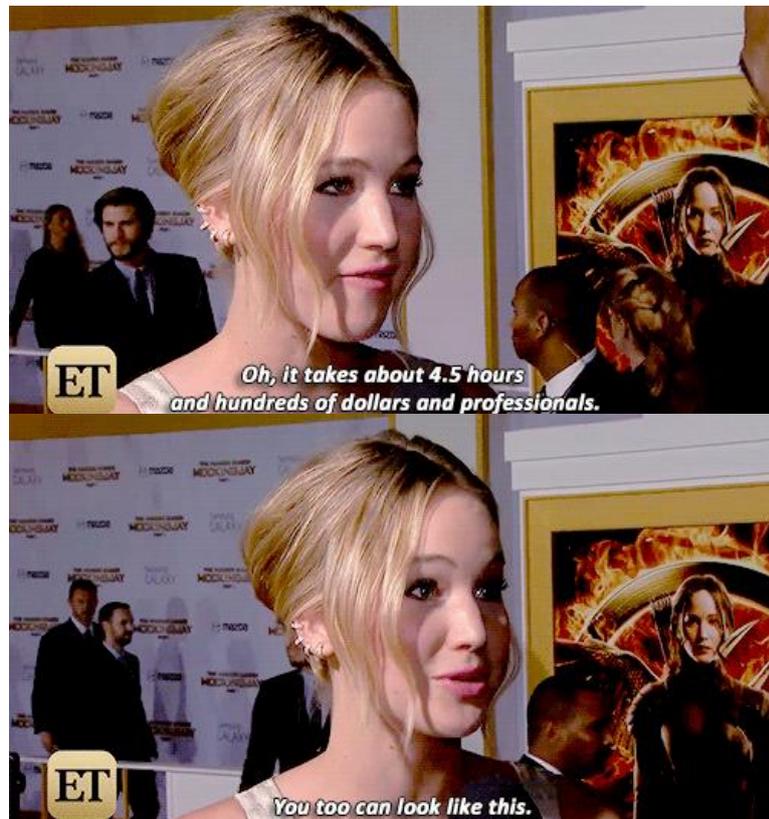


Figure 10 Woodward, Ellie (2015) 'Jennifer Lawrence is the badass woman we all want to be'

It is in this space that the celebrity enters and informs patterns and modes of behaviour to create a strong sense of identification between the fan and the celebrity figure.

As discussed in Chapter Three fandom encompasses a participatory culture, this is explored again by Holmes and Redmond who state that fandom is 'often a creative enterprise, involving the production of artwork, fiction and dedicated websites' (2006: 3). The website I have chosen to analyse with regards to fandom and Jennifer Lawrence is BuzzFeed. Founded in 2006 in New York as a viral lab tracking viral content the company has grown into a global media and technology company that provides coverage on a variety of topics; it produces daily content and the popular formats include lists, videos and quizzes. BuzzFeed is an appropriate object of study with regard to fandom and celebrity precisely because it is a product of fan's reactions to a particular celebrity. This builds on the ideas put forward by Jenkins regarding the aca-fan, outlined in Chapter Three, as BuzzFeed creates a 'sense of membership or affiliation with the populations at the heart of [the] research' (Jenkins, 2013: xiii). The articles concerned with Lawrence on BuzzFeed aid in perpetuating a certain level of intimacy between her and her fans, '[i]n the modern world where real face-to-face intimacy, with people you know, has arguably decreased, fandom involves an "illusion of intimacy"

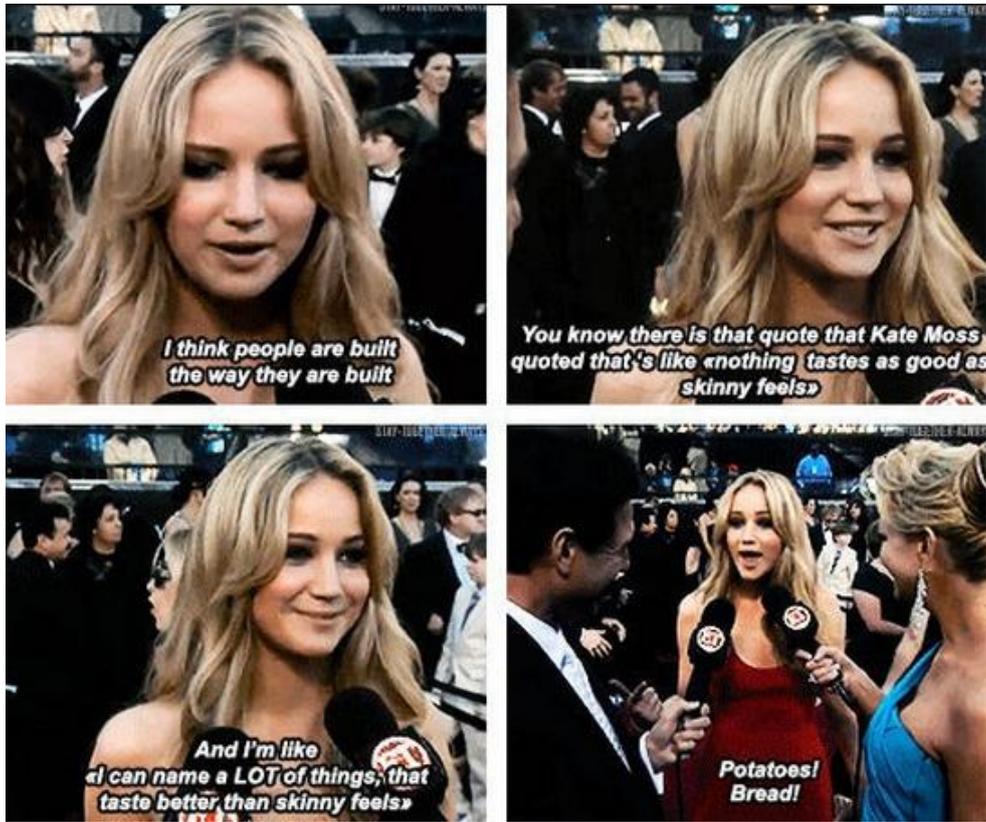


Figure 12 Woodward, Ellie (2015) 'Jennifer Lawrence is the badass woman we all want to be'

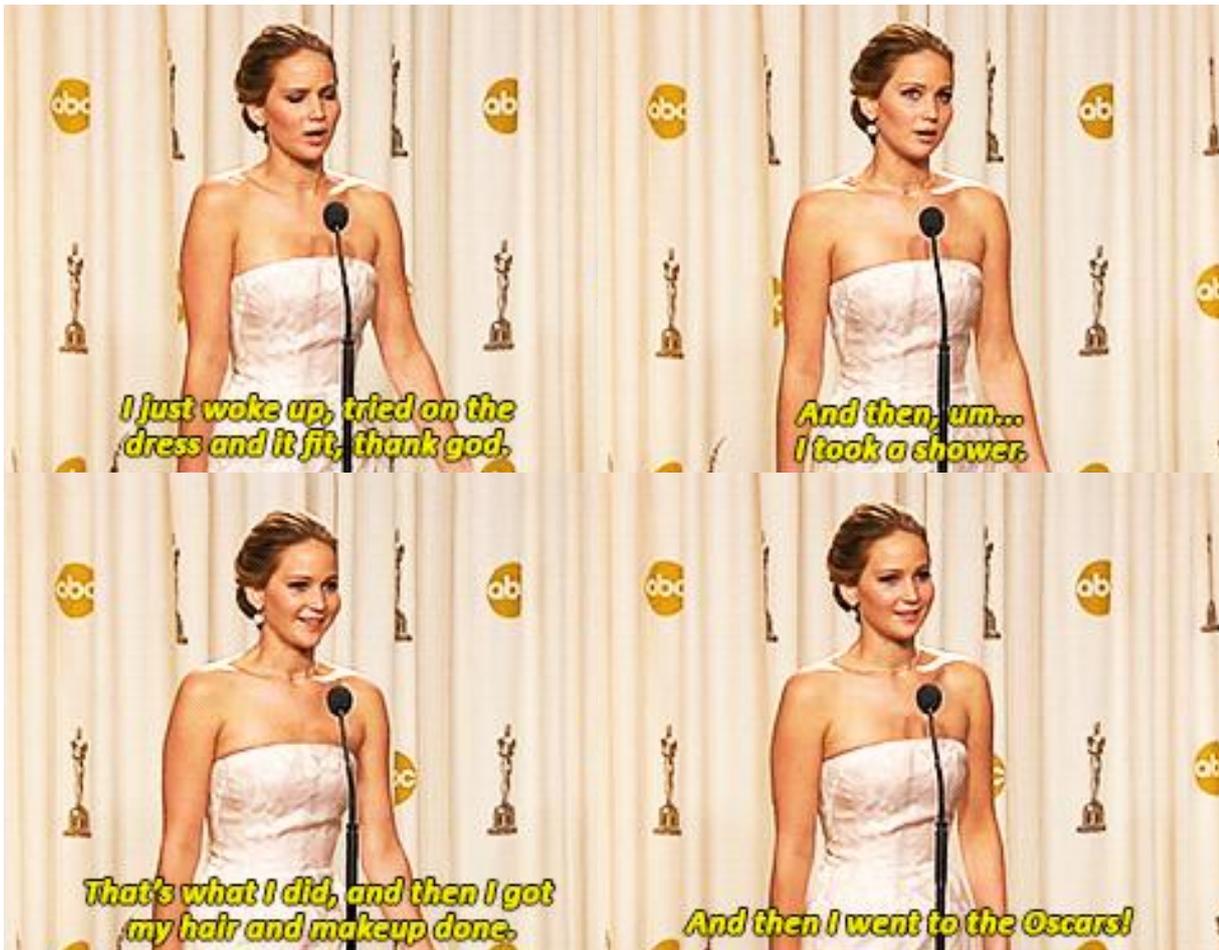


Figure 11 Woodward, Ellie (2015) 'Jennifer Lawrence is the badass woman we all want to be'

that aims to compensate for such loneliness' (Holmes and Redmond, 2006: 3). The way the BuzzFeed articles of Lawrence do this is to emphasise her image as "one of the girls". Some of the methodological challenges when analysing websites is that the accuracy of the data is often in doubt and, especially with websites such as BuzzFeed, the content is constantly changing. A method used to surmount this is to analyse each article individually in terms of Lawrence's indentifiability. Here I assess indentifiability in terms of my own spectatorship. As mentioned throughout the thesis spectatorship is subjective and given the self-reflexive approach that I use throughout the thesis here I will use the same method in the analysis of these articles. One of the articles, written by Ellie Woodward, focuses on Lawrence's relatability, a term which is used in place of identification, with regards to how she answers questions regarding her appearance stating that Lawrence 'humorously dismissed a question that focused solely around her looks because HELLO THERE IS MORE TO WOMEN' (Woodward, 2015). The format of BuzzFeed's lists is to have a statement, such as the above, followed by a photo which supports the statement. With regards to Jennifer Lawrence the images often include subtitles of what she was saying at the time, this depicts how even though the writer of the article manipulates the context of the image with their own words what Lawrence is saying comes across as identifiable fact (see Figure 10, which accompanied the above quote).

The article goes on to show, through the photos and quotes used, how Lawrence acts in response to the questions posed to her. Instead of going into detail regarding her preparation for the Oscars she is dismissive in the use of her language (see Figure 12). In doing so she undermines the questions that are put to her regarding her looks and how long she takes to get ready. The language used throughout the articles on BuzzFeed creates a connection between myself as the fan and Jennifer Lawrence as the celebrity. Lara Parker explores in the article '27 Times You Connected with Jennifer Lawrence on a Spiritual Level' (2015) the different ways in which Jennifer Lawrence has become relatable to her female fans. Parker writes that fans connect with Lawrence 'when she said exactly what we're all thinking when we try to be social', this is followed by a photo of Lawrence with the subtitles 'I'm not cool enough to be at this party' (Parker, 2015). The connection is made through the use of the pronoun we, this ties the reader directly to the celebrity and in doing so encourages identification with that particular celebrity. This use of language occurs throughout the article as Parker writes of when Jennifer Lawrence 'spoke DIRECTLY to your soul', 'described your weekend to a T' or 'when she owned her imperfections' (Parker, 2015). The first two relate to identification with an individual reader whereas the last one

(which was displayed with a photo of Lawrence and the quote ‘my breasts are uneven’) points towards a wider connection with her particular fan base, in this context ‘the star or celebrity is not just a desired object but also an intimate doorway for connecting people’ (Holmes and Redmond, 2006: 3). Lawrence’s image is used here to reflect concerns which many teenager girls and young women would be able to relate and identify with. The BuzzFeed articles I have chosen do this in several ways, as well as the example above, they appropriate Lawrence’s words on food and diets which extends her identifiable nature out to a wider audience. Lawrence is unapologetic about her weight in Woodward’s article and her words are comforting to an audience, of which I consider myself to be a part of, that is constantly confronted with images of skinny celebrities and diets in order to get the perfect body, ‘I like the way I look. I’m really sick of these actresses looking like birds. I’d rather look a little chubby on camera and look like a person in real life than look great on screen and look like a scarecrow in real life’ (Lawrence cited in Woodward, 2015). Expanding on this both articles go into detail when referencing Lawrence’s love of food, she does not shy away from the fact that she likes to eat. I reflected this attitude in my frontispiece for this chapter as through my research of Lawrence I felt that I could relate to her obsession with food. This approach and attitude is different to what celebrities usually say about food and Lawrence quotes Kate Moss when she is talking about her weight (see Figure 11). Food and femininity remain closely connected in the public imagination as well as the emotional lives of women. In their 2015 book, *Food and Femininity*, Cairns and Johnston explore the complex and emotionally charged tensions between food and the understanding of femininity today. They outline how ‘seemingly *personal* food struggles and stresses arise from the *social* challenge of successfully performing food femininities: the nurturing mother, the talented home-cook, the conscientious consumer, the health-savvy eater’ (Cairns and Johnston, 2015: 12). They go on to argue that these ‘are not easy tasks to pull off, especially if one wants to achieve them in a relaxed, seemingly “effortless” way that avoids the impression of excess’ (Cairns and Johnston, 2015: 12). The crux of their research depicts the ‘sense of responsibility [which] generated strong feelings of guilt and shame for women when standards were unmet, as well as pride and joy when foodwork goals were achieved’ (Cairns and Johnston, 2015: 16). Their work on food and femininity carries forward ideas regarding post-feminism as well as femininity and the masquerade as they state that they ‘approach gender not as something that we possess but as something that we *do*’ (Cairns and Johnston, 2015: 22). This is because of the evolving and multifaceted expressions around food and femininity were some women ‘may incorporate food within a femininity orientated toward corporeal restraint and body

work orientated toward thinness' (Cairns and Johnston, 2015: 22). The foods included in my frontispiece were a mix of healthy and un-healthy options that reflect my own continual conflict regarding what I eat. I feel that I can identify with Jennifer Lawrence because she states such joy at eating foods that are often judged as "bad for you", such as bread and pizza. Cairns and Johnston link certain kinds of foods to femininity and argue that 'we may perform femininity by ordering salad or sushi, dishes that are often culturally coded as feminine for Western eaters' (Cairns and Johnston, 2015: 25). Such discussions are linked to self-confidence and theorists, such as Gill and Orgad, explore how 'confidence has become a technology of self that invites girls and women to work on themselves' (Gill and Orgad, 2015: 324). They discuss Love Your Body discourse which encourages women to see their bodies in a more positive way 'with its critiques of the beauty industry's portrayal of women, and its counter-celebration of feeling comfortable and confident in your own skin' (Gill and Orgad, 2015: 324). Opposed to creating feelings of guilt or shame regarding the body 'Love Your Body discourses offer a warm, positive, encouraging intervention into women's relationship to their own embodied selves' (Gill and Orgad, 2015: 330). The adverts associated with this discourse, according to Gill and Orgad, are 'particularly powerful because of the way they seem to interrupt the almost entirely normalised hostile judgement and surveillance of women's bodies in contemporary culture' (Gill and Orgad, 2015: 330). In much the same way Jennifer Lawrence's words encourage me to see my eating habits as "normal" and "ok" Love Your Body discourse attempts to recreate those feelings by encouraging women to have confidence in their own bodies. It is a move away from relating to your body 'in terms of "flaws" (spots, cellulite, dry skin) and "battles" (with eating disorders, fat, self-esteem)' (Gill and Elias, 2014: 181) and a move towards understanding your body in less negative terms. However, despite the affective force of the Love Your Body discourse (and personally for me of Jennifer Lawrence's words) it is presented as a simple task to shrug off low self-esteem and negative body image, as if it were 'merely a matter of "remembering" how incredible you are or "realising" that "I'm beautiful"' (Gill and Elias, 2014: 182-183). García-Favaro goes further in critiquing confidence culture by arguing that the recent promotion of self-confidence as the 'site for expanded, heightened and more insidious modes of regulation, often spearheaded by those very institutions invested in women's insecurities' (2016: 283). In confidence culture women are interpellated as 'autonomous, freely choosing, perpetually self-regulating, transformative and adaptive actors who are entirely self-reliant, responsible and accountable for their life, and whose value is largely measured by their capacity to self-care and self-improve' (García-Favaro, 2016: 288-

289). The arguments put forward by these theorists expose the complicated relationship between women and their bodies, as well as other women's bodies. The role of the BuzzFeed articles being discussed is to be included in the post-feminist discussion of Love Your Body discourse and to show how Jennifer Lawrence, and the act of identifying with her, is a part of this wider complicated culture. Parker's article expands on this attitude and again uses personal pronouns to make Lawrence identifiable to the reader: 'when she shared your hobbies', 'when she said how we all feel when we go anywhere'; both of which are accompanied by photos of Lawrence, the first stating that 'Eating is one of my favourite parts of the day' and the second stating 'I'm starving. Is there food here?' (Parker, 2015). It is the use of these personal pronouns, as well as what Lawrence is saying, which makes me feel as if I can identify with her as a person. From my own subjective point of view articles such as this make Lawrence seem more "normal" and, therefore, more identifiable as a result.

The construction of celebrities has always conversely involved the search for the authentic person that lies behind the manufactured persona. Holmes and Redmond argue that the importance of this in an age where the artifice and simulation of modern technology makes it harder to know what is real and what is fake as '[n]ew and old media technologies have enabled stars and celebrities to be endlessly circulated, replayed, downloaded and copied. Their images, qualities and cultural values are found almost everywhere, invading or affecting many areas of social life' (2006: 4). The rise of websites like Twitter and Instagram mean that images of celebrities can be seen with greater frequency and as such the desire to get behind these images and to see through the manufactured celebrity is one of the overriding discourses of contemporary fame. Holmes and Redmond expand on their argument using the example of photographs of naked celebrities as the ultimate example of how to get behind the image of manufactured celebrity. Jennifer Lawrence's iCloud account was hacked, along with several other celebrity accounts, in 2014 and naked photos of the actress were posted online. Lawrence's response to the hacking scandal demonstrated why she can be seen as an identifiable celebrity. In an interview with Sam Kashner for the magazine *Vanity Fair* Lawrence states how she was going to write a public statement after the photos had been put online: 'I started to write an apology, but I don't have anything to say I'm sorry for. I was in a loving, healthy, great relationship for four years. It was long distance, and either your boyfriend is going to look at porn or he's going to look at you' (cited in Kashner, 2014). This can be associated with spectatorship as it raises issues about the relations of looking and who gets to decide who looks. The above quote by Lawrence is directly about resisting objectification but also about embracing it in a context which is

private and intimate. Once the photographs are viewed out of the initial context they become an object which should both not be looked at, as they stemmed from a private situation, and at the same time are openly available to be looked at. After the photographs were released the power of looking was outside of Lawrence's control, it is in the way she reacts to this heightened spectatorship and scrutiny in an area of her life that she never intended to be available for viewing that brings her identifiable nature to the fore. The majority of stars seem distant and unattainable but Lawrence comes across as identifiable and as a result the gap between the self of the spectator and the image of the character on screen shrinks even more: 'Just because I'm a public figure, just because I'm an actress, does not mean that I asked for this. It does not mean that it comes with the territory. [...] People forget that we're human' (cited in Kashner, 2014). It is this honesty and apparent sincerity about whom she is which makes Jennifer Lawrence, and therefore the character of Katniss, identifiable to me as a fan and spectator of *The Hunger Games* franchise. Given that aspects of Lawrence's character can be closely connected with those of Katniss a continuity is created between that actor and the character that carries elements of feminism across from real-life to make-believe.

This apparent honesty and sincerity is produced in the dystopian world, both on page and screen, of *The Hunger Games* as well as in the dystopian world of Hollywood and on the internet. The novels are for young adults who want to see the world in both a positive and more realistic way, not only are the novels dystopian but they predominantly centre around the notion of hope. The novels, and the films, tackle themes such as overcoming obstacles and developing strength through hardship; they can be powerful and uplifting as well as inspiring hope. A scene that reflects this is when Katniss volunteers for the reaping in *The Hunger Games*. As she stands on the stage looking down at the crowd the shot is an eye-line match so that we can see everyone in front of her salute her actions. Emotions are key in young adult dystopian fiction, especially if written using a first person narration, and hope is used to portray triumph over dire circumstances. In *The Hunger Games* franchise hope is seen as an element which should be contained and Katniss' progression into the beacon of hope that is the Mockingjay reflects the way that society around her is starting to crumble under the weight of the rebellion. It can be compared to Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) as well as more recent dystopian fiction such as *The Maze Runner* (James Dashner, 2009-2012) and the *Divergent* trilogy (Veronica Roth, 2011-2013). With the more recent books their protagonists are strong, smart and versatile, finding ways out of their predicaments using individual smarts or a special talent. Katniss' hunting skills keep her alive and become her greatest weapon, as well as contributing to her

transformation into the symbol of a revolution. All three young adult series' protagonists also narrate in first person, which gives a real time insight into their experiences. One major theme that sets *The Hunger Games* series, and particularly *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay: Part 2*, apart from the dystopian classics mentioned above is hope. On the whole, these teen-focused dystopias are far more hopeful than their adult fiction counterparts. Unlike Orwell and his contemporaries' warning sirens and lessons on lost morality, *The Hunger Games* series reads less like a cautionary tale on the dangers of reality television and more like a high drama about its dark conclusion (Balkind, 2014: 21-22). With regards to gender politics it can be argued broadly that *The Hunger Games* creates a participatory relationship between the spectator and the main protagonist. As outlined above one of the examples of this is the use of eye-line matches in the films. It can also be argued that this approach regarding gender is wholly different from classic cinema texts which alienate the spectator from the diegesis and thereby set up a different set of gender relations, as argued by Mulvey above. This approach, which allows the spectator space to be included in the diegesis, is reflected through the use of digital media in relation to film. Through the process of making the case study notebooks I viewed the newly released trailer for *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. Underneath the YouTube trailer for *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* are a series of comments which show how spectators are participating in the relationship between film and viewer (see Figure 13). One of the comments rewrites the ending of the original narrative but so that it is still keeping with the action taking place in the trailer. This has allowed the spectator to be a part of the film through a form of media which provides space for a more participatory form of identification with the characters within the film. Identification with regards to *The Hunger Games* franchise is not about objectification and distance, but instead is about encountering a form of identification which makes it harder to distance oneself as a spectator. These blurred boundaries between film and spectatorship are shown through moments when aspects of the film are appropriated in real life. I included in the case study notebooks an Empire Magazine article which tells how people in Thailand have been using the three finger salute from the films and spray painting on walls the quote 'If we burn you burn with us' on walls (Olly Richards, 2015: 75). What the article explores is how the films are relevant as they deal with issues of the military as well as rebellion. What my own thoughts on the article demonstrate is how the films clearly resonate with audiences and as such allow the themes to be identified with more readily. As a gendered subject looking at these images and reading these articles it needs to be discussed how, when it comes to discussing identification, the way in which these images are socially and culturally constructed becomes extremely relevant. A particular

section of the case study notebooks depicts how I look at photographs of Jennifer Lawrence and what my immediate thoughts are (see Figure 14). With regards to the photograph where she is standing between Liam Hemsworth and Josh Hutcherson I had to Google the three actors' heights as I wanted to know how I would compare being stood next to them. As a fan spectator I wanted to be able to imagine being stood next to them and as Jennifer Lawrence looks quite tall in the picture I felt a moment of identification as she looks the same height as me. This allowed me to imagine what it would be like standing in her place and reinforces the binary of similarity and difference as outlined by Stacey. When reading *The Hunger Games* books I imagined nothing but similarities between Katniss and myself. Through the process of adapting the book to screen the character of Katniss is given a form which can be judged and through this process difference is created between viewer and object. While the character exists on page she exists only in the imagination of the reader, by casting a specific actress to portray the character creates a space for both identification and dis-identification to take place as the reader's expectations of the character are met or not met. As an adaptation *The Hunger Games* series faces a series of issues which most mainstream films do not have to account for, one of which being that of a pre-existing fan base who have ideas and expectations regarding the series before it has even been released. The fact that *The Hunger Games* films are adaptations makes them a good example of a contemporary franchise because of the aforementioned fan base. With the success of a film relying on millions of people going to see it then it is more likely that the film will succeed if there are already fans waiting for the film's release. There are different considerations to take into account when discussing an adaptation, it is a more complex discussion than words versus images.

New circumstances and conditions need to be understood in relation to the different forms of media. Moving from one medium to the other there are new sign systems, new production methods, new cultures and ideologies, a new audience, new modes of censorship and new economic conditions. Also, with regards to film, more than one person is making the decisions unlike with a book where the author is the main decision maker. There is an interesting cultural phenomenon with regards to the cultural hierarchy of different media: text is seen as the original and film as the copy; the text is sacred and film is profane; the text is the legal precedent and any deviation in adaptation is a crime; the text is pure and innocent and the adaptation is a violation and a betrayal of the original; the adaptation is a reduction of the text and the adaptation is a failed translation of the text.

incarnational concept examines how adaptation is the word made flesh ‘wherein the word is only a partial expression of a more total representation that requires incarnation for its fulfillment’ (Elliott, 2003: 161). The genetic concept is where the text passes on genetic material to the film, they can share the same raw materials (such as character names) but they are distinguished by different plot strategies (Elliott, 2003: 150). With regards to the analogical concept this considers that adaptation to be an analogy of the original text (Elliott, 2003: 31). There is also the Darwinian concept which views adaptation as an evolution of the text and the trumping concept, in which the film corrects and improves on the text (Elliott, 2003: 174). Anthony Burgess argues that there is almost a need to see books adapted into films: ‘Every best-selling novel has to be turned into a film, the assumption being that the book itself whets an appetite for the true fulfilment—the verbal shadow turned into light, the word made flesh’ (Burgess cited in Elliott, 2003: 161). Having read the books, specifically *The Hunger Games* series, and identified with the character of Katniss through the first person narration there was a fascination for me as to how the adaptation would be presented on screen. To overcome the books’ first person narration the film shows parts of the story that the books cannot, such as the interactions between President Snow and Seneca Crane in the first film. In *The Hunger Games* we see Snow talking to Crane and telling him to not make Katniss a martyr:

President Snow: ‘Why do we have a winner? Hope’

Seneca Crane: ‘Hope?’

Snow: ‘Hope. It is the only thing stronger than fear. A little hope is effective, a lot of hope is dangerous. A spark is fine, as long as it’s contained.’

Crane: ‘So?’

Snow: ‘So, contain it.’ (*The Hunger Games*, 2012)

What scenes like this do is to use expository dialogue to expand and build on the world that was initially presented in the books. These scenes validate how fandom is constructed as a heightened spectatorial franchise where the films are facilitated both for fans and for a mass audience. The narrative strategies and subplots which build on the world presented in the books allow the fan spectator to engage in a new way with the material which includes an active contextual approach to the reading. Fandom is a strategic process of construction in contemporary media and designed to create an intense attachment over time. Fandom is a term used to refer to a subculture which is composed of fans, characterized by a feeling of camaraderie with other, who share a common interest. Fans are typically interested even in minor details of the object of their fandom, some examples of fandoms include:

Beatlemaniacs (fans of The Beatles), Browncoats (fans of *Firefly*), Potterheads (fans of *Harry Potter*), Sherlockians (fans of *Sherlock Holmes* and the oldest recorded fandom), Trekkies (fans of *Star Trek*) and Whovians (fans of *Doctor Who*).

The Hunger Games franchise can be analysed in terms of how fandom and distracted spectatorship function throughout the cinematic experience, particularly with regards to mainstream versus digital media. This will be done through a case study of the Honest Trailer videos which are put together by Screen Junkies and posted on YouTube. These are an Emmy nominated series of parody trailers of films that are made to satirise that particular film. This is often done with finding plot holes with the narrative or continuity issues within the film. Building on Jenkins' theory regarding fans and the way they rewrite commercial cultural objects the Honest Trailers show how fanworks are part of a process that modifies, amends, expands and then recirculates the fanwork back into mainstream media (Jenkins, 2006: 257). The Honest Trailers demonstrate how the fan spectator is always already distracted in their viewing. In the Honest Trailer for *The Hunger Games* the voiceover emphasises how the film does not include 'these important parts from the book: Katniss' hearing loss, the avoxes, Peeta's amputation, political and social satire, mythology and context, Katniss' inner turmoil at the fact that she doesn't love Peeta but is starting to warm to him but must put on a show of young love so that they can get sponsors and win the Games, and the actual hunger' (Signore and Weiner, 2012). It goes on to state how the film is 'basically just a rip off of *Battle Royale*' (Signore and Weiner, 2012). This first video explores how the films are being critiqued and analysed by fans of the books. This particular example shows how readers often notice aspects which have been lost when adapting from book to screen. This disrupts the idealised version of the cinematic experience and introduces distracted spectatorship as the fan of the books has noticed that these parts have been left out. This interrupts the cinematic experience as the spectator is then focussed on asking why those choices were made and how the film will then perhaps have a different narrative to that of the book. This automatically creates a sense of dissatisfaction in the adaptation especially if it was a part of the book that, as a fan, the reader felt integral to the story. The comparison to *Battle Royale* (Kinji Fukasaku, 2001) identifies how distracted spectatorship can be affected by the smallest detail and be expanded into a reference that is subjective for the spectator. Having not seen *Battle Royale* myself the connection between the two films did not produce distraction. This exemplifies how subjective distracted spectatorship is in relation to the cinematic experience and is considered further with Screen Junkies' second trailer for the franchise.

The Honest Trailer for *Catching Fire* depicts even more comprehensively how distracted spectatorship can call to mind certain popular culture references. What it also demonstrates is how these references will mean more to some spectators than others, which shows how distracted spectatorship relies on an individual's cultural knowledge and as such creates a very subjective cinematic experience. The examples I have chosen from the trailer are: 'Baby Thor, Jack Bauer's Dad, Jerry Bruckheimer Films, The claaaaw' (Signore, 2014), each of which I could understand and connect to its relevant reference point. 'Baby Thor' is written on the screen when actor Liam Hemsworth is shown because he is the younger brother of Chris Hemsworth who plays Thor in the Marvel films. 'Jack Bauer's Dad' is written on the screen over a clip of Donald Sunderland as he is Kiefer Sunderland's father and Kiefer plays Jack Bauer in the television series *24*. 'Jerry Bruckheimer Films' is written on the screen when there is a tree being struck by lightning because that is the logo for Bruckheimer's production company. 'The claaaaw' is written over the screen on a scene at the end where Katniss is being airlifted by a giant metal claw into an airplane, this is in reference to *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995) and the little green aliens who live in an arcade game and they can only be freed by the metal claw that selects one at random. The references to *Toy Story* and Jerry Bruckheimer films did not influence my original watching of them film. The other two references did as I had watched *Thor* (Kenneth Branagh, 2011) and was aware that Liam and Chris Hemsworth were related and their similarity in appearance prompted the memory at several points throughout the film. Distracted spectatorship builds multiple layers of distraction and as such I am distracted by the memory of a story whenever I see either Donald or Kiefer Sunderland on screen. It was told on *The Graham Norton Show* regarding Kiefer getting a star on the Hollywood walk of Fame before his father. Donald's response to Kiefer asking 'Where the hell is yours?' was to say 'Fuck you' (*The Graham Norton Show*, 2011). This is an example of the subjectivity of distracted spectatorship as it is, perhaps, pertinent only to me as a spectator and does not distract others in this way when they see either actor on screen. The references in the Honest Trailer that did not resonate with me were to 'Ryan Seacrest', 'Mine Craft' and 'Infinite Arrows' (Signore, 2014). This further maintains the subjectivity of the cinematic experience when examined with distracted spectatorship as spectators will react to certain parts of the film in very different ways. The sense of dissatisfaction that was present in the Honest Trailer for the first film is present in the second trailer as it critiques the idea that Katniss is a true representative of every woman with the words 'and a totally average down-to-earth girl... just like you!' (Signore, 2014) across the screen with Katniss. This is mocking the way the film makes the character down to

earth and relatable, this emphasises the issues of identification and Jennifer Lawrence discussed earlier in the chapter. The third Honest Trailer, for *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1*, also identifies how what spectators have come into contact with outside of the cinema influences how the film is watched. Over a clip of Katniss the voiceover says: ‘none of us have seen your boobs. I mean definitely not me... a friend of mine sent me a link but I said “Hey man... that is not okay! Privacy is an important issue. Not interested thank you very much... Cause... that’s... not cool”’ (Signore, 2015). This is in reference to the photograph hacking scandal where naked pictures of certain celebrities, including Jennifer Lawrence, were taken and put online. This again expounds how distracted spectatorship is not something that can be ignored but does have an active role in the way films are watched and experienced by spectators.

It is not possible to speak of the cinematic experience as a singular thing which is experienced in the same way by all audience members due to distracted spectatorship. Distracted spectatorship is an integral part of the cinematic experience and needs to be acknowledged as such. What this chapter has done is to demonstrate how films are not watched in a vacuum as there are always cultural references and personal and subjective references which influence the overall experience. The emphasis on gender and its impact on identification explored these aspects and the chapter has established how traditional gender roles have shifted in films and how this has affected how spectators identify with both the films and the actors in them. These discussions brought to the fore how franchise films are a gendered phenomenon and united issues of gender, identification and spectatorship regarding how the gendered female spectator is always already distracted. This chapter explored how gendered spectatorship does not follow simple binaries and is a complex and multi-faceted idea, which in turn emphasises the multiple identities incorporated into a single spectator. Analysing identification has aided in understanding how gendered spectatorship can be understood and theorised in relation to the cinematic experience. These connections are integral when it comes to the analysis of distracted spectatorship as they allow for a more in-depth analysis if the spectator has a greater connection to that particular film. This led to the inclusion of fandoms and how the fan spectator is a spectator who researches and anticipates the release of particular franchises. As a fan spectator you are aware of the temporality of the franchise and as such try to garner as much background information as you can before it ends. The case study which focused on the fan created Honest Trailers portrayed how fans interact with the material before them and also considered how distracted spectatorship is relevant in discussions of a variety of media. The following chapter will examine the

subjective nature of distracted spectatorship and how it makes certain identities visible. This reflexive approach to studying the fan experience illuminates the issues and concerns discussed as it puts the voice of the fan directly to the fore of the analysis. This adds to the understanding of fandom and spectatorship as it reinforces the voice of the fan with regards to their own cinematic experience and distracted spectatorship.

Chapter Six

The Hunger Games Mockingjay: Part 2 and the Significance of Subjective Spectatorship

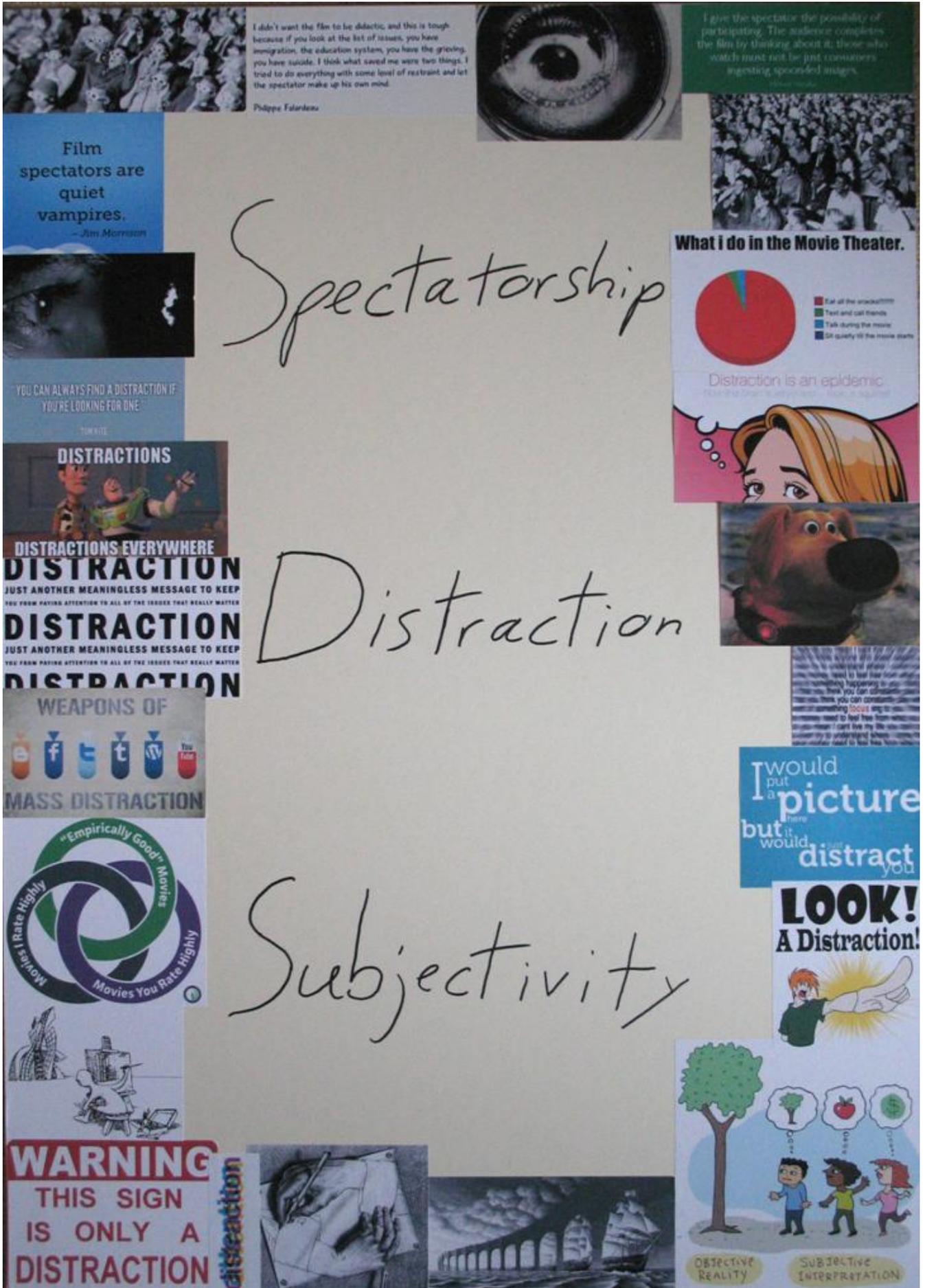


Figure 15 Subjective Spectatorship Frontispiece One

The collage features two magazine pages: 'HUGOES' on the left and 'VARIETY' on the right. Handwritten annotations in various colors (green, blue, red, purple) are scattered across the pages, often with lines pointing to specific text. A central graphic contains the logos for 'The Daily Telegraph' and 'EMPIRE' magazine. The 'HUGOES' page includes a headline 'The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2' and a sub-headline 'The Box Office'. The 'VARIETY' page includes a headline 'The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2' and a sub-headline 'The Box Office'. The central graphic also includes a headline 'The Daily Telegraph' and a sub-headline 'The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2'. The annotations include phrases like 'Made to be the emphasis', 'Probably not for this', 'I'm not sure if this is the point', 'Central to the narrative', 'Harry Potter friends', 'part from the movie', 'or being protected', 'I've read this and still don't know how these multiple endings are', and 'Proving that when adapting a book to film you just can't...'. The overall layout is dense and layered, with text overlapping text and graphics overlapping text.

Figure 16 Subjective Spectatorship Frontispiece Two

The Politics of Spectatorship and the Notion of the Abject Spectator

As I outline in Chapter Two, Cohen coined the term hyper-spectator to describe someone who has a deep knowledge of cinema and can mould that knowledge into the creation of new forms of cinema and spectatorship. I will be using this notion and examining how the spectator creates their own experiences with regards to distracted spectatorship. This is integral to film theory as it emphasises the subjective nature of spectatorship and exposes how different spectators look in different ways, and it is these different ways which impact the reading of the film. This chapter also reiterates Sobchack's theories that the viewer has a body through which cinematic experiences are directly felt as well as countering Phillips' argument that distraction lies only within the cinema itself. Shaviro's arguments will also be explored in relation to how films can arouse certain emotions within us. I expand on his point in this chapter to include how the experiences we encounter before and after the film also have the ability to arouse certain emotions within the spectator. The analysis in this chapter will contribute to our understanding of popular culture and how it can be viewed as a tangled web of distraction with the individual spectator at its centre.

The case study notebooks exemplify this, for example, when I documented how my own act of interpretation was affected through the use of a particular word (see Figure 17). While reading *Fan Phenomena: The Hunger Games* the author, Nicola Balkind, used the phrase 'Capitol feast' (2014: 14); this was in direct reference to feasts in the books in which the diners (wealthy citizens from the Capitol) eat as much as they like and then make themselves sick so that they can continue eating and, therefore, are able to try everything. This is also a reference to Ancient Rome as there is a common misconception that the Roman word vomitorium, to mean a passage from a theatre or coliseum, actually referred to the place where Romans forced themselves to be sick so that they could continue gorging on food at feasts. Though I was aware of what the author meant the phrase triggered a moment of distracted spectatorship and affected my interpretation of the word. The phrase 'Capitol feast', brought to mind the adventure stories of the *Famous Five* by Enid Blyton which contain extensive descriptions of what the children ate while out on their escapades. For me this is a very nostalgic memory as I received all of the *Famous Five* books as a Christmas present when I was nine years old. Living in Switzerland at the time and having no clear memory of England, as we moved abroad when I was three, these books created a particular kind of classed and nationalistic experience of a country I was a part of but did not live in. The classed Englishness I encountered in these books was in contrast to the international

environment I was a part of at school, where the dominant language and accent were American English. As such the *Famous Five* provided me with a, skewed, base from which to build my expectations of England and how the English spoke. As a result of the lingering influence they instilled in me during the course of watching *The Hunger Games* films when I hear the word “Capitol” I think instead of the *Famous Five* and the use of the word “capital” to mean excellent or exceptional. These associations lead my own reading of *The Hunger Games* to include an implicit suggestion of childlikeness that stems from the classed and nostalgic language used in the *Famous Five*. Though it occurs through seemingly small moments distracted spectatorship creates a space for the spectator to bring their own chain of associations to the act of viewing. It is through documenting and recording these moments that demonstrate how the cinematic experience is mediated by concerns and agendas that are subjective and would change from viewer to viewer. This prompts an exploration into how we encounter texts and suggests that distraction is a key mechanism in our activities.

This came to the fore when I viewed *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* in the cinema; whenever Philip Seymour Hoffman was on screen it reminded me that he had died the year the film was released. It was the shocking nature of Hoffman’s death that left the remembrance of it clinging to me while I watched the film. The actor was found dead in the bathroom of his apartment, the cause being an accidental overdose from a mixture of drugs. His unexpected death was widely lamented with commentator Peter Bradshaw stating that Hoffman ‘was a performer who was at his very best, a character player who had the lithe sexuality and above-the-title watchability of a star. He had a lot more to give. It’s desperately sad’ (Bradshaw, 2014). In another tribute Cate Blanchett dedicated her BAFTA win to Hoffman when she received the award for *Blue Jasmine* (Woody Allen, 2013). For large portions of the film instead of being solely focused on what was being said or shown on the screen my attention was split as I remembered again and again that Hoffman was dead. Throughout the film I kept on wondering which scene was the final one he filmed and if any of the film would have been different if he had not died. The case study notebooks depict how this dividing of attention takes place just as clearly outside of the cinema as within it because they trace the cinematic experience before the viewing of the film takes place. In this particular case the books demonstrate how, with the death of Hoffman, it prompted me to remember other celebrity deaths of 2014 (see Figure 18). The ones that lingered with me the most were those of Robin Williams and Lauren Bacall. Unlike Hoffman Bacall was eighty-nine years old and died of a stroke, what makes her death a point of remembrance for me is that she died on my twenty-fifth birthday, the twelfth August 2014. The other celebrity death

that I recorded in the case study note books was that of Robin Williams. Williams committed suicide the day before my birthday on the eleventh of August 2014. Williams is an actor who I can never remember not being aware of. I watched his films from his earliest break, *Popeye* (Robert Altman, 1980), right up to the year before his death, *The Butler* (Lee Daniels, 2013). I could instantly recognise his voice because of *Aladdin* (Ron Clements and John Musker, 1992), he brought me joy in *Mrs. Doubtfire* (Chris Columbus, 1993) and made me want to reach out and console him in *Good Will Hunting* (Gus Van Sant, 1997). When he was on screen his performances were so heartfelt that I felt like I knew every character he portrayed intimately. Hearing of his suicide was the first time I felt genuine sadness and loss at the death of a celebrity, as if I had been told of losing a distant relative. Though other spectators will have been affected by the deaths of these celebrities it is the specific recollections that take place for me which create my cinematic experience in a slightly different way to other distracted spectator's experiences. Having discussed distraction in relation to memory and nostalgia this explores how mourning is also a form of distraction. Having mourned for family members I know that grief, based on my own experiences, is ever present and can resurface at any time. My Grandpa, who died in 2011, was always making things from wood in his shed and as such smelled of paint, wood shavings and moss. Smelling a combination of these smells jolts me from what I am doing and a flood of memories pour in distracting me in that moment of mourning him all over again. Distraction as mourning relates back to Barthes' work on the punctum, explored in Chapter Two, as he discusses the photograph of his mother as an object of mourning.

Examined above are some of the individual affective and personal associations with film that constitute the cinematic experience, added to this are the social elements. The social ritual elements of the cinematic experience are displayed through aspects such as buying cinema tickets online (as well as buying tickets in person, queuing, purchasing food etc.). When buying tickets online we can choose the screenings, whether we want to view the film in 2D or 3D, whether or not to pay extra for VIP seats, we can see the film's start and end time and can even see what screen the film will be shown in (this is specifically based on my experience of the chain cinema Vue in Lancaster, see Figure 19). As such the elements of social ritual are heightened as spectators can refine their choices in relation to the options presented to them. My choices reflect this as I am familiar with my local cinema and have watched a film in each screen I can therefore make an informed decision as to where I want to sit depending on the screen the film is being shown in, as such the choices become as much a part of the experience as simply watching the film.

By Nicola Balkind, quite an interesting read but tries to cram a lot into very short chapters. The parts that compared Katniss to Theseus were fascinating, but I do love Greek mythology so that could have played a part in my interest.

My pen ran out of ink! Had to change the cartridge and am now covered in grey smudges. Got my own abbreviation wrong too, up until now I had been putting MTP2.

Like the Romans, though they didn't do it in a vomitorium as is popularly believed. A vomitorium was a side entrance to a stage. You learn a lot watching *Horrible Histories!*

6th July 2015

I am reading a book about fan phenomena and The Hunger Games. Though this next bit doesn't explicitly link to MTP2 it is a reflection on how words can prompt other recollections.

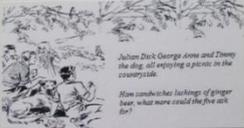
In this book about fan phenomena I read the sentence: "sample it all as though at a Capital feast". This was in reference to the Capital in Panem where the citizens attend lavish feasts and make themselves sick so that they can keep on eating and, therefore, try everything.

*See Appendices 4

Appendix 4

6th July 2015

Capital feast instantly brought to mind the capital feasts enjoyed by characters in books such as *The Famous Five*:



Julian Dick George Anna and Timmy the dog, all enjoying a picnic in the countryside.
How can such a lack of ginger have what more could the five do for?

"A wonderful smell came creeping into the little dining-room, followed by the inn-keeper carrying a large tray. On it was a steaming tureen of porridge, a bowl of golden syrup, a jug of very thick cream, and a dish of bacon and eggs, all piled high on brown toast."

For my tenth birthday, I got every single Famous Five book and devoured all of them. I love Enid Blyton and...

read the Malory Towers series too. They kept me going when I first went to boarding school. Though we never had midnight feasts with "fanned peaches, tinned sardines and - trying you smuggled in to fry sausages" we did have food boxes which were just as exciting.



Going on a picnic in Malory Towers

Another book which had descriptions of capital feasts was *The Little White Horse* by Elizabeth Goudge. It was made into a film called *The Secret of Mammae* in 2000 and something. It is the one film I have never seen purely for the reason that I loved the book so much, it is perfect and I did not want...

to watch them rain it. The food descriptions are long and reflect a quote from the book: "Humanity can be roughly divided into three sorts of people - those who find comfort in literature, those who find comfort in personal adornment, and those who find comfort in food." The book reflects this last one as it describes a meal: "there was homemade crusty bread, hot onion soup, delicious rabbit stew, baked apples in a silver dish, honey, butter the colour of marigolds, a big jug of warm milked claret, and hot roasted chestnuts folded in a napkin." To top it all off when the main character went to bed every night there was a plate of sugar biscuits in her room.



A film's representation of the biscuits

Food can call to mind particular moments, it is very evocative. The smell of...

BBQ's takes me back to cooking sausages on firepits by a mountain river in Berne. A film that encapsulates these Proutian moments is *Platanville*.



This is the dish that Romy the rat serves up to restaurant critic Anton Ego which takes him right back to his childhood and his mother's own cooking.

Figure 17 from Case Study Notebooks One and Two

27th October 2015
 Watched the final trailer for MSP2, apparently there will be TV spots and things like that but this was the last proper trailer before the film gets released on the 20th November. Not really paying too much attention to it as I was wondering if they would bill Finnick and Prim like in the book or if they will change one or both of these storylines. I guess I don't really mind if they do keep them alive as both of these deaths in the book felt like killing off Hedwig and Dobby in Harry Potter. totally unnecessary and done to make you cry that your childhood is over (maybe more than ~~that~~ MSJ). There were some funny comments at the bottom half of the internet.

Or it may be the 19th... either way I won't be able to watch it as soon as it's released due to my part time job so I'll have to wait until the following Wednesday. At least the cinema will be quieter then.

Dave Crozman has a show on Dave called 'Modern life is Goodish', he makes found poems out of the bits that people write about certain things on what he calls the bottom half of the internet.

This was automatically sung in my head to the tune of 'The Hanging Tree'

It annoys me when there are spelling mistakes in things, I know it reads the same but for me spelling is about caring about what you're writing (mean to me: check this for spelling mistakes)

I love how you have to be a part of the franchise to understand what the hell these people are writing about. Even though I have never posted anything on a forum website about The Hunger Games I like feeling a part of it by just being able to decipher what others write.

I know that Star Wars: The Force Awakens is available to buy tickets for so I...

This has to be the most anticipated film in years. The Odeon website crashed when tickets were available for pre-booking and Vue sold 17,000 tickets in the first hour!

Speaking of pre-booking tickets, my family and I bought tickets to see this live on October 24th 2015. We bought the tickets on 10th August 2014... I really hope film booking never reaches that level of madness. Booking a month ahead I can just about handle.

went on to Vue's website to see if MSP2 were ready to order.

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2
 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1
 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2
 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2: 3D
 NET Line: Hester Benedict Cumberbatch in Sony 4K

You can already book it! So I went further and looked up film times and what screen it will be in etc.

Is this an incentive? Are they just trying to boost ticket sales? I bet Ben + Jerry's would encourage us more!

Watch the same film for more money! And with the added bonus of nausea and headaches!

Not very many showings...

I bet anything they are saving the bigger screens for the 3D showings.

* see Appendix 7

Appendix 7
 27th October 2015

I do not like 3D films, they give me a real headache and add nothing to the film for me. I do not like that they are always shown in the biggest screens whereas 2D films are relegated to the smaller screens. I feel like I am being out-juggled because I do not want to attend a 3D film. The biggest gripe on top of my one is the uncomfortable thing as the play was done the day of my case so that I can't see anything myself. What this better to read "coming off the page"?

Like REAL LIFE!!!

EYE POPPING!

AMAZING!

REAL 3D!

WOW!

Figure 19 from Case Study Notebooks One and Two

As the case study notebooks show, through the above examples, the cinematic experience can be tracked outside of the cinema just as effectively as inside. This encompasses both the elements of social ritual and individual associations which the spectator encounters through the act of spectatorship. What these examples also demonstrate is how the spectator is always already distracted as it can be any element that prompts a distraction as the punctum is not prescriptive.

Exploring how spectators view films in different and subjective ways I turned to William Carlisle, a blogger and film reviewer who published all of his 2012 film reviews in one volume and who is, I would argue, representative of a certain kind of popular criticism that embraces the language of disgust, offence and shame. Examining writing of this kind also explores how the cinematic experience contributes to our understanding of popular culture. As the blogger is set up as a critical writer who “speaks the truth” because they are opposed to academic writing this gave me a chance to examine how different the reactions for a film could be. Carlisle is a distinct example used to signify the difficulty in writing of an immediate experience, as the experience is mediated through both the act of consumption and the act of writing. This is exemplified with film reviewers as there is a performative aspect which demands a hyperbolic response to the film in question. The method behind choosing a blogger for this case study is because critical writing often stems emotional reactions and disguises and hides affects in order to approach the topic more objectively. Setting up this comparison is integral with a study that relies on the emotional response to the film in order to emphasise how spectators view and react in different and subjective ways. This also brings to the fore Jenkins’ theory of the aca-fan as it illustrates the ‘accountability of the ethnographer to the communities we study’ (Jenkins, 2013: xiii). Analysing film reviews also challenges Jenkins’ restrictive definition of fandom, discussed in Chapter Three, as they allow us to see how everyone on some level can be constituted a fan and are not, therefore, a social alternative community. Bringing other voices into the discussion on distraction demonstrates how ‘the speaking position of those we write about is no less complex than ours’ and it is just as important to ‘think about the reflexivity of others, as it is to think about the analyst’s reflexivity’ (Couldry, 2000: 123).

Carlisle opens his review of *The Hunger Games* by stating that Hollywood have adapted the popular novel ‘[i]n another attempt to capture the hearts (and more importantly, the wallets) of teenage girls’ (2013: 65). Carlisle’s language isolates himself from the film immediately by demonstrating how he is not the perceived target audience. Carlisle condemns *The Hunger Games* for lacking a strong central concept, he argues that it is ‘almost

unbelievably stupid as the idea of holding annual battles to the death involving teenagers (the most likely to rebel) who are encouraged to train in combat for most of their lives in order to prepare for the games means that they are perfectly suited to rebellion' (Carlisle, 2013: 65). He states here that the teenagers are encouraged to train in battle for most of their lives which makes them ideally suited for rebellion which they would do because teenagers, stereotypically, rebel from authority. Carlisle's review turns on the idea that what constitutes teenage behaviour is universal rather than socially constructed.

The lack of identification Carlisle feels for the characters on screen is emphasised through the plot synopsis he provides. His language also depicts a lack of identification with the main character, establishing his particular subjective approach to the film. In the film it is only the teenagers who are dubbed the Careers, from District One and Two, who are trained to fight as they are the closest to the Capitol and the ones who are brought up to believe that fighting in the Games will bring honour on their districts. The teenagers from Districts Three through to Twelve are given no such preparation, opening up issues of the classed and hierarchical structure in which they live. Katniss has the advantage over others because her father taught her to hunt and shoot so that the family would not starve due to their meagre rations provided by the Capitol. With the female lead the emphasis is on survival rather than combat, a struggle which is reflected in the *Divergent* franchise. Carlisle states that the film overcomes its problem of narrative comprehension through the strong characters but goes on to state that 'the gimmick of giving them alien-sounding names to highlight that it's the future clashes with the contemporary language and dialogue in the script' (Carlisle, 2013: 65). This quotation from the review confirms how spectators look and approach films in very subjective ways. To Carlisle the names are alien and futuristic in nature, whereas the names were specifically chosen to denote certain aspects of the environment or the characters. For example, the city Panem comes from the Roman Panem et Circences (bread and circuses) which refers to the exchange of entertainment for the needs or wants of the populace. The phrase was used by Roman writer Juvenal to deplore the decline of heroism in Rome after the Republic ceased to exist and the Empire began:

Already long ago, from when we sold our vote to no man, the People have abdicated our duties; for the People who once upon a time handed out military command, high civil office, legions — everything, now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: bread and circuses (Juvenal cited in Keane, 2006: 36)

The phrase was in reference to the populace being kept happy by the distribution of free food and the staging of lavish spectacles. It has become a general term for government policies that seek to provide short-term solutions to public unrest. In the world of *The Hunger Games* the bread is given to the districts by the Capitol, also an area of ancient Rome, through the exchange of a portion of grain and oil if the teenagers add their name to the Reaping multiple times. The circuses are the spectacle of the Hunger Games themselves as they are screened through mandatory broadcasting.

As a spectator and a critic Carlisle writes of his response to the film and includes the need for certain emotional responses within his review. In his opinion ‘the concept of teenagers killing each other is severely muted because none of the deaths hold any weight’ and though ‘the concept of Katniss and her friend Peeta pretending to be a couple to have the audience root for them to win is a great and relevant concept, there’s no reaction from the audience to give it a satisfying payoff’ (2013: 66). It is the lack of an emotional response that Carlisle’s writing exposes here. In portraying certain key scenes in a specific way the film failed to resonate with Carlisle as a spectator. Neither of the aspects mentioned in the above quotations connected with Carlisle either socially or culturally and as such they did not prompt a response in him as a spectator. The difference in spectatorship also comes to the fore in the quotation above where Carlisle states how there is no satisfying payoff to Katniss and Peeta’s relationship. Having some valediction to this aspect of the film would have justified the couple’s relationship in some way for Carlisle and the fact that the film did not include such a scene prompted Carlisle to view the material in a specific way. Carlisle goes on to write that: ‘The main focus of “The Hunger Games” is clearly to appease fans of the book franchise as all the intriguing character relationships and subtext present in the source material is completely absent. With no prior knowledge of the novel, the characters in this adaptation come across as shallow and there’s no subtext to be found’ (Carlisle, 2013: 66). This quotation serves to indicate the levels of subjectivity that come into play when it comes to viewing films. Throughout *The Hunger Games* franchise subjects such as politics, the media, public demand and social rituals come under scrutiny and are integral to the subtext of the overall narrative. There is a broader satire at play in the series which involves romance, gender and spectatorship which Carlisle’s review misses due to its strong negative reaction towards a film that he perceives to be aimed at teenage girls. Analysing reviews is one way to attempt to capture the immediate experience with regards to film viewing as well as examining how the cinematic experience impacts on popular culture. Reviews use visceral language and are usually written after a single viewing of the film meaning that the reviewer

must rely on their initial responses when it comes to forming their review. As mentioned earlier reviews are mediated before their release and in doing so creates a different relationship between the reviewer and film. The reviewer is positioned as being in some way above the film, unlike fans who actively position themselves alongside certain franchises. The language used in the reviews discussed demonstrates how the reviewers see themselves as set apart through the process of reviewing the film, emphasised in Mendelson's review below. Using the reviews which were included in the case study notebooks and frontispiece for this chapter I will demonstrate how our responses go towards creating a form of subjective viewing that is different from spectator to spectator.

Scott Mendelson wrote *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* review for Forbes, an American business magazine, and it was published online on the fourth of November 2015. The first clear indication as to how spectators look in different ways is demonstrated when Mendelson states that 'the bread-and-circuses irony of how it was marketed hindered [his] ability to get truly into the films' (2015). The bread and circuses comment is in reference to how the Capitol in the world of *The Hunger Games* gives food in exchange for entertainment from the populace, as discussed above. Using this parallel Mendelson is equating the way that the authorities manage the public in the fictional world of *The Hunger Games* to how the marketing of the films took place. Though it is never explicitly stated in the review what Mendelson means by this it can be inferred that the way the films were marketed as depicting violence as entertainment, through the medium of cinema, was too ironic a concept for him as a spectator given the franchise's subject matter. The reviewer expands on how his experience of the series was affected from the start as he viewed *The Hunger Games* as creating an 'artificial morality in an inherently immoral situation so that [his] IMAX opening night audience cheered and howled in approval when one kidnapped child murdered another purely out of necessity' (Mendelson, 2015). Mendelson does not state whether he was one of the audience members joining in with the cheers of approval but it can be assumed from the tone of his writing, which explores the tensions between approving of one child's death over another, that he is setting himself apart from the other viewers in the cinema. Through reviewing the final film in the franchise Mendelson exposes how his subjective interpretation of the film shifted and changed over the course of the franchise. He conveys how with the conclusion of the franchise the films then offered 'not just an explicit critique of infotainment and the false reality of so much of our allegedly non-fiction media but a dark look at how both sides of a conflict used skewed narrative propaganda to tilt the masses in their favour' (Mendelson, 2015). As the franchise grew and developed from film to film so in turn did the

reviewer's appreciation for it as it shifted from a narrative which, according to Mendelson, extolled violence and murder to a narrative which incorporated meaningful commentary on modern day society itself and the negative uses and impacts of propaganda. Mendelson establishes his own spectatorship and how it did not line up with what he viewed the films' message to be:

That this most cynical and layered of blockbuster franchises became among the biggest in recent history is something of a coup. That this final chapter turned out to be so great, and so unexpectedly profound proves that the joke was on me all along. Now that I've seen the final Hunger Games film, I can't wait to go back and rewatch the preceding chapters so I can realize what a fool I had been. All those years ago when I turned my nose at the first film for its apparently franchise-friendly machinations, and at the second film for how the marketing contradicted the messaging, I was falling head-first into a trap (Mendelson, 2015).

If Mendelson had stopped watching after the first film his spectatorship would not have changed and he would not have considered the film in terms of its political relationship between film and spectatorship. The fact that the reviewer carried on watching all the films and had his own critical opinion changed as a result demonstrates how spectatorship is a fluid concept that adds to and builds on the overall cinematic experience.

In contrast to Mendelson's review which focuses specifically on how his own spectatorship shifted and changed throughout the franchise Peter Debruge's review for Variety magazine depicts how fandom and spectatorship impact on the cinematic experience. Debruge emphasises how watching the sequel requires a certain amount of knowledge with the franchise already. The reviewer states that the narrative does not condescend its viewers and instead relies on their ability to follow the story arcs without a prologue outlining the story so far:

Needless to say, it would be unwise for anyone not yet versed in the series' mythology to jump in at this late stage, as "Mockingjay – Part 2" is no mere sequel, but the finale of an ambitious narrative in which the tragedy of each fatality relies on connections established in previous films. While hardly unique to "The Hunger Games", this cumulative-storytelling approach feels perfectly consistent with sophisticated, serialized TV and film franchises ("Harry Potter" in particular) that respects viewers' ability to track multiple individuals and intrigues over a span of years – which is to say, there's no "Previously in Panem..." catch-up sequence to situate newcomers here (Debruge 2015).

Mendelson states how the narrative built for him in a specific way to create a certain cinematic experience. In the above quotation Debruge draws a parallel between the necessity

of fandom upon the cinematic experience. The reviewer demonstrates how *The Hunger Games* franchise is not distinctive in the way it portrays narrative but it does build upon techniques exemplified by television serials and other film franchises, Debruge uses the example of *Harry Potter*. In this way the narrative presented throughout the films encourages a certain level of fandom to take place with regards to the narrative in order to keep abreast of the complex storytelling which takes place all the way through the franchise. The way fandom is discussed here as impacting on the cinematic experience is demonstrated again through Debruge's analysis of *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. The subjective nature of the cinematic experience and distracted spectatorship can be seen through the connections which Debruge chooses to make with other films. Through his analysis of the progression of Katniss' character Debruge states that '[l]ike little Frodo Baggins, crushed and corrupted by his heavy burden over the course of three films, she's not the same person she was when her adventure began' (2015). While watching the film and thinking back on it through the course of writing his review Debruge noted that Katniss' narrative progression in the franchise can be connected to the progression of another franchise's character, Frodo Baggins from *The Lord of the Rings* in his quest to destroy a ring of power. Though the narratives themselves differ, Frodo is carrying an object to destroy and Katniss is attempting to save her family, they are both changed at the end of their journey because of the burdens that have been placed on them. The way Debruge sees the two characters as comparable shows how his subjective distracted spectatorship brought forward the connection between the two films for him as a viewer. This is established again later in the review when Debruge examines how an attack in the sewers during *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* resulted in a scene 'more intense than any of the demon or zombie nastiness the helmer conjured in "Constantine" or "I Am Legend"' (2015). The two films mentioned in the quotation were also directed by Francis Lawrence, the director of three of the four *Hunger Games* films. The subjective nature of distracted spectatorship is identified here as Debruge saw a resemblance between the fight scenes in the films mentioned above and *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. The connection is made clearer as the same person directed all three films drawing a correlation between the fight scenes in each film. These examples further support how distracted spectatorship can change and impact on the cinematic experience by adding subjectivity to the film viewing.

In comparison to the other reviews that have been discussed so far Robbie Collin (2015) places emphasis on the actor Philip Seymour Hoffman. As I have noted, Hoffman died in February 2014 from a cardiac arrest brought on by acute mixed drug intoxication. At the

time of his death Hoffman was filming *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* and had already completed the majority of his scenes, the two remaining scenes were rewritten to compensate for his early passing. Hoffman's unexpected death was widely lamented by fans and the film industry, and was described by several commentators as a considerable loss to the profession. These events, which occurred before the film was released, had an impact in how viewers engaged with the film while watching it. As such the review by Collin is a good example of how what takes place outside the cinema is brought to and impacts on what is watched on the cinema screen. Collin begins his review by focusing on the role of Plutarch Heavensbee, who Hoffman played in three films of the franchise:

The late actor's face is one of the first you see in this scorchingly tense and stylish final chapter of the young-adult franchise. Hoffman plays the Machiavellian powerbroker Plutarch Heavensbee – who in the last film became the de facto handler of Katniss Everdeen, the rebellion's increasingly wary young figurehead (Collin, 2015).

Collin shifts the emphasis of who the central character is by placing greater importance on the role of the recently deceased actor. Given the suddenness of Hoffman's passing his presence in the film is given more impact, especially as it was the last film he made before his death. The way this alters the cinematic experience is clear in Collin's writing as he discusses how 'Hoffman electrifies the line with a smile – heightening the intrigue, drawing you in, and making you question what you thought you knew' (Collin, 2015). Hoffman is placed front and centre in the review which exemplifies the importance of spectatorship outside of the cinema as well as the spectatorship that takes places within the cinema. As speculation one could state that if Hoffman had not passed away then Collin might not have viewed the film on the same terms as he did when writing his review given the fact that Hoffman had died. The fact that Hoffman did die before the release of the film changed the way the film was viewed and, as a result, had the capability of altering the cinematic experience for viewers who were aware of the actor's passing. As well as the prominence Philip Seymour Hoffman plays in the review Collin demonstrates how distracted spectatorship can lead to interpreting certain aspects of the film in a particular way. With regards to the films' costumes Collin made the following comments: 'There's so much I'll miss about this deservedly successful, genre-defying franchise: from its blood-chilling allegorising of reality-TV culture and the way war impacts on young minds and souls, to its dazzling world design and costumes, which are something like Schiaparelli by way of Harajuku' (2015). Schiaparelli was an Italian fashion designer who was heavily influenced by

the surrealist movement, the use here implies one of extreme flamboyance. Harajuku is an area in Japan and also refers to the subculture made famous by the association with white stars like Gwen Stefani. The use in this review implies one of extreme, exaggerated display which combines the high art of Schiaparelli with the display associated with South-East Asian pop culture. This is a very different vision from what is associated with typical cinematic dystopia which more often emphasise uniformity, which the buildings in *The Hunger Games* franchise do as discussed below. Collin draws a parallel between the costumes in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* and the themes mentioned in the above quotation. These aspects played a significant role in how Collin saw the film and as such created a different cinematic experience for him than it would for another viewer. What also adds to the subjective cinematic experience is how the individual perceives certain connections between the film being viewed and other films the spectator has previously viewed. This is how the spectator is influenced by distracted spectatorship to building their own subjective cinematic experience. Collin displays this when he states that a strength of the series ‘has always been that its heroine is no Chosen One, destined to save the world’ (2015). Collin brings to the fore the distinction here between a franchise such as Harry Potter, who is dubbed the Chosen One, and *The Hunger Games* where the heroine’s power lies in the choices she makes not the path that is predestined for her. Helen O’Hara who wrote the review for Empire Magazine, published online on fifth November 2015, provides further examples of how distracted spectatorship influences the subjective cinematic experience. O’Hara begins the review by stating that the ‘final *Hunger Games* film is so relentlessly solemn that it will occasionally make you long for the merry japes of *Sicario*’ (2015). The darker themes and bleak subject matter that is dealt with in the final instalment of *The Hunger Games* franchise prompted O’Hara to draw a comparison with the recent crime thriller *Sicario* (Denis Villeneuve, 2015), a hugely violent action film about mercenaries hence O’Hara’s joke. Other films are also mentioned in O’Hara’s review as she discusses the ‘looming fascist architecture, stripped of all colour except grey, there are chase scenes straight out of horror and action that recalls *Star Wars* or *The Terminator* rather than the earlier Games films’ (2015). These references are dependent on the films that spectators have seen and whether or not they are brought to the fore of each spectator’s cinematic experience. The reviews also make assumptions about what the reader knows, it is not simply a matter of what the reviewer has seen but also the performance of having seen the right things and, therefore, being able to reference them; this creates a performance of privilege throughout the reviews. For example O’Hara states how *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* is ‘not

perfect [...] by the end (or endings – *Return of the King*-style, there are several)' (2015). With O'Hara the ending called to mind the multiple endings that were also present in the final instalment of *The Lord of the Rings* franchise. This impacted on her interpretation of the film and resulted in the distracted spectatorship that influenced her subjective cinematic experience.

The significance of this section has been to determine how, using blogs, film reviews and my own distractions, distraction can be theorised as socially and culturally constructed. Building on the in-depth examination into spectatorship theory from Chapter Two and including an analysis of the different ways in which spectatorship has been theorised this chapter discussed distracted spectatorship in terms of its necessity to the cinematic experience. The section also included a discussion of the case study books, which stand as an example in order to depict distracted spectatorship as well as the subjective and self-reflexive nature of spectatorship. This advances the thesis because it outlines how in analysing the cinematic experience it is possible to see how it contributes to our understanding of popular culture. Through the use of my own distractions and the film reviews it is also possible to infer how each individual spectator is always already distracted by their own social and cultural concerns. Self-reflexivity plays a large part in the cinematic experience as it is the spectator's own thoughts, memories and cultural knowledge which add together to create a particular example of distracted spectatorship. Film spectatorship has concerned itself with how the spectator interacts with what is on the screen in front of them or how the bodies around the spectator affect the cinematic experience. What my thesis brings to the fore is how the spectator's experience extends beyond the cinema and discusses how the cinematic experience is subjective and constantly fluctuating and as such can be approached self-reflexively.

Distracted Spectatorship and Self-reflexivity

To build on the work that has been done so far with regards to identification and subjectivity this section will include a close analysis of *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. This will bring the discussion of distraction back to a single cultural object and will demonstrate how distracted spectatorship can be analysed from a self-reflexive viewpoint with regards to a single individual's cinematic experience. Throughout the thesis I have theorised the cinematic experience as beginning with one small element, the punctum, which prompts the spectator into a series of sustained narratives with that particular film. This can

happen before or after having seen the film. In Chapter Two I expand on the use of Roland Barthes' punctum when it comes to viewing images. It is a useful concept for thinking about film as it is not one single moment that makes up the cinematic experience for the spectator, rather the experience is peppered with these individual puncta which, when drawn together, constitute the cinematic experience for the spectator and allow us to understand how the spectator is always already distracted. The punctum opens up the cinematic experience in such a way that it allows us to think about it in more detail, particularly with regards to what it means to us as individuals and why. Barthes explores how viewing a photograph to draw the punctum out of it is a brief and active process, one which says as much about the viewer as it does about the image: 'to give examples of *punctum* is, in a certain fashion, to *give myself up*' (Barthes, 2000: 43). This came through during the process of writing my case study notebooks as well as in the creation of the frontispieces for each chapter as certain moments of punctum drew on elements of my own history and through the process of writing and including them I felt like I was putting small parts of myself on the page for everyone to see. The purpose for including *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* in this chapter is to demonstrate how it is possible to study distraction in relation to modern day film viewing. It follows on from the previous chapters as a contemporary example to show how distraction functions now and in doing so reveals something about contemporary popular culture. Distraction builds on and adds to the narratives shown on screen to create layered multi-thread stories with the spectator at the centre of the cinematic experience. Discussing distraction brings to the fore how distracted spectatorship is not limited to what is on the screen, other spectators' interruptions or lack of attention span but includes the extension of narratives across serial texts and through a variety of media. This further explores the question of how distracted spectatorship makes visible certain identities within the viewer, for example fan and academic, as well as emphasising how the spectator is always already distracted.

The first area of distraction in relation to the punctum I would like to examine is where the image carries its referent within itself. Barthes discussed this through stating that the photograph and the object photographed were always connected, 'glued together, limb by limb' (Barthes, 1980: 6). As such when we see the filmed image, of an actor for example, there is a tautological connection between the filmed image and the actor themselves. When rewatching *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* I recorded several instances of distraction that took this form for me as spectator. The moments of distraction identified all relate to aspects regarding particular actors that I have encountered through a variety of media which

do not directly relate to the film in question. This demonstrates that distracted spectatorship is not limited to the object of analysis but is a collection of experiences that the spectator is prompted into recollecting through contact with the object of analysis, in this case *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*. When Caesar Flickerman (Stanley Tucci) appeared on screen I was prompted into recollecting that the actor is married to Emily Blunt's sister, lives in London and released a cook book in 2012. Here the image of Tucci on screen led my distracted spectatorship to recall facts about Tucci's own life, illustrating how the image of the character we see on screen is connected to the actor themselves, this can expand into remembrances of actor's past roles as the subjectivity of distracted spectatorship makes clear. The appearance of Commander Lyme (Gwendoline Christie) provoked a reaction in that I compared the amount of screen time she received in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* with *Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens* (J J Abrams, 2015), where she played storm trooper Captain Phasma. Considering Christie's rising popularity as character Brienne of Tarth in HBO's *Game of Thrones* I was baffled that in both films her characters were, in my opinion, woefully underused. Due to the fact that, as stated above, the image we see is constantly connected to its referent the image of Christie is seamlessly connected to the other characters that she has played, causing distracted spectatorship to take place at the remembrance of these roles. As well as recalling past roles the distraction can happen with the knowledge of future characters the actors will play. With Finnick Odair (Sam Claflin) on screen I recalled a trailer I watched on YouTube for the upcoming film *Me Before You* (Thea Sharrock, 2016) where Claflin plays a quadriplegic. These three examples show how distraction can take place due to the nature of the image being connected to its referent, in this case the actors and actresses who play certain characters within the film. These examples of distracted spectatorship are subjective as they are reliant on my own background knowledge and the media that I have personally come into contact with before watching the film.

What Barthes' punctum allows us to do, through distracted spectatorship, is to call to mind other images that add to the cinematic experience and extend the narrative of the film outwards. Images that hold an interest for the viewer begin the process of recalling certain memories and in this situation the image on screen works by recalling an enormous number of associations all leading back to the one image or scene. It is in this way that film, just as photographs do, exert a certain '*advenience* or even *adventure*' (Barthes, 1980: 19) on the viewer by forcing them to recall certain memories. The examples chosen to emphasise how distracted spectatorship builds on what is already being shown on the screen connect to other

films that I have viewed. The image or words used in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* are an integral part of the narrative but at certain moments they recall images or words from other films, this has the result of extending the narrative through distracted spectatorship and shapes my own cinematic experience. One of the images that prompted distraction with me was when the train pulled into District Two and the camera cut to a barricade that was designed to stop the train from going further than the rebels wanted it to. The design of the barricade was rough and put together with broken pieces of wood and any other materials that were available after the battle in the district. This made me recall the moment in *Les Misérables* (Tom Hooper, 2012) when the young students build a similar barricade out of materials that are to hand to keep the police from capturing them. The other scene that brought to mind another film was when the members of the platoon, led by Katniss, were heading down into the sewers to find a quicker route to President Snow. Just before they enter the sewers proper they walk through a large vaulted room that brought to mind the Mines of Moria that the nine members of the Fellowship went through before Gandalf fought the Balrog in *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (Peter Jackson, 2001). The other examples were based on verbal cues rather than visual ones, one of which being when Katniss and Gale are having a conversation before firing on an object, Katniss states that they have one shot left and Gale responds: 'Let's make it count' (*The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*, 2015). This called to mind the attitude that the character of Jack Dawson (Leonardo di Caprio) tries to instil in Rose DeWitt Bukater (Kate Winslet) throughout the 1997 film *Titanic* (James Cameron). Dawson repeats the line 'to making it count' in order to encourage Rose to live as full a life as possible while she still can. Another moment in the film is when President Coin states, with regards to the war, that 'each moment will be captured for all posterity' (*The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*, 2015). This brought to my mind a line from the 1999 film *Notting Hill* (Roger Michell) when the character Anna Scott (Julia Roberts) has had nude photographs leaked of her to the newspapers. The character played by Hugh Grant, William Thacker, tries to console her by saying that the newspapers will be thrown away and everyone will forget the story, Anna responds with 'newspapers last forever, I'll regret this forever' (*Notting Hill*, 1999). The examples chosen are not necessarily placed in the film intentionally, they are dependent on the subjective distracted spectatorship of the individual spectator. Just because one image or scene from a film recalls another film for me does not mean it will prompt another spectator into a similar recollection. This is how distracted spectatorship expands on narratives dependent on the spectator's own cinematic experience. This narrative extension can be exemplified by the punctum as the aspect which

means the spectator can enter ‘into the spectacle, into the image’ (Barthes cited in Lury, 2002: 91) as the punctum encourages us to think about the cinematic experience in greater detail. The image does not stand on its own, spectators look to them ‘for the outlines of a story, for some chain of events outside the frame which could give some sense to the arbitrary collection of things [...] assembled on paper’ (Slater, 1997: 102). When accompanied by my memories, thoughts and interpretations the image becomes an integral part of the cinematic experience because images carry no meaning in themselves; it is this bringing of information to the image that transforms it into something significant for the viewer. Interpreting a photograph means to ‘lend it a past and a future, to insert it, in other words, into a narrative’ (Berger, 1997: 40). They prompt memory and as the ‘remembered is not like a terminus at the end of the line’ (Berger, 1997: 47) the memories constantly reference and recall one another so that there is no end to what can be remembered from viewing a single image.

The result of looking subjectively at the cinematic experience recalls Barthes’ statement that there is a sense of ‘uneasiness of being a subject torn between two languages, one expressive, the other critical’ (Barthes, 1980: 8). This reflects the identities that I have explored throughout the thesis, the expressive language being that of my fan identity and the critical language that of my academic identity. The following distracted analysis is a culmination of the work done throughout the thesis. As mentioned in Chapter Three in order to lend the distracted analysis two distinct identities I wrote it as if I was approaching an essay question: How does *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part Two* emphasise the isolation of Katniss? Doing this allowed me to juxtapose my distracted identity alongside the academic identity so that the two can finally be seen next to each other and impacting on one another throughout the analysis. It stands as an example of how the multiple identities of the viewer can be made visible through distraction and reinforces the argument that spectators are always already distracted.

Distracted Analysis

DVD taking a while to load. Sounds like the right speaker has gone again. What’s that speaking? Is it on the DVD?? Oh it’s Caesar before the menu buttons appear. “I knew Figaro’s husband was gay!” – what? Oh, fiancé talking about Orange is the New Black which he’s watching while at work in the other room. In order to examine how the final part of *The Hunger Games* franchise explores the isolation of its protagonist, Katniss Everdeen,

aspects such as cinematography, editing and mise-en-scene will be analysed. Through this analysis it will be made clear how the isolation of the character Katniss moves from an enforced isolation to a desired form of isolation where she can finally create a life away from the Hunger Games.

The film starts in media res with a close up on Katniss getting her throat checked. The shot displays her vulnerability in that moment after Peeta has attacked her *which we only know because we have hopefully (!) seen the previous three films*. This is especially made clear when the doctor, who is placed to the far left of the shot, makes her speak. Katniss' voice is weak and cracks as she tries to say her name and where she is from. As she gradually recovers and speaks to Plutarch *Philip Seymour Hoffman, died in 2014, this was his last film, would he have wanted it to be his last?* the close up of him demonstrates how, even though she is no longer under the control of the capitol, as the Mockingjay she is still controlled by those around her. The low angle shot used demonstrates how she is looking up at him which emphasises this domineering authority figure standing over her and controlling her. This is indicated further as he is placed literally above her in terms of framing within the shot.

The following scene depicts Katniss' isolation from the people who were closest to her in previous films, namely her family. When Primrose enters Peeta's hospital room *set looks like a Star Wars hospital might. "There must have been a death star canteen"* she is dressed as a medic from District Thirteen which already sets her apart from her sister who is not affiliated with the same district. This also demonstrates how Primrose is both growing up and more trusted than Katniss as she has been given a position of care and authority within the district. Though Katniss is isolated throughout the film this is also the fate of the other victors. They are set apart and made to appear different as they are the ones who have gone through the torment of, and survived, the Hunger Games. This is shown through Peeta in this scene as he looks sick and deranged as well as painfully thin, a stark contrast to Primrose who is sat next to him *all CGI though as Josh Hutcherson didn't lose weight for the role, he joked in an interview that clearly Sam Claflin didn't realise that CGI was an option as he lost the weight himself*.

In order to empathise with Katniss' isolation the film uses cinematography to place the viewer on the same level as her. The camera angles used in the scene where Katniss is speaking with Coin about heading to District Two demonstrate this through the over the shoulder shots and slight shaky cam which recreate the view as Katniss would see it *that is some damn straight hair on Coin, do they have straighteners in District 13, I thought Coin was black in the books, would have to go back and check*. Once the viewer is placed on the

same level as Katniss the following examples of her isolation are made even more acute as the spectator can sympathise with what she is experiencing. The establishing shot as the plane flies into District Two demonstrates the might and destructive power of the capitol as the shot shows the destroyed city coming into view. The shots used in the rebel meeting *Star Wars appropriate re rebels* uses mid and low angle shots to both place the spectator in the action alongside Katniss but to also emphasise how Commander Lyme is the one in charge *can't remember her name, Game of Thrones, Star Wars, really tall... Gwendoline Christie!*. As Coin and Lyme speak with the other rebel commanders Katniss is always shown throughout the conversations, the close ups used emphasise her reactions as well as demonstrating how she does not agree with the ideas that others are putting forward. The shots illustrate how that, even though she is the Mockingjay, she is small and isolated in comparison to those in power around her *watching this in the day sucks, it's so bright and the film is seriously dark, at least it's cloudy out or I wouldn't be able to see anything.*

As Katniss and Gale speak to each other they are framed in the same shot showing that, for the moment, they are still connected to one another *they've made Gale so much more dickish than he is in the books, mind you in the books he just bombs crap then vanishes so at least we hear his voice a bit more here.* The bombs dropping on District Two behind them maintain that the fight is continually taking place across Panem and not just in a single district. Once the destruction has finished in District Two Katniss is told to talk to the survivors and encourage them to turn against the Capitol. The shots used here depict her isolation as she is stood away from the other soldiers and protected like a precious commodity. The camera is trained on her so that, in terms of framing, she is always in the centre of the shot. There are no high or low angles used in this scene which places the viewer in an isolated position with her as she talks to one of the soldiers *impressive that she can remember all those names from the first games, calls ahead to what she does in the epilogue with naming all the dead over and over in order to remember them all and ensure they didn't die in vain.* As she moves the camera moves with her, it is trained on her eye level the entire time so that when she speaks it is she we see and not the reactions of those around her *ooh she got shot! That was a surprise, always forget that.*

After Katniss has been shot, having been protected by a bullet proof vest, she is sat in a hospital bed when Johanna Mason, one of the other victors, walks in. The high angle shot of Katniss emphasises how she is seen by those in authority in District Thirteen: alone, weak and isolated. As mentioned earlier this isolation extends to the other victors too, when Peeta is talking to Katniss *if you didn't know anything about these characters you would be so lost,*

no context, no back story, they just seem like they hate each other and remembering when he gave her the bread they share a bond *reminds me of reading HP, read second one first then went back and read first one and wondered why Harry, Ron and Hermione hated each other* which does not exist between themselves and the other characters within the film, that of sacrifice for the survival of another person *drink of water, seriously thirsty, always am early in the morning, they never show things like people drinking just to stay hydrated in films, if you took this to be the world you'd assume they're all like camels.*

The wedding scene between Finnick and Annie demonstrates Katniss' isolation from everyone around her even in the midst of great happiness. She stands apart from the others who are laughing and talking, depicting how she is literally kept on the fringes of society as she does not truly fit in anywhere *just like she is at the end living on the edge of district 12.* Once she is persuaded to join in with the dancing the camera is again trained on her and follows her movements as she dances with Primrose. The close up on her and her sister accompanied by the melancholy non-diegetic music, which is a shift in tone from the diegetic violins heard earlier, emphasise how Katniss is not only isolated but how she isolates herself from those around her *call forward to Prim's death too maybe.*

After the wedding scene Katniss hides away on a plane to take herself to the frontline of battle, expressly against the wishes of Coin. As she walks out of the plane towards the command centre she is framed in the centre of the shot. Everyone surrounds her in a circle as they kiss their fingers in salute to her but the way the shot is framed displays how she is surrounded by people and yet still isolated at the same time. The surrounding characters empathise with her but can never truly understand what she has been through. The words said by Plutarch as he and Coin watch this scene brings to the fore how the media plays a vital part in warfare just as it did in the Hunger Games: "at the front line surviving a gunshot wound, couldn't have staged it better myself" *didn't Joan of Arc survive arrow wounds?? According to Horrible Histories anyway.* The rally speech *do you want some expositioooooon? Some information through a sooooooong?* that takes place just after Katniss arrives at the frontline reinforces how Katniss is isolated even in such a large crowd. She is continually framed in the centre of shot with a different set of concerns to those around her, who are focused on the danger of the upcoming battle *in the books no one knows about the pods other than the special brigade, surely if they all have a map the plan would succeed much quicker and with fewer deaths than in the books?*, as the medic's jackets remind her of Primrose and the danger she is in. As the soldiers are being briefed on their upcoming mission a contrast is created between the surviving tributes and everyone else. Katniss and Finnick are reluctant to

obey orders whereas Gale, when told to obey orders, complies straight away. The champions are also set apart from the others and framed in shot stood together and shoulder to shoulder showing that they are equal with one another.

When Peeta joins the unit *you get a lot more exposition in the films than in the books, not from Katniss' perspective, Boggs knows a lot more than he does in the books, why do they do that? If people don't need it in the books why add it in the films?* he is depicted as being as isolated as Katniss as he is handcuffed with the other soldiers sat in a circle round him. This framing device reflects when Katniss arrived at the frontline and the soldiers stood in a circle around her. With the death of their leader Boggs as they walk through the booby trapped city Katniss is given control of the map which will allow them to get to Snow in relative safety. Another trap is set off and a sinister black oil *they made that oil a lot more dramatic than in the books, I swear there it was just a small section of the street that was affected* fills the square they are in forcing them to take shelter in an abandoned building. The oil *they got the metal cage things that springs from the just as I imagined, I like when that happens* is like the encroaching presence of the Capitol which coats and taints everything it touches. Having escaped the black oil and peacekeepers the soldiers, who are now presumed dead, hide in an abandoned apartment when a mandatory broadcast comes on the television. The pageantry of the media is again exemplified by Snow's speech which is then interrupted by Coin. Coin's false grief at Katniss' death shows how far those in charge will go to manipulate the situation to their advantage, this is reflected by the amused expression worn by Plutarch and with Katniss saying, "I never knew I meant so much to her" *great now I need the loo, same as the drink thing from films I could assume that characters don't have any bodily functions either.*

Hate this scene coming up, not the mutts but the bit just before, super tense and anxiety making. As the team try to cross the city in safety they decide to go into the sewers as there are no traps down there. Being underground reflects the danger the characters are in as the narrow tunnels and enclosed spaces illustrate how the characters are increasingly cornered by the dangers they are trying to fight. The dim lighting of the scene and the increased frequency of noises off screen increase the tension and heighten the suspense *nope going to have to pause it and go to the toilet. And we're back. What was Peeta saying... oh yeah, tracker jacker poison re memories being shiny.* As the character's crawl through small spaces to get through the tunnels there is a break in the non-diegetic music, the longer the silence is the more the tension is increased as a result. The diegetic noises increase the silence as the splashes in the water become more dominant *argh! Just bring out the mutts already! I know they're coming... THERE they are,* making it sound like someone is following them *why go*

underground, let's be trapped in an enclosed tunnel with frickin nightmare creatures from hell, super idea! Bleurgh, they're like gangly slippery E.T's and he creeped me out enough.

Having escaped the sewers, and lost Finnick in the process *I always think that maybe Finnick will make it, maybe if I watch it enough his ending will change and he'll be allowed to live happily with Annie...*, Katniss and Gale hide in the crowds headed towards Snow's residence in order to get close enough to assassinate him. The peacekeepers are searching the crowd for them and are in stark contrast to the gaudily dressed Capitol citizens. The peacekeepers blend in with the colour scheme of the Capitol as they wear grey and white which is the same colour as the surrounding buildings. Having their faces hidden leads to them being dehumanised and emphasises the all pervasive nature of the Capitol and how it is constantly there in the background guiding the behaviour patterns of the citizens. As the rebels attack the crowd *feel the base of those machine guns! Just turn the volume down a bit because that is offensively vibrately* Katniss stands on top of a truck to witness the action. This isolates her from the main crowd and gives her a position of omniscience as she can see the children are being put to the front of the people near the main gates of the residence. In her isolation Katniss is powerless to help as the bombs rain down on the children. As she runs forward to help in the aftermath she sees Primrose in her medic uniform helping the children, their eyes meet as another bomb explodes and Katniss is blown backwards *literal girl on fire!* as her sister is killed.

When Katniss has healed sufficiently she is taken back to the Capitol and meets Snow who, like Katniss, is isolated in his own greenhouse. The low angle shot of Snow looking up at Katniss *that is a foul hacking cough Snow has, I know he's dying but still* shows how she has the power in their relationship now as well as the authority to enforce change. Through their conversation Katniss finally understands the extent to which Coin will go to grasp power and Katniss is in a position to do something about it. Katniss' isolation from those around her gives her the ability to take action without fear of the consequences. She has lost her sister and it is clear from a conversation that takes place with Gale that he is partially to blame for this which serves to isolate Katniss from him too. In this conversation Gale and Katniss are kept out of the same shot, the use of shot-reverse-shot shows the viewer that though they are talking to each other they are at opposite ends of the room. This distance emphasises their separation from each other as Gale leaves to go and help in another district. As the remaining champions sit round a table to vote on whether or not there should be another Hunger Games Katniss is positioned opposite Coin, emphasising the direct

opposition of both of the characters *hey it's Bernard from Westworld, don't trust him he's being controlled by Anthony Hopkins!*.

As Katniss walks down the mall towards Snow for his execution she is once again shown as isolated in a sea of people *make-up for an execution, gotta look good for the cameras obviously*. The tall buildings on both sides and the length of the street emphasise the vastness of the Capitol. Coin, who is stood on a dais above Snow, demonstrates how one dictator has been swapped for another as she is wearing similar colours to the peacekeepers and to the buildings around her. Katniss' last act of defiance in the film isolates her completely from the rest of society, she assassinates Coin to prevent another dictator claiming power and after doing so she is placed in prison *and now the scene filler because PSH died before moving back to remains of District Twelve to live in the victor's village need the toilet again ffs, this is why I don't drink anything in the cinema, I'd never get to the end of the film*. She and Peeta create a life for themselves as totally separate from the Capitol and the final scenes of the film show how there can be happiness and togetherness in that isolation *and now am in serious need of food, only about 10 mins left so I can wait for lunch*. The sun, having been absent for the rest of the film, finally makes an appearance in the closing scenes as Katniss finds her place with Peeta *who cuts their hair? Even away from the stylists etc it's all perfectly coiffed*, reflecting how they have found peace in their isolation together *birdsong at the end is like the final of Blackadder Season 4*.

Summary of Distracted Analysis

In terms of Barthes' concepts the punctum of the photograph, as Metz notes, 'depends more on the reader than the photograph itself, and the corresponding off-frame it calls up is also generally subjective' (cited in Lury, 2002: 90). The punctum is both 'what I add to the photograph and *what is nonetheless already there*' (Metz cited in Lury, 2002: 90). In other words, what is already present within the photograph is what prompts us to add our own punctum. As stated above the punctum which prompts distracted spectatorship depends on who is doing the viewing. The punctum cannot be predicted as it differs from person to person as that ambiguous 'element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces' (Barthes, 1980: 26) the viewer. It is in these moments, as can be seen from the above analysis, where the multiple identities of fan, academic and gendered subject come into contact with one another. To resolve the internal conflict he outlined Barthes decided to make himself the 'reference of every photograph' (Barthes cited in Lury, 2002: 218). By taking a

subjective approach it makes it possible to define aspects such as the punctum which, when discussed in relation to distracted spectatorship, impacts so integrally on the cinematic experience. Discussing the cinematic experience through distracted spectatorship can offer us suggestive and provocative ways of seeing and looking. It is through the process of comparison and analysis that we can begin to view the distraction with a different eye. Distracted spectatorship can aid in examining the cinematic experience from a more subjective standpoint which allows for the extension of narratives that change and alter the experiences. Considering such alternative ways of viewing demonstrates how modes of viewing and seeing are themselves culturally and historically constructed. The examples chosen maintain how distraction takes a variety of forms and extends from a number of differing locations. This can help us to acknowledge that distraction is a central component of film viewing and as such is central to the cinematic experience. If we follow Benjamin's theory, explored in Chapter Two, then distracted spectatorship can also be understood as a central feature of modern life and modern experiences. There are certain aspects of contemporary film, particularly films of the young adult genre, which encourage re-watching and construction on the part of the spectator. The value of doing this kind of extended cultural research is that it allows us to see these changes and continuities. This can also be expanded outwards so that studying film ultimately allows us, as spectators, to think of how society works; this reflects the work that Benjamin was doing in the 1930s in relation to distraction.

Conclusion

This research began with the question of whether or not the punctum could be used in the analysis of film. Through the course of the research the area of study expanded to include elements of distraction which became apparent when attempting to describe an immediate experience. The main aim of the thesis is to demonstrate how distracted spectatorship has always been an integral part of the cinematic experience but is becoming more evident with the rise of franchise films. This enabled the thesis to be grounded in theories of distraction, phenomenology, and affect as well as spectatorship theory more generally. When undertaking this kind of self-reflexive research that endeavours to expand on how spectatorship can be theorised in relation to film viewing and the cinematic experience it was necessary to select a pertinent case study. Selecting a Hollywood blockbuster franchise allowed for an intimate examination of the cinematic experience as it was experienced by a single distracted spectator. This meant understanding how distracted spectatorship poses methodological problems when discussing the cinematic experience alongside a discussion of franchise films. The creation of the case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses served to overcome these methodological problems as well as exploring the gap that exists in both film theory and film analysis in relation to including the direct experience of the spectator. What I am proposing is a particular understanding of cinema that calls for a particular approach to allow for a particular focus when it comes to discussing spectatorship. The methods I have used throughout the thesis draw on existing analytical methods in order to gain that understanding. The thesis is not offering a new way of paying attention to films but is insisting on the importance of attention in the first place. Distraction is not a problem; rather it should be seen as the mechanism of thought and interaction between texts and the world.

The theory of the distracted spectator and of distracted spectatorship insists on the importance of paying attention to what is not being paid attention to. As such it explores how the gendered female spectator is always already distracted. The central concept of the thesis is of paying attention to distraction and how we, as spectators, pay attention more generally. Distraction is an important aspect of attention and its impact on film viewing should be recognised as such. Throughout the thesis the argument highlights how distracted spectatorship does not come into play solely when the spectator is pulled away from the film by things such as other viewers eating or talking, as mentioned by other theorists (Phillips, 2007). Instead the thesis outlines how distraction is a permanent state which varies in intensity but which, at any time, allows the spectator to create links between their own lives, memories, recollections and what they see on screen. The thesis also explored, through distraction, how certain identities were made visible. These moments of punctum create the

distractions and in doing so construct a very subjective view of the cinematic experience which places the spectator at the centre. Each of the chapters served to explore this way of viewing the experience as a purely subjective one. Chapter Four began this process with a discussion of one of the distracted analyses which emphasised how multiple identities are brought to the fore through distracted spectatorship. The examination of franchise films in relation to fan spectators is illustrated in the case study notebooks and the frontispiece for Chapter Five, which also demonstrates the self-reflexive nature of spectatorship and its impact on contemporary popular culture. Chapter Six discussed how films are never viewed in isolation as there are always cultural references and more personal and subjective references which influence the overall experience. The purpose of Chapter Six was to outline how spectatorship is a cultural and social construct and needs to be acknowledged as such in order to build a more rounded picture of spectatorship, as an experience which takes place beyond the cinema screen. The chapter also included a discussion of the case study books which stand as an example in order to illustrate distracted spectatorship as well as the subjective and self-reflexive nature of spectatorship. This was done in order to highlight its complex nature and to make clear the different types of distraction which are possible. The purpose in doing this was to bring to the fore that all of these varying types of distraction constitute the cinematic experience which also helped to see how distraction has become a part of the texture of contemporary life.

The thesis advances a theory of film spectatorship that emphasises the subjectivity of the individual spectator which is distinct from pre-existing theories of the hypothetical or ideal viewer. The thesis also advances a theory of film spectatorship that emphasises the extra-filmic activities and knowledge that inform the film viewing event. The process of advancing these two aspects throughout the thesis involved simultaneously writing about distraction whilst being distracted through the writing process. This duality is recognised by Charney in relation to modernity and the concept of the moment as there is a split ‘between sensation, which feels the moment in the moment, and cognition, which recognises the moment only after the moment’ (Charney, 1995: 279). As a result of this it is only possible to acknowledge the immediate experience after it has occurred, this makes writing about distraction a continual test of memory as the ‘cognition of the moment and the sensation of the moment can never inhabit the same moment’ (Charney, 1995: 281). The case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses are an attempt to embrace these problems in order to illustrate the immediate experience through the writing and tracing of moments of distraction in the multi-layered writing style used throughout. What they also did was to ‘take

account of the messiness of individuals' situations "inside" culture' (Couldry, 2000: 128), Couldry expands on this below:

I can love a range of musics (from Western classical to jungle to Javanese gamelan); I can identify (loosely, but consistently) with musics, art, fashions, cultural positions that I only partly understand and have little time to follow in detail; I can be hostile to the way I am addressed by the marketing campaign for a particular product, yet for unconnected reasons buy that product (so that others may judge me as the "type of person" who responds to that type of campaign); I can be disillusioned about the conditions under which politics in my country or locality is conducted, but lack any sense of what effectively I can do to change it; and I can reflect a great deal over time about my changing relationship with what gets defined as "mainstream" culture – all of this without any clear resolution. It is obvious that the cultural experience of such a self is hardly a non-contradictory unity, and it involves a significant and open-ended degree of self-reflexivity. (2000: 128)

It is integral, therefore, to think about culture and the experiences and effects associated with it as a process which is necessarily complex. In doing so the relationship between the academics' viewing experience and the spectators' viewing experience also needs to be acknowledged as a part of the writing process. It needs to be acknowledged that the thesis is not attempting to block off one way of viewing over others, but instead explores that the academic way of watching films is simply a more exaggerated version of what all viewers experience, and the case study is an extreme illustration of that. The self-reflexive approach is used as a means of understanding the experience of distraction and should be understood that it is set in a PhD that has its own particular set of characteristics. The cinematic experience with regards to distracted spectatorship is not different to other experiences and there are limits and constraints when discussing it, the value of the case study notebooks, frontispieces and distracted analyses are that they help us to understand the individualised nature of spectatorship and they aid in making visible certain identities. Due to the self-reflexive nature of the thesis there is the recognition that the aspects of distraction described and analysed are of my own experience, they are expressed as ordinary for me with regards to my own cinematic experience.

The thesis' main focus has been to discuss the nature of distracted spectatorship with regards to franchise films, specifically *The Hunger Games* franchise. This allowed me to explore how the cinematic experience contributes to our understanding of popular culture. I am aware that taking this particular approach could be regarded as a niche view when it comes to the wider discussions and implications of distracted spectatorship. However, as discussed throughout the thesis and above, the particular understanding of cinema and

analysis that the thesis proposes has implications for both popular cinema and cinema more generally. Providing a concrete example allows for the work to connect back to a space in current literature as the notion of fandom rests on the idea of the fan as both a consumer and a spectator, a relationship that is complicated by spectator theory. Fan cultures are understood as a specific kind of focused experience, the thesis argues that watching a film for anyone can be a rich experience and it is not necessary to rely on fandom to create this kind of viewing. The work done throughout the thesis begins to contradict Jenkins' work on fan cultures as, through distracted spectatorship, it is possible to view his work as the recognition of the allusion and reference as part of the spectatorial experience rather than a description of fan cultures explicitly, this thesis critiques Jenkins' idea that fan culture is either separate or different. Franchise films are a pertinent example as they try to produce a certain spectatorial effect through aspects such as self-reflexivity, citation, intertextual allusion and narrative seriality. What these characteristics do not do is necessarily produce the kind of affective viewing that Barthes outlines in his theory of the punctum. The idea that the franchise film is the best example of a punctum studded film experience can also be questioned as franchise films are deliberately trying to employ a certain kind of spectatorship this does not mean that they necessarily engage, excite, upset or disturb the spectator. This leads to the question that if fan cultures are associated with franchise films are there certain types of film that are designed to produce puncta and if so what are the practicalities of outlining how this is done.

Using distracted spectatorship to analyse films demonstrates how there is no such thing as a mass audience as each spectator brings their own subjective interpretation to the cinema and in doing so creates their own cinematic experience. What the research exposes is how distraction is often associated with mainstream cinema and escape; hence the choice of franchise films for the case study. What remains to be learned, and the direction this research could take in the future, is how distraction is relevant in all cinematic forms. The thesis limited the area of study to Hollywood blockbusters and franchise films but distracted spectatorship can be analysed with a range of genres and film types. The potential for further research could lead to having something to say about the serial structure of culture more generally. This is particularly in relation to genre films as any genre film could be understood as a serial film in that they have the same story, same characters and the same iconography. Though the discussion of distracted spectatorship has focused on franchise films it must be made clear that distraction is not just pertinent to franchise films. The arguments put forward throughout the thesis can be used to understand the relationship of franchise films to film in general. This is made especially clear in terms of narrative as the viewer needs to be as

familiar with narrative conventions when watching any film as they are when watching franchise films. With regards to this franchise films are a specific case of a more general tendency within film viewing. Taking the research a step further and examining a broader range of films and cinematic categories will enable distracted spectatorship to be analysed in a multitude of ways while keeping the spectator at the core of the research. Through this different understanding of the cinematic experience it would even be possible to examine how distraction impacts on everyday life more generally. Studies could be done into how distraction takes place when we read, listen to the radio, talk to others and undertake everyday activities. At no point do we as individuals cease to be a spectator to the world around us and as such are always already distracted.

Appendix

i: The Hunger Games Series Synopsis

The Hunger Games series consists of four films that are based on the books written by Suzanne Collins. The series is set in a dystopian future society in a country called Panem. Seventy-four years before the narrative in the first book there was a war and in order to quell it the figures in power divided the country into twelve districts. Keeping the peace went a stage further and the Hunger Games was implemented. Every year each district has to put forward a male and female tribute from the ages of twelve and eighteen. This is done through a lottery, dubbed the reaping, where each male name is placed in a bowl and each female name is placed in another bowl. A name from each is drawn and those two are then the tributes. The twenty-four tributes then have to fight to death in a purpose built arena until only one remains. The winner is dubbed the victor and they, and their children, never have to participate in the Hunger Games again. The victor also receives a mansion and an income so they do not have to worry about monetary issues. The Capitol, which is a separate district from the other twelve, does not participate in the Games as it was members of the Capitol who implemented the Games from the start. The Hunger Games are filmed and screened live throughout the country so that all of the districts have to watch their tributes fight each other, this is mandatory viewing. The story begins in district Twelve and follows the character of Katniss Everdeen whose sister, Primrose, is about to be placed into the lottery for the first time. As the reaping takes place it is Primrose's name that is called, as she goes forward Katniss volunteers as tribute in her sister's place. Katniss then travels to the Capitol with the male tribute, Peeta Mellark, where they meet the other tributes and train for three days before entering the arena. Katniss has skills with a long bow because she had to hunt for food in district twelve as it is the poorest district. She uses this to her advantage in the Games along with strategies devised by her and Peeta's trainers. One of these strategies was to make the viewing public believe that she and Peeta were in love in order to gain sympathy from the audience, Peeta is actually in love with Katniss at this point. This tactic works and in the end they both end up winning the Games. The story continues with Katniss and Peeta having to keep the pretence up during the victory tour that is compulsory for the champions. Civil unrest is taking place throughout the other districts as they see Katniss' trick of allowing for more than one champion as a sign for rebellion to overthrow the system that keeps the Hunger Games going. In order to stop the rebellions the seventy-fifth Hunger Games takes tributes from the pool of champions that were promised they would never have to fight in the Games again. At the end of that Games a group of champions, which include Katniss, break

out of the arena and are taken to District Thirteen. This district is underground and, as their speciality is building nuclear weapons, had set up an uneasy truce with the government in order to remain anonymous and not participate in the Games. From here the rebellion truly begins and they use Katniss as their symbol in order to encourage the other districts to do more. The rebellion succeeds and a new government is put in place. The series deals with issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, survival, oppression, freedom of speech, rebellion, relationships as well as issues of reality television and spectacle.

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Aeon Flux (2005) Karyn Kusama, USA

Aladdin (1992) Ron Clements and John Musker, USA

Alien (1979) Ridley Scott, USA

Aliens (1986) James Cameron, USA

Avengers Assemble (2012) Joss Whedon, USA

Battle Royale (2000) Kinji Fukasaku, Japan

Blue Jasmine (2013) Woody Allen, USA

Brave (2012) Mark Andrews, Brenda Chapman and Steve Purcell, USA

Captain America: The First Avenger (2011) Joe Johnston, USA

Casino Royale (2006) Martin Campbell, UK

Catwoman (2004) Pitof, USA

Carve Her Name With Pride (1958) Lewis Gilbert, USA

Covert Affairs (2010-2014) Matt Corman and Chris Ord, USA

Delirium (2014) Rodrigo García, USA

Die Hard (1988) John McTiernan, USA

Dishonoured (1931) Josef von Sternberg, USA

Divergent (2014) Neil Burger, USA

Dr No (1962) Terence Young, UK

Game of Thrones (2011-current) David Benioff and D B Weiss, USA

Gladiator (2000) Ridley Scott, USA

Good Will Hunting (1997) Gus Van Sant

Hanna (2011) Joe Wright, USA

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002) Chris Columbus, UK

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part One (2010) David Yates, UK

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part Two (2011) David Yates, UK

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2005) Mike Newell, UK

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2009) David Yates, UK

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2007) David Yates, UK

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (2001), Chris Columbus, UK

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004) Alfonso Cuarón, UK

Homeland (2011-current) Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon, USA

Hook (1991) Steven Spielberg, USA

In Plain Sight (2008-2012) David Maples, USA

Interstellar (2014) Christopher Nolan, USA

Iron Man (2008) Jon Favreau, USA

Iron Man 2 (2010) Jon Favreau, USA

Jaws (1975) Steven Spielberg, USA

Kill Bill: Vol. 1 (2003) Quentin Tarantino, USA

Kill Bill: Vol. 2 (2004) Quentin Tarantino, USA

Killer Women (2014) Hannah Shakespeare, USA

L'homme Orchestre (1900) Georges Méliès, France

Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (2001) Simon West, USA

Les Misérables (2012) Tom Hooper, UK

Looper (2012) Rian Johnson, USA

Mamma Mia! (2008) Phyllida Lloyd, USA

Me Before You (2016) Thea Sharrock, USA

Mission Impossible (1996) Brian De Palma, USA

Mrs. Doubtfire (1993) Chris Columbus, USA

Nikita (2010-2013) Craig Silverstein, USA

Notting Hill (1999) Roger Michell, UK

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest (2006) Gore Verbinski, USA

Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl (2003) Gore Verbinski, USA

Popeye (1980) Robert Altman, USA

Rear Window (1954) Alfred Hitchcock, USA

Resident Evil (2002) Paul W S Anderson, USA

Resident Evil: Afterlife (2010) Paul W S Anderson, USA

Resident Evil: Apocalypse (2004) Alexander Witt, USA

Resident Evil: Extinction (2007) Russell Mulcahy, USA

Resident Evil: Retribution (2012) Paul W S Anderson, USA

Revenge (2011-2015) Mike Kelley, USA

Revolution (2012-2014) Eric Kripke, USA

Rocky II (1979) Sylvester Stallone, USA

Romeo + Juliet (1996) Baz Luhrmann, USA

Salt (2010) Phillip Noyce, USA

Sicario (2015) Denis Villeneuve, USA

Snow White and the Huntsman (2012) Rupert Sanders, USA

Spider-Man (2002) Sam Raimi, USA

Spy (2015) Paul Feig, USA

Star Trek (2009) J J Abrams, USA

Star Wars (1977) George Lucas, USA

Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace (1999) George Lucas, USA

Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens (2015) J J Abrams, USA

Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991) James Cameron, USA

The Blacklist (2013-current) Jon Bokenkamp, USA

The Bugle Call (1916) Reginald Barker, USA

The Butler (2013) Lee Daniels, USA

The Dark Knight Rises (2012) Christopher Nolan, USA

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (2011) David Fincher, USA

The Graham Norton Show (2007-current) BBC

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) Peter Jackson, New Zealand

The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) Peter Jackson, New Zealand

The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013) Peter Jackson, New Zealand

The Hunger Games (2012) Gary Ross, USA

The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (2013) Francis Lawrence, USA

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1 (2014) Francis Lawrence, USA

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2 (2015) Francis Lawrence, USA

The Incredible Hulk (2008) Louis Leterrier, USA

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) Peter Jackson, New Zealand

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003) Peter Jackson, New Zealand

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002) Peter Jackson, New Zealand

The Matrix (1999) Lana Wachowski and Lilly Wachowski, USA

The Matrix: Reloaded (2003) Lana Wachowski and Lilly Wachowski, USA

The Matrix: Revolutions (2003) Lana Wachowski and Lilly Wachowski, USA

The Maze Runner (2014) Wes Ball, USA

The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones (2013) Harald Zwart, USA

The Shawshank Redemption (1994) Frank Darabont, USA

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 (2011) Bill Condon, USA

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (2012) Bill Condon, USA

The Twilight Saga: Eclipse (2010) David Slade, USA

The Twilight Saga: New Moon (2009) Chris Weitz, USA

The Twilight Saga: Twilight (2008) Catherine Hardwicke, USA

Thor (2011) Kenneth Branagh, USA

Titanic (1997) James Cameron, USA

Toy Story (1995) John Lasseter, USA

Toy Story 3 (2010) Lee Unkrich, USA

Underworld (2003) Len Wiseman, USA

Underworld: Awakening (2012) Måns Mårilind and Björn Stein, USA

Underworld: Evolution (2006) Len Wiseman, USA

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans (2009) Patrick Tatopoulos, USA