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# DVD Special Features and Stage Greetings: Whose Promotional Material Is It Anyway?

By Jonathan Wroot

Stage greetings are special features on DVDs of Japanese films which consist of promotional footage. They document a film's premiere, press conference, or other similar event, and show the stars and audience who are in attendance. For audiences outside of Japan, however, the most likely site for viewing such greetings is the extra features included on DVD releases, such as the 4Digital Asia disc for *Death Note: L Change The World* (dir. Nakata Hideo, 2008).<sup>1</sup> The article will use the DVD releases from one particular sub-label as a case study. 4Digital Asia is no longer active within the operations of 4Digital Media (an independent UK DVD distributor), but from 2008 to 2010 it predominantly released Japanese films for consumption in the UK.<sup>2</sup> The DVDs were often the first, or the only, instances where these films were released for the English language market.<sup>3</sup> Stage greeting footage frequently appears alongside the films on the DVDs - either as separate special features, or as part of interviews or making-of footage. 4Digital Asia was given exclusive license to distribute the extra material alongside its film releases.<sup>4</sup> And later UK DVD releases of Japanese films, from other Asian film distributors, have contained special features similar to those found on 4Digital Asia's discs. Specifically, the *Death Note: L Change The World* DVD is an illustrative example, both because of its extensive array of special features, and the various types of stage greetings that it includes.<sup>5</sup>

It is undoubtedly the case that the stage greetings are re-circulated promotional material, and their basic characteristics can be seen as similar to existing special features (e.g. the cast and crew often discuss the making of the film, which is comparable to interviews that are often included in making-ofs). But what is not so clear from their inclusion on UK DVDs of Japanese films is who, or what, they are promoting. After investigating the stage greetings, it becomes clear that the footage does not promote the film alone. Certain stars and crew members are given prominence over others, companies are credited with creating the extras more often than individual production members, and source material for a film's script and story can be discussed more than the film itself. Analysing the stage greetings gives insight into what this footage can potentially tell an audience outside of Japan. 4Digital Asia disseminates this material before any other distributor outside of Japan, thereby

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providing evidence of the distributors' intentions to provide a unique viewing experience.

Methods of analysing DVD extras, such as Craig Hight's assessment of making-of documentaries, can be easily transferred to these examples to demonstrate their status as promotional material.<sup>6</sup> But such an approach has not gone on to address what this material is promoting and why it is re-used on a DVD disc. Re-addressing Hight's approach, with a case study that does not disguise its promotional traits, will help explain what distributors intend to add to the film-viewing experience with certain DVD special features. Adapting Hight's method means that the promotional purposes of extras such as stage greetings can be questioned, as well as what purposes they fulfil on a DVD.

### **DVD Special Features: Recycled Promotional Material, But Why?**

Existing DVD research helps illustrate how Hight's approach is the most detailed and versatile for the analysis of special features. All existing work claims that DVD special features are drawn from material originally used for the promotion of media texts, but do not explore the purpose of re-circulating it on a disc. DVD studies grew in conjunction with the popularity of the medium itself. As a consequence, most research has been published within the last decade. Robert Alan Brookey and Robert Westerfelhaus were among the first writers to suggest that special features could affect film-viewing, in their 2002 article on the DVD release of *Fight Club* (dir. David Fincher, 1999).<sup>7</sup> The commentary communicates views on the film's production from certain cast and crew members.<sup>8</sup> In 2005, Brookey and Westerfelhaus then made similar conclusions in relation to making-of features.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, they claimed that these views were added to aid promotional activities of filmmakers and production studios.<sup>10</sup>

In support of these findings, both Graeme Harper and John Caldwell explained that the format of most special features is derived from the electronic-press-kit (EPK) format. Such media are used for the promotion of films and television shows by providing pre-recorded interviews, making-of footage and a variety of clips and images to print and broadcast media outlets.<sup>11</sup> As a result, both writers see the possible interactions offered to audiences by the DVD medium as pre-determined by the commercial aims of filmmakers and production companies. In 2006, Barbara Klinger came to a similar conclusion, and stated that DVDs disguised their commercial purpose by presenting their extras as "trivia" and "insider knowledge".<sup>12</sup> Despite this evidence, the appeal of these commercially-rooted extras does not seem to be dwindling, as argued by

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Nicola J Evans within her analysis of particular DVD box-sets in 2010. <sup>13</sup>

What can be seen from this overview is that much DVD research does not go beyond revealing the commercial aims of the filmmakers and production studios. Hight's work from 2005 is not only illustrative of these conclusions, but also details how he found these commercial aims within making-of documentaries (MODs). <sup>14</sup> Making-ofs frequently appear on certain types of releases, such as the special extended DVD editions of *The Lord of the Rings (LOTR)* films. <sup>15</sup> Though these discs are exceptional due to the volume of material that they contain, Hight finds them to be limited in their scope. He states that "the pattern on special edition DVDs is for MODs to contribute to a complex variety of partial production discourses, all conforming to the broader constraints of the film industry's efforts to develop DVD as an EPK platform." <sup>16</sup> Hight also criticises and evaluates his own methodology, which is based on four proposed steps for studying making-ofs and other special features. <sup>17</sup> They assess:

1. the nature of the content of each MOD segment
2. the possible combinations of MODs as part of trajectories, shaped through by the disc's interface, through the DVD's content
3. the relationship these extras have with the feature film as central parts of a complex layering of possible readings of this text (from the suspension of disbelief inherent to a reading of the film, to the detailed presentation of the industrial techniques behind the creation of that fictional narrative)
4. the relationship with other extras, with their own combinations of narrative and database forms. <sup>18</sup>

The last point helps highlight the basis from which Hight developed his perspective, leading to his evaluation of his approach.

Hight draws on the work of Brookey and Westerfelhaus, and media scholar Lev Manovich, to argue that making-ofs can offer additional narratives and interpretations of a film, or a film's production, ultimately suggesting such extras act as "interpretive frames". <sup>19</sup> However, other concepts are needed to demonstrate how this is possible within DVD media. Manovich argues that all digital media (CD-ROMs, websites, compute games, etc) are structured as databases, from which various types of text or audio-visual media can be accessed. <sup>20</sup> While this helpfully fits with the example of DVD menus, from which both the film and extras are accessed, it does not explain what order these databases take. Though Manovich himself later used narrative as an explanation, Hight's

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combination of database and interpretive frames allowed him to form his methodology through the four steps cited above. As a result, the purposes of the special features can be investigated.

Utilising these steps means that individual segments within the making-of features and other extras can be closely analysed. In addition, any potential links between them that could provide an additional or alternate interpretation of a film's narrative, or its production, can be identified. Hight believes that DVD can offer audiences new ways of interacting with cinematic texts, and seems to be searching for these potential interactions. However, in his analysis he claims to reveal that the making-of is simply another means of commercial promotion for a film text and the film industry overall, as a particular film studio or production company ultimately controls the construction of DVD extras. Hight also claims that more work is needed to develop an appropriate methodology that can find out how the consumption of films is affected by the "language" of DVD media. <sup>21</sup>

In actuality, Hight's method and conclusion help illustrate an additional perspective within DVD media research. This is especially the case when the *LOTR* article is taken into account with other work from both before and after 2005. In 2004, Deborah and Mark Parker suggested that the intentions of film directors can be found through DVD commentaries. <sup>22</sup> Along with other "supplementary materials" (e.g. extras), the DVD re-orientates the viewing experience of a film, making the disc release a new "edition" of a film. <sup>23</sup> And similarly, in 2007, Rayna Denison claimed that a DVD does not simply present a text and extratextual materials, but acts as a "multitext", meaning that it has: "...competing yet combined narratives, any of which potentially impacts on and changes the meaning of the others depending on which features audience members engage with." <sup>24</sup> Even if it is a fact that DVD extras originate from material originally used for the promotion of a film, they still provide a means of interacting with a film other than through its narrative. It is necessary to chart these discursive patterns, because audiences may not watch all the extras on a DVD (as suggested by both Hight and Denison), <sup>25</sup> and different extras and menus may accompany varying DVD editions of films (as suggested by Parker and Parker). <sup>26</sup> Hight does argue that all the *LOTR* making-ofs similarly promote different aspects of the films' production, but he also finds that there are two separate discursive patterns within them. There is both an assertion of the films' authenticity (as adaptations of the original books by JRR Tolkien), and the sophistication of the digital technologies used in their production. <sup>27</sup>

Hight's methodical steps can therefore be adjusted in order to investigate the purposes of other extras. The following steps are proposed for the analysis of DVD extras in general, and not just for making-of features.

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This would involve assessing:

1. the nature of the content of each extra;
2. the possible combinations of extras as part of trajectories, shaped by the disc's interface, through the DVD's content;
3. the relationship these extras have with the feature film as central parts of a complex layering of possible readings of this text (from the suspension of disbelief inherent to a reading of the film, to the detailed presentation of the industrial techniques behind the creation of that fictional narrative);
4. the relationship they have with other extras.

A further step could be added for the comparison of different DVD editions of a particular film, as suggested by Parker and Parker's research. But, in the case study for this article, the 4Digital Asia discs are often the first (or only) instances where the stage greeting footage appears on English-language DVD releases of Japanese films. And, as will be demonstrated by applying the first step to the 4Digital Asia releases, the stage greetings are evidently the most prolific extra on these discs. They are essentially re-circulated promotional material from a film's theatrical release in Japan. But the DVD of *Death Note: L Change The World* will show that the stage greetings features give additional information and viewing material to audiences. And, in the case of 4Digital Asia's DVDs, this is an exclusive viewing experience. 4Digital Asia manages to promote its own releases by providing additional footage that cannot be found on another disc available with English subtitles. If the stage greetings are seen as promotional material for the DVD distributor, their purpose can be revealed. The 4Digital Asia DVD of *Death Note: L Change The World* acts as an appropriate case study. It contains an extensive range of special features, as well as various types of stage greetings features, which are found on several other 4Digital Asia releases.

### **Stage Greetings: The Promotion of Stars, Companies, Media and DVD Labels**

*Death Note: L Change The World* (DNL) is the third live-action film within the multimedia *Death Note* franchise.<sup>28</sup> It stars Matsuyama Kenichi, who reprises his role as the lead character from the previous two films: the mysterious detective named L. The earlier films involved a cat-and-mouse-style battle-of-wits between L and Light. Light (played by Fujiwara

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Tatsuya) is a student who gains possession of a notebook that can kill anyone whose name is written in it. The resolution of this narrative leads to L's death after a certain number of days, and the third film places the character within another mystery that has to be solved before his time runs out. The first two films are based on the same story, which was originally written for a Japanese comic (*manga*); then adapted into an animated television show (*anime*); before being adapted into two films in 2006 (with the third being released in 2008). 4Digital Asia released the first two *Death Note* films for the UK audience, as well as the third film, on DVD in 2008.<sup>29</sup> The special features on the *DNL* DVD refer to the same context of *manga* and *anime* origins, despite the film having a separate storyline. Alongside the anecdotes from the cast and crew of the film, the *DNL* stage greetings particularly provide reference to the *manga* and *anime* context, and other additional information. Their content will now be examined to ascertain the potential purposes of the extras.

The first step proposed for analysing DVD extras states that the nature of the content for each extra should be assessed. Charting the extras' content helps illustrate how often the stage greetings features appear on the second disc of the *DNL* DVD. As with many DVD releases, the stage greetings and other features are found on a second disc separate from the film. Before detailing the content of each extra, it is necessary to provide a brief list of the disc's contents. This usually accompanies the film's synopsis on 4Digital Asia's webpages (within the 4Digital Media website), as well as retailers' websites, and the DVD case itself:<sup>30</sup>

A similar synopsis appears on 4Digital Asia's webpages: '[Death Note L Change The World](#)', *4Digital Media* website, accessed 27/12/2012.[/ref]

1. a making-of feature (entitled 'A Slice of "L Change The World"');
2. trailers and TV Spots;<sup>31</sup>
3. an interview with Matsuyama Kenichi;
4. footage from the Production Wrap Press Conference;<sup>32</sup>
5. footage from the Asia Promotion Campaign (Jump Fest 2007);
6. footage from the film's Gala Premiere in Japan;
7. footage from the film's Opening Day Stage Greetings in Tokyo;
8. footage from the Japan Tour (the film's openings in different cities);
9. and an image gallery (of stills from the film and its production).

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Despite being given separate titles, the features numbered 5, 6, 7 and 8 all share traits with each other. They each contain the basic characteristics of stage greetings extras, found on the *DNL* DVD and other 4Digital Asia DVDs. Though other discs may entitle the extras as 'Japanese Premiere Stage Greetings', 'Opening Day Stage Greetings', or 'Press Conference', the footage used is very similar. Such extras appear on over half of the DVDs released by 4Digital Asia,<sup>33</sup> and often more than once.<sup>34</sup> The *DNL* DVD has the highest number of instances of this type of footage within its extras, and all bear many resemblances to the extra entitled 'Gala Premiere.'

In this extra, the main cast are introduced before the film's premiere in Tokyo. Several of them sign flyers of the film's poster that are to be handed out to the crowds. The cast then await the arrival of Matsuyama and the director, Nakata Hideo. After a brief greeting, the attendees are ushered into the room where the film is to be screened, and the cast eventually walk out on to the stage in front of the screen. Matsuyama is the first to ascend the stage, and does so after walking through the audience and greeting fans and signing autographs. After the fans thank Matsuyama, and chant the film's title, the cast and director leave the stage, and are briefly seen talking together as they leave the building. The footage allows the viewers to share in the premiere attendees' experiences, by having the cameras record footage from their point of view. But they also follow the cast and crew to document their perspectives.

The 'Stage Greetings', 'Japan Tour' and 'Campaign' extras all include footage resembling many of these scenes. Most parallels are found in scenes where the cast and crew stand in front of a cinema's audience and greet them from the stage in front of the screen. The main differences from the 'Gala Premiere' extra are in their locations. The 'Stage Greetings' extra documents corresponding events happening across Tokyo, as certain members of the cast and crew travel from one cinema to the next in one evening, because of the city's high number of cinemas. The 'Japan Tour' shows equivalent events happening during a tour of Japanese cities. And the 'Campaign' extra documents similar events taking place in other East Asian countries - namely, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Though other cast and crew members may vary, Matsuyama is always present at each event that is recorded. In comparison to all other 4Digital Asia DVDs, *Kaiji* (dir. Sato Toya, 2009) is the only disc that includes similar footage of a promotional tour of Asian countries for a Japanese film. In all other instances where the stage greetings are presented as a DVD extra, the film screening is almost always taking place at a single venue. But the format of these events is virtually identical, despite any potential change in location that can occur.

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The different types of stage greeting extra that appear on the *DNL* DVD give an idea of the various ways in which it is categorised, as well as its basic traits. However, there is one other way in which this footage appears on the 4Digital Asia DVDs, which the *DNL* features disc also illustrates. Within the *DNL* making-of, footage is shown from some of the film premieres and other live events that are documented in the stage greetings extras. The making-ofs for *Kaiji* and the *20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys* trilogy (dir. Tsutsumi Yukihiro, 2008-2009) also include similar footage. And the stage greetings can also be incorporated into other extras. The DVD of *X-Cross* (dir. Fukasaku Kenta, 2007) contains an interview with certain cast members, and it is preceded by a brief clip of the cast participating in stage greetings before the film's premiere. These examples of stage greetings crossing over with other features help illustrate how regularly this type of footage is found on UK DVDs of Japanese films.

With the example of the *DNL* DVD, it has become clear that the stage greetings frequently appear alongside making-ofs, interviews, trailers, still images, and other types of DVD special feature. This has shown what DVD extras appear on these discs, and how often the stage greetings footage appears within them. The menu for the second disc in the *DNL* DVD release (listed earlier) indicates that the extras can be viewed separately, or altogether if chosen to be viewed one after another (or in another order entirely). The menu list also illustrates that the stage greetings extras are usually found after others, such as making-ofs and trailers. But interrelations between the types of extras have also been made clear, and examining them further is necessary in the analysis of the *DNL* DVD. They will demonstrate how the stage greetings footage acts as viewing material recycled from a film's promotion, as well as what purpose this fulfils.

The prominence of Matsuyama was particularly evident within the 'Gala Premiere' extra, and he appears regularly in many of the other *DNL* DVD extras. Though the event has been put together for the promotion of a particular film, the events surrounding Matsuyama make it clear that there is additional significance to his presence. Particular emphasis is placed on the central character of L - through the flyers and posters, the film's title, the chanting by the audience, as well as 'L' symbols made by the hands of the cast while they are on stage. L is not only a link that *DNL* has to the previous two *Death Note* films, which were hugely popular in Japan.<sup>35</sup> The character was one of the most popular aspects of the earlier films, and Matsuyama seems to be one of the reasons for this. A huge cheer greets him as he arrives with Nakata, and again when he signs autographs in the screening room. Matsuyama may be helping to promote a certain film in this instance, but he has no qualms about using the premiere to enhance his star persona. The dual promotional purpose

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of the stage greetings is more implicit alongside the other *DNL* extras. In other Japanese cities, and other East Asian countries, fans in attendance at the stage-centred events are as excited to see the lead actor as they are to see the new film. 4Digital Asia gives an insight into how popular Matsuyama is, in a similar way to media coverage in magazines and television programmes.

However, equally important influences on the content of the *DNL* extras are the companies financing the film's production, which are also prominent within the DVD's extras. There is a conglomeration of media production companies within the film's credits, and they are collectively titled as 'L Film Partners'.<sup>36</sup> Some have control over certain activities, such as the theatrical distribution and events surrounding the film's release. The 'Gala Premiere' extra shows organisers of the event issuing instructions to the cast of the film before they walk out on to the red carpet and the cinema stage. When viewed in conjunction with the other extras on the *DNL* disc, it becomes clear that these organisers are acting on behalf of Warner Bros - one of the film's production companies, and the film's theatrical distributor. The company is credited in the film's theatrical trailers (another DVD extra), and is revealed to own several cinemas in Tokyo which feature in both the 'Press Conference' and 'Stage Greetings' features.<sup>37</sup> 4Digital Asia is happy to promote Warner Bros' actions indirectly, as they provide additional viewing material for their DVD releases.

What the features reveal altogether is that many of them are taken from events used to promote the film's theatrical release. The footage within the special features can support the conclusions of studies of DVD extras that claim they are promotional material, and demonstrate that they provide UK viewers with extra information. As material used for a film's promotion, the extras reveal what events and paraphernalia can be used to boost a film's publicity in Japan. Stage greetings are revealed to be a useful promotional resource for the theatrical release of a film, as they can accompany a film's premiere, as well as a more localised event in multiple cities or countries (which are all documented on the *DNL* DVD). International film companies, such as Warner Bros, not only accommodate these events within their operations, but seem to have provided premises in Japan explicitly for them. The events documented on the *DNL* DVD are publicising the release of a specific film, and can allow stars to promote themselves to their fans. These companies are promoting their own activities and resources, in a similar fashion to particular media properties (e.g. specific films and their stars). 4Digital Asia therefore provides another insight into these activities that the premiere attendees are not necessarily aware of, which is exclusive to viewers of the *DNL* DVD.

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Furthermore, another facet of publicity material re-used for a DVD release can be the indirect promotion of interrelated media. The earlier *Death Note* films are constantly mentioned in all the *DNL* DVD extras, including the 'Gala Premiere'. Before the cast do greet the audience on-stage, they briefly meet the director of the previous two films, Kaneko Shusuke, who has been invited to the premiere. And it is not just the earlier films which are an important part of the promotion of *DNL*. The third film's theatrical trailers constantly refer back to the popularity of the first two films, as well as the original *manga* and their *anime* adaptation. While this could simply be argued as the re-use of a strategy employed in the marketing of the previous *Death Note* films, it provides an additional context for viewers of the 4Digital Asia DVD of *DNL*. Though trailers for *DNL* are a selectable extra on the DVD, others are automatically presented on its first disc. In contrast to any other 4Digital Asia release, trailers for the first two *Death Note* films are consecutively displayed before the DVD menu screen can be seen. And, as stated earlier, the context of the original *manga* and *anime* adaptation are also referred to within these trailers. Even if UK viewers simply use the *DNL* DVD to watch the film, 4Digital Asia exposes them to promotional material that emphasises its origins in other media texts. The stage greetings then continue to emphasise the *manga* and *anime* context in conjunction with the trailers and other special features.

Within the analysis of the *DNL* DVD extras, several findings have been made. In essence, these special features can simply be interpreted as re-used promotional material, but that implies that they can simply be understood by uniform characteristics. Even though great attention has been paid to the stage greetings footage, the analysis has shown the different formats it appears in. The extras have the capacity to provide extra information about a specific film and its place within popular culture - either through its lead actor, its production company, or its links to other media texts. The extras promote these individual aspects as much as the film titled on the DVD disc, and help illustrate the special features' interrelations. The vital role in presenting all this material to UK DVD viewers is particularly evident - that of the DVD distributor.

## **DVD Distributors and Their Intentions**

Actions taken by distribution companies to distinguish and shape DVD releases are usually overlooked within DVD research. But allusions to them have been made. For example, Hight claims that special edition discs are useful to study as they contain a multitude of features. <sup>38</sup> Caldwell claims that companies can, and often, release a special edition DVD following the release of a disc with no extras to maximise profits. <sup>39</sup>

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Parker and Parker's earlier work supports these claims, and goes further by stating that each DVD of a film "constitutes a new edition, and it should be seen in those terms."<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, the research of Denison clearly outlines that the DVD is an opportunity "in which the makers can put back or reemphasize missed or missing genre parts."<sup>41</sup> Though Denison is using DVD to discuss media genre, her conclusion does imply that DVD can allow different aspects of media texts to be emphasised within different disc releases. Following these points, and the analysis of the *DNL* extras, it becomes clear that their purpose is ultimately to highlight the actions of the DVD distributor. They are responsible for creating an exclusive viewing experience on their discs, and not one that is simply re-circulated for home consumption on behalf of the filmmakers and production companies.

Parker and Parker hint at this conclusion, in stating that each DVD release for a film is a different edition of it. With DVD, this is often the physical reality. It is especially the case with international film distribution, as a separate company is often employed by filmmakers to release a film in a foreign country.<sup>42</sup> Different distributors do not just offer varieties of packaging, subtitles, audio-tracks and marketing strategies for different countries.<sup>43</sup> They can provide a whole different viewing experience within their DVD - through both the extras' contents and their links to the central film text. The *DNL* disc provides a further illustration which clarifies this point. 4Digital Asia has exclusive licence rights for disseminating the material on DVD within the UK.<sup>44</sup> Similar or alternate material must be negotiated for release from the filmmakers for DVDs distributed in other countries. Therefore, while the USA release of *DNL* (by Viz Media) contains similar behind-the-scenes and interview content, it also has contrasting features, such as audio commentaries and a dub-track for the film's dialogue.<sup>45</sup> The audio commentary for the *DNL* film could provide information that is similar to that found in the 4Digital Asia DVD extras. However, it is delivered in a different format, and provides a different viewing experience from the UK DVD. And these exclusive extras indicate a demand which has been recognised by other UK distributors. In 2010, Third Window released the DVD of a Japanese film, *Fish Story* (dir. Nakamura Yoshihiro, 2009), with a feature that consists of a public performance (in Japan) of the fictional band within the film. Also in 2010, Arrow's release of *Departures* (dir. Takita Yojiro, 2008) contained a making-of which documents stage greetings at various premieres and festivals in East Asia. It is true that the availability of this material is determined by the filmmakers and production companies in Japan, but it is ultimately the decision of the distributors as to whether or not it is included on the DVD discs.

In response to the titular question, 'Who's Promotional Material Is It Anyway?', the DVD distributor provides the answer and the discs' extras

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represent the evidence. The example of stage greetings has been used as a case study because it is quite clearly footage of a promotional event, but it has not simply been recycled to increase the number of special features on a DVD disc. Using Hight's method of assessing DVD extras, and adjusting its perspective, it has been argued that the stage greetings demonstrate a type of special feature that indirectly promotes its subject matter. And that does not mean the film text alone - it can relate to cast and crew members, production companies, and other interrelated media. Therefore, the question that entitles this article can be given a plural answer, as there are multiple promotional intentions. But it is perhaps discussion of the distribution company which is most illuminating in regards to the purposes of the DVD extras. After all, the composition of the discs' content is central to DVD distribution, and yet it has often been overlooked in earlier research of DVD discs. Distribution may not always be separate from other processes in the film industry, though it is a major industrial process in itself. Choices made by a DVD distributor affect the appeal of a film, or other media text, as much as other means of promotion. In essence, 4Digital Asia is disseminating promotional material with the intention of it providing a viewing experience, suggesting it is as worthwhile to watch as the films the sub-label distributes.

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## **Filmography**

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys trilogy (dir. Tsutsumi Yukihiro, 2008-2009 - DVD, 4Digital Asia, 2010).

*Death Note* (dir. Kaneko Shusuke, 2006 - DVD, 4Digital Asia, 2008).

*Death Note: The Last Name* (dir. Kaneko Shusuke, 2006 - DVD, 4Digital Asia, 2008).

*Death Note: L Change The World* (dir. Nakata Hideo, 2008 - DVD, 4Digital Asia 2008).

*Departures* (dir. Takita Yojiro, 2008 - DVD, Arrow, 2010).

*Fish Story* (dir. Nakamura Yoshihiro, 2009 - DVD, Third Window, 2010).

*Kaiji* (dir. Sato Toya, 2009 - DVD, 4Digital Asia, 2010).

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*X-Cross* (dir. Fukasaku Kenta, 2007 - DVD, 4Digital Asia, 2009).

*Frames # 3 Promotional Materials* 05-07-2013. This article © Jonathan Wroot. This article has been blind peer-reviewed.

Notes:

1. Japanese names are written in the traditional format, surname first, unless cited otherwise. ↵
2. 4Digital Asia released 20 DVDs in the UK from 2008 to 2010. One of these was for a film entitled *Meat Grinder* (dir. Tiwa Moeithaisong, 2009), which was made in Thailand. It is the only non-Japanese film released in its catalogue - "[4Digital Asia](#)", *4Digital Media* website, accessed 05/12/2012. ↵
3. The only films from 4Digital Asia's catalogue that were already available in the USA were (in order of DVD release date): *Black Kiss* (dir. Tezuka Macoto, 2006), *Yo-Yo Girl Cop* (dir. Fukasaku Kenta, 2006), *Tokyo Gore Police* (dir. Nishimura Yoshihiro, 2008) and *Meatball Machine* (dir. Yamaguchi Yudai and Yamamoto Jun'ichi, 2005).

All 4Digital Asia's other titles released in the UK were available subsequently from USA distributors, except for: *Starfish Hotel* (dir. John Williams, 2006), *Cyborg She* (dir. Jae-young Kwak, 2008), *Hidden Fortress: The Last Princess* (dir. Higuchi Shinji, 2008), and *Kaiji* (dir. Sato Toya, 2009). ↵

4. All of 4Digital Asia's DVD discs have the following statement printed on their cases: 'The Owner of the copyright hereunder has licensed the material contained in this videogram for non-commerical private use only and prohibits any other use, copying or reproduction in whole or part).' In addition, none of the footage discussed in this article was found through video-streaming websites, such as YouTube. ↵
5. Apart from *Death Note: L Change The World (DNL)*, the other 4Digital Asia DVDs that include stage greetings footage are eleven in number: *Death Note* (dir. Kaneko Shusuke, 2006), *Death Note: The Last Name* (dir. Kaneko Shusuke, 2006), *Yo-Yo Girl Cop*, *X-Cross* (dir. Fukasaku Kenta, 2007), *Tokyo Gore Police*, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys: Chapter One* (dir. Tsutsumi Yohihiko, 2008), *Cyborg*

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- She, Vampire Girl vs Frankenstein Girl* (dir. Nishimura Yoshihiro and Tomomatsu Naoyuki, 2009), *20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys Trilogy* (dir. Tsutsumi Yukihiro, 2008-2009) and *Kaiji*. None have as many DVD extras, or as many stage greetings features as *DNL*. [↵](#)
6. Craig Hight, "Making-of Documentaries on DVD: *The Lord of the Rings* Trilogy and Special Editions", *The Velvet Light Trap*, No.56 (2005), 4-17. [↵](#)
  7. Robert A. Brookey and Robert Westerfelhaus, "Hiding Homoeroticism in Plain View: The *Fight Club* DVD as Digital Closet", *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19:1 (2002), 21-43. [↵](#)
  8. *Ibid*, 32-8. [↵](#)
  9. Robert A. Brookey and Robert Westerfelhaus, "The Digital Auteur: Branding Identity on the *Monsters, Inc.* DVD", *Western Journal of Communication*, 69:2 (2005), 109-128. [↵](#)
  10. *Ibid*, 123-5. [↵](#)
  11. Graeme Harper, "DVD and the New Cinema of Complexity", in N. Rombes (ed), *New Punk Cinema* (Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp.89-101; John Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 298-306 [↵](#)
  12. Barbara Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies and the Home* (University of California Press, 2006), pp.54-90. [↵](#)
  13. Nicola J. Evans, "Undoing the magic? DVD extras and the pleasure behind the scenes", *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 24:4 (2010), 587-600. [↵](#)
  14. Hight, *op. cit.* [↵](#)
  15. The *LOTR* films Hight discusses are those directed by Peter Jackson - *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001); *The Lord Of The Rings: The Two Towers* (2002); and *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003). [↵](#)
  16. Hight, *op. cit*, 14. [↵](#)
  17. Hight does list other extra materials on the *LOTR* DVDs, but examines the making-ofs due to their volume and frequency on these and other DVD discs - Hight, *ibid*, 10. [↵](#)
  18. *Ibid*, 11. [↵](#)
  19. *Ibid*, 9. [↵](#)
  20. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), p.215. [↵](#)
  21. Hight, *op. cit*, 14. [↵](#)
  22. Deborah Parker and Mark Parker, "Directors and DVD Commentary: The Specifics of Intention", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 62:1 (2004), 13-22. [↵](#)
  23. *Ibid*, 14. [↵](#)
  24. Rayna Denison, "It's a Bird! It's a Plane! No, it's DVD! *Superman*,
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- Smallville*, and the Production (of) Melodrama” (pp.160-79), in I. Gordon, M. Jancovich and M.P. McAllister (eds), *Film and Comic Books* (University Press of Mississippi, 2007), pp. 178-179. [↵](#)
25. Hight, *op. cit*, 12; Denison, *op. cit*, pp.178-9. [↵](#)
  26. Parker and Parker, *op. cit*, 14. [↵](#)
  27. Hight, *op. cit*, 13. [↵](#)
  28. The first two films are called *Death Note* and *Death Note: The Last Name* (both were directed by Kaneko Shusuke, and were made in 2006). [↵](#)
  29. The consecutive UK DVD release dates for all three *Death Note* films (*Death Note*, *The Last Name* and *L Change The World*) are: 28 July 2008, 13 October 2008 and 29 December 2008. [↵](#)
  30. The disc case and its contents can be viewed from the Amazon.co.uk website: ‘[Death Note L Change The World DVD \[2008\]](#)’, *Amazon.co.uk*, accessed 27/12/2012. [↵](#)
  31. These are trailers and TV spots specifically for the *DNL* film. Trailers for other 4Digital Asia releases appear on the first disc in the *DNL* DVD case. [↵](#)
  32. Press Conference extras usually share traits with stage greetings footage. However, this *DNL* DVD extra is an abnormality - it is a look behind-the-scenes prior to a press conference. The cast and director of *DNL* are ushered into a meeting room at the Warner Bros. building in Tokyo, and are seen chatting with each other briefly. The footage ends just before they move into another room for the press conference itself. I have found no other DVD extra similar to this on any other 4Digital Asia disc or DVD released by another distributor. [↵](#)
  33. See note 5. [↵](#)
  34. 4Digital Asia releases that have more than one instance of a stage greetings extra are (other than *DNL*): *Death Note: The Last Name*, *Yo-Yo Girl Cop*, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys (Chapter One DVD* and the *Trilogy DVD*), and *Cyborg She*. [↵](#)
  35. The popularity of the first two *Death Note* films were the basis for some of their English-language reviews: Anton Bitel, “[Death Note](#)”, *Film4* website, accessed 30/12/2012; Derek Elley, “[Death Note: Death Note: The Last Name](#)”, *Variety* website, accessed 30/12/2012. [↵](#)
  36. This title can be found in the *DNL* film credits, as well as on the 4Digital Asia DVD case. [↵](#)
  37. Warner Bros is officially credited with assisting in production of the film, and it’s theatrical distribution - “[Death Note: L Change The World - Company Credits](#)”, *The Internet Movie Database (IMDb)*, accessed 30/12/2012. [↵](#)
  38. Hight, *op. cit*, 4-6 and 10. [↵](#)
  39. Caldwell, *op. cit*, pp.300-1. [↵](#)
  40. Parker and Parker, *op. cit*, 14. [↵](#)
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41. Denison, *op. cit*, p.179. ↵
  42. Michael Leader, "[Extreme Fallout: A Post-Tartan Context](#)", *Wild Tyme BlogSpot* website, accessed 30/12/2012. ↵
  43. David Sin, "[What is Distribution?](#)", *BFI Screen Online* website, accessed 30/12/2012. ↵
  44. See note 4. ↵
  45. The extras for the Viz Media *DNL* DVD can be confirmed from fan and retail websites: "[Customer Reviews: Death Note 3: L Change The World \(2009\)](#)", from *Amazon.com*, accessed 30/12/2012; "[Forum Discussion: Death Note L Change The World \(Live-Action\)](#)", *Mania* website, accessed 30/12/2012. ↵