

# Remaking Film

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What is film remaking? Which films are remakes of other films? How does film remaking differ from other types of repetition, such as quotation, allusion and adaptation? And how is film remaking different from the cinema's ability to repeat and replay the same film over and again through reissue, redistribution and re-viewing? These are questions which have seldom been asked, let alone satisfactorily answered, in cinema studies. Even a recent attempt to respond to some of these questions – Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal's edited collection *Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes* – for the most part fails to recognise the complexity of the concept of film remaking.<sup>1</sup> Although there may be sufficient cultural agreement on the existence and nature of film remakes to allow for a clear understanding – especially in the case of those remakes which carry a pre-sold title and repeat readily recognisable narrative units – when considered alongside the broader concept of intertextuality, film remaking can also refer to 'the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a [film] culture'.<sup>2</sup> As David Wills points out, 'What distinguishes the remake is not the fact of its being a repetition, [but] rather the fact of its being a precise institutional form of the structure of repetition, the citationality or iterability, that exists in and for every film'.<sup>3</sup>

As in the case of film genre, a fundamental problem for film remaking has arisen from 'the ever-present desire for a stable and easily identifiable set of objects for analysis', and a related attempt to reduce film remaking to a 'corpus of texts' or set of 'textual structures'.<sup>4</sup> In addition to problems of canonicity, these textual accounts of remaking risk essentialism, in many instances privileging the 'original' over the remake or measuring the success of the remake

according to its ability to realise what are taken to be the essential elements of a source text – the property – from which both the original and its remake are derived.<sup>5</sup> While there sometimes seems sufficient semantic and syntactic evidence to suggest that remakes are textual structures, film remaking depends, too (as does film genre), 'on the existence of audience activity', not only prior knowledge of previous texts and intertextual relationships, but an understanding of broader generic structures and categories.<sup>6</sup> In addition to this, film remaking is both enabled and limited by a series of historically specific institutional factors, such as copyright law, canon formation, and film reviewing which are essential to the existence and maintenance – to the 'discursivisation' – of the film remake.<sup>7</sup> In these ways, film remaking is not simply a quality of texts or viewers, but the secondary result of broader discursive activity.<sup>8</sup>

This article refers to several books and essays dealing directly with 'film remakes' and the concept of 'remaking film', from Michael B. Druxman's *Make It Again, Sam* (1975) through to Horton and McDougal's *Play It Again, Sam* (1998) and Forrest and Koos' *Dead Ringers: The Remake in Theory and Practice* (2002).<sup>9</sup> A number of key points developed here have been made (differently) by John Frow and Lesley Stern in their work on intertextuality<sup>10</sup> and remaking<sup>11</sup> respectively, and also in their reviews of the Horton and McDougal anthology.<sup>12</sup> In addition, this article draws upon Rick Altman's *Film/Genre*, developing from that book the idea that, although film remakes (like film genres) are often 'located' in either authors or texts or audiences, they are in fact not located in any single place but depend upon a network of historically variable relationships.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly this discussion falls into three broad (though not unrelated) sections: the first, *remaking as*

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*industrial category*, deals with issues of production, including industry (commerce) and authors (intention); the second, *remaking as textual category*, considers texts (plots and structures) and taxonomies; and the third, *remaking as critical category*, deals with issues of reception, including audiences (recognition) and institutions (discourse).

### Remaking as industrial category

As in some approaches to film genre, remakes can be located in 'the material conditions of commercial film-making, where plots are copied and formulas forever reiterated'.<sup>14</sup> For film producers, remakes are consistently thought to provide suitable models, and something of a financial guarantee, for the development of studio based projects. In a commercial context, remakes are 'pre-sold' to their audience because viewers are assumed to have some prior experience, or at least possess a 'narrative image',<sup>15</sup> of the original story – an earlier film or literary property – before engaging in its particular re-telling.<sup>16</sup> In the case of cross-cultural remakings, such as *The Ring* (Gore Verbinski, 2002)/*Ringu* (Hideo Nakata, 1998) or *Vanilla Sky* (Cameron Crowe, 2001)/*Abre Los Ojos* (Alejandro Amenábar, 1997) foreign films are dispossessed of local detail to exploit new (English-language) markets. A number of commentators<sup>17</sup> have observed that the remake, along with the sequel and series, has become typical of the defensive production and marketing strategies of a 'post-*Jaws*'<sup>18</sup> Hollywood. For instance, Jim Hoberman says that 'the trickle of remakes that began . . . with *Farewell, My Lovely* in 1975 became a flood of recycled Jazz Singing Scarfaced King Kong "landmarks," Roman numeral'd replays of old and recent mega-hits, and retired mixed media figures [Flash Gordon, Popeye, Superman, and the like] pressed back into service'.<sup>19</sup>

This 'great downpour' of sequels and remakes, perhaps more perceived than real,<sup>20</sup> is often taken as a sign of Hollywood film having exhausted its creative potential, leading into 'conservative plot structures'<sup>21</sup> and 'automatic

self-cannibalisation'.<sup>22</sup> Equally, film remaking is seen as a trend that is encouraged by the commercial orientation of the conglomerate ownership of Hollywood, one which seeks to duplicate past successes and minimise risk by emphasising the familiar – 'recreating with slight changes films that have proved successful in the past' – even if this leads to 'aesthetically inferior films'.<sup>23</sup> As instantly recognisable properties, remakes (along with sequels and series) satisfy the requirement that Hollywood deliver reliability (repetition) and novelty (innovation) in the same production package.<sup>24</sup> Understood in this way, the remake becomes a particular instance not only of the 'repetition effects'<sup>25</sup> which characterise the narrative structure of Hollywood film but also of a more general repetition – of exclusive stars, proprietary characters, patented processes, narrative patterns, and generic elements – through which Hollywood develops its 'pre-sold' audience.<sup>26</sup>

In discussions of industry and commerce the surest arbiter of what counts as a film remake is an acknowledgment of copyright, but this limit is complicated by what are commonly referred to as 'unacknowledged remakes' and 'non-remakes'. In *Make It Again, Sam*, Michael B. Druxman sets out 'to provide a comprehensive dissertation on the remake practice' by 'detailing the film life of [thirty-three] literary properties'.<sup>27</sup> Druxman begins by electing to limit the category of remake 'to those *theatrical* films that were based on a *common literary source* (i.e., story, novel, play, poem, screenplay), but were not a sequel to that material'.<sup>28</sup> This 'seemingly infallible signpost' is however complicated by those films that are 'obviously remakes [but] do not credit their origins'.<sup>29</sup> In such cases Druxman adopts a heuristic device – a rule of thumb – which requires that a new film 'borrow more than just an element or two from its predecessor to qualify'.<sup>30</sup> This in turn allows Druxman to distinguish between 'non-fiction films' of a single historical incident or biography of a historical figure (e.g., the mutiny on the *Bounty* or the life of Jesse James) which *differ* because they are based around competing versions of

the same incident; and those 'non-fiction films' of a like historical incident which are *similar* even though they are based upon diverse literary sources.<sup>31</sup> As might be expected from an approximate rule which arbitrates according to whether a film's borrowings are 'significant', or only amount to 'an element or two', Druzman ultimately admits that 'there were many marginal situations . . . [in which he] simply used [his] own discretion in deciding whether or not to embrace [a film as a remake]'.<sup>32</sup>

Although Druzman's recognition of 'unacknowledged' remakes introduces a number of methodological difficulties, he further grounds his discussion by viewing (pre-1975) Hollywood remaking practice as a function of industry pragmatism, driven by three major factors. First, Druzman argues that the decision to remake an existing film is primarily a 'voluntary one' based on the perceived continuing viability of an original story. However, industry demand for additional material during the studio-dominated era of the thirties and forties, and attempts to rationalise the often high costs of source acquisition, prompted studios to consider previously filmed stories as sources for B-pictures, and even for top of the bill productions.<sup>33</sup> As Tino Balio points out, the Hollywood majors 'had story departments with large offices in New York, Hollywood, and Europe that systematically searched the literary marketplace and stage for suitable novels, plays, short stories, and original ideas'.<sup>34</sup> Taking as an example story acquisitions at Warner Brothers between 1930 and 1949, Balio notes that "the pattern of source acquisition demonstrates two often contradictory goals: (i) the desire to base films on pretested material, that is, low-risk material that was already well known and well received by the public and (ii) the desire to acquire properties as inexpensively as possible, especially during declining or uncertain economic circumstances".<sup>35</sup> In practice this meant that while Warners often invested in expensive pre-sold properties, such as best-selling novels and Hollywood hit plays, 'it offset the high costs of pretested properties by using original screenplays written in its screenwriting department and by

relying heavily on "the cheapest pretested material of all" – earlier Warner pictures'.<sup>36</sup>

Druzman's second, related point is that the customary studio practice at the time of purchasing the rights to novels, plays and stories *in perpetuity* meant that a company was able to produce multiple versions of a particular property without making additional payments to the copyright holder.<sup>37</sup> Canonised classics of literature, such as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Three Musketeers*, not only had pre-sold titles, but because they were in the public domain, had the added advantage of requiring no initial payment for their dramatic rights.<sup>38</sup> While the majority of recycled, previously purchased source material (particularly from those films that had done fair to poorly at the box office) made its way into B-unit production,<sup>39</sup> high profile titles were sometimes remade to take advantage of new technologies and practices. Accordingly, Druzman's third and final point relates to the profit potential of redoing established films in order to exploit new stars or screen techniques, e.g., following the success of *Captain Blood* and *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (Michael Curtiz, 1935 and 1936) Curtiz's 1938 version of *The Adventures of Robin Hood* is a vehicle for Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland, *but also* a sound and Technicolor update of the Douglas Fairbanks silent epic, *Robin Hood* (Allan Dwan, 1922).<sup>40</sup>

Druzman's initial definition, and the above factors of industry pragmatism, allow him to posit three general categories of Hollywood remake: (i) the *disguised* remake: a literary



• *High Sierra* (1941) later remade as *Colorado Territory* (1949).

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property is either updated with minimal change, or retitled and then disguised by new settings and original characters, but in either case the new film does not seek to draw attention to its earlier version(s), e.g., *Colorado Territory* (Raoul Walsh, 1949) as a disguised remake of *High Sierra* (Raoul Walsh, 1941); (ii) the *direct* remake: a property may undergo some alterations or even adopt a new title, but the new film and its narrative image do not hide the fact that it is based upon an earlier production, e.g., William Wellman's 1939 remake of *Beau Geste* (Herbert Brenon, 1926); and (iii) the *non*-remake: a new film goes under the same title as a familiar property but there is an entirely new plot, e.g., Michael Curtiz's 1940 version of *The Sea Hawk* (part of the Errol Flynn swashbuckling cycle) is said to bear little relation to First National's 1924 adaptation of the Rafael Sabatini novel.<sup>41</sup>

Not surprisingly, Druxman's three categories do not operate without the kind of overlap and exclusion that often attends taxonomism. For instance, an inspection of the second half of James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997) – the band's decision to play on as the ship sinks; Benjamin Guggenheim's preference for his dinner jacket over a life jacket; designer Thomas Andrews' address to a young couple at the fireplace of the first-class lounge – suggests it is a 'direct' remake of the British-made account of the sinking, *A Night to Remember* (Roy Ward Baker, 1958); but the first half of the film – the establishment of the romance between (fictional) characters Rose DeWitt Bukater and Jack Dawson – suggests that it is not only a 'non-remake' of *A Night to Remember*, but perhaps a 'disguised' remake of both *It Happened One Night* (Frank Capra, 1934) and *An Affair to Remember* (Leo McCarey, 1957).<sup>42</sup> In addition, any attempt to determine a single precursor text for *Titanic* (even Druxman's method for distinguishing between types of 'non-fiction' remakes) is further complicated not just by the film's 'inter art intertextuality' (references to paintings, operas, and the like),<sup>43</sup> but by various other reworkings of the *Titanic* disaster: film versions, such as *Saved from the Titanic* (Eclair Film Co., 1912), *In Nacht und Eis* (Herbert Selpin, 1943), *Titanic* (Jean Negulesco,

1953), and also books (Walter Lord's *A Night to Remember*), musicals (*The Unsinkable Molly Brown*), TV-movies (*S.O.S. Titanic*), and historical accounts (Steven Biel's *Down with the Old Canoe: A Cultural History of the Titanic*).

Although the example of *Titanic* presents difficulties for Druxman's taxonomy it does, however, support his further claim that, in addition to industry pragmatism, remaking is located in a filmmaker's desire to repeatedly express (and modify) a particular aesthetic sensibility or world view in light of new developments and interests.<sup>44</sup> In the case of *Titanic*, it is not only Cameron's 'devotion to and love for the ship at the bottom of the ocean',<sup>45</sup> but his well-documented 'preoccupation with precision and historical accuracy'<sup>46</sup> which drives this particular re-telling of the story. In the anthology *Play It Again, Sam*, Stuart McDougal takes up this type of approach, describing Alfred Hitchcock as a director 'who was continuously and obsessively remaking his own work'.<sup>47</sup> This results not only in the repetition of specific shots, sequences and themes,<sup>48</sup> but in the case of Hitchcock's 1955 remake of his own earlier film, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934), it provides the filmmaker with an opportunity to rethink 'the relations between texts, between characters (real and fictional), and between the work of a younger, more exuberant director and a mature craftsman'.<sup>49</sup> In a similar way, Lloyd Michaels argues that while it is difficult to conceive of a more "'faithful" remake' of *Nosferatu*, *A Symphony of Horror* (F. W. Murnau, 1922) than Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu, the Vampyre* (1979) the latter not only pays homage to Murnau's silent classic but simultaneously 'resurrects the ghost of Herzog', remaking in limited ways the director's signature themes and stylistic traits.<sup>50</sup>

Harvey Roy Greenberg takes this type of authorial approach to remaking a step further, modifying Druxman's commercially grounded remake categories to locate the motivation for remakes, 'well beyond the profit principle', in complex, highly personal reasons, based on various 'Oedipal inflections'.<sup>51</sup> Using as his example Steven Spielberg's *Always* (1990), an

'acknowledged, transformed' remake of the WWII fantasy *A Guy Named Joe* (Victor Fleming, 1943), Greenberg finds in 'the intensely rivalrous spirit inhabiting Spielberg's "homage" . . . an unconscious Oedipally driven competitiveness [which] constitutes the dark side of Spielberg's intense admiration for the original [film] and its director [and father surrogate, Victor Fleming]'.<sup>52</sup> Greenberg's 'symptomatic reading'<sup>53</sup> of film remaking is itself an (acknowledged) elaboration of Harold Bloom's theory of influence (and the Freudian analogies that structure it),<sup>54</sup> and a like attempt to shift the relationship between a text (remake) and its particular precursor (original) to that between an author and his (sic) major predecessor(s).<sup>55</sup> In the case of *Always*, Spielberg, at once worshipful and envious of his predecessor (Fleming, and also Spielberg senior, a WWII veteran), returns to his preferred WWII locale (the historical setting for *1941*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Empire of the Sun*, and the later *Saving Private Ryan*) and enters into 'an ambiguous, anxiety ridden struggle with a film [*A Guy Named Joe*] he both wishes to honor and eclipse'.<sup>56</sup>

### Remaking as textual category

While the above factors contribute to an understanding of film remaking, the concept of the remake is never simply reducible to issues of commerce or matters of influence. A second, general (and related) approach suggests that remakes are located in texts (structures) that are produced in accordance with the narrative invention of former film models.<sup>57</sup> At its most contracted, a textual approach leads to accounts of remaking which attempt to reduce all narrative structures to a single, Oedipal logic or variant thereof. Michael Eaton, for instance, notes that 'there are only two possible premises for stories: The Odd Couple and The Fish Out of Water . . . Although Oedipus, if you think about it, is a bit of both'.<sup>58</sup> More commonly (and as for film genre), the desire to confine film remakes to a body of texts or set of textual relationships reveals a tension between 'sharable terms' (sharability) and 'accurate designation' (accuracy).<sup>59</sup> In the case of remaking this is a

conflict between a desire to provide exhaustive lists of film remakes, and one (as in Druxman's taxonomy) to precisely define the category, or various categories, of the remake.

An example of the former approach – of sharability – is Robert Nowlan and Gwendoline Wright Nowlan's almost one thousand page long *Cinema Sequels and Remakes, 1903–1987*, a reference work which alphabetically lists one thousand and twenty five 'primary films', and many more associated remakes and sequels.<sup>60</sup> In a brief (not quite two pages long) introduction, Nowlan and Nowlan make little attempt to define either remake or sequel, but rather take these as received categories, i.e., the principal criterion for selection is that a film has been *previously* designated as a remake or sequel in any two or more of a number of unidentified but 'reliable source[s]', which list remakes and sequels of certain genres of films.<sup>61</sup> While this type of loose definition makes for a wide selection of material (sharability), and does not preclude the inferential reconstruction of at least some of the unspecified principles of selection (through an examination of those films that have been included), Nowlan and Nowlan's intuitive approach underscores the extent to which the remake is conceived more through actual usage and common understanding than through rigorous definition.<sup>62</sup>

If sharability tends toward exhaustive lists of remakes, then accuracy tends toward taxonomism.<sup>63</sup> For instance, in 'Twice-Told Tales', Thomas M. Leitch makes a number of points about the singularity of the remake both among Hollywood films and even among other types of narratives: '[t]he uniqueness of the film remake, a movie based on another movie, or competing with another movie based on the same property, is indicated by the word *property*. Every film adaptation is defined by its legally sanctioned use of material from an earlier model, whose adaptation rights the producers have customarily purchased'.<sup>64</sup> Putting aside for the moment the fact that this description immediately excludes those 'obvious remakes' (Druxman) which do not acknowledge their previous source, the point Leitch wants to make is that although adaptation

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rights (e.g., film adaptation rights of a novel) are something producers of the original work have a right to sell, it is only remakes that 'compete directly and without legal or economic compensation with other versions of the same property'.<sup>65</sup>

[R]emakes differ from . . . adaptations to a new medium because of the triangular relationship they establish among themselves, the original film they remake, and the property on which both films are based. The nature of this triangle is most clearly indicated by the fact that the producers of a remake typically pay no adaptation fees to the makers of the original film, but rather purchase adaptation rights from the authors of the property on which that film was based, even though the remake is competing much more directly with the original film – especially in these days of video, when the original film and the remake are often found side by side on the shelves of rental outlets – than with the story or play or novel on which it is based.<sup>66</sup>

Taking as an initial proposition the triangular relationship among a remake, its original film, and the source for both films, Leitch suggests that any 'given remake can seek to define itself either with primary reference to the film it remakes or to the material on which both films are based; and whether it poses as a new version of an older film or of a story predating either film, it can take as its goal fidelity to the conception of the original story or a revisionary attitude toward that story'.<sup>67</sup> Accordingly, Leitch outlines the following quadripartite taxonomy of the remake: (i) *readaptation*: the remake ignores or treats as inconsequential earlier cinematic adaptations in order to readapt as faithfully as possible (or at least more faithfully than earlier film versions) an original literary property, e.g., the film versions of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Laurence Olivier, 1948; Tony Richardson, 1969; and Franco Zeffirelli, 1990) and *Macbeth* (Orson Welles, 1948; Roman Polanski, 1971); (ii) *update*: unlike the readaptation which seeks to subordinate itself to the 'essence' of a literary classic, the update 'competes directly' with its literary source by adopting an overtly revisionary and transformational attitude toward it, e.g.,

*West Side Story* (Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, 1961), *China Girl* (Abel Ferrara, 1987), and *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (Baz Luhrmann, 1996) as transformed remakes of filmed versions of *Romeo and Juliet* (George Cukor, 1936; Franco Zeffirelli, 1968); (iii) *homage*: like the readaptation which seeks to direct the audience's attention to its literary source, the homage situates itself as a secondary text in order to pay tribute to a previous film version, e.g., Brian de Palma's *Obsession* (1975) and *Body Double* (1986) as homages to Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Fear Eats the Soul* (1973) as a tribute to the Douglas Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows* (1955); (iv) *true remake*: while the homage renounces any claim to be better than its original, the true remake 'deal[s] with the contradictory claims of all remakes – that they are just like their originals only better – [by combining] a focus on a cinematic original with an accommodating stance which seeks to make the original relevant by updating it', e.g., Bob Rafelson's 1981 remake of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Tay Garnett, 1946), and Lawrence Kasdan's *Body Heat* (1981) as a remake of *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944).<sup>68</sup> Leitch concludes that, unlike readaptations, updates, and homages, which only acknowledge one earlier text (literary in the first two cases and cinematic in the third), 'true remakes [emphasise] a triangular notion of intertextuality, since their rhetorical strategy depends on ascribing their value to a classic earlier text [i.e., an original property such as James M. Cain's novel, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*], and protecting that value by invoking a second earlier [film] text as betraying it [Garnett's version as a watered-down film noir, probably due to limitations imposed by the MGM studio and the Production Code of the forties]'.<sup>69</sup>

While Leitch's recognition of the significance of a literary property, and in particular the relationship of a film adaptation and its remake to that property, leads to what at first appears to be a more nuanced taxonomy than that outlined by Druxman, further consideration reveals a number of difficulties, not only among Leitch's

four categories but in relation to his preliminary suppositions. First, while the ubiquity of the Hollywood remake might understandably lead Leitch to conclude that the remake is a particularly cinematic form, one might question to what extent it differs from the remaking of songs in the popular music industry. That is, how does the triadic relationship between (i) the Pet Shop Boys' long remake (of their earlier, shorter remake) of 'Always on My Mind', (ii) the 1972 version of the same song by Elvis Presley, and (iii) the original property (music and lyrics written by Thompson James Christopher, and published by Screen Gems/EMI), differ appreciably from the triangular relationship for the film remake as described by Leitch? Or, to take as another example a case which underscores Leitch's overestimation of the *economic* competition a remake creates for a former adaptation, the Sid Vicious remake of 'My Way' from *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle* (Julien Temple, 1980), and even Gary Oldman's remake of that performance for Alex Cox's *Sid and Nancy* (1986), competes *culturally*, but not economically, with Frank Sinatra's earlier adaptation of a property written by Reveaux, Francois, and Anka. These examples, and (many) others from the popular music industry, adequately conform to, and so problematise, Leitch's initial claim that *the film remake is unique* because of the fact that its producers 'typically pay no adaptation fees to the makers of the original [version], but rather purchase adaptation rights from the authors [publishers] of the property on which that [version] was based'.<sup>70</sup>

A second limitation is that while Druxman at least acknowledges the difficulty of identifying and categorising those films 'that are obviously remakes [but] do not credit their origins',<sup>71</sup> Leitch remains silent in this respect. For instance, Leitch considers *Body Heat* a 'true remake' of *Double Indemnity*, but he does not comment upon the fact that the film's credits do not acknowledge the James M. Cain novel as a source; similarly, Leitch takes *Obsession* and *Body Double* to be 'homages' to *Vertigo* but he fails to note that neither of the films credits either the Alec Coppel and Samuel Taylor screenplay, or the Pierre

Boileau and Thomas Narcejac novel, *D'entre les morts*, upon which the Hitchcock film is based. While the question of identifying unacknowledged remakes is returned to below, Leitch's insistence upon the connection between three elements – a remake, an earlier version, and a literary property – presents a further difficulty in that it marginalises those instances in which a *dyadic* relationship exists between a remake and a previous film *that is itself* (at least in the sense conveyed by Leitch) the original property. Although it might be objected that a published original screenplay constitutes a discrete property, the point to be made here is that the remake of an 'original film property', such as John Badham's *The Assassin [Point of No Return]* (1994), *does not* 'compete directly and without legal or economic compensation' with its earlier version, but (generally) pays adaptation fees to the copyright holder of the original film upon which it is based (in this example, Luc Besson's [*La Femme*] *Nikita* [1990]).<sup>72</sup>

The above example of the American remake of *Nikita* not only demonstrates that a 'triangular relationship' fails to adequately accommodate remakes of those films based upon original stories and screenplays, but highlights the difficulty of Leitch's suggestion that remakes *compete* with earlier versions, and his belief that successful remakes *supersede* and so 'typically threaten the economic viability of their originals'.<sup>73</sup> To stay with the example of the French-Italian production of *Nikita*, it seems doubtful that having successfully played an art-cinema circuit and having been released to home video (variously under the categories of 'cult', 'festival', and 'art-house'), that the appearance of *The Assassin*, initially as a first run theatrical release and then as a mainstream video release would have any appreciable impact (either positive or negative) upon the former's 'economic viability'. Admittedly, *The Assassin* was not *promoted* as a remake of the Besson film, but even a widely publicised remake such as Martin Scorsese's 1991 version of *Cape Fear* did not occasion the burial, or even diminish the cult following, of J. Lee Thompson's earlier (1961) version. On the contrary, the theatrical release of

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the Scorsese film (accompanied by press releases and reviews foregrounding its status as remake) prompted first a video release and then a prime-time national television screening of the Thompson version. The reciprocity of the two versions is further exemplified by *Sight and Sound's* running together of a lead article by Jim Hoberman on Scorsese and *Cape Fear*, and a second briefer article comparing the two versions ('[n]ovelist . . . Jenny Diski watches a video of the first *Cape Fear* and the Scorsese remake – and compares them') and giving details of the availability of the (then recently) re-released CIC video of the 1961 version.<sup>74</sup> While reciprocity may not always be the case – in the international marketplace a local remake may supplant an earlier foreign language and/or culture version<sup>75</sup> – it seems that contemporary remakes generally enjoy a more symbiotic relationship than Leitch's account would have us believe.

While the above examples suggest that Leitch overestimates the extent to which some remakes compete with original film versions, his recognition of the impact that innovations in television technology, particularly home video, have had upon shaping the relationship between a remake and its earlier versions should not be underestimated. Leitch states that during the studio-dominated era of the thirties and forties it was at least in part the belief that films had a 'strictly current value' that enabled studios such as Warners to recycle *The Maltese Falcon* three times in ten years, and release many 'unofficial remakes' of its own films.<sup>76</sup> Although the re-release of successful features, particularly during the late forties and early fifties, gave some films a limited currency outside their initial year of release,<sup>77</sup> the majority of films held in studio libraries were not available for re-viewing until the mid-fifties when the major studios decided to sell or lease their film libraries to television. The release of thousands of pre-1948 features into the television market not only gave the general public the opportunity to see many films that had been held in studio archives since their initial year of release, but provided the possibility of seeing different versions of the same property, produced years or even decades apart, within

weeks or even days of each other. Moreover, and in an instance of what has been described as the 'virtual mobility' of contemporary spectatorship,<sup>78</sup> the television broadcasting of films provided the further possibility of viewing remakes outside of the temporal order of their production, i.e., the repeated screening of the same features meant that it was inevitable that the broadcast of a remake would precede the screening of its original. While Leitch does not address the impact of television, his recognition that a remake and its original circulate in the same video marketplace draws attention to the fact that the introduction of an information storage technology such as videotape radically extends the kind of film literacy, the ability to recognise and cross-reference multiple versions of the same property, that is inaugurated by the age of television.

The ever-expanding availability of texts and technologies, and the unprecedented awareness of film history among new Hollywood filmmakers and contemporary audiences, is closely related to the general concept of *intertextuality*, an in principle determination which requires that texts be understood not as self-contained structures but as 'the repetition and transformations of other [absent] textual structures'.<sup>79</sup> In Mikhail lampolski's discussion of intertextuality and film, the 'semantic fullness' of a text is precisely 'the result of its ability to establish a connection with [these other] texts that came before it, and occasionally with those that came later'.<sup>80</sup> Refusing to reduce this type of semantic productivity to a simple question of influence, lampolski draws instead upon Saussure's (and Kristeva's) account of the *anagram* to define the intertextual element – the quotation – as that '*fragment of the text that violates its linear development [its internal, 'textual' repetitions] and derives the motivation that integrates it into the text from outside the text itself*'.<sup>81</sup> As this description suggests, the 'semantic anomaly' of the quotation disrupts the linear unfolding of the text impelling the reader toward a non-linear (tabular) intertextual reading, but one that may ultimately enrich meaning and salvage the very same narrative linearity that was initially

compromised.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, Lampolski points out that an 'embedded quotation', one that seems to derive its motivation from the logic of the text and so dissolves into the film's mimetic structure (i.e., a quotation known to the author but not the reader) is, paradoxically, *not a quote* and, conversely, an 'anomalous moment' can *become a quote* through the reader making specific moves of exegesis, regardless of whether this expresses the author's intentions.<sup>83</sup> Adapted to the case of the film remake, this suggests that '[r]emaking is not necessarily about intended effects, nor necessarily about precise identification of an intertext. It is, or it may be, a more general intertextual relation, although this doesn't mean that it is unstructured or imprecise in its operations'.<sup>84</sup>

Film remaking can be regarded as a specific (institutionalised) aspect of a broader and more open-ended intertextuality. It ranges from the limited repetition of a classic shot or scene, e.g., the many reprises of the Odessa Steps sequence of *The Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925) – *Bananas* (Woody Allen, 1971), *Brazil* (Terry Gilliam, 1985), *The Untouchables* (Brian De Palma, 1987), *Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult* (Peter Segal, 1994) – to the more general repetition of a single film, e.g., the successive versions of the *Titanic* story. Generally speaking, film remakes are intertextual structures which are stabilised, or *limited*, through the naming and (usually) legally sanctioned (i.e., copyrighted) use of a particular literary and/or cinematic source which serves as a retrospectively designated point of origin and semantic fixity. In addition, these intertextual structures (unlike those of genre) are highly particular in their repetition of narrative units, and these repetitions most often (though certainly not always) relate to 'the order of the message,' rather than to that of 'the code'.<sup>85</sup> While these factors yield some degree of consensus, any easy categorisation of the remake is frustrated (as already seen) by (i) films which do not credit an 'original' text, but which repeat both general and particular elements of the original's narrative unfolding, e.g., *Body Heat* as an uncredited remake of *Double Indemnity*, and *The Big Chill* (Lawrence Kasdan, 1983) as an

unacknowledged remake of *The Return of the Secaucus Seven* (John Sayles, 1980);<sup>86</sup> and (ii) films based on a like source – a literary work or historical incident – but which differ significantly in their treatment of narrative units, e.g., *The Bounty* (Roger Donaldson, 1984) as a 'non-remake' of *Mutiny on the Bounty* (Frank Lloyd, 1935 and Lewis Milestone, 1962); and Tony Richardson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968) as a 'non-remake' of Michael Curtiz's 1936 version. Furthermore, the intertextual referentiality between either 'non-remakes' or 'unacknowledged remakes' and their 'originals' is to a large extent *extratextual*,<sup>87</sup> being conveyed through institutions such as film reviewing and exhibition, e.g., the BFI/National Film Theatre's programme describes four films from Paul Schrader scripts – *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976), *Rolling Thunder* (John Flynn, 1977), *Hardcore* (Schrader, 1979), and *Patty Hearst* (Schrader, 1988) – as 'updates', or remakes, of *The Searchers* (John Ford, 1956).<sup>88</sup>

### Remaking as critical category

Remakes do not consist simply of bodies of films but, like genres, are located too in 'expectations and audience knowledge',<sup>89</sup> and in 'the institutions that govern and support specific reading strategies'.<sup>90</sup> The concept of intertextuality needs, for instance, to be related to the ever-expanding availability of texts and technologies, and the unprecedented awareness of film history among new Hollywood filmmakers and contemporary audiences. As seen in Leitch's taxonomy, a remake can be categorised according to whether its intertextual referent is *literary* (the 'readaptation', the 'update') or *cinematic* (the 'homage', the 'true remake'). In the latter case, Leitch states that while homages, such as *The Thing* (John Carpenter, 1982) and *Invaders from Mars* (Tobe Hooper, 1986), establish direct intertextual relations to their original films, these quotations or 'rewards . . . take the form of throwaway jokes whose point is not necessary to the [films'] continuity, and which therefore provide an optional bonus of pleasure to those in the know'.<sup>91</sup> While this may

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seem consistent with Umberto Eco's account of the 'intertextual dialogue' (i.e., the instance where a quotation is explicit and recognisable to an increasingly sophisticated, ciné-literate audience),<sup>92</sup> what Leitch does not sufficiently stress here is that his examples of the homage (and of the true remake) – all drawn from the new Hollywood cinema – suggest a historically specific response to a post-modern (or post-*Jaws*) circulation and recirculation of images and texts. This does not mean that the classical Hollywood remake never takes an earlier film as its intertextual referent, but rather that, as the continuity system develops through the pre-classical period (1908–17), direct intertextual referentiality is mostly displaced by an industrial imperative for standardisation which prioritises the intertextual relation of genres, cycles and stars. Accordingly, as the classical narrative strives to create a coherent, self-contained fictional world according to specific mechanisms of internal (or *intratextual*) repetition, direct *intertextual* referentiality to either and/or both literary properties (novels, short-stories, plays, etc) and earlier film versions becomes an *extratextual* referentiality, carried by such apparatuses as advertising and promotional materials (posters, lobby cards, commercial tie-ins, etc), motion picture magazines, review articles and academic film criticism.

What seems to happen with contemporary Hollywood cinema, particularly in the case of remakes, is that while the *intratextual* mechanisms of classical continuity are mostly respected, *intertextual* referentiality (to genres, cycles and stars) is sometimes complemented by what is perceived – *within specific interpretive communities* – as the explicit and recognizable *intertextual* quotation of plot motifs and stylistic features, peculiar to earlier film versions. To take a general example, and one that underscores the assertion that 'allusion constitute[s] . . . the very briefest form of "remaking"',<sup>93</sup> the narrative of *Unforgiven* (Clint Eastwood, 1992) assumes as its primary intertexts the revisionist westerns of the sixties and seventies, and the Eastwood star persona, but (re)viewers additionally see the film as a kind of sequel (the Will Munny character as

the now aged 'Man-with-no-name' from Eastwood's spaghetti westerns), and as a homage to the films of both Sam Peckinpah and John Ford.<sup>94</sup> More specifically, Martin Scorsese's remake of *Cape Fear* may be said to work perfectly well as a conventional thriller (a psychopath attacks a 'normal' – in this case, dysfunctional – American family), but the new *Cape Fear* also 'assumes [in its reworking of the original Bernard Herrmann score, and the casting of original lead players in cameo roles] that the viewer has seen the earlier one, perhaps even as recently as Scorsese himself'.<sup>95</sup> Another example, Jim McBride's *Breathless* (1983), displays a 'neo-noir' predilection for *l'amour fou*, but also quotes its Godard original (*A bout de souffle*, 1959) in its smallest detail (a character's name, a player's gesture), and more generally embraces Godard's enthusiasm for American pop-cultural iconography: the title song, 'Breathless', by the Killer – Jerry Lee Lewis; the direct quotation from Joseph H. Lewis' *Gun Crazy* (1950); the Roy Lichtenstein-type lifts from Marvel Comics' *The Silver Surfer*; the collectable American automobile – the 1957 Ford Thunderbird, the 1959 Cadillac Eldorado. While it is possible to find instances of 'direct' quotation in the classical cinema, the above examples demonstrate that '[a]t whatever level of generality the intertext exists (or rather can be posited), every remake simultaneously refers to and remakes the genre to which that intertext belongs, and this genre may itself be the only intertext'.<sup>96</sup>

The type of *intertextual* referentiality which characterises contemporary American film circulates in a historically specific context. Accordingly, the identification of (and indeed the commercial decision to remake) an earlier film is located in particular *extratextual*, institutional or discursive practices. As in Noël Carroll's discussion of new Hollywood 'allusionism', the question of *intertextual* referentiality needs to be related to the radical extension of film literacy and the enthusiasm for (American) film history that took hold in the United States during the sixties and early seventies.<sup>97</sup> Partly made possible by the release of Hollywood features to television and the wider accessibility of new technologies (e.g.,

16mm film projection), this re-evaluation, or legitimisation, of Hollywood cultural product was underwritten by such additional factors as the importation of the French *politique des auteurs*, the upsurge of repertory theatre short-seasons, the expansion of film courses in American universities, and the emergence of professional associations, such as the American Film Institute. Accordingly, and this is evident from the above examples – *Unforgiven*, *Cape Fear*, *Breathless* – the selection and recognition of films, and bodies of films, for quotation and reworking (e.g., the work of auteurs, Ford and Peckinpah; the cult movie, *Cape Fear*; the *nouvelle vague* landmark, *A bout de souffle*) can be located in the institutionally determined practice of film canon formation, and its contributing projects – the determination to comment upon and conserve a film heritage, the discussion and citation of particular films in popular and academic film criticism, the selective release and re-release of films to theatrical and video distribution windows, the proliferation of talk and web-sites on the internet, and (in circular fashion) the decision of other filmmakers to evoke earlier films and recreate cinema history.<sup>98</sup>

An understanding of the formation and maintenance of a film canon in turn goes some way toward explaining why remakes of highly institutionalised film noirs – e.g., *D.O.A.* (Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel, 1988), *No Way Out* (Roger Donaldson, 1987), and *Against All Odds* (Taylor Hackford, 1984) – are discussed with reference to their originals (*D.O.A.* [Rudolph Maté, 1949], *The Big Clock* [John Farrow, 1948], and *Out of the Past* [Jacques Tourneur, 1947], respectively), while films such as Martin Scorsese's version of *The Age of Innocence* (1993) and James Dearden's remake of *A Kiss Before Dying* (1991) defer, not to their little known, or (now) rarely seen, earlier film versions – *The Age of Innocence* (Wesley Ruggles, 1924 and Philip Moeller, 1934), and *A Kiss Before Dying* (Gerd Oswald, 1961) – but to the authority of an established literary canon: *The Age of Innocence* is based on Edith Wharton's 1920 Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *A Kiss Before Dying* is adapted from a best-selling novel by Ira

Levin. Indeed, and in accordance with the canonisation of the work of Alfred Hitchcock, the more direct intertextual referent for the remake of *A Kiss Before Dying* is Hitchcock's *Vertigo* – a clip from the film appears diegetically on a character's television screen, and in addition to the 'figure' of the *doppelgänger* there is allusion to Hitchcockian plot structure and motif: '[I]liberally alluding to Hitchcock by killing off his leading actress in the first reel, Dearden includes subtler references like the washing out of hair-dye and the cop who just won't leave'.<sup>99</sup> In a similar way, Kolker suggests that Scorsese's *Cape Fear* is not simply a 'direct remake' of the 1962 version, but a 'secret remake' of three 'minor' Hitchcock films: *Stage Fright* (1950), *Strangers on a Train* (1951), and *I Confess* (1953): '[*Cape Fear*] adopts the plot of its predecessor while gaining a deeper structure through an allusive tag game with [these] three Hitchcock films'.<sup>100</sup>

The endless chain of connections – both voluntary and involuntary – which characterises film remaking is further sketched in Lesley Stern's *The Scorsese Connection*. Stern argues, for instance, that Scorsese's version of *Cape Fear*, in its reworking of elements of horror and film noir, is as much a remake of *The Night of the Hunter* (Charles Laughton, 1955) as it is of Thompson's earlier film version.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, Stern sees Max Cady (Robert DeNiro) from *Cape Fear* as a 'reincarnation' of *Taxi Driver*'s Travis Bickle (also played by DeNiro) who, in turn, is a kind of 'resurrected' Ethan Edwards, the John Wayne character from *The Searchers*.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, Stern states that 'it is not just characters who are reincarnated; ideas persist, questions that are not answered, anomalies that drive by night through a variety of cinematic landscapes [return]'.<sup>103</sup> In the case of *The Searchers*, Stern traces an elaborate exchange, 'a network of similarities, a kind of cinematic scar tissue [it is the Indian Chief 'Scar' whom Ethan pursues] that stretches, extends over the continuity of the celluloid surface'.<sup>104</sup> In *The Searchers* and *Taxi Driver*, this exchange is not just (to give two examples) an oscillation between the terms of 'home' and 'away', or the reproduction of a prohibition against contamination and miscegenation, but

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- Travis Bickle (Robert DeNiro) in *Taxi Driver* as 'a kind of resurrected Ethan Edwards'.

more broadly the ghostly return of 'a troubling scenario of irresolution. . . . The repetition . . . (aimless yet compulsive) . . . of the obsessive structure of the films [of all films] themselves'.<sup>105</sup>

The above examples of *A Kiss Before Dying*, *Cape Fear* and *The Searchers/Taxi Driver* demonstrate that 'the intertext, the precursor text, is never singular and never a moment of pure origin'.<sup>106</sup> This is nowhere more evident than in *Breathless*, the American remake of *A bout de souffle*. At one level, *Breathless* is a genre movie, an outlaw romance which draws heavily on the romantic star persona developed by Richard Gere in films like *American Gigolo* (1980) and *An Officer and a Gentleman* (1982). For a contemporary audience, the *Breathless* update is a 'suitably jazzy, sexy entertainment',<sup>107</sup> but its identification as remake may be the occasion for an *interpretive shift*, restricting attention to particular scenes and to a comparative analysis of the remake to its original.<sup>108</sup> In this way the

former version *can* come to function as a kind of fixity against which the remake is evaluated, but 'there can never be a simple original uncomplicated by the structure of the remake'.<sup>109</sup> Just as *Breathless* admits to other intertexts (its makers screened *Gun Crazy*, *Killer's Kiss*, and *High Sierra* during pre-production<sup>110</sup>), *A bout de souffle* draws upon classic film noirs – *The Enforcer*, *Ten Seconds to Hell*, *The Harder They Fall*, *Whirlpool* – and a host of inter-art intertexts,



- John Ford's much quoted *The Searchers* 'spreads a cinematic scar tissue over the celluloid surface'.

among them: Paul Klee's *The Timid Brute* (1938), Picasso's *The Lovers* (1923), Faulkner's *The Wild Palms* (1939) and Maurice Sachs' *Abracadabra*.<sup>111</sup> Understood in relation to a vast body of critical writing on Godard, *Breathless* is but one moment in an elaborate chain of reworkings: Godard as critic rewrites Hollywood cinema; Andrew Sarris rewrites Godard as critic; Godard remakes Hollywood cinema in *A bout de souffle*; Godard remakes *A bout de souffle* in *Pierrot le fou* (1965); McBride remakes Godard in *David Holzman's Diary* (1967); McBride remakes *A bout de souffle* in *Breathless*; Quentin Tarantino remakes everyone in *Pulp Fiction* (1994).<sup>112</sup>



• Godard's densely referential *A bout de souffle* (1959).

Like all critical constructs (genre included), film remaking – quotation, allusion, adaptation – is created and sustained through the repeated use of terminology.<sup>113</sup> The suggestion, that the very limited direct intertextual referentiality between the remake and its original is organized according to an extratextual referentiality, located in historically specific discursive formations – especially film criticism and reviewing, but also copyright law and authorship, canon formation and film literacy – has consequences for purely textual descriptions of the remake, particularly those which seek to ground the category in a rigid distinction between an original story and its new discursive incarnation.<sup>114</sup> Aside from the questionable move of assuming that the unchanging essence of a film's story can somehow be abstracted from the mutable disposition of its expression,<sup>115</sup> demarcation along the lines of story and

discourse is evidently frustrated by those remakes which repeat not only the narrative invention of an original property but seek, for instance, to recreate the expressive design of an earlier film (e.g., *Obsession* as a reconstruction of the 'mood and manner' of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*)<sup>116</sup> or to rework the style of an entire oeuvre or genre (e.g., *Miller's Crossing* [Joel Coen, 1990] as the 'essential' Hammett, or *Body Heat* as the archetypal recreation of the film noir). More importantly, while it might appear 'an elementary and intuitively given fact that a story can be told in different ways and remain, in an important sense, the same story',<sup>117</sup> the identification of exactly which elements shall count as the fundamental units of narrative in the determination of the similar and the same – i.e., in the identification of the remake and its original – becomes (especially in the absence of a screen credit acknowledging an original property) a theoretical construct, or a function of the discursive context of the film's production and reception. These 'contextual forms of intertextuality',<sup>118</sup> which include film industry and other public discourses, shift attention from purely textual markers to the identification of an interpretive frame. That is, while a general narrative and cinematic competence enables the construction of an intratextually determined hierarchy of story descriptions, which range from the most succinct to the most detailed, the construction of a particular intertextual relation between a remake and its presumed original is *an act of interpretation*, one which is 'limited and relative – not to a [viewing] subject but to the interpretive grid (the regime of reading) through which both the subject position and the textual relations are constituted'.<sup>119</sup> Finally, and as Frow argues generally in relation to the concept of intertextuality,<sup>120</sup> what is important to an account of the remake is not the detailed 'identification of particular . . . intertextual source[s]', which function as retrospectively designated points of origin, but the determination of 'a more general discursive structure' – *the genre of re-viewing labelled 'remake'*.

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In conclusion, it seems necessary to stress the need for further investigation and research into the concept of film remaking, in both its legal-industrial and critical-interpretive definitions. As Stern points out, there may be no simple answer to what it is about the term 'remaking' that makes it 'peculiarly cinematic', but the pursuit of just what defines film remaking and characterises its intersection with other practices of repetition would need to include '[an engage[ment] with the industrial nature of the cinema (questions of what constitutes a "property" and questions of copyright, for instance), [an engagement with] the peculiarity of cinematic genre, with the nature of cinematic quotation, and with how to conceive of cinematic intertextuality as a question of cultural history'.<sup>121</sup> Beyond textual approaches to film remaking, beyond the identification of endlessly proliferating patterns of repetition and difference, future research would locate film remaking – as has been argued above – in cinematic (and general) discursive fields, in such historically specific technologies as copyright law and authorship, canon formation and media literacy, film criticism and film re-viewing.

### Notes

- 1 Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal, eds, *Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes*, University of California Press, 1998. More recent attempts to theorise (mainly the American remaking of French films) include: Jennifer Forrest and Leonard R. Koos (eds), *Dead Ringers: The Remake in Theory and Practice*, State University of New York Press, 2002; and Lucy Mazdon, *Encore Hollywood: Remaking French Cinema*, British Film Institute, 2000.
- 2 Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction*, Blackwell, 1999: 202.
- 3 David Wills, 'The French Remark: *Breathless* and Cinematic Citationality', in Horton and McDougal, eds, *Play It Again, Sam*: 148.
- 4 Rick Altman, *Film/Genre*, British Film Institute, 1999: 84.
- 5 Imelda Whelehan, 'Adaptations: The Contemporary Dilemmas', in Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, eds, *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, Routledge, 1999: 3.
- 6 Altman, *Film/Genre*: 83–84.
- 7 Ibid.: 85.
- 8 On this point, see Constantine Verevis, 'Psycho Redux', *Hitchcock Annual*, 2000–2001: 155–58.
- 9 Michael B. Druxman, *Make it Again, Sam: A Survey of Movie Remakes*, A. S. Barnes, 1975.
- 10 John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History*, Blackwell, 1986; and 'Intertextuality and Ontology', in Michael Worton and Judith Still, eds, *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*, Manchester University Press, 1990.
- 11 Lesley Stern, *The Scorsese Connection*, British Film Institute, 1995; and 'Emma in Los Angeles: Remaking the Book and the City', in James Naremore, ed, *Film Adaptation*, Athlone: 2000.
- 12 John Frow, 'Rev. of *Play It Again, Sam*', *Screening the Past*, <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/www/screeningthepast/shorts/reviews/rev0799/jfbr7a.htm>; Lesley Stern, 'Rev. of *Play It Again, Sam*', *Modernism/Modernity*, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/modernism-modernity/v007/7.1stern.html>
- 13 Altman, *Film/Genre*: 86.
- 14 Ibid.:84.
- 15 John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video*, rev. ed., Routledge, 1992: 30.
- 16 Altman, *Film/Genre*:112.
- 17 Tino Balio, 'Introduction to Part II', in Tino Balio, ed, *Hollywood in the Age of Television*, Unwin Hyman, 1990; J. Hoberman, 'Ten Years That Shook the World', *American Film*, June 1985: 34–59; Stephen M. Silverman, 'Hollywood Cloning: Sequels, Prequels, Remakes, and Spin-Offs', *American Film*, July-August, 1978: 24–30.
- 18 Thomas Schatz, 'The New Hollywood', in Jim Collins, Hilary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins, eds., *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, Routledge: 1993.
- 19 J. Hoberman, 'Facing the Nineties', in *Vulgar Modernism: Writing on Movies and Other Media*, Temple, 1991: 1–2.
- 20 Reviewing a sample of 3,490 films from between 1940 and 1979 Thomas Simonet argues that far more 'recycled script' films appeared before the conglomerate takeovers, and perceptions that remaking has increased in the 'new Hollywood' may be governed by comparisons with the previous decade only. See 'Conglomerates and Content: Remakes, Sequels, and Series in The New Hollywood', in Bruce A. Austin, ed, *Current Research in Film: Audiences, Economics, and Law*, Vol. 3, Ablex, 1987.
- 21 Stephen Harvey, 'Can't Stop the Remakes', *Film Comment*, September–October 1980: 50–53.
- 22 Mark Crispin Miller, 'Hollywood: The Ad', *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1990: 59–62.
- 23 Simonet, 'Conglomerates and Content':154.
- 24 Ibid., p. 155.
- 25 Raymond Bellour, *The Analysis of Film*, ed. Constance Penley, Indiana University Press, 2000.
- 26 See Robert P. Kolker, 'Algebraic Figures: Recalculating the Hitchcock Formula', in Horton and McDougal: 36; Steve Neale, 'Questions of Genre', *Screen* vol. 31, no. 1, 1990: 56; Altman, *Film/Genre*: 115.

- 27 Druxman, *Make it Again, Sam*: 9.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.:13.
- 34 Tino Balio, *Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise 1930–1939*, History of the American Cinema, vol. 5, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993: 99.
- 35 Robert Gustafson quoted. in Balio.
- 36 Ibid. Thomas Schatz similarly notes the reliance of Hollywood studios, in particular Warner Bros., on pre-sold movies and story properties. See *Boom and Bust: The American Cinema in the 1940s*, History of the American Cinema, vol. 6, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1997: 40–41 and 64–65.
- 37 Druxman, *Make it Again, Sam*: 15.
- 38 Ibid.: 18–20.
- 39 Balio, *Grand Design*: 100.
- 40 Druxman, *Make it Again, Sam*: 15.
- 41 Ibid.:13–15.
- 42 David M. Lubin, *Titanic*, British Film Institute, 1999: 36 and 72.
- 43 Ibid.: 120.
- 44 Druxman, *Make it Again, Sam*: 20.
- 45 Alexandra Keller, "'Size Does Matter": Notes on *Titanic* and James Cameron as Blockbuster Auteur', in Kevin S. Sandler and Gaylyn Studlar, eds, *Titanic: Anatomy of a Blockbuster*, Rutgers, 1999: 133.
- 46 Justin Wyatt and Katherine Vlesmas, 'The Drama of Recoupment: On the Mass Media Negotiation of *Titanic*', in Sandler and Studlar, eds, *Titanic*: 35.
- 47 Stuart Y. McDougal, 'The Director Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock Remakes Himself', in Horton and McDougal: 52.
- 48 Ibid.: 53.
- 49 Ibid.:67.
- 50 Lloyd Michaels, 'Nosferatu, or the Phantom of the Cinema', in Horton and McDougal: 245.
- 51 Harvey Roy Greenberg, 'Raiders of the Lost Text: Remaking as Contested Homage in *Always*', *Journal of Popular Film and Television* vol. 18, no. 4, 1991: 115–30. Reprinted in Horton and McDougal: 115–30. Greenberg follows Druxman's taxonomy to outline the three following categories: (i) *the acknowledged, close remake*: the original film is replicated with little or no change, e.g., *Ben Hur* (1907, 1925, 1959); (ii) *the acknowledged, transformed remake*: there are substantial transformations of character, time and setting, but the original film is variably acknowledged, ranging from a small screen credit to foregrounding in promotion, e.g., *A Star Is Born* (1976), *Heaven Can Wait* (1978), *Stella* and *Always* (both 1990); (iii) *the unacknowledged, disguised remake*: minor or major alterations (in character, time and setting) are undertaken but the audience is not informed of the original film version, e.g., studio-era remakes such as Warner's *The Wagons Roll at Night* (1941) remake of *Kid Galahad* (1937).
- 52 Ibid.: 166–67.
- 53 David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*, Harvard, 1989.
- 54 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, Oxford, New York, 1973.
- 55 Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*. Routledge, 1981: 107–10; and Michael Worton and Judith Still, 'Introduction', in Worton and Still, 1990: 27–29.
- 56 Greenberg, 'Raiders of the Lost Text': 170.
- 57 Altman, *Film/Genre*: 84.
- 58 Michael Eaton, 'Condemned to Repeats', *Sight and Sound*, December 1991: 4.
- 59 Altman, *Film/Genre*: 87.
- 60 Robert A. Nowlan and Gwendoline Wright Nowlan, *Cinema Sequels and Remakes, 1903-1987*, McFarland, 1989.
- 61 Ibid.: xi–xii.
- 62 In this respect see also Simonet's 'Conglomerate and Content', a survey of recycled scripts, i.e., remakes, sequels and series, in which each film is categorised not according to content, but according to the text of a film review.
- 63 The most recent and elaborate of remake taxonomies is the one proposed by Robert Eberwein: fifteen categories, most with subdivisions. See 'Remakes and Cultural Studies', in Horton and McDougal: 28–31.
- 64 Thomas M. Leitch, 'Twice-Told Tales: The Rhetoric of the Remake', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1990: 138. See also the revised version 'Twice-Told Tales: Disavowal and the Rhetoric of the Remake', in Forrest and Koos: 37–62.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid.: 139.
- 67 Ibid.: 142.
- 68 Ibid.: 142–45.
- 69 Ibid.: 147.
- 70 Ibid.: 139.
- 71 Druxman, *Make it Again, Sam*: 9.
- 72 The titles to *The Assassin* state that it is 'based on Luc Besson's "*Nikita*"' (the latter was both written and directed by Besson). While the payment of copyright fees is *generally* the case, there are exceptions. For instance, *Black Cat* (Steven Shin, 1991), a Hong Kong film which closely follows the narrative unfolding of *Nikita* does not acknowledge Besson's film, and *A Fistful of Dollars*, Sergio Leone's uncredited 1964 remake of *Yojimbo* (Akira Kurosawa, 1961), was taken to court where the latter's producers were awarded exclusive distribution rights in Japan.
- 73 Leitch, 'Twice-Told Tales': 139.

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- 74 J. Hoberman, 'Sacred and Profane', *Sight and Sound*, February 1992: 8–11; and Jenny Diski, 'The Shadow Within', *Sight and Sound*, February 1992: 12–13.
- 75 For instance, the producers of the Brazilian *Costinha e o King Mong* (1977), a parodic remake of *King Kong* (1933/1976), capitalised on the advertising apparatus and pre-release publicity for Guillermin's 1976 remake, to release a version that ran simultaneously with the American remake in Brazilian theatres. See João Luiz Vieira and Robert Stam, 'Parody and Marginality: The Case of Brazilian Cinema', in Manuel Alvarado and John O. Thompson (eds), *The Media Reader*, British Film Institute, 1990: 94. While it is likely that both versions benefited from this arrangement, it seems probable too that *King Mong* siphoned some of its older sibling's box-office receipt.
- 76 Leitch, 'Twice-Told Tales': 139.
- 77 John P. McElwee, 'Theatrical Re-issues', *Films in Review*, December 1989: 593–96; January–February 1990: 21–25.
- 78 Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, University of California Press, 1993.
- 79 Frow, 'Intertextuality and Ontology': 45.
- 80 Mikhail Lampolski, *The Memory of Tiresias: Intertextuality and Film*, trans. Harsha Ram, University of California Press, 1998: 8.
- 81 Ibid.: 31.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 Ibid.: 32–35.
- 84 Frow, 'Review of *Play It Again, Sam*'.
- 85 Frow, 'Intertextuality and Ontology': 45. Some remakes also repeat at the level of the cinematic code, e.g., Brian De Palma's *Obsession* (1976) not only repeats the narrative invention of Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), but 'resurrects some of Hitchcock's most visible [stylistic] characteristics (tight plot construction, extended *doppelgänger* effects, precise control of point-of-view)', Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Review of *Obsession*', *Monthly Film Bulletin*, vol. 43, no. 513, 1976: 217.
- 86 Most interesting here is the series of films based on W. R. Burnett's 1940 novel, *High Sierra: High Sierra* (1941), *Colorado Territory* (1949), *I Died a Thousand Times* (1955). Neither of the remakes which followed the 1941 adaptation acknowledged the Burnett novel, but the films establish another type of seriality: *High Sierra* was directed by Raoul Walsh and written for the screen by Burnett; *Colorado Territory* was also directed by Walsh but Burnett did not contribute to the screenplay; *I Died a Thousand Times* was directed by Stuart Heisler but again adapted for the screen by Burnett.
- 87 Friedberg, *Window Shopping*: 175–76.
- 88 'The Searchers: A Family Tree', *National Film Theatre Programme*, November–December 1981: 2–6.
- 89 Neale, 'Questions of Genre': 51; and Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, Routledge, 2000: 31.
- 90 Altman, *Film/Genre*: 91.
- 91 Leitch, 'Twice-Told Tales': 141.
- 92 Umberto Eco, 'Innovation and Repetition: Between Modern and Post-Modern Aesthetics', *Daedalus*, vol. 114, no. 4, 1985: 161–84.
- 93 John Biguenet, 'Double Takes: The Role of Allusion in Cinema', in Horton and McDougal: 131.
- 94 For instance, Pat Dowell states that *Unforgiven* is 'inescapably Fordian' in its mood, lifting a 'signature scene' – the man silhouetted against the sunset, looking over the grave of his beloved wife – from *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949) and *Young Mr Lincoln* (1939), 'Review of *Unforgiven*', *Cineaste*, vol. 19, nos. 2–3, 1992: 72.
- 95 Hoberman, 'Sacred and Profane': 11.
- 96 Frow, 'Review of *Play It Again, Sam*'.
- 97 Noël Carroll, 'The Future of Allusion: Hollywood in the Seventies (and Beyond)', *October*, no. 20, 1982: 51–81.
- 98 Janet Staiger, 'The Politics of Film Canons', *Cinema Journal*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1985: 4.
- 99 Philip Strick, 'Review of *A Kiss Before Dying*', *Sight and Sound*, June 1991: 50.
- 100 Kolker, 'Algebraic Figures': 40.
- 101 Stern, *The Scorsese Connection*: 198.
- 102 Ibid.: 49 and 170.
- 103 Ibid.
- 104 Ibid.: 58.
- 105 Ibid.: 33–34.
- 106 Frow, 'Review of *Play It Again, Sam*'.
- 107 *Variety Movie Guide*, ed. Derek Elley, Hamlyn, 1998.
- 108 For instance, Gilbert Adair says that 'whatever its precise status – homage, pastiche, paraphrase, vulgarisation' – the film is in 'no significant sense' a remake of *A bout de souffle*, but rather 'a wet, pulpy, squelching kiss lovingly applied to Hollywood's backside', 'Review of *Breathless*', *Monthly Film Bulletin*, vol. 50, no. 596, September 1983: 241–42.
- 109 Wills, 'The French Remark': 157.
- 110 L. M. Kit Carson, 'Breathless Diary', *Film Comment*, May–June 1983: 33–38.
- 111 Dudley Andrew, 'Breathless: Old as New', in Dudley Andrew, ed., *Breathless: Jean-Luc Godard, director*, Rutgers, 1987: 3–20; and T. Jefferson Kline, *Screening the Text: Intertextuality in New Wave French Cinema*, Johns Hopkins, 1992: 184–221.
- 112 For recent accounts of the two versions of *Breathless*, see not only Wills, 'The French Remark,' but also Carolyn A. Durham, *Double Takes: Culture and Gender in French Films and Their American Remakes*, University Press of New England, 1998: 49–69, and Lucy Mazdon, *Encore Hollywood*: 78–88.
- 113 Altman, *Film/Genre*: 84.
- 114 Leitch, 'Twice-Told Tales': 143.

- 115 Peter Brunette and David Wills, *Screen/Play: Derrida and Film Theory*, Princeton, 1989: 53; Krin Gabbard, 'The Ethnic Oedipus: *The Jazz Singer* and Its Remakes', in Horton and McDougal: 96.
- 116 Rosenbaum, 'Review of *Obsession*': 217.
- 117 Jonathan Culler, 'Defining Narrative Units', in Roger Fowler, ed, *Style and Structure in Literature: Essays in the New Stylistics*, Blackwell, 1975: 123.
- 118 Barbara Klinger, 'Digressions at the Cinema: Commodification and Reception in Mass Culture', in Patrick Brantlinger and James Naremore, eds, *Modernity and Mass Culture*, Indiana, 1991: 122.
- 119 Frow, *Marxism and Literary History*:155.
- 120 Frow, 'Intertextuality and Ontology':46.
- 121 Stern, 'Review of *Play It Again, Sam*'.