Vassar College

Digital Window @ Vassar

Senior Capstone Projects

2022

The Snyder Cut: How the Internet Influenced Fan Campaigns

Logan Hyde

The Snyder Cut: How the Internet Has Influenced Fan Campaigns
Logan Hyde
Professor M Mark and Professor José Perillán

Science, Technology, and Society Senior Thesis
April 25, 2022

Introduction

For over a century, the film industry has continued to grow in size and popularity. Hollywood movie studios have long capitalized off of the demand for new releases, and no genre has been more successful in the box office than superhero films. The Marvel Cinematic Universe, Disney's portfolio of films based on Marvel's comic books, has grossed over 25 billion dollars in the box office.[1] Disney has found success in virtually every Marvel film, breaking domestic and global records in the process. Warner Bros. owns the rights to the DC comics books stories, and decided to create the DC Extended Universe, or DCEU, in response to the overwhelming success of Marvel films. The DCEU got its start in 2013 with the Superman stand-alone film, *Man of Steel*, and was soon followed by films that introduced other DC superheroes, *Wonder Woman* and *Aquaman*. Marvel's films featuring the comic books' prominent superhero team, The Avengers, were Disney's best box office performers, meaning that there was also opportunity in DC's superhero squad, the Justice League, for Warner Bros.

The Justice League was created in 1960, when the group first appeared in *The Brave and the Bold #28*.[2] Like the Avengers, the league was made of different superheroes with unique abilities and backgrounds. Although members of the Justice League changed from time to time in the comics, Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman, the Flash, Cyborg, Green Lantern, and the Martian Manhunter appeared most often. This was the first superhero coalition of its kind, which actually inspired Marvel's first supergroup, the Fantastic Four. DC has released Justice League comics as recently as May 2021.[3]

[1] "Marvel Cinematic Universe Franchise Box Office History," The Numbers, accessed January 19, 2022, https://www.the-numbers.com/movies/franchise/Marvel-Cinematic-Universe#tab=summary.
[2] "Justice League Publication History," DC Database (Fandom), accessed January 19, 2022, https://dc.fandom.com/wiki/Justice_League_Publication_History.
[3] Christian Holub, "The Best Superhero Cartoon Is Returning in Comic Form This Summer," Entertainment Weekly (Meredith Corporation, April 22, 2021), https://ew.com/books/justice-league-infinity-comic/.

Man of Steel, the first film of Warner Bros.' DC Extended Universe was directed by Zack Snyder, a creator known for his dark overtones and violent battle scenes. The director first came onto the scene with his remake of the 1978 horror film *Dawn of the Dead*, which demonstrated his ability to bring an edge to old stories. Snyder has also shown a knack for graphic novel adaptations with his gory and violent film *Watchmen*. After the release of *Man of Steel*, Zack Snyder was asked to write and direct *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice*, a film that would introduce Batman and Wonder Woman and further develop the DC storyline.

Because Snyder had already made his mark on the DC Extended Universe with his first two films, Warner Bros. hired him to write and direct *Justice League*, the studio's biggest test yet. *Man of Steel* and *Batman vs. Superman* did not break the box office like their Marvel counterparts, and this fact alongside the darker tone Zack Snyder brought to this superhero world worried Warner Bros. The studio decided to put trusted Warner employees on set to supervise Snyder through the film's production. The director and the studio experienced a considerable amount of friction, as the two sides had opposing visions for the film and the studio continued to limit Snyder's creative authority. In response, Warner Bros. hired Joss Whedon, a writer and director known for his work in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, to lighten the tone and aesthetics of the story. Zack Snyder did not think much of this addition, and continued his work on *Justice League* despite the abundance of warning signs. However, Snyder lost his daughter, Autumn, to suicide during production, and felt that he could no longer focus on finishing *Justice League*, ultimately deciding to leave the film.

After Snyder's departure, Joss Whedon took over to finish the project. DC fans voiced their concerns with the change ahead of the film's release, saying Whedon "single-handedly ruined Zack Snyder's Justice League," but waited until *Justice League*'s release to make their

final judgments.[4] The film was deep into production, yet Whedon still managed to change a sizable portion of it, rewriting scenes, reshooting sequences, and cutting an estimated 90 percent of Zack Snyder's material; the new director had chosen to diverge entirely from the path that Snyder had begun to pave. The theatrical cut of *Justice League* was released on November 17, 2017, and fans, critics, and even Warner Bros. agreed that it was not a satisfying final product.

Two days after the movie's release, disappointed fans of Zack Snyder and the DC Extended Universe began a campaign to release Zack Snyder's *Justice League*, referred to as the "Snyder Cut." The movement leveraged the Internet to amplify its voice and gain visibility. Thanks to online petitions and crowdfunding sites, the campaign was able to accumulate support and finance its advertising initiatives. Members of the campaign, in addition to the film's actors and Zack Snyder himself, turned to social networks and their hashtag features in order to spread the word about what came to be known as the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement. While continuing to advocate for the Snyder Cut via social media, the movement also raised awareness and money for suicide prevention in honor of Zack Snyder's daughter.

On May 20, 2020, after over two years of campaigning, the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement found success in the Warner Bros. announcement that Zack Snyder's *Justice League* would be released on the studio's new streaming platform, HBO Max. Zack Snyder was given the opportunity to finish his vision for *Justice League*, with no restrictions from the studio.

The story of the Snyder Cut is certainly inspiring, but it also explicitly demonstrates the influence that technological innovation has had over the relationship between fans and creators in the film industry; this innovation resulted in monumental paradigm shifts, changes in normal practices, that revolutionized fan campaigns and movie release conventions. Because the Internet has broken down barriers to communication, fan campaigns have changed for the better.

---

[4]

Starting in 1966, fans turned to grassroots letter-writing campaigns to get the attention of Hollywood studios, but with the proliferation of websites, a plethora of resources were now at the disposal of fan campaigns, meaning they could organize more efficiently and increase their probability of success. Fans of the DCEU and Zack Snyder's work used the Internet to their advantage, accumulating support through online petitions, financing their advocacy via crowdfunding sites, and spreading the word of the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement on social networks. The growing popularity of online streaming platforms has also changed the traditional movie release conventions. For most of the film industry's history, movies have premiered in theaters, but the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the shift to straight-to-streaming movie releases. Streaming sites enabled viewers to watch new movies from the comfort of their own home, a safer alternative to sitting in a theater with others during a public health emergency. As this new convention became more widely accepted, it became evident that such platforms make it more financially and logistically feasible to release original content, resulting in more releases geared toward specific audiences.

The consequences of shifts in fan campaigns and movie releases are embedded into the fruits of the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement's labor, Zack Snyder's *Justice League*. The Snyder Cut represents its democratic origins and creative independence that defy an industry whose history has been dominated by the few powerful Hollywood studios. Resources found on the Internet such as online petitions, crowdfunding sites, and streaming platforms facilitated the accomplishments of an egalitarian movement, and resulted in the authoritative Warner Bros.' surrender to the fans, who relentlessly advocated for the Snyder Cut's release. As a result, Zack Snyder was able to finish his work on *Justice League* unhindered.

The Snyder Cut was vastly different from Joss Whedon's *Justice League* in terms of representation, storytelling, and technical tools. As Langdon Winner has argued in *The Whale and the Reactor*, artifacts have politics, and the Snyder Cut resulted in new politics thanks to the democratic movement that made the film a reality. The resources used to disseminate the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement's mission, crowdfunding sites, online petitions, and social network sites, were all decentralized in that fans from different social and geographic centers organized to launch the movement. In addition, Snyder was no longer limited to the vision of Warner Bros., meaning he could take his time to fully develop new, diverse characters, achieve his intended dark tone, and pay tribute to his late daughter. The politics of the Snyder Cut demonstrate that the new relationship between fans and creators has the potential to augment representation and creative freedom in future movies.

Chapter 1: *Justice League*'s Turbulent Start

Well-known for directing *300* and *Watchmen*, Zack Snyder is no stranger to epic battle scenes and comic-book adaptations. Given his portfolio of relevant projects, it made sense to studio executives that he was given the responsibility of kickstarting Warner Bros.' DC Extended Universe with the release of *Man of Steel*, a Superman origin story, in 2013. Although the response from critics was mixed, the audience was quite pleased, claiming it is one of the most underrated superhero movies of all time. Snyder then created *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice*, the prelude to *Justice League*, in 2016. Because this was the first film in which two of the most prominent DC characters were seen together, the expectations of both the studio and critics were high. These expectations were not met, as *Rotten Tomatoes* labeled it "Rotten" while giving it a 28% critical approval rating, and the film barely broke even with its 873 million dollar global box office performance.[5] Greg Silverman, a former executive at Warner Bros., said that the director's "kindness, openness, and enthusiasm created an environment for critics to undervalue his work" in response to a fan's claim that any other director would have received praise for *Man of Steel* and *Batman vs. Superman*.[6] The mixed response to Snyder's cornerstone of the DCEU created a sense of doubt among Warner Bros. executives. Because of the overwhelming criticism Snyder's *Batman vs. Superman* received, the studio reorganized its executive ranks, naming Executive Vice President of Development and Production Jon Berg and DC Comics Chief Creative Officer Geoff Johns to lead DC Films.[7] Under this new leadership,

---

[5] "Justice League," Rotten Tomatoes, accessed January 19, 2022, https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/justice_league_2017/reviews?intcmp=rt-scorecard_tomatometer-review.
[6] Adam Bentz, "Former WB Exec Defends Zack Snyder & His DCEU Movies," ScreenRant, January 6, 2022, https://screenrant.com/warner-bros-executive-zack-snyder-dceu-defense/.
[7] Ryan Faughnder, "Warner Bros. Shuffles Its DC Film Executive Ranks after 'Batman v Superman' Criticism," Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles Times, May 18, 2016), https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/cotown/la-et-ct-warner-bros-dc-20160517-snap-story.html.

Warner Bros. hoped to realize the success in the DC Extended Universe that Disney has seen in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

As a result, Geoff Johns and Jon Berg were sent to oversee the production of Snyder's *Justice League*. Snyder's vision for the film diverged from the traditional ethos of the superhero genre, leading Johns and Warner Bros. to consistently say no to the director's ideas. The studio even set a two hour run time limit for the film. Snyder's response: "how am I supposed to introduce six characters and an alien with potential for world domination in two hours?"[8] While Zack Snyder tried to make sense of Warner Bros.' demands, Johns had also been working with Joss Whedon on a *Batgirl* movie that has since been abandoned. Whedon, best known for producing *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and writing and directing Marvel's *The Avengers*, was brought in to write for Snyder in hopes that he could bring his light and playful tone to the predominantly dark vision for *Justice League*. Zack Snyder was optimistic about the addition, saying that he "thought maybe he could write some cool scenes" for the film during production.[9] However, Joss Whedon quickly assumed a significant amount of responsibility in the film; despite having only spoken to Snyder once, Whedon moved from the writers room to the set as an advisor on reshoots, and even directed his own additional scenes. After the death of their daughter, Zack Snyder and his wife Deborah, a producer on the film, left *Justice League* in post-production because they "just lost the will to fight that fight in a lot of ways".[10] With the departure of the Snyders, Joss Whedon took full creative and directorial control of *Justice League*.

---

[8] Zack Sharf, "Warner Bros.. Executive Slams Joss Whedon's 'Justice League' Cut: 'Stupefying' and 'Piece of Sh*t'," IndieWire (IndieWire, February 22, 2021), https://www.indiewire.com/2021/02/warner-bros-joss-whedon-justice-league-stupefying-1234618417/.
[9] Tom Meisfjord, "How Joss Whedon Really Ended Up Taking Over On Justice League," Looper.com (Looper, February 22, 2021), https://www.looper.com/339436/how-joss-whedon-really-ended-up-taking-over-on-justice-league/.
[10] Ibid.

So, what changed? Apparently a lot. Snyder admitted that he has never seen Whedon's cut of the film, but "estimates that three quarters of his script was rewritten by the end of the process." Whedon insisted that his reshoots were not extensive and he hoped to follow Snyder's blueprint, but *Justice League's* cinematographer Fabian Wagner stated that only ten percent of Zack Snyder's work made it into the theatrical cut.[11] On top of Whedon's evidently substantial reshoots, he included almost 80 new script pages. This information contradicts the message disseminated a week before the film's release, where producer Charles Roven said that Joss Whedon only shot approximately 15 to 20 percent of the theatrical cut. The end result was an hour and 59 minute incoherent "Frankenstein's monster of a film" that fails to follow up on many of its prominent plotlines.[12]

The poorly executed computer-generated imagery (CGI) done on Superman in Joss Whedon's *Justice League* suggested that almost all of Zack Snyder's Superman scenes were reshot by Whedon. Superman saves the day in the film, meaning that his return was central to the story and the core of the film was reshot. Throughout the advertising campaign leading up to *Justice League*'s release, Superman was absent from the marketing materials for the film, which many took as a strategy to build hype for the return of the group's leader. Six weeks ahead of the theatrical cut's release, DC had begun character weeks, which meant the film's social media feeds were dominated by one hero each week. Superman had "been completely absent from the marketing, with only his legacy discussed." Film critic Alex Leadbetter suspected that this was "meant to build to the movie or be transferred into some explicit drive to the cinema," however, it is evident now that they were still finishing Superman's scenes, and had no material with the

---

[11] Ana Dumaraog and (5190 Articles Published) Accidental movie fan who is perpetually curious, "Justice League DP Says Only 10% of Snyder's Original Footage Was Used," ScreenRant, December 4, 2019, https://screenrant.com/justice-league-movie-theatrical-cut-zack-snyder-footage-amount/.

[12] Alex Leadbeater and , "Justice League Reshoots: Every Change Whedon Made to Snyder's Film," ScreenRant, November 17, 2017, https://screenrant.com/justice-league-movie-reshoot-changes-explained-snyder-whedon/.

hero to use for advertising. Henry Cavill had already begun filming *Mission: Impossible 6*, during Joss Whedon's reshoots. The actor had grown a mustache for the next installment of *Mission: Impossible* that Paramount would not allow him to shave, so he had to do his *Justice League* reshoots with a mustache. As a result, Warner Bros. visual effects artists were forced to remove it with CGI. The result was laughable, as the poorly executed alterations to Henry Cavill's face were distracting in almost every Superman scene of the film. Cavill's upper lip often did not move as it typically does when he speaks, leading to unnatural expressions. Only two scenes in the theatrical cut appear to have an unaffected Henry Cavill, suggesting that these were the only two remaining Superman scenes from Snyder's shoot kept in the film.

In addition to the botched CGI that distracted the audience from almost every Superman appearance, Whedon dramatically changed Wonder Woman as a character in his cut of the film. The new portrayal of the superhero was a direct result of Joss Whedon's writing and directing, as he forced her into stereotypical gender roles and belittled her prominence in the team of superheroes. Unlike Wonder Woman's solo film and her appearance in *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice*, the superhero was filmed to appease the male gaze, a way of portraying women in media that empowers men while sexualizing and diminishing women. "Never before has Wonder Woman worn so few articles of clothing and had so many upskirt shots taken of her in a single film."[13] Whedon sexualized the only female member of the Justice League, scattering gratuitous body shots of Wonder Woman across the film. The director also made Wonder Woman into the typical female love interest. In *Dawn of Justice*, Batman's alter ego, Bruce Wayne, flirted with Wonder Woman's Diana Prince, but it was a means to an end, as they were both employing a manipulative charm. By the end of the film, the two are friends and teammates. However, when Joss Whedon took over *Justice League*, he unnecessarily leaned into

---

[13] Ibid.

the characters' romantic interests; there are multiple instances of uncomfortable flirting between Bruce and Diana that never manifests into anything more. This pointless fling reinforced the fact that Whedon had no intention of developing Wonder Woman into a strong leader of the super group, instead opting out for tired gender stereotypes.

Joss Whedon cut a significant amount of Snyder's shots and material, as evident in the cinematographer's claim that only ten percent of the original creator's scenes were used. The most glaring omission was the development of Ray Fisher's Cyborg and Ezra Miller's the Flash. These two members of the Justice League were the only two heroes to make their debut in this film. As a result, Snyder intended to include Cyborg's origin story in the film and demonstrate the power and speed of the Flash through an act of heroism in a pedestrian setting. Without these scenes, the heroes join the Justice League without any background to support their place in the group. Whedon's decision to cut these pieces of the story led to failure in solidifying these two heroes as important members of the Justice League. A notable missing scene for fans of Snyder and DC comics was the 2017 San Diego Comic Convention "trailer money shot" of Alfred meeting what the audience presumed to be Superman.[14] Not only was this scene not included in the theatrical cut, but it is hard to place where the scene may have been. The exclusion of this scene has no weight on the plot, but its prominence in the 2017 trailer suggested it would be a fan-pleaser. Although Joss Whedon's decisions to leave these scenes out of his final *Justice League* were likely in response to pressure from Warner Bros. to keep the feature under two hours, the cuts affected the storyline for the worse.

Whedon's alterations to Zack Snyder's vision for the story drastically changed the feel of the final product. As is evidenced by Snyder's previous bodies of work from the DC Extended Universe and elsewhere, his film's tend to have a darker tone. Joss Whedon was brought in by

---

[14] Ibid.

Warner Bros. specifically to address this fact, instructed to liven the story. The end result was a film that employed more light throughout for the purpose of contrast. The culminating battle was changed from a nighttime sequence to daytime, with ominous red skies. Although the doomy skies still brought feelings of fear and anxiety to the film's final fight scene, it was still lighter than Zack Snyder's previous work in the DC Extended Universe.

The soundtrack is a huge contributor to the tone of both individual scenes and films as a whole. Snyder planned to have Junkie XL do the soundtrack for his *Justice League*, as they had worked together on *Man of Steel* and *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice*. When Snyder was replaced by Joss Whedon, Junkie XL was replaced by Danny Elfman. Likely due to time restrictions, Elfman chose to use classic themes for Superman and Batman from the 1990s and 1980s throughout the film, drawing more attention to a sense of nostalgia rather than the gravity of the moment. This goes hand in hand with the set of restrictions set by Warner Bros., as all of these decisions were made to play it safe rather than risk a box office bust.

The most influence Joss Whedon's previous professional experiences had on the theatrical cut of *Justice League* was the dialogue and consequent character portrayal. In the first two installments of the DC Extended Universe, Superman was portrayed as a god, and Wonder Woman and Batman stepped in to save humanity. In Whedon's *Justice League*, however, his experience writing for *The Avengers* was all too evident as he employed the Marvel approach to superhero storytelling, which entails humanizing superheroes in big moments. In his reshoots, "Whedon's dialogue leans on the idea that these characters are at their center recognizably human and flawed."[15] Instead of the superheroes conversing as god-like characters that need to save Earth, the team was often found engaging in self-doubt and instigating insignificant

---

[15] Adam B. Vary, "How the 'Justice League' Snyder Cut Reverses Joss Whedon's Version," Variety (Variety, March 20, 2021), https://variety.com/2021/film/news/justice-league-snyder-cut-comparison-joss-whedon-version-1234934246/.

personal quarrels. This stark contrast to the groundwork laid for the story was best demonstrated in the scene where the members of the Justice League were attempting to bring Superman back to life. Batman and Wonder Woman began arguing as they discussed the consequences of what they were about to do; "that argument turns personal when Diana evokes Bruce's guilt at Clark's death, and Bruce mentions Diana's long dead love Steve Trevor."[16]   This argument directly mirrored a scene from Joss Whedon's *The Avengers* where the superheroes also argued about their purpose and personal motivations. The influence of Joss Whedon's past projects were prominent in the theatrical cut of *Justice League*, leading to a glaring divergence from the groundwork Zack Snyder had laid for the DCEU.

Whedon's *Justice League* turned out to be a critical and commercial failure, grossing 657.9 million dollars in the box office, less than Snyder's standalone Superman film. This was not a number to scoff at, but when taking into consideration the 300 million dollar budget, the estimated 100 to 150 million dollars in marketing costs, and the cut theaters take from the box office, "a return of only $657 million is a clear money loser."[17] Warner Bros. was not just disappointed in the financial performance of the film, but also in its quality. An executive at the movie studio anonymously spoke to *Vanity Fair* ahead of the Snyder Cut's release, saying that when they saw "what Joss actually did, it was stupefying…The robber on the rooftop-so goofy and awful. The Russian family-so useless and pointless. Everyone knew it. It was so awkward because nobody wanted to admit what a piece of sh*t it was."[18] The studio quickly realized that Joss Whedon did not meet their expectations, and critics and fans validated the sentiment upon

[16] Ibid.
[17] Anthony Breznican, "'Justice League': The Shocking, Exhilarating, Heartbreaking True Story of #TheSnyderCut," Vanity Fair, February 22, 2021,
https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2021/02/the-true-story-of-justice-league-snyder-cut.
[18] Sharf, "Warner Bros.. Executive Slams Joss Whedon's 'Justice League' Cut: 'Stupefying' and 'Piece of Sh*t.'"

the film's release, as it received a 40 percent critic score and a 69 percent audience score on

Rotten Tomatoes.[19]

Not only did Joss Whedon's work disappoint many people invested in the DC Extended

Universe, controversy regarding the director's behavior on set soon followed. Members of both

the cast and crew spoke out against Whedon and how he treated people while on set. Ray Fisher

said in a tweet from July 2020 that Whedon's "on-set treatment of the cast and crew of *Justice*

League was gross, abusive, unprofessional, and completely unacceptable." He also added that

Geoff Johns and Jon Berg, the men tasked with overseeing the film's production by Warner

Bros., enabled Whedon's deplorable behavior. Fisher said he had attempted to speak to the new

director and writer several times about the representation of Cyborg, who at the time was going

to be the first lead Black superhero in film history. Whedon was incredibly dismissive, saying he

had no intentions of "taking notes from anybody."[20] Fisher found support in his fellow cast

members who also spoke out against the film's director. When asked about her relationship with

Whedon, Gal Gadot said: "I had my issues with Joss and I handled it. He kind of threatened my

career and said if I did something, he would make my career miserable."[21] Jason Mamoa also

took to social media to draw attention to the mistreatment that took place during the movie's

reshoots, saying Ray Fisher "and everyone else who experienced what [happened] under the

watch of [Warner Bros.] needs proper investigation."[22]

---

[19] Kim Masters, "Ray Fisher Opens up about 'Justice League,' Joss Whedon and Warners: 'I Don't Believe Some of These People Are Fit for Leadership,'" The Hollywood Reporter (The Hollywood Reporter, April 6, 2021), https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/ray-fisher-opens-up-about-justice-league-joss-whedon-and -warners-i-dont-believe-some-of-these-people-are-fit-for-leadership-4161658/.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Jenny Desborough, "What Gal Gadot Said About Filming Justice League with Joss Whedon," Newsweek (Newsweek, October 19, 2021), https://www.newsweek.com/what-gal-gadot-has-said-about-joss-whedon-jason-momoa-justice-league-1640329.
[22] Ana Dumaraog, "Jason Momoa Also Experienced Mistreatment on Justice League Set," ScreenRant, September 15, 2020, https://screenrant.com/justice-league-jason-momoa-ray-fisher-joss-whedon/.

After the November 2017 release of *Justice League*, Zack Snyder fans' skepticism was validated by the movie's consensus failure. An online-petition asking for a director's cut of the film and the original soundtrack began circulating that same month. This sparked a full-on movement, where fans of both Snyder and the DCEU campaigned for the Snyder Cut through all of the mediums at the members' disposal. After over two years of dedicated fan advocacy, the Release the Snyder Cut Movement realized their goal when Warner Bros. announced that Zack Snyder's *Justice League* would be released on HBO Max.

Chapter 2: The Social Determination of the Internet and Its Resources

Technological determinism is a theory that assumes a society's technology determines how a society behaves and uses that technology. The resultant behavior is best exemplified in society's cultural and social values. Langdon Winner has argued that a core tenet of this theory is that technology is the basis of social life and "that technology develops as the sole result of an internal dynamic and then, unmediated by any other influence, molds society to fit its patterns."[23] The shifts in organized campaign approaches and movie release conventions are direct results of the technology that preceded them.

Changes in communication technology and media largely have largely influenced society as a whole. Although the Internet has influenced how people communicate, organize, and connect, the development has also changed our understanding of technology itself. The Internet has become a "border-crossing technology that has evolved into a commercial communication platform," which has altered our view of the relationship between technology and its audience. Communication technology has become more intelligent and interactive, so it is not justifiable to claim that technology is omnipotent in shaping society, because people can also choose how they use certain sites and platforms offered on the Internet to best serve their needs. Instead, it may be more reasonable to examine the social determination of technology, which "is a needed corrective to those who focus uncritically upon such things as 'the computer and its social impacts' but who fail to look behind technical devices to see the social circumstances of their development, deployment, and use."[24] This concept helps to present the Internet and its various

---

[23] Fernando de la Cruz Paragas and Trisha TC Lin, "Organizing and Reframing Technological Determinism," *New Media & Society* 18, no. 8 (December 10, 2014): pp. 1528-1546, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814562156.
[24] Langdon Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1986), page 21.

platforms as influential, but also malleable given their uses in society. There is abundant

evidence of how the Internet has influenced people and how people have influenced the use of

the Internet.

The introduction of the Internet provided a malleable platform through which people can

interact, organize, and advocate. In addition to its ability to address common issues and

demands, the Internet also made sites and services more accessible, as a device and an internet

connection was all that was needed. In 1999, Blogger and Live Journal, blogging and

life-streaming services on the Internet, were created, and Google was incorporated in the same

year. A year later, PayPal, an online payment service, also came into being. "This culture of use

involves several features, principally that users create content as well as read it; and that access

to and participation in this endeavor is part of a conversational approach to information

circulation, involving online sharing within friendship groups."[25] From this point on, the Internet

became a popular mode of communication and exchange, and it soon influenced "how people are

going to work, communicate, travel, consume, and so forth for a very long time."[26]

Twitter, a popular social media platform, has become well known for the users'

employment of hashtags. However, as mentioned earlier, the company did not intend on

hashtags becoming a main attraction for the site. Instead, the adamant use of the feature by

people around the world influenced Twitter's decision to embrace hashtags, resulting in addition

of the "Trending Topics" tab. From that point on, hashtags became a helpful tool for people to

organize and follow certain topics on the social network, leading ther social media sites to adopt

the hashtag as it gained popularity. The hashtag feature on social media best exemplifies how

technology has influenced organization on the Internet, but people have also influenced how the

---

[25] Matthew Allen, "What Was Web 2.0? Versions as the Dominant Mode of Internet History," *New Media & Society* 15, no. 2 (June 2012): pp. 260-275, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812451567.
[26] Ibid.

sites were best used. Twitter was a space for general discourse and discussion among its users, but people began to use hashtags on their own accord, seeing it as a better way to gather support for a certain cause, idea, or topic. As a result, Twitter, along with its competitor social networks, committed time and resources to developing features to make hashtags more navigable and consequently useful.

Technological innovation often seeks to address an issue or fill a void in society; but as they do so, new problems often arise. Technological advancements "provide solutions and create new needs."[27] While communication technology provided platforms for the public to raise awareness and garner support, this created a consequent need for ways to push campaigns and movements further. In response, online petition sites and crowdfunding sites were born. Online petition sites enabled people to legitimize a cause by gaining online petition signatures. This greatly expedited the growth of support and expanded the reach of petitions. The Internet has no geographic boundaries, so petitions were no longer limited to restrictive approaches like a door-to-door strategy. Furthermore, as people became more and more effective in organizing campaigns via the Internet, the need arose for financing to take movements to the next level. Crowdfunding sites were consequently developed that facilitated the organization of funds for specific movements. On these platforms, campaigns could finance themselves through donations of any size by supporters, and use the funds to grow and gain visibility. The Internet influenced how people went about organizing, but in response, people pushed the Internet's potential further by creating needs for more efficient processes and more effective campaigns. As a result, it is evident that people have influenced the development of technology just as technology has influenced the development of people.

---

[27] S. Arulchelvan, "New Media Communication Strategies for Election Campaigns: Experiences of Indian Political Parties," *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies* 4, no. 3 (July 2014), https://doi.org/10.29333/ojcmt/2478.

The proliferation of video streaming services is largely a result of the observed demand for such platforms. As Netflix prospered, more sites were developed such as Hulu. These services have dramatically altered how we entertain ourselves. From the start, streaming services were created to make entertainment more accessible for their audiences by being dependent on an internet connection instead of a cable connection. As a result, people were able to watch their favorite programs and movies from any place that they had the Internet.   The newfound mobility that streaming services provided in the entertainment industry forever changed how people consumed media. First, binge-watching became a more popular approach to enjoying a television series. Binge-watching is a practice that involves watching more than one episode of a series in one sitting, which is considerably different from the watching conventions that people had grown accustomed to on cable television. The on-demand nature of streaming services meant that people were not limited to the weekly release of their favorite shows, so they began to watch episodes at a time. Even more, the Internet dependency of such streaming platforms gave people more choice when it comes to where they watched their programs and when. Instead of being restricted to the television, they could use any device with Internet connection to watch their shows and movies. People began using their game consoles, computers, and smartphones from virtually anywhere for their personal entertainment. The technological innovation that facilitated the success and consequent popularity of streaming platforms has shaped the way people consume media today.

Society has also influenced the development of streaming services. As these platforms gained traction, mainstream media conglomerates such as Disney and Warner Bros. decided to invest in their own streaming services. Both new and old services have realized the potential profitability in the streaming industry, and this confidence is reflected in the recent investment in

this sector's future. "The top eight US media groups plan to spend at least $115bn on new movies and television shows" in 2022 to attract viewers.[28] The so-called "streaming wars" are a response to the audience's shift to streaming from cable television, demonstrating that society is also transforming the streaming industry.

The transitions from grassroots letter-writing campaigns to online movements and from traditional theater movie releases to straight-to-streaming releases were vital developments for the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement's success. Technological innovation facilitated these transitions, which clearly exemplified the theory of technological determinism, that technology can shape society's culture and behaviors, because social networks and streaming platforms changed how people organize and consume new media. On the other hand, it is evident that society also had its effect on technology by choosing how these new developments were best used, further pushing technology to adhere to the needs of the people. For this reason, it is best to understand the social determination of the Internet, since society and technological advancements have worked in tandem.

---

[28] Anna Nicolaou and Christopher Grimes, "Streaming Wars Drive Media Groups to Spend More than $100BN on New Content," Subscribe to read | Financial Times (Financial Times, December 29, 2021), https://www.ft.com/content/ae756fda-4c27-4732-89af-cb6903f2ab40.

Chapter 3: The Evolution of Fan Campaigns

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn defines a paradigm shift as "discarding some previously standard beliefs or procedures and, simultaneously, by replacing those components of the previous paradigm with others."[29] Although Kuhn coined this concept in the context of the natural sciences, paradigm shifts provide an appropriate way to analyze new practices in other disciplines. In the film industry, technology has created new procedures and practices for how fans engage with content. As a result, two substantial paradigm shifts have changed the negotiations between fans, creators, and major movie studios, leaving the participatory culture of fandom more impactful. One of the five core dimensions of participatory culture is "a base for consumer activism."[30] Consequently the change in negotiations among the different participants in the film industry has also fundamentally changed an important pillar of participatory culture. The first paradigm shift is centered around how fans engage with television shows and movies, and campaign on their behalf when they see fit. The second relates to the platforms on which movies are released.

Originally, fans did not have many options when it came to reaching out to TV studios, creators, and actors; they were predominantly limited to letters. The most notable example of this campaign style is the letter-writing campaign that saved *Star Trek* from being canceled. The show debuted on NBC in the fall of 1966, but the network was ready to cancel the series after its second season. In response, Betty Jo "Bjo" and John Trimble organized what is considered one of the first grassroots fan campaigns in Hollywood history. The couple started a chain of letters petitioning NBC to renew the series. Over 110,000 postcards were sent to NBC, and the network

---

[29] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), pg. 66.
[30] Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

eventually conceded and ordered a third and final season.[31] Although only one more season of

the show was created as a result of the campaign, an expansive world of television series and

movies was made of the franchise. In a time where Hollywood studios had such power and

audiences were limited in terms of television programs, fans were able to lobby a major

television network.

Soon after this successful movement, Viewers for Quality Television (VQT), a

"grass-roots organization that attempts to bring together TV watchers who...have a voice in what

the networks put on the air," was founded in 1984.[32] The nonprofit organization employed the

same tactics used by the Trimbles for *Star Trek*. VQT peaked at 5,000 members, and is most

known for saving the CBS shows *Designing Women* and *Cagney & Lacey* from cancellation

through its letter-writing campaigns.[33] The nonprofit even started its own award show, with the

"Q" Award given to actors and series based on members' votes. When asked about the

organization, CBS's president at the time, Kim LeMasters acknowledged that "VQT has the

advantage of organization and media access," unlike a single viewer. In this statement,

LeMasters is acknowledging the importance of networked audiences in getting the attention of

powerful network studios, such as CBS. Networked audiences enable fans to extend their

campaigns to reach more people, consequently getting more attention.   Given that the

organization relied on strength in numbers, founder Dorothy Swanson disbanded Viewers for

Quality Television in 2000 after its membership dropped to 1,000 people.[34] The eighty percent

drop in membership drastically decreased the influence of the nonprofit organization, as the

group had less funding and less members spreading the word of their campaigns.

[31] Devon Maloney, "How Star Trek Fans Helped Change TV Forever," Vox (Vox, September 29, 2017), https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/9/29/16369692/star-trek-history-fan-campaign-original-series-discovery.
[32] Diane Haithman, "VQT: A Rising Voice in the TV Wilderness," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1988, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-09-23-ca-2784-story.html.
[33] Haithman, "VQT: A Rising Voice in the TV Wilderness."
[34] Haithman, "VQT: A Rising Voice in the TV Wilderness."

As discussed earlier, the network effect is what made the letter-writing campaigns so successful early on in television. As more people wrote letters and petitions, the probability of network studios reading them and better yet, considering them, increased drastically. Today, the Internet connects people to millions of others across the globe through a large variety of social media sites. As a result, fans are able to organize and develop a strength in numbers when seeking change in media. "The emergence of digital networks altered the ways that participatory culture operates, allowing people who might not encounter each other otherwise to have meaningful exchanges and creating a context where forms of expression flow quickly and broadly, both within and between social networks."[35] In addition to the reach that the Internet has brought fans, it has brought on a new level of expedience; as soon as a fan or subset of fans feels compelled to mobilize, they can do so by contacting others online. Thanks to the digital age, fans can move on from grassroots letter-writing campaigns to subreddits, social media hashtags, online petitions, and crowdfunding sites.

In *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet age*, sociologist Manuel Castells stated that a "condition for individual experiences to link up and form a movement is the existence of a communication process that propagates the events and the emotions attached to it…In our time, multimodal digital networks of horizontal communication are the fastest and most autonomous, interactive, reprogrammable and self-expanding means of communication in history."[36] Thanks to the Internet and its digital networks, technology brought about a paradigm shift that has forever changed how fans interact with movie franchises, their creators, and their studios. The seed of this shift was planted when the first website on the

---

[35] Henry Jenkins, "Fandom, Negotiation, and Participatory Culture," in *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies*(Hoboken, NJ, USA: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), pp. 11-26, http://www.dcac.du.ac.in/documents/E-Resource/2020/Metrial/417SagorikaSingha1.pdf.
[36] Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age* (Polity Press, 2018).

Internet was created in August 1991, though it was not until 1997 that the Internet was populated

with one million websites. Virtually anyone can create a website, but one of the most relevant

sites to participatory fandom, Reddit, was launched in 2006.[37] Reddit is a social news

aggregation site that allows users to submit, rate, and discuss content. Members of communities,

known as subreddits on the platform, interact with one another on a variety of topics, ranging

from video games to financial markets. In 2021, there are 52 million daily active Reddit users

globally and over 2.8 million subreddits, of which more than 130,000 are active.[38] As a result,

those with a common curiosity or goal are able to engage with each other, their interests, and

organize on the site.

Hashtags, once a useful tool for programmers, have become "a mainstream organizational

device for online content."[39] Twitter initially did not support hashtags, but once #SanDiegoFire

was used on the social media platform by a California resident to discuss the state's ongoing

wildfires, users began to use hashtags to group relevant content.[40] As a result, Twitter embraced

hashtags and created a search tool such that users could find tweets relevant to a certain topic in

2009. Soon after, the social media site also introduced "Trending Topics," a feature that

displayed the most popular hashtags. As hashtags became a common tool on Twitter, other

social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr, and Pinterest also adopted the

symbol to group content. In 2010, the hashtag was used to coordinate the Arab Spring, a series

of anti-government protests and armed rebellions in response to corruption and economic

stagnation in much of the Arab world. One of the countries at the center of this conflict, Tunisia,

---

[37] "Total Number of Websites," Total number of Websites - Internet Live Stats, accessed November 5, 2021, https://www.Internetlivestats.com/total-number-of-websites/.
[38] Ying Lin, "10 Reddit Statistics You Should Know in 2021," Oberlo (Oberlo, September 23, 2021), https://www.oberlo.com/blog/reddit-statistics.
[39] Allison Lips, "History of Hashtags: How a Symbol Changed The Way We Search & Share," Social Media Week, February 20, 2018, https://socialmediaweek.org/blog/2018/02/history-hashtags-symbol-changed-way-search-share/.
[40] Lips, "History of Hashtags: How a Symbol Changed The Way We Search & Share."

made a "lasting shift to democracy."[41] There are countless other cases of how hashtags have

helped groups organize and have their voices heard, but the success of the Arab Spring

effectively demonstrates how impactful a simple tool can be in accomplishing change.

Petitions have long been a tool to get the attention of government officials, public

entities, and large corporations. Largely a political tool, petitions typically include demands for

change and are signed by a large number of people to show support for the issue at hand.

Beyond taking action for change, petitions can also mobilize supporters and reinforce views.

Change.org, a petition site created to let individuals start their own online campaigns and bring

instant awareness to their movements, was founded in 2007. Over 200 million people use the

platform across 196 countries.[42] There is a simple process to start an online petition, consisting

of three questions: who, what, and why? After the petition has been posted, it can be

electronically signed by anyone. Many campaigns on Change.org have been successful, but

there is one case that shows how simple yet effective this platform can be. "A class of

fourth-graders petitioned Universal Studios to strengthen the environmental message in the Dr.

Seuss story-turned film, *The Lorax."* After 50,000 people signed the petition, Universal changed

the movie's website as the class requested.[43] A small group of nine to ten year old students was

able to convince a major movie studio to improve the message of one of its films. Although not

every campaign is successful, the ease with which individuals can gather support and bring

---

[41] Kali Robinson, "The Arab Spring at Ten Years: What's the Legacy of the Uprisings?," Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations, December 3, 2020), https://www.cfr.org/article/arab-spring-ten-years-whats-legacy-uprisings.

[42] "The World's Platform for Change," Change.org, accessed November 5, 2021, https://www.change.org/about?utm_source=sem&utm_medium=google_ad&utm_campaign=G%3ESearch%3ESAP %3EUS%3EBrand%3EAll-Match-Types&utm_term=%2Bchange+%2Borg+%2Bstart%7Cb%7CAG%3A11712982 7756%7CAD%3A494379776305&utm_content=2021_11_03&gclid=Cj0KCQjw5oiMBhDtARIsAJi0qk0yVnleUtlu usvWL3EWbNrf2IoGiX0-GCpGI9tR_spot4-9PAR8id0aArb2EALw_wcB.

[43] Teresa Tomassoni, "Petitions Are Going Viral, Sometimes to Great Success," NPR (NPR, March 16, 2012), https://www.npr.org/2012/03/16/148556371/petitions-are-going-viral-sometimes-to-great-success.

attention to issues on Change.org demonstrates how the Internet has changed the way people organize.

Like Change.org, the development of crowdfunding sites has also revolutionized the scope of campaigns. Traditionally, groups held fundraisers to raise money for their cause. With this funding, they could create advertisements and buy advertising space to spread their message. Although fundraising has been an effective strategy for campaigns in the past, they are often limited by the number of people in a campaign's network. Crowdfunding sites have become prevalent to address this issue. Crowdfunding and in conjunction with social media enables campaigns to "harness the power of an audience to create something, often with little to no money up front."[44] Crowdfunding provides a platform through which money can be raised for a cause, and social media helps spread the word. Of the crowdfunding sites on the Internet, the most notable are Indiegogo and Kickstarter, which were founded in 2008 and 2009 respectively. These two crowdsourcing platforms had helped almost one million campaigns reach their funding goals as of 2019.[45] This practice is only growing, as the crowdfunding market size was worth 12.27 billion dollars in 2020, and is expected to grow 11.2% by 2027.[46]

The Internet, more specifically social media hashtags, online petitions, and crowdfunding sites have transformed how fans engage with movies and each other. The story of the Snyder Cut is a prime example of this paradigm shift's consequences, as the Internet proved to be the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement's greatest ally in advocating for the film's release. Days after the release of Joss Whedon's disappointing *Justice League* in 2017, fans of Zack Snyder created

---

[44] Theo Munch, "The Evolution of Crowdfunding," *Jumpstart* (Jumpstart, April 21, 2019), https://www.jumpstartmag.com/the-evolution-of-crowdfunding/.
[45] Munch, "The Evolution of Crowdfunding."
[46] "Global Crowdfunding Market Size to Accumulate USD 25800 Million by 2027," GlobeNewswire (Market Study Report, LLC., September 13, 2021), https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2021/09/13/2295559/0/en/Global-crowdfunding-market-size-to-accumulate-USD-25800-million-by-2027.html.

a subreddit to discuss the evidence of an unfinished Snyder cut, "r/SnyderCut."[47] On this thread,

die-hard fans of DC Comics posted theories of the film's existence, important resources

pertaining to the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement, and reactions to the film after its release on

HBO Max. This subreddit is still currently active, as fans of the film are not stopping at this

victory. Now, members of "r/SnyderCut" are advocating for the restoration of the

"SnyderVerse," which is a term coined for Zack Snyder's vision for the DC Extended Universe

and its upcoming films. Reddit facilitated the birth of the Snyder movement by providing a

platform for fans to converse and organize.

In 2018, on top of a subreddit that enabled free-flowing discussion about all things

Snyder Cut, fans created a website, "forsnydercut.com," to keep followers of the movement up to

date.[48] The site includes a timeline for the production and release of Zack Snyder's *Justice

League*, as well as a list of accomplishments and articles related to the film's history. On its

homepage, members of the movement say, "we changed Hollywood forever. Once maligned for

daring to celebrate Zack's films. We now stand proudly in front of the human race waiting for

others to join us in the sun."[49]

In the film's low critics scores and missed box office expectations, Joss Whedon's *Justice

League* was a critical and commercial failure. Like the creation of the subreddit "r/SnyderCut,"

fans immediately took to Change.org and created an online petition, calling for the release of

Zack Snyder's original cut of the film and Junkie XL's intended movie score. Roberto Mata, the

creator of the petition, said in his mission statement that "fans have been waiting for years, while

others have waited for decades for the film to finally arrive on the silver screen. The [2 hour]

---

[47] "R/Snydercut," reddit, accessed November 5, 2021, https://www.reddit.com/r/SnyderCut/top/?t=all.
[48] ComicBook, "Zack Snyder Fans Launch New Website to Support Release of 'Justice League' Director's Cut," DC (Comicbook.com), accessed November 5, 2021, https://comicbook.com/dc/news/justice-league-zack-snyder-cut-official-website/.
[49] "For Snyder Cut," For Snyder Cut, March 7, 2021, https://www.forsnydercut.com/.

runtime is disrespectful towards Zack Snyder's vision and towards the fans who have waited for

more than a year to see the alien's story come to an end."[50] The petition, addressed to Warner

Bros., cited issues with both the writing and score, and recommended that Zack Snyder be

allowed to complete a director's cut of *Justice League.* The petition ultimately got 179,097

signatures before it was closed. The Snyder movement was able to quickly and effectively

disseminate a petition for its cause, showing Warner Bros. how many people were passionate

about Snyder's work.

After the release of *Justice League*, fans began discussing the "Snyder Cut" on Twitter,

based on suspicions that Snyder had finished filming his version, but Warner Bros. did not like

the project and fired him as a result. From this, "#ReleasetheSnyderCut" was born. Snyder's

supporters took advantage of every opportunity to spread the word, commenting the hashtag on

every social media post by Warner Bros. and the cast of the movie. As of November 2019, the

hashtag had been tweeted over 60,000 times.[51] Considering that members of the "Snyder

Movement" continued to spread the hashtag all over social media for three years and the

hashtags were used across several social media platforms, the number of times the hashtag was

used in total definitely towers this datapoint. Jason Mamoa, who plays Aquaman in the DC

Extended Universe, posted an instagram video saying that he saw the "Snyder Cut" and soon

after, fellow cast members Ben Affleck, Ray Fisher, and Gal Gadot all tweeted using

#ReleasetheSnyderCut. The tweets from Affleck and Gadot both received over 100,000 likes

---

[50] Roberto Mata, "Zack Snyder's Director's Cut and Tom Holkenborg's (Junkie XL) Score for Home Release.," Change.org, accessed November 5, 2021, https://www.change.org/p/warner-bros-zack-snyder-s-director-s-and-tom-holkenborg-s-score-for-home-release-e90fe f07-11c6-4a9a-9ae8-375c7717dafa?recruiter=91715253&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm _campaign=share_petition.
[51] Christopher J. Teuton, "Justice League: #ReleaseTheSnyderCut Trends Worldwide with over 60K Tweets," ScreenRant, November 9, 2019, https://screenrant.com/justice-league-snyder-cut-trending-releasethesnydercut-worldwide/.

each.[52] These actors have millions of followers each on Twitter, so their use of

#ReleaseTheSnyderCut made millions of people aware of the Snyder Movement on its own. The

spread of this hashtag across social media platforms helped grow the movement's size and scale,

putting more pressure on Warner Bros. to consider greenlighting Zack Snyder's *Justice League.*

Crowdfunding also proved to be a reliable strategy for members of the Snyder movement.

Fans took to GoFundMe, a popular crowdfunding site, to collect funds for an "advertisement

assault" at San Diego's 2019 Comic-Con to inform both Warner Bros. and those in attendance of

the power and presence of the movement. The campaign raised a total of $26,794, far surpassing

its initial goal of $2,140.[53] With this funding, the Snyder movement was able to pay for a plane

to fly a banner over the convention, a billboard, a half page advertisement, a bus wrap, and a

ground team with handouts. In addition to putting up these advertisements, this strategy attracted

attention on social media and in mainstream newspapers, including the *Washington Post* and the

LA Times.[54] Crowdfunding allowed fans of Zack Snyder to raise capital for the movement's

advertising campaign, and received positive media attention across different media platforms as a

result, raising more awareness for the movement than originally intended.

Although the film's release is impressive on its own, the highlight of the Snyder Cut's

story is the movement's dedication to suicide prevention. Zack Snyder's fans raised over

$250,000 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, in honor of his late daughter.[55]

Despite the incredible amount of money raised, this was not a centralized effort by the

#ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement. Similar to efforts to advocate for the director's cut of the

---

[52] Teuton, "Justice League: #ReleaseTheSnyderCut Trends Worldwide with over 60K Tweets."
[53] "#ProjectComicCon SDCC19 - Releasethesnydercut/AFSP, Organized by Bill Rowlands," gofundme.com, accessed November 5, 2021, https://www.gofundme.com/f/releasethesnydercut.
[54] "#ProjectComicCon SDCC19 - Releasethesnydercut/AFSP, Organized by Bill Rowlands."
[55] Sheraz Farooqi, "A True North: Fans of Zack Snyder Raise Over A Quarter Million Dollars For Suicide Prevention," *Forbes Magazine* (Forbes, September 23, 2020), https://www.forbes.com/sites/sherazfarooqi/2020/09/23/a-true-north-fans-of-zack-snyder-raise-over-a-quarter-million-dollars-for-suicide-prevention/?sh=af3600917d66.

film, fans raised money through a variety of methods, creating GoFundMe's, billboards to raise awareness for both the film and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and selling t-shirts.

Fans have always engaged with their favorite television shows and movies. This fundamental truth may have never changed, but the manner in which fans carry out this engagement has. Technology has enabled fans to engage with each other and their contact of interest from any location at any time, amplifying the network effect of fandom. Social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter, and Reddit have drastically decreased the difficulty required to organize a campaign. Other revolutionary sites like Change.org and GoFundMe gave fans the collective power and fundraising to have their voices heard. The impact of technology is evident in the successes of contemporary fan efforts. Dorothy Swanson, founder of Voices for Quality Television, said, "I don't think (fan influence) has ever been stronger," and modern fan campaigns "can organize so quickly on the Internet and have an influence."[56] Without this important paradigm shift, the world may have never seen Zack Snyder's *Justice League*.

---

[56] Bill Keveny, "From 'Star Trek' to 'Timeless,' Fan TV-Show Rescues Evolve, but Passion Remains Paramount," *USA Today*, December 3, 2018, https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/tv/2018/12/03/fan-campaigns-save-our-tv-shows/2159748002/.

Chapter 4: The Straight-to-Streaming Transition

The second paradigm shift that facilitated the release of Zack Snyder's *Justice League*

involved the conventions of movie releases. For over a century, movies have premiered in movie

theaters, but in early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic stood in the way of this practice, as

stay-at-home mandates were put in place, and movie theaters closed their doors. Streaming

services, which had already gained popularity in the entertainment industry prior to the

pandemic, became the primary method of movie watching during. The newfound success caused

movie studios to put more emphasis on streaming capabilities, continuing to release movies on

their platforms even after theaters opened and people felt more comfortable in public spaces.

On June 19, 1905, the first public movie theater in the United States, the Nickelodeon,

opened in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.[57] The theater's owner, Harry Davis, hoped to provide a

movie experience that everybody could afford, and consequently he made a ten-minute thriller,

The Great Train Robbery, available at the theater for a nickel. The theater became incredibly

popular, prompting the owner to open over twelve more Nickelodeons in the cities. Two years

later, Davis had more than 8,000 theaters across the country. However, this trend in

entertainment ignited a wave of innovation, leading to bigger screens, more seats, and better

sound, leading "movie palaces" to replace Harry Davis's Nickelodeons.[58] From that point on, the

most common convention in cinema has been to premiere movies in such theaters.

This convention has survived, but not without friction. The emergence of television in

the 1950s cut into movie crowds, as audiences could now be entertained from the comfort of

their own homes. In response, theaters offered wider screens, bigger motion pictures, and more

theaters for multiple showings. Furthermore, the videocassette gave people the opportunity to

---

[57] Bob Mondello, "100th Anniversary of First-Ever U.S. Movie Theater," NPR (NPR, June 17, 2005), https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4707873.
[58] Ibid.

take their favorite movies home instead of going to the movie theaters. This could have been

devastating for theaters, but it proved to just be another revenue stream for Hollywood studios,

and theaters continued to endure.

The most recent disruption in the entertainment industry was the proliferation of online

streaming services. YouTube, an online platform that enables users to share and view videos,

was founded in 2005. The site gained traction with *Saturday Night Live*'s digital short, "Lazy

Sunday," and soon after, YouTube was acquired by Google "for a then-unprecedented $1.65

billion."[59] Within two days of the acquisition, Google's stock price increased by 2 billion dollars,

materializing the potential that the world saw in the platform. As of October fourth, 2021,

YouTube had over 2.3 billion monthly users.[60] Netflix was created in 1997 to serve as an

equivalent to Amazon in the media industry, where subscribers could receive DVDs in the mail

by renting movies online. By 2007, the company had introduced its streaming services, which

enabled subscribers to watch featured content online.[61] In the third quarter of 2021, Netflix had

approximately 209.18 million subscribers.[62] Hulu soon followed suit, launching its beta site in

2007. Although it never got as big as Netflix, it still boasted a considerable 43.8 million paid

subscribers in the fourth quarter of 2021.[63]

Many companies entered the online streaming market, but Netflix consistently

differentiated itself from competitors. In 2012, the streaming service entered the content

production industry with its release of *Lilyhammer*, and *House of Cards* was released by Netflix

---

[59] Amy Lamare, "How Streaming Started: YouTube, Netflix, and Hulu's Quick Ascent," The Business of Business (Thinknum, June 2, 2020),
https://www.businessofbusiness.com/articles/a-brief-history-of-video-streaming-by-the-numbers/.
[60] "YouTube User Statistics 2021," Global Media Insight, October 4, 2021,
https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/youtube-users-statistics/.
[61] Amy Lamare, "How Streaming Started: YouTube, Netflix, and Hulu's Quick Ascent."
[62] Julia Stoll, "Netflix Subscribers Count in the U.S. 2021," Statista, October 22, 2021,
https://www.statista.com/statistics/250937/quarterly-number-of-netflix-streaming-subscribers-in-the-us/.
[63] Julia Stoll, "Hulu: Paying Subscribers by Quarter U.S. 2021," Statista, November 15, 2021,
https://www.statista.com/statistics/258014/number-of-hulus-paying-subscribers/.

in 2013, becoming the first "original online-only web television series to receive major Emmy nominations."[64] The company hoped to capitalize on this early success, releasing about 126 original series and films in 2016. Even more, Netflix invested 8 billion dollars in original content in 2018, hoping to have half of its library made of original content by 2019. This emphasis on quantity led to the occasional sacrifice of quality, but there has also been a considerable number of winners, including *Orange is the New Black*, *Stranger Things*, and *Icarus*.

Although original content from streaming platforms such as Netflix came into competition with traditional movie conventions, theaters did not suffer. In 2019, global box office revenue recorded a record 42.5 billion dollars in ticket sales.[65] This number was largely driven by growth in the foreign box office, but ticket sales had continued to climb every year despite the geographic source of the year's movie momentum.

In March 2020, however, this growth trend was halted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. People were mandated to stay at home, and as a result, businesses that depended on in-person services were hit the hardest. Indoor cinemas closed, and there was no clear way for them to bounce back. The general consensus was that "the theater industry 'is not going to recover fully until consumers are confident they won't die if they go to the movies.'"[66] Major theater chains such as AMC, Cinemark, and Regal, reopened in August, but the public was still

[64] Elsa Scott, "History of Netflix Originals," The Buzz, November 20, 2019, https://www.thebubuzz.com/single-post/2019/11/20/history-of-netflix-originals.
[65] Rebecca Rubin, "Global Box Office Hits New Record in 2019 with $42.5 Billion," Variety (Variety, January 16, 2020), https://variety.com/2020/film/box-office/box-office-us-misses-record-disney-dominates-1203453752/.
[66] Sarah Whitten, "Movie Theaters in Jeopardy as Studios Move Blockbusters to 2021, Audiences Stay Home," CNBC (CNBC, September 29, 2020), https://www.cnbc.com/2020/09/29/coronavirus-movie-industry-studios-move-blockbusters-audiences-stay-home.html.

hesitant to enter indoor theaters. In September of 2020, a survey by Morning Consult found that "only 22% of consumers feel comfortable returning to theaters."[67]

This behavior had strategic and financial implications for movie studios and theaters. In response to the pandemic and the consequent dwindling attendance, Hollywood studios were forced to take blockbusters off of their release calendar, leaving theaters with a limited arsenal of content to attract audiences. In total, over 100 film releases were changed because of the pandemic.[68] Warner Bros. film, Christopher Nolan's *Tenet,* was expected to entice moviegoers to go to theaters, but only made 10 million dollars during its opening weekend and 41.2 million dollars in the first month of its release.[69] In the United States and Canada, ticket sales amounted to 2.05 billion dollars by September of 2020 compared to 8.4 billion at the same time in 2019. To make matters worse, the average cost of producing films had grown by at least 20 percent because of the need to hire health and safety personnel and film for fewer days.[70] The financial standing of theaters was in jeopardy, as the market value of a select group of movie theater stocks dropped by as much as 2.7 billion dollars during the pandemic, with Cinemark falling by 70 percent.[71] AMC was in danger of going bankrupt before it secured a new debt deal, while other independent theaters were not as fortunate.

Because the public did not want to go to movie theaters, they turned to streaming services for entertainment. In the first half of 2020, Netflix added a record 26 million customers.[72] Other

---

[67] Ibid.
[68] "Here Are All the Movies Delayed Because of the Coronavirus-With Some New Release Dates," Vulture (Vulture, April 9, 2021), https://www.vulture.com/2021/04/here-are-all-the-movies-and-tv-shows-affected-by-coronavirus.html.
[69] Sarah Whitten, "Movie Theaters in Jeopardy as Studios Move Blockbusters to 2021, Audiences Stay Home."
[70] Lucas Shaw, "Here Are the Ways the Pandemic Changed Hollywood," Bloomberg.com (Bloomberg, May 26, 2021), https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-05-26/pandemic-and-entertainment-how-hollywood-has-been-changed-by-covid.
[71] Sarah Whitten, "Movie Theaters in Jeopardy as Studios Move Blockbusters to 2021, Audiences Stay Home."
[72] Lucas Shaw, "Here Are the Ways the Pandemic Changed Hollywood."

media companies followed, launching their own streaming services through which they could

release original content. "Universal, Warner Bros. and Disney canceled plans to release major

movies in theaters and put them online instead."[73] After testing the waters, these major studios

seemed to like the results, so they continued to release films straight to their online streaming

platforms. Warner Bros. decided to release all of its movies on its streaming site, HBO Max, at

the same time they were released in theaters. Alex Kurtzman, a writer and producer known for

Transformers and *Star Trek Into Darkness* said "the movie business I grew up in is effectively

over…and I'm not sure that's a bad thing."[74] Although movie theaters are not dead, the influx of

subscribers that came from the pandemic has encouraged streaming services to continue betting

on themselves. The general manager of HBO Max, Andy Forssell, said "the experience in the

pandemic for us with these films has been really good…regardless of what happens, we'll do

more and more."[75] The graph below illustrates just how good the pandemic was for streaming

Global Streaming Video Revenue

■ North America ■ Asia Pacific ■ Europe, Middle East, and Africa ■ Latin America
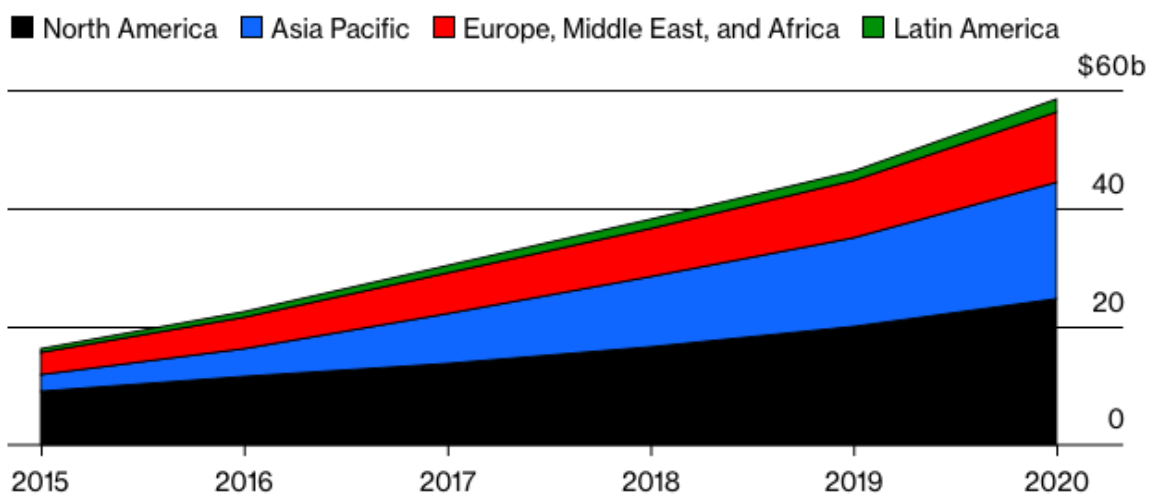
Data: PwC report (PwC, Omdia, Bundesverband Audiovisuelle Medien, Ancom)
Numbers for 2019 are preliminary; 2020 numbers are a projection

---

[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

services. The growth rate of streaming revenue was projected to increase during the pandemic across the globe, showing that the pandemic was a catalyst, not an inhibitor, for streaming services.

Warner Bros. announced that movies would go to HBO Max 45 days after they leave theaters starting in 2022. Universal and Paramount Pictures Corp. joined in, establishing 17 and 30 day windows for theaters respectively. This marked a monumental transition in the film industry, as studios are beginning to rely more heavily on streaming services as a mode of distribution for their movies. Not only did studios choose to release more and more of their movies on their respective platforms, more people have chosen to watch movies on these platforms instead of making the trip to their local theater. Initially, original content on streaming platforms was dominated by television shows in both quantity and viewership, but this changed with the pandemic. The online streaming of movies grew at a faster rate than television shows, as pictured in the graph below.

U.S. Online Views and Transactions
Year-over-year change
■ Movies ■ Television
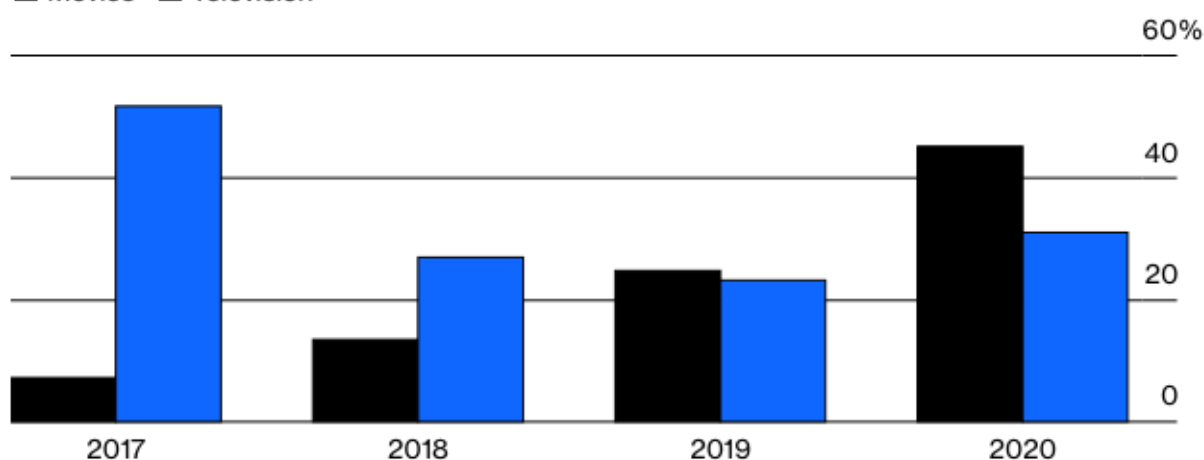
Data: Motion Picture Association

Movies were gaining traction on online streaming platforms in 2019, but during the pandemic, the year-over-year change in online movie viewership far surpassed online television show views. This goes to show that because of this global crisis, streaming services were able to establish themselves as a reliable, easy approach to distribution for movie releases. Hollywood studios' commitments to increasing their dependence on such platforms for movie debuts and distribution demonstrated the potential for a new premiere convention in the film industry.

Fans of Snyder and the DC Extended Universe proved to be relentless, but they had lofty demands. In the eyes of the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement success involved funding the film's reshoots and subsequent release. This would be costly and therefore made the campaign's success unlikely; the costs associated with releasing a movie are considerable, and a movie studio would not be inclined to take on those costs just to appease a dedicated fanbase, especially considering that the studio's ultimate motive is profitability. Consequently, these demands fell on deaf ears for two years.

However, like all other Hollywood studios, the pandemic was difficult for Warner Bros. The studio had to push the releases of all of its films, including fellow DCEU feature *Wonder Woman 1984*, because of theater closures and a cautious public. While movies were a considerable portion of Warner Bros. business, the studio had also been developing its own streaming service, HBO Max, to compete with Netflix and Hulu. The platform was originally set to launch in early 2020, but COVID-19 shut that notion down. The pandemic may have pushed back Warner's deadlines, but studio executives saw opportunity in the global crisis. Sooner or later, people would exhaust the library of quality content that other online streaming sites had to

offer. As a result, Warner Bros. decided to launch its streaming service, HBO Max, on May 27, 2020.[76]

Executives at Warner Bros. did not only see potential to capitalize on the COVID-19 pandemic, they also saw that they could capitalize on the remarkable dedication of Zack Snyder's fanbase. After years of promotion from fans, actors, and Snyder himself, the movie studio agreed to finish the Snyder Cut and release it to the public; however, the movie would only be released on HBO max. With both the global pandemic and the costliness of releasing a movie as obstacles, releasing Zack Snyder's *Justice League* straight-to-streaming made perfect sense. When discussing Zack Snyder's vision for the DC Extended Universe, Warner Bros. Picture Group Chairman Toby Emmerich admitted that he "felt badly that Zack didn't get to finish his vision of this film because of the circumstances…and so if there was a way to make it logistically and financially possible, which HBO Max did, and Zack had a willingness to do it, it seemed like a win for everybody."[77] It was also incredibly strategic on behalf of Warner Bros. The studio announced that the feature would be released on HBO Max on May 20, 2020, seven days before the streaming platform was set to launch.[78] Those who signed up before May 27 were also given a "teaser rate," a first-year subscription discount that amounted to three dollars off per month. By offering this rate in conjunction with the news that the Snyder Cut would only be on HBO Max, Warner Bros. hoped that they could attract more subscribers to the newly launched platform.

[76] Meg James, "Inside HBO Max's Scramble to Launch a Massive Bet on Streaming," Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles Times, May 21, 2020), https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/business/story/2020-05-21/hbo-max-streaming-marketing-coronavirus-warner-media.
[77] Anthony Breznican, "'Justice League': The Shocking, Exhilarating, Heartbreaking True Story of #TheSnyderCut," Vanity Fair, February 22, 2021, https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2021/02/the-true-story-of-justice-league-snyder-cut.
[78] Tracy Brown, "The 'Snyder Cut' of 'Justice League' Is Real Now and Will Be Released on HBO Max," Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles Times, May 20, 2020), https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2020-05-20/snyder-cut-justice-league-hbo-max-release.

       Theaters have faced competition from a variety of different entertainment mediums, including videocassettes and DVDs, television, and most recently online streaming services, but the general public's faith in the theater experience never faltered. However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the viewing conventions for people across the world, as movie theaters were forced to close and streaming services seized the moment. Hollywood movie studios turned to their respective platforms to release films they had hoped to release in theaters during the pandemic, and in doing so attracted new subscribers to their recently launched services while also cutting costs associated with movie releases. As time has passed and these streaming services have become more profitable, studios are increasing their bets on the strategy, simultaneously adding more original features to their platforms earlier in the movie lifecycle. This shift is largely responsible for the release of Zack Snyder's *Justice League*, as Warner Bros.' HBO Max made it feasible to release the film while also serving as a promotion for the new platform.

Chapter 5: The Snyder Cut

When Zack and Deborah Snyder left the set of *Justice League*, Zack took his laptop with him, which included his almost four hour version of the film. The video was black and white, with no visual effects or music. However, throughout the history of the Release the Snyder Cut movement, there was doubt as to whether or not the Snyder Cut actually existed. Snyder put this doubt to bed himself, publicly affirming twice that his version of *Justice League* existed. The director posted a photo of three film canisters labeled "Z.S.," "J.L.," and "Director's Cut" on the social media platform Vero to demonstrate material evidence of the film's existence.[79] The relentless effort of Snyder's fans as well as the words of Snyder himself and the film's cast members led Warner Bros. to announce in May 2020 that the studio would finally release Zack Snyder's *Justice League*.

Snyder only agreed to finish his cut of the film if it was on his terms. He wanted to ensure that this time around he did not receive the restriction and push-back he had experienced from Warner Bros. when he was first on the set of *Justice League*. Zack Snyder refused to be compensated for the work that needed to be done in order to complete his vision, because he "didn't want to be beholden to anyone, and it allowed [him] to keep [his] negotiating powers with these people pretty strong."[80] In forgoing his compensation, Warner Bros. could not hold Snyder's salary over his head as he sought to follow through with the risks that the studio had previously shut down. All in all, finishing the movie cost the studio approximately 70 million dollars. Warner Bros. was able to capitalize on a hotly anticipated movie and incredible

---

[79] Joseph Knoop, "Zack Snyder Seemingly Confirms 'Snyder Cut' Exists," IGN (IGN, December 4, 2019), https://www.ign.com/articles/2019/12/04/snyder-cut-confirmed-zack-snyder-justice-league-film-proof.
[80] Anthony Breznican, "'Justice League': The Shocking, Exhilarating, Heartbreaking True Story of #TheSnyderCut."

comeback story, while Zack Snyder gets to go "as deep and dark as he likes" while also adding his own personal elements.[81]

The Snyder Cut revitalized DC comics, something that Joss Whedon and his Marvel influences failed to do in the theatrical cut. Zack Snyder was able to lean into the awe-striking abilities of each member of the super squad, pay homage to specific comics, and introduce characters from the DC Extended Universe that fans had been dying to see in a live-action movie.

One of the most exciting changes evident in Zack Snyder's *Justice League* is the inclusion of characters that did not make an appearance in Whedon's film. The first introduction is Darkseid, a supervillain in DC comic books first introduced in 1970. Although he was not the primary antagonist of the story, it is evident that his role is more important to the future of Zack Snyder's vision for the DCEU. The supervillain has aspirations to take over the known universe, similar to Marvel's supervillain, Thanos. Another notable addition was J'Onn J'Onzz, the Martian Manhunter. He is an important member of the Justice League, and offered his help to Batman in the epilogue of the Snyder Cut, alluding to the team of superheroes as it is represented in most comics. Other new characters included the DC superhero The Atom, introduced as Ryan Choi and the Joker, Batman's arch nemesis. In his appearance, the Joker was working with Batman sometime in the future to stop Darkseid. Despite the short screen time for most of Snyder's added characters, the additions demonstrated how much Zack Snyder planned to develop the DC Extended Universe while also giving fans an idea of how he had hoped to follow his first installment of the Justice League. Aside from Darkseid, the newly introduced characters had very little bearing on the plot, but instead served as foundations for what is to come.

---

[81] Ibid.

The most notable difference between Zack Snyder's *Justice League* and the theatrical cut was the length. The Snyder Cut was over two times longer, amounting to four hours and two minutes in length versus Whedon's one hour and 59 minutes. The disparity was a direct result of the same sequences being longer in the director's cut of the film, which is most evident in Steppenwolf's arrival at Wonder Woman's home of Themyscira. The film's antagonist arrived at the 22 minute mark in the theatrical cut while in the Snyder Cut he arrived at the 25 minute mark. Furthermore, the battle scene that followed was only five minutes in the theatrical cut, compared to 11 and a half minutes in Snyder's version.[82] The longer scenes gave the director more room for exposition and violence throughout the film.

Zack Snyder's violent, bloody take on the beloved superhero comic led to its R rating, in stark contrast with the theatrical cut's PG-13 rating.[83] Instead of cutting away before characters die in the film, Snyder let the audience sit with the violent deaths in the story. Blood spatter is present throughout the film, along with dismemberment, impalation, and decapitation. This type of gore was how Zack Snyder made his name in the film industry, and he was able to return to his roots now that Warner Bros. was not breathing down his neck.

Snyder also added much-needed exposition for Barry Allen and Victor Stone, alter egos of the Flash and Cyborg, providing backstories and motivation for the two newly minted superheroes. In the Snyder Cut, the audience was able to see Victor Stone become Cyborg. His story started with a car accident that killed his mother. Victor almost died in the accident too, but he was saved by his father at the cost of becoming half robot, causing him to harbor considerable resentment toward his father and his new robotic nature. Eventually, he realized how much he could help with his new abilities, and became an integral part of the Justice League. The Flash,

---

[82] Vary, "How the 'Justice League' Snyder Cut Reverses Joss Whedon's Version."
[83] "Zack Snyder's Justice League," Rotten Tomatoes, accessed January 20, 2022, https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/zack_snyders_justice_league.

on the other hand, had a much more robust set of abilities in Zack Snyder's cut of *Justice League*. He created a massive electrical charge to revive Superman and ran so fast that he turned back time. Snyder created new dimensions for characters that had not yet made their debut in the DC Extended Universe.

To further build on the abilities of all of the superheroes on the team, Zack Snyder employed a considerable amount of slow motion in the film. IGN, a video game and entertainment site, concluded that 24 minutes and seven seconds, or ten percent of Zack Snyder's *Justice League*, was slow motion footage.[84] This may seem gratuitous, but it actually served to acknowledge the incredible power and reflexes that the Justice League have. The Flash can run almost as fast as the speed of light, so anything he did in the film would go unseen without the help of slow motion. Furthermore, Superman's reflexes in Zack Snyder's *Justice League* were fast enough for him to dodge the Flash; this would have also gone unseen if it were not for slow motion. The director's emphatic use of slow motion footage created a dramatic effect while also putting a spotlight on the Justice League's supernatural abilities.

With his newfound creative freedom, Zack Snyder was also able to return to his original concepts for the design of certain characters. First, Snyder had Superman make his return in his famous black suit, the first time it was ever worn by the hero in a theatrical release. This suit came from the *Death of Superman* storyline in the early 1990s, where the superhero died and later came back to life, just as he did in *Justice League*.[85] Superman's black suit has many names, such as the Recovery, Regeneration, and Solar Suit, and has restorative technology that aids the hero in his recovery. In the comics, the suit absorbs more radiation from the sun, where

---

[84] Vary, "How the 'Justice League' Snyder Cut Reverses Joss Whedon's Version."
[85] Sarah El-Mahmoud, "Why Superman's Black Suit Is so Important for the DC Hero," CINEMABLEND (Cinemablend, July 29, 2020),
https://www.cinemablend.com/news/2551376/why-supermans-black-suit-is-so-important-for-the-dc-hero.

Superman gets his power, resulting in a quicker healing process after his death. Most

importantly, the black suit served as a symbol for hope as he transitions from death back to his

heroism, because he must earn his colors back. Snyder's depiction of Superman in his cut of

Justice League showed the respect he had for the DC comics and the dedication he had to

making the film true to its origins.

Snyder also changed the design of the story's villain, Steppenwolf, back to the original

concept created during the production of *Batman vs. Superman*. In the Snyder Cut, "the new

Steppenwolf is more rugged, angrier and uglier compared to the 2017 version, and comes with

spiky metallic armor that would make the Iron Throne blush."[86] The villain's look was directly

in line with the darker tone of the director's cut; his appearance is altogether more intimidating,

with spiky armor covering his entire body and a far less humanoid face.

The most common aspect ratio used in films today is 1.85:1, meaning that the width of

the screen is 1.85 times its height. In the Snyder Cut, Zack Snyder instead decided to use a

1.33:1 aspect ratio in the film, which made the width of the screen only 1.33 times its height. As

a result, the black bars were on either sides of the picture instead of the top and bottom, creating

a more box-like frame. Because more often than not the characters in the film are standing,

Snyder made this decision to add vertical stature to the story's heroes. This aspect ratio is also

best for IMAX theaters, and Snyder said he fell in love with the idea, stating that everything was

"composed and shot that way, and a lot of the restoration [was] sort of trying to put that back.

Put these big squares back."[87] The writer and director originally intended that the film be made

[86] Craig Elvy, "Justice League: Why Snyder's New Steppenwolf Design Looks So Different," ScreenRant, November 18, 2020, https://screenrant.com/justice-league-snyder-steppenwolf-new-design-differences-why/.
[87] Ian Sandwell, "Why Zack Snyder's Justice League Looks like It Does," Digital Spy, March 18, 2021, https://www.digitalspy.com/movies/a35873209/snyder-cut-justice-league-aspect-ratio-explained/.

with the 1.33:1 aspect ratio in mind, so a large portion of the work done to release the Snyder Cut was bringing back this technical strategy.

Another impactful change in Zack Snyder's *Justice League* that persisted throughout the film was the return of Dutch composer Junkie XL's soundtrack. Snyder and the composer worked together on both *Man of Steel* and *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice*, so this continued relationship in the Snyder Cut helped to evoke a similar sentiment as past DC films. This was also one of the key demands from the original online petition to release Zack Snyder's *Justice League*.

The final product was a four hour and two minute film that set up Snyder's vision for future films in the DC Extended Universe. Because the director was no longer bound to Warner's two hour limit, he was able to flesh out everything he had originally hoped to include in his movie. The movie was divided into six chapters, each given a title related to their respective events. While this tactic provided organization and clarity to the movie's storyline, the chapters also made such a long film more digestible for the average viewer. Zack Snyder could not expect everyone to sit down to watch *Justice League* for four hours, so the chapters created the best points to pause and return to at a later time. The writer and director also added an epilogue, broadly known as Zack Snyder's Knightmare, which was "a worst-case-scenario future, where Darkseid has succeeded in conquering Earth, and Superman has succumbed to his mind control via the Anti-Life Equation in the wake of Lois Lane's death."[88] In this scene, Snyder showed the audience where he had hoped to go with his continued work in the DC Extended Universe.

---

[88] Molly Edwards, "Zack Snyder Explains the Knightmare Timeline in Justice League," GamesRadar+ (Future US Inc., March 23, 2021),
https://www.gamesradar.com/zack-snyder-explains-the-knightmare-timeline-in-justice-league/.

Finally, Zack Snyder was able to add personal elements to his director's cut, honoring his daughter Autumn. In the film, the camera stopped on a giant billboard for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, an organization that Snyder fans and the Snyder family supported throughout the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement. In addition, the first trailer for Zack Snyder's *Justice League* featured Autumn's favorite song, "Hallelujah."[89] A cover of the song was also included in the movie's end credits along with a "For Autumn" tribute.

The release of Zack Snyder's *Justice League* proved to be an overwhelming success for Warner Bros. Critics and fans both enjoyed the film considerably more than the theatrical cut, and HBO Max gained subscribers and downloads soon after the director's cut release. Scott Mendelson of *Forbes* said "it's an arguable 'told you so' moment for the fans, who really ought to take the well-earned win."[90] The film received a 71 percent critics rating on Rotten Tomatoes, and a 94 percent audience score, translating to 21 and 25 percent improvements respectively.[91] Furthermore, HBO Max added 2.7 million subscribers in the United States for the first quarter ahead of the Snyder Cut release, beating Netflix's 450,000 new domestic subscribers in the same period.[92] The film also reached the top of DVD sales, outnumbering the second spot by five to one.[93] Fans were so excited by the vision Snyder had for the DC Extended Universe, that they began another campaign to restore the "Snyderverse." An online petition for the cause has over 75,000 signatures.[94] Although the campaign never gained the same traction as its predecessor,

---

[89] Anthony Breznican, "'Justice League': The Shocking, Exhilarating, Heartbreaking True Story of #TheSnyderCut."
[90] Scott Mendelson, "Is Zack Snyder's 'Justice League' a Hit for HBO Max? Well, It's Complicated...," Forbes (Forbes Magazine, March 30, 2021), https://www.forbes.com/sites/scottmendelson/2021/03/29/zack-snyder-justice-league-complicated-questions-for-hbo-max-success/?sh=435bcd527151.
[91] Sarah Whitten, "HBO Max Adds 2.7 Million Domestic Subscribers Ahead of Global Launch," CNBC (CNBC, April 23, 2021), https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/22/zack-snyders-justice-league-did-little-to-boost-hbo-max-subscriptions.html.
[92] Mendelson, "Is Zack Snyder's 'Justice League' a Hit for HBO Max? Well, It's Complicated..."
[93] John Latchem, "'Zack Snyder's Justice League' Dominates Disc Sales," Media Play News (JCH Media Inc., September 16, 2021), https://www.mediaplaynews.com/zack-snyders-justice-league-dominates-disc-sales/.
[94] Vinicio Reyes, "Restore the Snyderverse and Zack Snyder's Vision," Change.org, accessed January 20, 2022, https://www.change.org/p/warner-brothers-restore-the-snyderverse-and-zack-snyder-s-vision.

there are rumors that the Snyderverse will be restored after Discovery's 43 billion dollar

acquisition of Warner Bros.[95] Discovery could see the future success that lies in the past

performance and dedicated fanbase of Zack Snyder's *Justice League* trilogy.

---

[95] Edwin Francisco, "Roaring Success of Justice League Blu-Ray Solidifies Snyderverse Being Restored," Geekosity, September 20, 2021, https://geekositymag.com/roaring-success-of-justice-league-blu-ray-solidifies-snyderverse-being-restored/.

Chapter 6: What the Snyder Cut Has Done to the Politics of the Film Industry

In *The Whale and the Reactor*, Langdon Winner argued that artifacts inherently have politics, and movies are no exception. By politics, he meant "arrangements of power and authority in human associations as well as the activities that take place within those arrangements."[96] Every artifact assumes the social circumstances and political dynamics that made it possible. The two *Justice League* cuts have entirely different distributions of power, and the relationship between Warner Bros., the creators, and the fans changed drastically. As a result, the two films have distinct politics. This divergence is a consequence of those who held authority over the respective films, but it is also a consequence of the technology that made Zack Snyder's *Justice League* a reality.

The relationship between the studio, the director, and the audience was closer to the traditional dynamics of Hollywood. Hollywood studios have long been considered exploitative, as they capitalized the most off of artists' hard work. No matter how successful a movie is in the box office, the studio responsible for releasing it benefits more than the writers, producers, directors, and actors involved in the project because they are all on payroll. Moreover, when success in a specific storyline is found, Hollywood has turned to pure exploitation films, such as sequels, remakes, and reboots. "These kinds of movies, while not very original, are thought to be safe bet cash cows for Hollywood studios."[97] Again, this demonstrated that big movie studios' primary motive is to profit, rather than give artists a well-deserved platform for expression.

---

[96] Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*, page 21.
[97] Knut Haanaes and Michael Sorell, "Déjà Vu: Is the Film Industry's Sequel and Remake Addiction a Sign of the End?," IMD business school (IMD Business School, August 23, 2018), https://www.imd.org/research-knowledge/articles/deja-vu-is-the-film-industrys-sequel-and-remake-addiction-a-sign-of-the-end/.

This Hollywood trend was incredibly evident in Warner Bros. production of *Justice League*'s theatrical cut. The studio was more concerned with making the film a commercial hit instead of supporting Zack Snyder as he continued to build his vision for the DC Extended Universe. As a result, Warner Bros. put several restrictions on him; the studio said no to his ideas, limited the length of the film to two hours, and had employees look over his shoulder on set. When Joss Whedon took the helm, he was happy to oblige all of the studios' demands. The new director's inclination toward Warner Bros. made the theatrical cut of *Justice League* "perhaps unavoidably, linked to particularly institutionalized patterns of power and authority."[98] The lack of creative direction in the theatrical cut was a direct consequence of the authority Warner Bros. held over its directors. This was demonstrative of "the tendency of large, centralized, hierarchically arranged sociotechnical entities to crowd out and eliminate other varieties of human activity."[99]

The changes made by Joss Whedon, a white man, to appease Warner Bros. also asserted the social dynamics of race and gender. In order to make the film shorter, he cut out all of the exposition and development of Cyborg, who at the time was the one of the first black live-action superheroes. Whedon also decided to utilize gender stereotypes when portraying Wonder Woman, one of the strongest members of the Justice League. He unnecessarily turned to the male gaze and presented Wonder Woman as Batman's love interest in the film. The "unequal distribution of power between social actors explains one of the most important aspects of ideology: ideology *privileges* some interests over others."[100] As a white male, Joss Whedon

---

[98] Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*, page 38.
[99] Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*, page 48.
[100] Brian L. Ott and Robert L. Mack, "Cultural Analysis," in *Critical Media Studies: An Introduction* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), pg. 149.

perpetuated dominant perspectives in his theatrical cut of *Justice League* as he failed to properly represent diverse characters.

Like the two cuts of *Justice League*, the technology that amplified the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement's voice was inherently political. Technology "unavoidably brings with it conditions for human relationships that have a distinct political cast-for example, centralized or decentralized, egalitarian or inegalitarian, repressive or liberating."[101] Crowdfunding sites, online petitions, and social networks proved to be both decentralized and liberating. These sites were decentralized in the sense that the movement was able to organize from the ground up, fan by fan, on the Internet to accumulate influence. The network effect expanded with each added signature or donation for the cause, stressing "the need for a greater number of centers of genuine social and political policy making."[102] Furthermore, they were liberating because through the Internet, Snyder fans forced a repressive Hollywood studio to meet their demands.

The Internet has provided a space for democratic decision making, increasing the power of modern fan campaigns. There are many instances in which technology is created to assist people in places such as their workplace, but such developments can harm them as quickly as they help. However, crowdfunding sites, online petitions, and social networks were not created out of need or crisis, they came as the Internet evolved. For this reason, the technology "could be fruitfully explored," instead of potentially harming or exploiting its users.[103] Thus, the Internet and its range of organizational sites produced results "much different from those recommended by the rules of technical and economic efficiency."[104] Seeing as the

---

[101] Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*, page 28.
[102] Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*, page 89.
[103] Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*, page 56.
[104] Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*, page 55.

#ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement made the Snyder Cut a reality and changed the course of the

DC Extended Universe, it was clear that the Internet dramatically increased the campaign's

power, which Winner defined as "the ability of persons or social groups to accomplish their

goals."[105]

The democratic process that forced Warner Bros. to release Zack Snyder's *Justice League*

resulted in a new artifact, and consequently new politics. The Snyder Cut's politics are

antithetical to the theatrical cut's links to institutional power and authority, as both the movement

that made it a possibility and the creative leeway given to Zack Snyder were in direct opposition

to the Hollywood studio's power. Fans used the Internet to have their voices heard and gain

support as they fought Warner Bros. to let Snyder finish the film. As fans and people involved

with *Justice League* continuously campaigned with no sign of slowing down, Warner Bros.

relented and announced that the Snyder Cut would be released. This is the first significant way

in which the big movie studio loses its power to the people it typically capitalized on. Next, as

Zack Snyder agreed to finish his *Justice League* vision, the director refused to take a salary for

his work. This meant that Warner Bros. could not leverage the director's compensation in order

to get what they wanted, so Zack Snyder's *Justice League* was precisely that, Zack Snyder's

Justice League; the director was able to restore everything he originally intended on including in

the movie. The final product was entirely different from Warner Bros. design, the theatrical cut,

as it was double the length of the studio's original request, darker, and included the character

design that Snyder originally envisioned.

Because Zack Snyder was no longer tied to Warner Bros., the director was able to reverse

all of the changes and cuts that Whedon made to accommodate the two hour run time. Snyder

properly developed the Flash and Cyborg with the newfound space in the film, resulting in

---

[105] Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*, page 87.

Cyborg becoming a key character in the *Justice League* story. This is in direct contrast to the theatrical cut, where Cyborg found himself with significantly less screen time and exposition. In addition, Wonder Woman was portrayed as the powerful superhero that she was, often leading the predominantly male Justice League while also dominating the movie's battle scenes. This adjustment made by Zack Snyder helps the film separate itself from the gender stereotypes and male gaze employed in Joss Whedon's theatrical cut. Zack Snyder's *Justice League* laid more groundwork for the director's vision for the DC Extended Universe, while also promoting diversity and representation in the superhero genre.

The story of Zack Snyder's *Justice League* and the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement effectively demonstrates how technology has changed the negotiation process between fans and creators. For a considerable portion of the film industry's history, big movie studios had control over virtually every aspect of their movies; they held power over those involved with movies' creation through salaries and financing while capitalizing off of those who hoped to see them in theaters. However, the proliferation of social networks and websites on the Internet has increased the influence of fans and creators in the industry. As evidenced by the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut movement, the Internet enabled people to organize, finance campaigns, and accumulate support along the way. Online streaming platforms and the streaming wars have also made it more financially and logistically reasonable to release content for fans. While the contents of the new cut of *Justice League* changed, so did the inherent politics of the film. The democratic nature of the Internet's sites as well as the circumstances surrounding the Snyder Cut resulted in a more egalitarian and decentralized final product. Fan campaigns have evolved alongside the Internet, and as they continue to do so, fans will develop more influence over the decisions Hollywood studios make.

Bibliography

"#ProjectComicCon SDCC19 - Releasethesnydercut/AFSP, Organized by Bill Rowlands."
    gofundme.com. Accessed November 5, 2021.
    https://www.gofundme.com/f/releasethesnydercut.

Allen, Matthew. "What Was Web 2.0? Versions as the Dominant Mode of Internet History."
    New Media & Society 15, no. 2 (2012): 260–75.
    https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812451567.

Arulchelvan, S. "New Media Communication Strategies for Election Campaigns:
    Experiences of Indian Political Parties." *Online Journal of Communication and
    Media Technologies* 4, no. 3 (July 2014). https://doi.org/10.29333/ojcmt/2478.

Bentz, Adam. "Former WB Exec Defends Zack Snyder & His DCEU Movies."
    ScreenRant, January 6, 2022.
    https://screenrant.com/warner-bros-executive-zack-snyder-dceu-defense/.

Breznican, Anthony. "'Justice League': The Shocking, Exhilarating, Heartbreaking True
    Story of #TheSnyderCut." Vanity Fair, February 22, 2021.
    https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2021/02/the-true-story-of-justice-league-snyde
    r-cut.

Brown, Tracy. *Los Angeles Times*. March 19, 2021.
    https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2021-03-19/zack-snyder-ju
    stice-league-timeline.

Castells, Manuel. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. Polity
    Press, 2018.

ComicBook. "Zack Snyder Fans Launch New Website to Support Release of 'Justice
    League' Director's Cut." DC. Comicbook.com. Accessed November 5, 2021.
    https://comicbook.com/dc/news/justice-league-zack-snyder-cut-official-website/.

Dayton, Adrian. "The Power of Twitter to Turn a Terrible Superhero Film from Bad to
    Good: #Releasethesnydercut." Forbes. Forbes Magazine, March 15, 2021.
    https://www.forbes.com/sites/adriandayton/2021/03/15/the-power-of-twitter-to-turn-a
    -terrible-superhero-film-from-bad-to-good-releasethesnydercut/?sh=1c41540f17a5.

de la Cruz Paragas, Fernando, and Trisha TC Lin. "Organizing and Reframing
    Technological Determinism." *New Media & Society* 18, no. 8 (December 10, 2014):
    1528–46. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814562156.

Desborough, Jenny. "What Gal Gadot Said About Filming Justice League with Joss
    Whedon." Newsweek. Newsweek, October 19, 2021.
    https://www.newsweek.com/what-gal-gadot-has-said-about-joss-whedon-jason-momo
    a-justice-league-1640329.

Dumaraog, Ana. "Justice League DP Says Only 10% of Snyder's Original Footage Was
    Used." ScreenRant, December 4, 2019.

https://screenrant.com/justice-league-movie-theatrical-cut-zack-snyder-footage-amou
nt/.

Dumaraog, Ana. "Jason Momoa Also Experienced Mistreatment on Justice League Set."
ScreenRant, September 15, 2020.
https://screenrant.com/justice-league-jason-momoa-ray-fisher-joss-whedon/.

Edwards, Molly. "Zack Snyder Explains the Knightmare Timeline in Justice League."
GamesRadar+. Future US Inc., March 23, 2021.
https://www.gamesradar.com/zack-snyder-explains-the-knightmare-timeline-in-justic
e-league/.

El-Mahmoud, Sarah. "Why Superman's Black Suit Is so Important for the DC Hero."
CINEMABLEND. Cinemablend, July 29, 2020.
https://www.cinemablend.com/news/2551376/why-supermans-black-suit-is-so-import
ant-for-the-dc-hero.

Elvy, Craig. "Justice League: Why Snyder's New Steppenwolf Design Looks So Different."
ScreenRant, November 18, 2020.
https://screenrant.com/justice-league-snyder-steppenwolf-new-design-differences-wh
y/.

Farooqi, Sheraz. "A True North: Fans of Zack Snyder Raise Over A Quarter Million
Dollars For Suicide Prevention." *Forbes Magazine*. Forbes, September 23, 2020.
https://www.forbes.com/sites/sherazfarooqi/2020/09/23/a-true-north-fans-of-zack-sny
der-raise-over-a-quarter-million-dollars-for-suicide-prevention/?sh=af3600917d66.

Faughnder, Ryan. "Warner Bros. Shuffles Its DC Film Executive Ranks after 'Batman v
Superman' Criticism." Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles Times, May 18, 2016.
https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/cotown/la-et-ct-warner-bros-dc-201
60517-snap-story.html.

For Snyder Cut, March 7, 2021. https://www.forsnydercut.com/.

Francisco, Edwin. "Roaring Success of Justice League Blu-Ray Solidifies Snyderverse
Being Restored." Geekosity, September 20, 2021.
https://geekositymag.com/roaring-success-of-justice-league-blu-ray-solidifies-snyder
verse-being-restored/.

"Global Crowdfunding Market Size to Accumulate USD 25800 Million by 2027."
GlobeNewswire News Room. SKYLINE MARKET RESEARCH LLP, September
13, 2021.
https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2021/09/13/2295559/0/en/Global-cro
wdfunding-market-size-to-accumulate-USD-25800-million-by-2027.html.

Haanaes, Knut, and Michael Sorell. "Déjà Vu: Is the Film Industry's Sequel and Remake
Addiction a Sign of the End?" IMD business school. IMD Business School, August
23, 2018.
https://www.imd.org/research-knowledge/articles/deja-vu-is-the-film-industrys-sequel
-and-remake-addiction-a-sign-of-the-end/.

Haithman, Diane. "VQT: A Rising Voice in the TV Wilderness." *Los Angeles Times*. September 23, 1988. https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-09-23-ca-2784-story.html.

"Here Are All the Movies Delayed Because of the Coronavirus-With Some New Release Dates." Vulture. Vulture, April 9, 2021. https://www.vulture.com/2021/04/here-are-all-the-movies-and-tv-shows-affected-by-coronavirus.html.

Holub, Christian. "The Best Superhero Cartoon Is Returning in Comic Form This Summer." Entertainment Weekly. Meredith Corporation, April 22, 2021. https://ew.com/books/justice-league-infinity-comic/.

James, Meg. "Inside HBO Max's Scramble to Launch a Massive Bet on Streaming." Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles Times, May 21, 2020. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/business/story/2020-05-21/hbo-max-streaming-marketing-coronavirus-warner-media.

Jenkins, Henry. "Fandom, Negotiation, and Participatory Culture." Essay. In *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies*, 11–26. Hoboken, NJ, USA: Wiley Blackwell, 2018. http://www.dcac.du.ac.in/documents/E-Resource/2020/Metrial/417SagorikaSingha1.pdf.

Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

"Justice League Publication History." DC Database. Fandom. Accessed January 19, 2022. https://dc.fandom.com/wiki/Justice_League_Publication_History.

"Justice League." Rotten Tomatoes. Accessed January 19, 2022. https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/justice_league_2017/reviews?intcmp=rt-scorecard_tomatometer-reviews.

Keveny, Bill. "From 'Star Trek' to 'Timeless,' Fan TV-Show Rescues Evolve, but Passion Remains Paramount." *USA Today*. December 3, 2018. https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/tv/2018/12/03/fan-campaigns-save-our-tv-shows/2159748002/.

Knoop, Joseph. "Zack Snyder Seemingly Confirms 'Snyder Cut' Exists." IGN. IGN, December 4, 2019. https://www.ign.com/articles/2019/12/04/snyder-cut-confirmed-zack-snyder-justice-league-film-proof.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Leadbeater, Alex. "Justice League Reshoots: Every Change Whedon Made to Snyder's Film." ScreenRant, November 17, 2017. https://screenrant.com/justice-league-movie-reshoot-changes-explained-snyder-whedon/.

Lamare, Amy. "How Streaming Started: YouTube, Netflix, and Hulu's Quick Ascent." The Business of Business. Thinknum, June 2, 2020. https://www.businessofbusiness.com/articles/a-brief-history-of-video-streaming-by-the-numbers/.

Latchem, John. "'Zack Snyder's Justice League' Dominates Disc Sales." Media Play News. JCH Media Inc., September 16, 2021. https://www.mediaplaynews.com/zack-snyders-justice-league-dominates-disc-sales/.

Lin, Ying. "10 Reddit Statistics You Should Know in 2021." Oberlo. Oberlo, September 23, 2021. https://www.oberlo.com/blog/reddit-statistics.

Lips, Allison. "History of Hashtags: How a Symbol Changed The Way We Search & Share." Social Media Week, February 20, 2018. https://socialmediaweek.org/blog/2018/02/history-hashtags-symbol-changed-way-search-share/.

Maloney, Devon. "How Star Trek Fans Helped Change TV Forever." Vox. Vox, September 29, 2017. https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/9/29/16369692/star-trek-history-fan-campaign-original-series-discovery.

"Marvel Cinematic Universe Franchise Box Office History." The Numbers. Accessed January 19, 2022. https://www.the-numbers.com/movies/franchise/Marvel-Cinematic-Universe#tab=summary.

Masters, Kim. "Ray Fisher Opens up about 'Justice League,' Joss Whedon and Warners: 'I Don't Believe Some of These People Are Fit for Leadership.'" The Hollywood Reporter. The Hollywood Reporter, April 6, 2021. https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/ray-fisher-opens-up-about-justice-league-joss-whedon-and-warners-i-dont-believe-some-of-these-people-are-fit-for-leadership-4161658/.

Mata, Roberto. "Zack Snyder's Director's Cut and Tom Holkenborg's (Junkie XL) Score for Home Release." Change.org. Accessed November 5, 2021. https://www.change.org/p/warner-bros-zack-snyder-s-director-s-and-tom-holkenborg-s-score-for-home-release-e90fef07-11c6-4a9a-9ae8-375c7717dafa?recruiter=91715253&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=share_petition.

Meisfjord, Tom. "How Joss Whedon Really Ended Up Taking Over On Justice League." Looper.com. Looper, February 22, 2021. https://www.looper.com/339436/how-joss-whedon-really-ended-up-taking-over-on-justice-league/.

Mendelson, Scott. "Is Zack Snyder's 'Justice League' a Hit for HBO Max? Well, It's Complicated..." Forbes. Forbes Magazine, March 30, 2021.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/scottmendelson/2021/03/29/zack-snyder-justice-league-complicated-questions-for-hbo-max-success/?sh=435bcd527151.

Mondello, Bob. "100th Anniversary of First-Ever U.S. Movie Theater." NPR. NPR, June 17, 2005. https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4707873.

Munch, Theo. "The Evolution of Crowdfunding." *Jumpstart*. Jumpstart, April 21, 2019. https://www.jumpstartmag.com/the-evolution-of-crowdfunding/.

Nicolaou, Anna, and Christopher Grimes. "Streaming Wars Drive Media Groups to Spend More than $100BN on New Content." Subscribe to read | Financial Times. Financial Times, December 29, 2021. https://www.ft.com/content/ae756fda-4c27-4732-89af-cb6903f2ab40.

Ott, Brian L., and Robert L. Mack. *Critical Media Studies: An Introduction*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020.

"R/Snydercut." reddit. Accessed November 5, 2021. https://www.reddit.com/r/SnyderCut/top/?t=all.

Reyes, Vinicio. "Restore the Snyderverse and Zack Snyder's Vision." Change.org. Accessed January 20, 2022. https://www.change.org/p/warner-brothers-restore-the-snyderverse-and-zack-snyder-s-vision.

Robinson, Kali. "The Arab Spring at Ten Years: What's the Legacy of the Uprisings?" Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, December 3, 2020. https://www.cfr.org/article/arab-spring-ten-years-whats-legacy-uprisings.

Rubin, Rebecca. "Global Box Office Hits New Record in 2019 with $42.5 Billion." Variety. Variety, January 16, 2020. https://variety.com/2020/film/box-office/box-office-us-misses-record-disney-dominates-1203453752/.

Scott, Elsa. "History of Netflix Originals." The Buzz, November 20, 2019. https://www.thebubuzz.com/single-post/2019/11/20/history-of-netflix-originals.

Sandwell, Ian. "Why Zack Snyder's Justice League Looks like It Does." Digital Spy, March 18, 2021. https://www.digitalspy.com/movies/a35873209/snyder-cut-justice-league-aspect-ratio-explained/.

Sharf, Zack. "Warner Bros.. Executive Slams Joss Whedon's 'Justice League' Cut: 'Stupefying' and 'Piece of Sh*t'." IndieWire. IndieWire, February 22, 2021. https://www.indiewire.com/2021/02/warner-bros-joss-whedon-justice-league-stupefying-1234618417/.

Shaw, Lucas. "Here Are the Ways the Pandemic Changed Hollywood." Bloomberg.com. Bloomberg, May 26, 2021. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-05-26/pandemic-and-entertainment-how-hollywood-has-been-changed-by-covid.

Stoll, Julia. "Hulu: Paying Subscribers by Quarter U.S. 2021." Statista, November 15, 2021.
>   https://www.statista.com/statistics/258014/number-of-hulus-paying-subscribers/.

Stoll, Julia. "Netflix Subscribers Count in the U.S. 2021." Statista, October 22, 2021.
>   https://www.statista.com/statistics/250937/quarterly-number-of-netflix-streaming-sub
>   scribers-in-the-us/.

Christopher J. Teuton, "#ReleaseTheSnyderCut Trends Worldwide with over 60K Tweets."
>   ScreenRant, November 9, 2019.
>   https://screenrant.com/justice-league-snyder-cut-trending-releasethesnydercut-worldw
>   ide/.

Tomassoni, Teresa. "Petitions Are Going Viral, Sometimes to Great Success." NPR. NPR,
>   March 16, 2012.
>   https://www.npr.org/2012/03/16/148556371/petitions-are-going-viral-sometimes-to-g
>   reat-success.

"Total Number of Websites." Total number of Websites - Internet Live Stats. Accessed
>   November 5, 2021. https://www.Internetlivestats.com/total-number-of-websites/.

"The World's Platform for Change." Change.org. Accessed November 5, 2021.
>   https://www.change.org/about?utm_source=sem&utm_medium=google_ad&utm_ca
>   mpaign=G%3ESearch%3ESAP%3EUS%3EBrand%3EAll-Match-Types&utm_term=
>   %2Bchange+%2Borg+%2Bstart%7Cb%7CAG%3A117129827756%7CAD%3A4943
>   79776305&utm_content=2021_11_03&gclid=Cj0KCQjw5oiMBhDtARIsAJi0qk0yV
>   nleUtluusvWL3EWbNrf2IoGiX0-GCpGI9tR_spot4-9PAR8id0aArb2EALw_wcB.

Vary, Adam B. "How the 'Justice League' Snyder Cut Reverses Joss Whedon's Version."
>   Variety. Variety, March 20, 2021.
>   https://variety.com/2021/film/news/justice-league-snyder-cut-comparison-joss-whedo
>   n-version-1234934246/.

Vary, Adam B. "Ray Fisher Accuses Joss Whedon of 'Abusive, Unprofessional' Behavior
>   on 'Justice League' Set." Variety. Variety, July 1, 2020.
>   https://variety.com/2020/film/news/ray-fisher-joss-whedon-justice-league-123469583
>   1/.

Whitten, Sarah. "Movie Theaters in Jeopardy as Studios Move Blockbusters to 2021,
>   Audiences Stay Home." CNBC. CNBC, September 29, 2020.
>   https://www.cnbc.com/2020/09/29/coronavirus-movie-industry-studios-move-blockb
>   usters-audiences-stay-home.html.

Whitten, Sarah. "HBO Max Adds 2.7 Million Domestic Subscribers Ahead of Global
>   Launch." CNBC. CNBC, April 23, 2021.
>   https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/22/zack-snyders-justice-league-did-little-to-boost-hbo
>   -max-subscriptions.html.

Winner, Langdon. *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High
>   Technology*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

"YouTube User Statistics 2021." Global Media Insight, October 4, 2021.
   https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/youtube-users-statistics/.

"Zack Snyder's Justice League." Rotten Tomatoes. Accessed January 20, 2022.
   https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/zack_snyders_justice_league.