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Joe Tompkins

Department of Communication Arts, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA, USA

Published online: 12 Aug 2014.

To cite this article: Joe Tompkins (2014): ‘Re-imagining’ the canon: examining the discourse of contemporary horror film reboots, New Review of Film and Television Studies, DOI: 10.1080/17400309.2014.945884

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17400309.2014.945884
RESEARCH ARTICLE

‘Re-imagining’ the canon: examining the discourse of contemporary horror film reboots

Joe Tompkins*

Department of Communication Arts, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA, USA

This paper examines the latest cycle of horror movie franchise reboots as a form of critical industrial practice. It argues that horror movie reboots such as Rob Zombie’s Halloween (2007) should not be regarded as mere cynical attempts to repeat successful formulas but part of a far-reaching industrial strategy to cultivate notions of aesthetic distinction in viewers, specifically by rewarding cultural competencies that correspond to the logic of media brands. Examining the promotional and marketing discourses of Halloween, the paper shows how such reboot discourses reflexively incorporate ‘critical’ attitudes of canonical literacy, authorship, and subcultural distinction as a way to maintain consumer ties and enhance brand loyalty. In turn, these attempts to fold aspects of film reception back into the production process afford industry insiders (i.e. directors, producers, distributors, marketers) the opportunity to overstate the cultural and historical importance of a franchise, while presenting their subcultural credentials to genre fans. Thus, reboots act as a means of reflexively interrogating media properties so as to mediate and contain knowledge about those properties in accordance with the political economy and brand-valuing strategies of contemporary Hollywood.

Keywords: Reboot; remake; horror film; industrial practice; reception; paratext; DVD; branding; taste; subcultural distinction

The practice [of horror remakes] speaks more to the entertainment industry’s artistic laziness and penchant for pre-sold product than to any particular devotion to [genre]. (Cinefantastique; quoted in Kermode 2003, 14)

Horror cinema devours and regurgitates its own entrails like a hungry cannibal. (Kermode 2003, 13)

It is arguable the horror genre ‘abounds with more examples of sequels, prequels, and remakes than any other popular film genre in the history of cinema’ (Hand and McRoy 2007, 1) and that, accordingly, the practice of remaking in the age of new media and tent-pole entertainment is hardly unique in its propensity to revisit previous success. However, it is also true that the practice of horror

*Email: jtompkins@allegheny.edu

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remaking has emerged as ‘one of the dominant trends in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century American cinema’ (Heffernan 2014, 61), and that this trend clearly takes on a new valence in the context of the franchise reboot. Over the last decade, for example, as many as 45 horror film remakes have been produced and theatrically released within the USA; this compared to approximately 10 remake titles distributed in the same market over the preceding two decades (Box Office Mojo 2012). Among the most prominent of these recent titles are a whole slew of studio reboots of (potential) franchise films hailing from the genre’s canonical period during the 1970s and 1980s. As a number of critics point out, these reboots generally arise as a function of brand recognition, wherein studio-distributors look to recycle ‘little gems’ in their corporate libraries as a way to capitalize on a ‘pre-sold’ product (Proctor 2012, 1; see also Arnett 2009). In this sense, horror movie reboots are regularly interpreted as by-products of an essentially conservative production environment: formulaic outcomes of a degenerative creative process underwriting the contemporary horror movie industry, a condition routinely defined in terms of self-‘cannibalization’ and ‘artistic laziness’.

However, as William Proctor (2012) argues, the ‘reboot is essentially a franchise-specific concept’, which is to say, it ‘seeks to forge a series of films, to begin a franchise anew from the ashes of an old or failed property’ (2). According to this formulation, then, a remake is considered a reinterpretation of one specific film, whereas a reboot undertakes a more ambitious process of effectively ‘re-starting’ a whole series of films (or a franchise) according to particular discursive and intertextual branding strategies. In short, reboots look to capitalize on the previous (cult) successes of two or more films, while also, and most importantly, mobilizing the general brand identity, fan attachments, and discursive regimes of cultural value associated with a given franchise. Thus, reboots seek to disavow any direct narrative or stylistic correlation to the franchise in its previous iterations, while at the same time looking to incorporate well-known brand iconography within a new storyline, developing certain narrative and mythological components as a method to invite new audiences into the fold (Proctor 2012).

In some cases reboots even conceive altogether new characters or plot developments in order to rewrite the history of a given franchise. As Proctor (2012) explains, the recent cycle of action hero reboots provides a chief example of this practice, as films like Man of Steel (Zach Snyder, 2013), The Amazing Spiderman (Marc Webb, 2012), Incredible Hulk (Louis Leterrier, 2008), and Batman Begins (Christopher Nolan, 2005), as well as the new James Bond series (Casino Royale [Martin Campbell, 2006], Quantum of Solace [Marc Forster, 2008], and Skyfall [Sam Mendes, 2012]) essentially respond to previous commercial and critical disappointments by ‘wiping the slate clean’, and thus ‘beginning from year one’ with a never-told origin story that seeks to ‘nullify history and disconnect stagnant or failed product from a new, cinematic experiment’ (1). Accordingly, properties that typically receive the reboot
treatment are recognizable brands, which function as market-tested properties with the potential to ‘revitalize, reinvent, and recycle textual forms’ (15).

All this is to suggest, in other words, that the reboot is as much a discursive format as it is an industrial category (Verevis 2006), and that it aspires to transform (and hence rejuvenate) a given franchise by drawing upon multiple intertextual connections to original source material. Consequently, reboots attempt to exert their own autonomy as a function of extratextual practices of branding, repurposing, and promotional value-generation. In effect, reboots afford their creators (producers, distributors, marketers, directors) the chance to ‘stamp their mark’ on iconic film properties (Proctor 2012, 7) by way of a strategic mobilization of particular economic and promotional discourses – that is, through the invocation of a given set of industry and reception practices. Thus, rebooting does not necessarily entail a process of aesthetic negation or an intertextual break with the ‘aura’ of an original brand; on the contrary, the anatomy of the contemporary reboot suggests a more ‘symbiotic’ relationship (Verevis 2006, 17). As Constantine Verevis (2006) argues:

film-remaking is both enabled and limited by a series of historically specific institutional factors, such as copyright law, canon formation and film reviewing which are essential to the existence and maintenance – to the discursivisation – of the film remake. In these ways, film remaking is not simply a quality of texts or viewers, but a ‘by-product’ or the secondary result of broader discursive activity. (2)

In the same vein, one might say that film reboots act as a form of ‘critical industrial practice’ (Caldwell 2006), shifting matters (including academic analysis) away from issues of textual fidelity and authenticity and toward questions of institutional context and broader discursive fields.

As regards the 2007 Halloween reboot, for example, critics, fans, and industry personnel regularly draw attention to earlier canonical versions of the franchise so as to effectively police and uphold equally canonical reading strategies. Within this context, the reboot is not a perversion of some original property but a discursive opportunity to breathe new life into an established brand identity. This practice is in keeping with the logic of film remakes generally; as Verevis (2006) explains, the discourse of remakes often invokes the idea of an ‘original’ so as to augment brand value and relay cultural status (2). However, this paper will argue that the practice of rebooting also affords producers and marketers the opportunity to reflexively draw into its orbit concomitant aesthetic frameworks and hierarchies of cultural value that underwrite cinematic competence in a given field (in this case, the horror genre). In effect, reboots work to incorporate ostensibly ‘critical’ attitudes of canonical literacy, audience connoisseurship, and (sub)cultural distinction as a way to maintain consumer ties and enhance brand loyalty.

Simply put, then, reboots function as a critical industrial practice (Caldwell 2006), a means of activating and sustaining the discourses of aesthetic value and distinction that provide fan-consumers with officially sanctioned interpretive frameworks for legitimating subcultural investments in a given franchise. According to John Caldwell (2006), critical industrial practice encompasses...
those forms of ‘analysis of texts by industry’, which reflexively interrogate media properties so as to mediate and contain knowledge about those properties in accordance with the commercial strategies of brand value-generation (102). As I use the term, critical industrial practice becomes a means to interrogate the discursive process of film rebooting, and how this process serves to reflexively bolster consumer ties and brand loyalty via critical frameworks. Through an examination of the promotional discourses surrounding Rob Zombie’s *Halloween* (2007), I argue that the horror franchise reboot effectively enables industry personnel to cultivate notions of aesthetic distinction and subcultural capital, and thus reward audience competencies in accordance with the logic of media brands. A key point moving forward will be that reboots are not merely cynical attempts by studio-distributors to repeat successful formulas but extratextual discursive constructions which tend to interlace economic and promotional discourses through the valorizing strategies of academic film culture, doing so as a way to validate and distinguish the processes of ‘re-imagining’ a preexistent franchise.²

In this context, there is certainly an interaction between industrial and discursive dimensions; however, my argument is that a film reboot is ultimately constructed (industrially and otherwise) through extratextual practices that rely on notions of aesthetic canonization and brand-name distinction. Among these practices are formats that both precede a film’s release (e.g. press kits, movie trailers, websites, posters, reviews) and formats that follow a film’s release (e.g. DVDs, video games, ‘making-of’ documentary specials, and weblogs). For my purposes, the following sections will mostly concentrate on formats that follow a film’s release, and specifically those that accompany the DVD and its ‘bonus tracks’. However, I hope to show that in the case of *Halloween*, these sorts of ancillary discourses play a key role not merely in communicating a film’s cultural status as an artistic ‘re-imagining’ (as opposed to a remake), but also in invoking the sorts of intertextual frameworks (namely, authorship and canonicity) that are routinely trotted out to bolster critical interpretations of a rebooted film. As we shall see, these discourses afford media producers the opportunity to both overstate the cultural and historical importance of a franchise and present their own subcultural credentials to genre fans. In view of this critical industrial process, the discourse of horror film reboots will be examined not as an extension of otherwise autonomous textual entities, but as an extratextual function of both producers and consumers – as the ‘by-product’, as it were, of various user-groups who indirectly work to construct and negotiate a film’s cultural status as a ‘re-imagining’, and hence produce meaning and value for the brand.

**Rebooting Halloween’s star power and canonicity**

Rob Zombie hacks away at ‘Halloween’ [a] horror classic. (Matthews 2007)

I have the privilege of re-imagining ‘Halloween’ for a new generation of audiences. (Rob Zombie quoted in Business Wire 2006)
As a function of broader corporate logics and marketing imperatives, reboots stimulate a range of critical activities that can be translated into industrial practice. That is, reboots not only provide the institutional context for discursively conferring value and distinction upon certain franchises, but also act as the catalyst for extradtextually performing that distinction at the level of both industrial practice and audience reception. Reboots thus work to support canonical readings of franchise films via fan and critical interpretations, which are effectively parlayed into the critical industrial practices of media producers. In this sense, media industries attempt to shape the consumption of horror cinema by collapsing critical activities of fans and critics as a function of industrial practice. Here popular discourses of (sub)cultural distinction can be – and indeed often are – drawn into commercial complicity with industrial business plans and marketing strategies.

Most notable in this regard are the intertextual references to the ‘original’ (sometimes canonical) source text. In the case of Halloween, procedures of canonization and subcultural distinction are clearly at work in the various promotional and audience discourses surrounding the reboot, as producers, fans, marketers, and creative personnel share an abiding concern for upholding the authenticity and canonical legacy of ‘the original’ as a way of maintaining critical authority and generic expertise. Accordingly, these constituencies tend to locate contemporary appeal of the reboot according to discourses of enduring cultural relevance, that is, in reference to Halloween’s iconic brand elements. These elements, in turn, underwrite extradtextual practices of marketing and reception, which frame the Halloween reboot as some combination of ‘updated’ genre text and auteur/star vehicle.

For instance, whereas promotional discourse surrounding Halloween typically seeks to avow the credentials of the reboot in accordance with the alleged ‘classic’ horror text, the value of the franchise itself, for most fans and critics, appears to reside in ‘one of the most iconic slasher movie characters of all time in Michael Myers’ (Harrington 2007). Indeed, much like the titular characters headlining recent superhero/action movie reboots, Michael Myers furnishes the key reference point for organizing the Halloween brand; as such, it is his ‘star image’ that serves to negotiate the various proprietary and authorial revisions of the Halloween franchise. To quote Halloween (2007) director Rob Zombie, as he explains his rationale for rebooting the series:

I was not really keen on the idea of making a remake ... [So] I started envisioning how you could do this. I looked at it and thought Michael Myers is a great character. He’s one of the few modern day iconic monsters. There’s only about 4 or 5 modern day monsters. They very rarely pop up and present themselves in a classic way. So, I thought, ‘shit I have to do this movie’. (Icons of Fright 2007)

In this way, creative personnel behind Halloween (2007) not only distance themselves from the tainted cultural connotations of the ‘remake’ as a critical category, but also utilize the reboot as a means of ‘re-envisioning’ Myers and reactivating the Halloween franchise. Accordingly, creators of Halloween (2007)
mobilize the brand’s star attraction vis-à-vis a prevailing corporate context of the blockbuster superhero franchise (see Arnett 2009). As Zombie explained in a telling comparison with recent *Batman* films:

Make it different but retain classic elements. The best way I can describe it [i.e. the *Halloween* reboot] is that it’s like *Batman Begins*. You’re keeping Wayne Manor. You’re keeping Batman. You want the Bat suit. You’re probably going to have Alfred as the butler. You’re going to keep some of the classic things, but the way you want to represent it is completely different. (Icons of Fright 2007)

In rebooting the *Halloween* franchise then, Zombie retains ‘classic’ elements of the original while also repositioning the franchise according to a narrative structure that closely resembles superhero franchise reboots. Hence the iconic monster’s back-story – his biographical ‘becoming’ as it were (Arnett 2009, 4) – effectively dominates the first half of the film, while also activating a narrative schema that betokens further installments (including Zombie’s 2009 follow-up *Halloween II*). In this sense, the film purportedly undertakes ‘a new chapter in the Michael Myers saga’ by providing a never-told back-story for the movie’s arch-killer, doing so in a way that effectively belies a promotional strategy that draws upon the canonical (or ‘classic’) status of the original so as to emphasize its modern-day alterations at the hands of a bona fide commercial horror auteur. Ostensibly, the *Halloween* reboot entails a process of corporate ‘re-imagining’ to the degree that the iconic movie monster’s star image can be made to coincide with the auteur-director’s updated ‘vision’ for the franchise.

Needless to say, these strategies work to cultivate notions of aesthetic capital and cultural distinction around the Myers character, deploying interpretive competencies that may or may not prove appropriate to the franchise reboot. Thus, much of the critical and popular response to Zombie’s re-imagining centered, quite predictably, on the perceived failure of the film to improve upon the iconic status of the 1978 John Carpenter version. The prevailing tone among reviewers and fans was righteous indignation toward the high-concept ruination of a beloved genre classic. Critics and reviewers writing for major market newspapers and trade publications, for example, were equally bemused and irritated at what they took to be an unnecessary (at best) and cynical (at worse) attempt to reboot a prominent horror movie franchise. Dennis Harvey (2007) of *Variety* ruefully noted the impact of marketability on the film’s content: ‘in contrast to that spare, suggestive genre classic [the reboot] resulted in a bloodier, higher-body count version [that] leaves nothing to the imagination. . . . [The] end result is a hectic, professionally assembled pic that just about cancels itself out on every level.’ Meanwhile, fans of the genre were similarly scornful of the director’s attempt to re-imagine the franchise through the back-story of Michael Myers. As one devotee brusquely put it, ‘Rob Zombie completely misses the point of Michael Myers. Not knowing what makes him tick IS WHAT MAKES HIM SCARY!’ Thus, critics and fans alike were in agreement over Zombie’s two principal mistakes in rebooting the film: the first was to have undertaken a ‘gory bastardization of a horror classic’, a canonical artwork that ‘DID NOT need
to be remade . . . [because] it was absolutely perfect in every aspect'; and the second was to have done so by way of a newfangled origin myth for ‘one of the greatest psychopaths of cinema’ (Nemiroff 2009). The outcome appeared to be a film that was roundly dismissed as a derivative failure: not simply a botched authorial ‘re-envisioning’ but an inferior – if relatively high budget and professionally stylized – effort to commercially exploit a genre landmark.

Nonetheless, these reactions are remarkable, not for what they suggest about the lackluster reception of the *Halloween* reboot, but for what they reveal about the broader intertextual frameworks that motivate bids for cultural distinction. Here the question of whether the *Halloween* reboot actually is ‘better’ or ‘worse’ than the original misses the mark; the key point is the way reboot productions occasion the reiteration of canonical systems of value and interpretation, which ultimately serve to bolster the brand itself. Far from ‘competing’ (aesthetically and economically) with the original film, the *Halloween* reboot – like other recent franchise reboots – actually works to reinvigorate the authoritative status of the brand as a means to reestablishing certain (marketable) continuities with high points of the past. In doing so, the reboot affords producers and directors the chance to re-imagine a ‘classic’ text while motivating (profitable) forms of horror movie expertise and generic competency. In effect, reboots such as *Halloween* function as nodal points for the proliferation of specific economic and promotional discourses – discourses that are set to align the institutional practices of critical and popular reception with industrial procedures of marketing and repurposing. As such they embody reflexive forms of cultural production that help to sustain a composite relation between critical activity, popular reception, and critical industrial practice.

Thus, while attempts to legislate (hermeneutically) the ubiquitous claims of authenticity and textual authority – of whether reboots are ‘just like’, ‘better’, or ‘worse’ than the original – may yield worthwhile insights into a film’s perceived aesthetic significance and value (or lack thereof), they also tend to get hamstrung on issues of fidelity and originality. Again, the crucial point here is that while critical and popular hierarchies work to sustain discourses of cultural distinction, they also underpin industrial bids for generic canonization and brand valuation vis-à-vis the reboot as a critical industrial practice. Rebooting in this sense functions not as some blueprint for commercial (re-)production, but a means of *discursively intervening* into the social constructions of taste and institutional procedures of canonization that mark the field of reception. The critical industrial practice of rebooting thus indicates that the normative aesthetic judgments of reviewers and fans (whether ‘good’ or ‘bad’) resonate just as much (if not more) with the commercial interests of producers and directors, who maintain an equal (if not greater) stake in recognizing the commercial and aesthetic value of genre ‘classics’ like *Halloween* by way of their contemporaneous re-imaginings. Accordingly franchise reboots might be viewed as a means of establishing promotional ‘filters’ through which to interpret and evaluate the brands that they hype (Gray 2010, 3).
It therefore behooves researchers to acknowledge the vital role that critical and industrial discourse plays, not only in communicating a film’s status as a re-imagining but also in invoking the intertextual frameworks that sustain the value of a given franchise. In the case of *Halloween*, the institutional logic of rebooting a popular franchise is such that the discursive mechanisms of canonicity and genre classicism not only underscore the appeal of earlier cult ‘classics’ but also thereby invite audiences to ascribe aesthetic worth and build cultural attachments to the brand. This strategy is not limited to the horror genre, of course (see Proctor 2012), but it is, perhaps, most clearly apparent across the terrain of contemporary horror film reboots, including 1970s canonical movies like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974/2003), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978/2004), *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977/2005), and *The Last House on the Left* (1972/2009). As the official website for *Dawn of the Dead* (2004) makes clear, for example, quoting producer Eric Newman:

> This is a re-envisioning of a classic. There was not, is not, a valid reason to ‘remake’ *Dawn of the Dead*. That’s not what we set out to do, not what any of us wanted. There are some amazing updates on some great films ... [John] Carpenter’s *The Thing*, [David] Cronenberg’s *The Fly*. They’re great movies that add to rather than diminish their original films. We really saw this as a chance to continue the zombie genre for a new audience.

Similarly, director Zack Snyder is quoted as saying:

> I had no desire to remake the picture. A remake, to me, is you take the script and you shoot it again. And that can be cool, but you don’t mess with it. A re-filming of the original version was so not needed. Reinterpretation is what we wanted to do. Re-envision it. We put some steroids into it. I don’t want to have this film compared to any other – our *Dawn* is its own thing with its own personality, voice and experience. (cf. Verevis 2006, 134)

In this way promotional discourses of re-envisioning provide an opportunity to shape a film/franchise’s relationship to the canonical past while potentially inciting new attitudes that accord with contemporary taste markets and critical categories of authenticity (e.g. the ‘new’ zombie genre). Hence, the critical and popular negotiations of these films – as either devalued or revalued cultural objects – boils down to the ways they afford critical frameworks that allow viewers to both deepen their investment in the franchise and contribute to its social circulation as a point of affective devotion. As one glowing IMDB fan review of *Dawn of the Dead* put it:

> I know an awful lot of genre fans rail against remakes, but like the update of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2003), this version of *Dawn of the Dead* is so good that we should instead be clamoring for more ... Hardly five minutes into the film we’re already into hardcore, high-tension, gore-filled horror material ... [It’s] as good as the original, with exciting new directions and room for a sequel!

In this way reboot discourses seem to reward critical distinction in consumers who fancy themselves as repeat viewers of the genre, and thus base that distinction on the normative assumptions and canonical reading strategies of knowledgeable
intermediate communities (i.e. critics and fans). To the extent these fan distinctions occur alongside – as opposed to in stark contrast with – the promotional discourses of the industry, the practice of re-imagining works to instill a particular type of subcultural competency, redirecting viewers back to the franchise (and clamoring for more!) through discourses of canonicity and cult engagement.

Conversely, production cultures respond to the practice of rebooting in much the same way as consumer cultures: by invoking the language of authenticity and utilizing the evaluative frameworks of critics and fans. Caldwell’s (2006) description of this practice is useful here:

Industrial discourses [of branding, repurposing, and rebooting] can also be viewed as plays of cultural competence and critical-theoretical engagement . . . The circulation of critical-theoretical icons and texts by the industrial participants is in fact a fundamental component of the way the industry makes sense of itself to itself and thus navigates corporate uncertainty. (107)

Hence the aesthetic canonization of texts (via the discourse of ‘re-imagining’) can be viewed as a function of the industry’s ongoing attempt to shape film consumption in an age of uncertainty. By way of constructing subcultural distinctions through ‘plays of cultural competence and critical-theoretical engagement’, the industry seeks to effectively ‘mutate critical analysis and industrial reflexivity as business plans’ (Caldwell 2008, 168). In this sense, horror movie reboots constitute an industrial performance of critical distinction.

Furthermore, as Caldwell (2009) notes: ‘screen studies are in effect analyzing a production environment that already obsessively analyzes itself. However, we seldom consider this, nor consider the opportunities that this analysis of analysis might provide’ (175). In the case of horror movie reboots, the analysis of industry by industry not only contributes to the (re)formation of particular, generic-discursive formations, but also to the arrangement of distinct modes of subcultural capital and generic competency, which, as I have argued, underwrite the media industries’ attempts to generate meaning and value for the brands that they hype, by wedding cultures of production and reception. At the same time, contemporary reboots also yield a whole range of ancillary discourses that inevitably feed back into the industry’s conceptualization of the genre and its audience. In terms of the Halloween franchise, ancillary formats like the DVD and its bonus tracks communicate a canonic, authoritative value system that seeks to orient how the franchise is impressed upon viewers. To the extent such discourses are more and more dispersed among home video cultures (see Hawkins 2000; Guins 2005), ancillary materials provide an indication of what, exactly, the industry considers valid (because marketable) forms of generic competency and aesthetic expertise.

Rebooting and the discourse of DVD culture
The ‘Unrated Director’s Cut, special ed. DVD’ for the Halloween reboot includes a host of bonus tracks and ‘behind-the-scenes’ featurettes that both replicate and
extend the sort of cultural competence and critical theoretical engagement evinced in the publicity materials and reviews of the film. Additionally, it includes a number of authorial commentaries and interviews with creative personnel that serve to append aura to the brand. Most fittingly, the DVD extras announce a key distinction in the franchise by way of two separate making-of documentaries: *Re-Imagining Halloween* and *The Many Masks of Michael Myers*, both of which construct distinction and authenticity for the franchise (and its fans) by inviting viewers to enjoy an ‘insider’ perspective on the production process. These documentaries reinforce, in particular, discourses of auteurism and cultural authority via background stories that supply behind-the-scenes information regarding the making of the film in relation to its iconic brand-name stars: Michael Myers and Rob Zombie. With the promise of unvarnished, paratextual access to the stated intentions of the film’s director and production team, such bonus tracks lay claim to the real ‘authentic’ version of the film (as it was authorially ‘envisioned’), while also playing into audience expectations for reliable information regarding the reboot process. In short, the two documentaries both ask and answer the question: ‘What artistic motivations can possibly underwrite rebooting a classic film like *Halloween*?’ and in doing so, DVD viewers are afforded a sense of having direct access to, and knowledgeable appreciation of, the franchise in its hallowed canonical legacy, authorship credentials, and underlying fan community.

The first documentary, *Re-Imagining Halloween*, crystallizes the different forms of ‘industrial theorizing’ (Caldwell 2009) that go into re-imagining a successful horror movie franchise. Beyond mere cross-promotion, the contents and structure of this particular bonus track suggest four institutional strategies for asserting the reboot’s claim to authenticity. First, and most obviously, *Re-Imagining Halloween* sets out to construct meaning and value for the brand in accordance with the conventions of the making-of documentary; it therefore provides extensive background footage of production sets, costume designs, artwork, and special effects (SFX), alongside backstage interactions among cast and crew. Furthermore, the documentary intercuts these different field scenes – along with promotional excerpts from the primary text – with interviews and discussions with chief creative figures, including Zombie, producer Andy Gould, production designer Anthony Tremblay, SFX/makeup artist Wayne Toth, and actors Tyler Mane and Daeg Faerch (the ‘old’ and ‘young’ Michael Myers, respectively). In this way, the *Re-Imagining* extra supplies viewers with a host of professional justifications for ‘reinventing’ the franchise, as crewmembers are on hand to provide personal testimony as to the sorts of artistic and creative rationale that go into rebooting ‘the ultimate slasher classic’ (as one DVD blurb put it).

Furthermore, audience members are made privy to the sorts of critical industrial knowledge that define the DVD format. As Barbara Klinger (2006, 73) writes, far from demystifying the production process, industrial ‘revelations’ featured in DVD extras ‘produce a sense of the film industry’s magisterial control of appearances . . . [and thus] vividly confirm Hollywood as a place of marvels
brought to the public by talented film professionals’. No doubt, the Re-Imagining
documentary supplies viewers with a host of ‘talented professionals’ and
‘revelations’ which lend support to the idea that, as Zombie puts it, Halloween
aims for a ‘totally different experience’ vis-à-vis the John Carpenter original.
Predictably, these distinctions are made on the basis of Zombie’s authorship
credentials: crewmembers repeatedly marvel at how the director was able to
inject his own artistic ‘vision’ into the process, despite the weight of Carpenter’s
canonical legacy bearing down on the reboot production. As Zombie himself
admits: ‘It would have been very easy to watch Halloween [1978] and copy it
shot for shot . . . but that would be completely pointless.’ Instead, we are told that
studio executives were continually on hand to pressure Zombie to ‘make it [the
film] more Rob Zombie’, and hence establish the reboot’s brand-name distinction
vis-à-vis the original.

This pressure from the executive tier indexes the second (and related)
institutional strategy underpinning the DVD making-of featurette: to offer visible
and credible evidence of directorial control and genuine artistry at the hands of a
bona fide auteur – evidence of which might then go on to justify the reboot’s
status as a legitimate ‘re-envisioning’. As director of photography Phil Parmet
asserts at the beginning of the Re-Imagining documentary, ‘Rob is an amazing
artist; he has strong, vivid imagery in his mind that he wants translated in a very
direct way.’ These sentiments are echoed across interviews with members of the
film’s production team, including production designer Anthony Tremblay and
editor Glen Garland. As Tremblay insists: ‘Rob’s an inventive director who
knows what he wants, yet likes to get a lot of input and see choices . . . he filters
out what he doesn’t want.’ Likewise, Gould summarizes the aims of the executive
tier: ‘If we can just allow Rob to realize his vision, then everyone will be happy.’
In this way crewmembers ensure that Zombie comes across as a competent,
talented film professional’, while offering credible testimony to his authorial
control.

Meanwhile, the making-of documentary shows us visible evidence to back up
these claims – backstage performances of Zombie ‘making choices’ about props,
costumes, lighting, set design, artwork, and SFX. This occurs in conjunction with
candid B-roll footage that provides ‘special access’ to otherwise unseen
production decisions. Almost paradoxically, then – and despite the DVD’s
implicit acknowledgment of the various artists at work ‘behind-the-scenes’ – the
reboot is represented here as the product of a singular aesthetic vision, and thus
ordained as the work of a legitimate film author. Hence distinction is created by
way of extratextual bids for creative intelligence and auteur status, dramatized in
relation to images of the cast and crew on hand to provide ‘production literacy’
(Gray 2010, 98) for DVD viewers.

In turn, this sort of critical industrial practice serves to reflect (or more
accurately, construct) audience interest regarding expert commentary. As Klinger
(2006) notes in her discussion of the ‘special collector’s’ DVD format, the
principal appeal of these behind-the-scenes intertexts lies not only in their ability
to impress upon viewers the work of talented professionals but in positioning the DVD audience as industry-knowledgeable consumers, who dwell within the inner circle of genre experts, critics, and artistic personnel. Accordingly viewers do not get ‘the unvarnished truth about the production process; they are instead presented with “promotable” facts, behind-the-scenes information that supports and enhances a sense of the “movie magic” associated with Hollywood production’ (Klinger 2006, 73). As a result, critical literacy made available by DVD features remains skewed by the studios and marketing departments in charge of producing and defining their contents. The same goes for the ‘unrated director’s cut’ version of *Halloween* 2007, which ostensibly supplies DVD viewers with exclusive access to Zombie’s ‘re-imagining’ methods. Hence the bonus tracks tend to focus on the auteur-director as the fulcrum of artistic collaboration and viewer identification, as practical ins-and-outs of the reboot process are dramatized so as to appeal to the general suppositions of authorial control and creative vision that fundamentally serve to ‘update’ (or re-brand) the franchise as something altogether ‘different’.

The presumed efficacy of this sort of institutional appeal, from the standpoint of the industry, can be illustrated by way of the similarity between shared talking points recurring throughout the *Re-Imagining* documentary and other promotional materials. For instance, a 4 June 2006 press release encapsulates a preemptive theoretical conception for the reboot that finds its way in subsequent DVD materials:

> Zombie’s vision of this film is an entirely new take on the legend and will satisfy fans of the classic *Halloween* legacy while beginning a new chapter in the Michael Myers saga. This new movie will not only appeal to horror fans but to a wider movie-going audience as well. It will not be a copycat of any prior films in the *Halloween* franchise. (Official Press Release 2006)

Accordingly, a third institutional strategy animates the DVD’s extratextual discourse: underscoring the subcultural authenticity of the franchise vis-à-vis ‘legend’ of Michael Myers. Here the ‘classic *Halloween* legacy’ serves to both placate genre fans and augment brand value, prefiguring the sorts of critical industrial knowledge woven into the DVD format. In particular, the *Many Masks of Michael Myers* bonus track (like the other publicity materials, including the theatrical trailer, included among the DVD extras) performs the extratextual work of recalling the Carpenter original – or at least the canonical memory of it – so as to amplify promotional discourse of the reboot as ‘a new chapter in the Michael Myers saga’.

Specifically, whereas the official trailer promises to ‘unleash’ Rob Zombie’s ‘unique vision of a legendary tale’ by at once invoking the original and distancing the reboot from it – specifically through a montage of audiovisual excerpts that suggest a keen parallel to the 1978 version via the iconic score and other familiar set pieces – the *Many Masks* documentary seeks to elevate Zombie’s ‘vision’ of *Halloween* as a direct function of Michael Myers’ subcultural authenticity and brand value. For this reason, industry personnel ‘theorize’ (Caldwell 2009)
extensively about their own production experience and how it compares to the look and style of the original, while setting out to distinguish the reboot (under the helm of Zombie) as equally unique and distinctive. Garland (the editor) suggests that, unlike the Carpenter film, Zombie’s version aspires to greater ‘realism’ (as opposed to crude sensationalism or fantasy), and thus establishes a sense of artistic control and purpose: ‘Rob’s vision is all about keeping things real. If there’s too much blood, it’s not going to seem real.’ Likewise, Zombie declares his authorial penchant for filmmaking styles that maintain an altogether ‘raw, edgy feel’:

> I just look at movies that I love . . . like what would work for Taxi Driver; take the same ideas from that and apply it to this . . . you have characters that you want to watch and that you follow, and situations that are real so they become terrifying or compelling.

In this sense, the repeated emphasis on ‘realism’ serves to generate aesthetic distinction for the reboot, drawing discourses of ‘horror-as-art’ into close alignment with discourses of auteur aesthetics, which have already been deemed legitimate and valuable. In the same sequence, for example, Parmet (the director of photography) underscores Zombie’s bid for cultural distinction by placing Halloween in extratextual proximity to contemporary auteurist films: ‘The films that we [Zombie and Parmet] talked about, in terms of the look for this film, weren’t horror films at all; they were like 21 Grams, they were like Amores Perros, they were like Larry Clark films.’ Here the strategy of name-dropping and historical juxtaposition serves the purpose of not only legitimating the Halloween reboot but distancing the process of ‘re-imagining’ from the less venerable tradition of teenage slasher films associated with Carpenter legacy. In so doing, the Many Masks documentary walks a fine line, recalling the franchise ‘legend’ while affording DVD viewers a new frame for critically interpreting – and hence valorizing – the reboot as one in a tradition with esteemed auteurist films. This gambit ultimately serves to underscore Zombie’s ‘unique vision’ vis-à-vis the Carpenter version; as the director himself remarks on the heels of Parmet’s comments:

> You know John Carpenter has a very distinctive style – how he shot. It’s long, and slow, and smooth. And so I was like what if we shot Halloween in the style of 21 Grams or The Constant Gardner, it’s immediately a different movie, even if it’s the same movie [title].

In due course, the film is positioned according to a wider canon of auteurist filmmaking (namely, Clark, Alejandro Gonzalez Innaritu, and Fernando Meirelles) – of which Carpenter’s ‘distinctive style’ is also, decidedly, a part.

Effectively, this revisionary take on Halloween coincides with a ‘new look and feel’, which potentially delivers more intense (because all the more ‘realistic’) horror movie scares. As (producer) Gould sums up, ‘[the movie] is not an excuse to kill people in more wild and wacky ways; that’s not what this movie is. We’re trying to get a real intensity to it.’ This bid for intensity is underwritten
by appeals to subcultural authenticity – that is, attempts to ‘make it real’ through an emphasis on the psychological realism of the Myers character, as the _Many Masks_ bonus track attempts to negotiate the commercial and cultural pressures involved in formulating ‘an entirely new take on the legend that will satisfy fans of the classic _Halloween_ legacy’. As cast and crewmembers tirelessly remark throughout the _Many Masks_ video, the Myers character is the key emblem of the _Halloween_ mythos, and as such, his carefully crafted visage is key to establishing the credibility of the reboot. As makeup artist Wayne Toth puts it, ‘Michael’s mask was as important as any other visual piece in the movie . . . it [the mask] is the main character.’ Accordingly, Toth explains to DVD viewers how the original mask, taken from the 1978 film, had long since deteriorated, and that, far from being a cause for concern, this serendipitously afforded him the opportunity to ‘redo’ the classic Myer’s look. Rather than embark on a radically alternative makeup design, however, Toth pronounces fidelity to original:

I had to be really true to what the iconic Michael Myers looks like when I was sculpting. . . . We did a ‘clean’ version [that] Michael has as a child [and] a ‘rotted’ version [for] when he grows up . . . we painstakingly painted by hand, so every smudge of dirt, everything looked exactly the same.

To that end, the DVD presents design workups and still images attesting to Toth’s attention to detail; these are then overlaid with voice-over declarations of cast and crew as to the subtle artistic nuances of Toth’s design. As Garland states: ‘I thought working with the mask would be a huge challenge, but the fact that Wayne created such a great mask that can show so many emotions, it didn’t become a challenge.’ Similarly, Zombie asserts, ‘it’s such a weird mask; depending on how you light it, sometimes it would look really scary and cold, and sometimes it would look more sympathetic’. For his part, Tyler Mane (the actor playing Myers), insists that the mask brings something beyond ‘just a walking shape’ to his performance, and that ‘it’s scarier to know a little bit more about what’s going on behind the mask than just the mask’. Hence cast and crew seek to elevate the accomplishments of Toth (and the rest of the production team) by underlining the central point of the _Halloween_ reboot: that it is far from a straight remake, but rather a genuine ‘re-imagining’ of the Myers character, right down to the iconic facial insignia, and running through to the origin story that narratively details ‘what’s going on behind the mask’. In this sense the _Many Masks_ documentary sets out to ‘deepen’ the Michael Myers character as a function of the reboot process – to reestablish the subcultural allure of a ‘once terrifying movie monster’ by injecting him with a dose of pseudo-biographical realism. As Zombie explains:

I always felt that Michael Myers was a great character that had lost his impact. Like Frankenstein, who couldn’t have been parodied to death more once you’re watching the Munsters! But a great character is always a great character and can always be made scary again. . . . [The _Halloween_ reboot] was [thus] more about the characters and the situation, and that’s what would make it scary again. (quoted in Harrington 2007)
Such comments reveal an implicit concern with re-starting the franchise by way of the Myers persona in the face of unavoidable caricature and endless sequels. By reestablishing his on-screen presence as terrifyingly ‘real’, Myers ‘re-envisioning’ at the hands of ‘talented film professionals’ sets out to undo frivolous depictions of some chimerical movie monsters; rather, the reboot (and its paratexts) move to restore ‘maturity’ to the franchise through a solemn, yet iconic makeover.

In view of this tactic, Zombie and other crewmembers proclaim their own fannish enthusiasm and pop cultural attraction to ‘working with the star of the original film’ as a motivating factor for undertaking the reboot. On the one hand, this becomes a way for industry personnel to discursively justify the process of rebooting as an artistic one while, on the other, reaffirming their own subcultural allegiance, their devotion to the pleasures of fandom and cult connoisseurship. Indeed, as Toth recounts of the pressure he felt in ‘redoing’ the Myers look and meeting audience expectations in the process:

There’s a whole slew of real fans, like groups of fanatics – there’s websites just about Michael Myers and the mask, so I always had that in mind while I was working on it. So, that’s where most of the pressure came from. I really had to make sure, basically, that we had the same look [as the original]... For someone like myself, growing up on horror films, it was a big deal to redo the classic Michael Myers mask from *Halloween*.

In this way Toth (like Zombie) signals his awareness of the genre community’s subcultural standards for *Halloween*; at the same time (and more importantly) the makeup artist casts his own lot with those seemingly hardcore genre ‘fanatics’, who might likewise consider it ‘a big deal to redo the classic Michael Myers mask’. Rather than shirk off responsibility to the fan community, or casually dismiss the pleasures of horror movie consumption (namely, those fans operating websites ‘just about Michael Myers and the mask’), the *Many Masks* documentary represents crewmembers who thus show great respect for the genre and its fans, and thereby perform their own subcultural legitimacy for DVD viewers.

In this regard, the documentary accomplishes the fourth institutional strategy of the horror reboot DVD format: the presentation of genre credentials to horror fans as a critical industrial function of the technical and creative practices of horror movie personnel. Here not only do the film’s producers want audiences to believe the *Halloween* reboot stands in league with (if not above and beyond) other films in the franchise (or at least on canonical par with the original); they also wish to signal that audiences, too, are involved in something uniquely special in being granted privileged access to the creative team’s aspirations and artistic intentions, specifically its accredited background within the vaunted subcultural field of horror movie craftsmanship and SFX technique (cf. Hills 2005, 73–90). For, as Toth states, ‘there’s a whole slew of fans’ dedicated to reflexively analyzing the technical practices of horror movie personnel, and this is especially true of horror’s cult movie ‘fanatics’. Crucially then, as Matt Hills points out,
subcultural preoccupation with the reputed artistry and detailed craftsmanship of gore SFX functions as one of the ways horror film fans are able to discursively perform their own extratextual agency and genre expertise. For this reason, not only are technical dissections of horror’s gory SFX ‘self-reflexively used by sections of horror fandom to sustain and generate a reading of horror-as-art’ (Hills 2005, 89), they can also be mobilized to indicate one’s own subcultural status, one’s belonging and group identity. Accordingly, the inclusion of SFX special features as part of the Many Masks and Re-Imagining documentaries point to DVD producers’ critical reflexive awareness of fans’ interpretive competency and strategies of taste distinction.

As Hills (2005) points out, ‘fan investments in horror-as-art are not experienced simply in relation to “the text itself” . . . they are, rather, layered and reinforced through extratextual “floating signifiers” such as SFX images [which are] extracted from their original narrative frames’ (89). Likewise, the sort of extratextual ‘layering’ (and repurposing) at work in the DVD extras not only let viewers in on the production ‘tricks’ of the trade but also capitalize on (by way of incorporating) the reception practices of horror movie culture, albeit in a manner that implicitly strives to ‘educate’ viewers as to the pleasures of horror film consumption. Hence the Re-Imagining documentary devotes a whole section of ‘critical analysis’ to the movie’s 17 kill scenes; audiences are shown the working methods for executing various ‘blood gags’ and the details of makeup SFX. In one particularly gruesome set piece, for example, we learn how Ronnie, one of Myers’ first victims, has his throat slit, and how the production team crafted a latex-tubing device coupled with a fire extinguisher to pump more than two-and-a-half gallons of fake blood at the point of incision. Meanwhile, the documentary shows repetitious primary footage of actors being slashed, stabbed, beaten, bludgeoned, and strangled to death by the movie’s arch-killer. All the while, Toth and FX crewmembers assure DVD viewers that each kill scene had the overreaching aesthetic imperative to keep the violence as ‘realistic’ as possible. Thus, do SFX revelations carry intertextual resonance with Zombie’s stated ‘vision’ of the film, while rewarding subcultural competency in viewers who imagine themselves connoisseurs of insider knowledge.

Along these lines, then, DVD viewers are granted specialized access to some of Halloween’s more graphic stunts, while being invited to reflexively ponder the mechanics of horror movie violence. Such behind-the-scenes (self-) disclosures of industry by industry accord with discourses of fan subcultural authenticity that, as Hills (2005) points out, display SFX knowledge to frame horror’s graphic pleasures as a matter of ‘fan agency, discrimination and expertise’ (89). In the same vein, DVD extras provide reboot engineers the opportunity to perform their own subcultural distinction in relation to horror fandom – particularly, ‘competent viewers’ who pride themselves on being able to recognize the ‘trick’ of SFX gore. Privileging knowledge of production literacy over affective/‘illiterate’ responses to horror movie violence thus becomes a way for producers to establish subcultural credibility with the community of horror fans. Moreover,
this in turn becomes a way to instill the reboot itself with a sense of subcultural distinction through the presentation of critical industrial knowledge.

‘Play it again’: toward a political economy of horror movie consumption

The *Halloween* DVD fosters a sense of intimate knowledge between cast, crew, director, and audience, ultimately working to secure a coherent narrative – in the form of production back-story – for the franchise reboot. Specifically, through an analysis of SFX and directorial perspectives, the employment of production literacy and dialogues with creative personnel, reflexive acknowledgement of the franchise’s canonical status and its deliberate retention of iconic, ‘classic’ elements, the DVD announces allegiance to the subcultural community. It also posits an implicit notion of ‘the horror film audience’ as generically savvy and aesthetically attuned, and thus the *Re-Imagining* and *Many Masks* documentaries work to construct that audience in accordance with the prevailing extratextual discourses of authorship, stardom, and genre classicism. In so doing these and other paratexts participate in the wider industrial attempt to shape the parameters of horror film consumption – by catering to ‘competent’ viewers of canonical texts, and by addressing spectators in the same language and modes of critical evaluation associated with horror-fan cultures. In effect the subcultural experience of horror fandom is (represented as) utterly significant to industrial practice.

This is not to suggest that reboots are merely creatures of the subcultural market, however; nor that ancillary discourses of horror movie consumption inevitably lead to uncritical acceptance of certain franchised properties by movie audiences. To be sure, *Halloween* demonstrates that fans and critics are often quite critical of contemporary reboots on the grounds that they not only exploit valued subcultural materials, but also potentially denigrate the authenticity of those materials through a process of assimilating fan attachments with commercial imperatives. As Mark Kermode (2003) puts it, these films simply ‘repackage the underground appeal of genuinely edgy horror offerings into saleable, multiplex-friendly fodder’ (15). And thus ‘repackaging’ franchises like *Halloween* become a thorny issue, as reboots might be summarily dismissed as mere cynical attempts by the cultural industries to capitalize on the ostensibly ‘radical potential of gore cinema that flourished in the 1970s’ (Kermode 2003, 15). However, as this paper has argued, such breezy dismissals would be remiss in effectively overlooking the broader discursive operations that underwrite the reboot process in general, including the very same cross-institutional practices of canon formation, ideological criticism, genre distinction, and cinematic authorship at work in such dismissals. In other words, it would be to overlook the specific forms of generic competency that just as often get ‘recycled’ on the occasion of such corporate repackaging.

In terms of the *Halloween* reboot, ancillary discourses like the DVD with its special features communicate a canonical system of values and orientations that
govern how the reboot is both promoted to audiences and discursively positioned in relation to previous iterations, so as to ultimately construct an inflated sense of generic heritage. Both the film and its accompanying paratexts emphasize a debt to the past – a debt that essentially functions to critically invest the franchise with renewed aesthetic and commercial value. However, suggesting brand autonomy for the contemporary reboot, without challenging the aura of earlier canonical texts, is one way media producers potentially revitalize ‘classic’ film properties for contemporary taste markets. Whereas the DVD format affords ‘added value’ to the franchise in the form of bonus tracks and special features, these extratextual platforms thus provide a key indication of what the industry itself considers to be appropriate frameworks for engaging horror film culture. To the extent these frameworks also dovetail with the imagined tastes, preferences, and consumer habits of film audiences, they inevitably feed into critical industrial practice.

Notes
1. For a complete list of horror film remakes, 1982–present, see Box Office Mojo 2012.
2. While this approach appears to elide institutional differences between critical academic commentary and the industry’s own self-legitimating discourse, it calls attention to the fact that critical industrial practices can (and do) often take the form of institutionally sanctioned frameworks of interpretation. Indeed, as Caldwell (2009) points out, critical industrial practices of Hollywood do not simply represent mere brand extensions but also function as ‘scripted acts of cultural-industrial interpretation’ (171). In other words, they represent intersections of both production and reception cultures, to the point of making critical discourse a conventional aspect of media convergence. No doubt, it’s tempting to view such practices with cynicism; but my inclination is to regard them less judgmentally – that is, not as bastardized forms of cultural critique, but as forms of social discourse that can aid the researcher in ascertaining the conditions under which the industry works to ‘initiate, stabilize, and protect’ the discursive existence of film genres (Altman 1999, 85). Thus, rather than lament the ostensible ‘co-optation’ of critical discourse by cultural industries, my goal here is to examine the former’s flexible institutional operations.
3. See also Los Angeles Times movie critic Tasha Robinson (2007), who observed a disingenuous ‘bait-and-switch’ tactic driving the film’s marketing campaign: ‘Director Rob Zombie pulls a clever sort of bait-and-switch with his “re-imagining” of John Carpenter’s seminal 1978 horror hit “Halloween” . . . It’s a more polished, high-fidelity version of a story that’s played out on screen many times since 1978, but once Zombie runs out of subtext, he’s right back to the same old slasher text: “Blood. Guts. The end.”‘ Thus, critics of various stripes were both hostile and dubious toward the ‘re-imagining’ rhetoric. See also: Kit 2006; Harvey 2007; Matthews 2007; Covert 2007; Demara 2007; Fox 2007.
4. These and other fan comments were taken from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) user reviews; at the time of this writing, Halloween: Unrated Director’s Cut, special ed. DVD (2007) had been reviewed by 980 users and rated by 53557 users, with an average score of 6.0 out of 10. See http://www.IMDb.com/title/tt0373883/reviews (accessed 3 July 2012).
5. Additionally, there is a 2008 ‘Three-Disc Unrated Collector’s Edition’, which contains the two documentaries discussed in this paper alongside a four-and-a-half hour documentary about the making of the film, entitled Michael Lives: The Making of Halloween. While the latter incorporates additional behind-the-scenes footage (and
nearly an hour of clips taken from the movie), it duplicates much of the interview and B-roll material found in the shorter documentaries. Furthermore, it does not appear to have gained the widespread promotional circulation of Re-Imagining and Many Masks, both of which are freely available online via YouTube. Nonetheless, Michael Lives fits the broader critical industrial strategy analyzed here of studio-distributors packaging ‘insider knowledge’ as a means of generating brand loyalty, with a focus on Rob Zombie’s authorial ‘vision’ of the franchise.

6. Additionally, Isabel Pinedo (1997) notes how the subcultural appeal of many fan-oriented commercial publications, such as Fangoria and Cinefantasique, center on the tension between ‘special effects realism and [fan] awareness of its artifice’ (56). Hence, not only do these publications stimulate reader interest in special-effects technology; they also enact specialized forms of media literacy, which are geared to cultivate a discussion of SFX professionals and ‘how they do it’. In effect, fan-oriented publications ‘yield a discourse that reveals the hidden, behind-the-scenes work’ of production, and as a result typically aim to provide a sense of practical instruction, allowing the more ‘competent’ viewer to ‘distance him or herself from depictions of violence by looking for the trick, i.e., the cut from the actor to the prosthetic device’ (56). According to Pinedo, then, the strategy of ‘looking for the trick’ – or what she calls ‘ruptures in realism’ – serves to both whet the appetites of horror audiences for greater production knowledge and address spectators as discriminating members of a subcultural community whose pleasure lies in more fully seeing the mechanics of horrifying spectacle. DVD viewers of the Halloween reboot are similarly encouraged to thus seek out ‘ruptures in realism’, to ‘look for the trick’ by way of the flows of blood and gory set pieces.

References


