

## The Re-make as (Dis)avowal: The Ambivalent Stances of the Hollywood Blockbuster Horror Remakes of the 2000s<sup>1</sup>

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The prefix “re-” says it all, both the motive for, and the means of, remaking a film: you do it for a profit and you do it by improving on the original in terms of technology and technique. As Daniel Protopopoff and Michel Serceau (1989) have pointed out, remakes “benefit from the technical improvements of cinema,” such as “stereophonic sound, wide screens” or “color” (26, my translation). They are also thought to improve in other respects that can equally be considered in terms of technique: the quality of the acting, the effectiveness of the narration, and ultimately, by Hollywood standards, the degree of verisimilitude.<sup>2</sup> This article will attempt to foreground some of the contradictions immanent to the remake. I will argue that the stance of the remake is a disavowal of the very terms contained in the prefix. I am heavily indebted to Thomas Leitch’s (1990, 2002) argument that the remake is grounded in a “trope of disavowal,” a stance which, in my view, is both formal and pragmatic, involving both the film itself and the way it is marketed by producers and received by audiences.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the ideas have appeared in *Making and Remaking Horror in the 1970s and 2000s*.

<sup>2</sup> The cast and crew of contemporary remakes often emphasize this aspect (Roche 278). For instance, in the DVD extra “Surviving the Dawn,” actor Jake Weber says that *Dawn of the Dead* (Zack Snyder, 2004) tries to “play it a little closer to the vest [than *Dawn of the Dead* (George A. Romero, 1978)], and make it more about real people, and what would we do if we woke up and the world went mad” [2:50].

Michael B. Druxman (1975) and Harvey Roy Greenberg (1998) have proposed the following typologies of the remake:<sup>3</sup> Druxman distinguishes between “the direct remake,” “the disguised remake” and “the non-remake” (173-74); Greenberg between “the acknowledged, close remake,” “the unacknowledged, disguised remake” and “the acknowledged, transformed remake” (126). For Constantine Verevis, Druxman’s approach to classifying remakes is “commercially grounded,” while Greenberg’s is more “authorial” (8). What Greenberg mainly does is add the discourse of producers, critics and viewers to Druxman’s commercial and formal classification. The usage of the word “acknowledge” invites us to take into account both the film and the paratext (posters, production notes, interviews, DVD extras), and more generally, the formal and pragmatic levels.

Thomas Leitch has identified four “stances” of the remake vis-à-vis its source material (“Twice-Told” 45), without making it absolutely clear whether these “stances” are pragmatic, formal or both; this is largely due to the fact that he provides few examples to illustrate his claims. Leitch’s four stances include the “readaptation” and the “update” which involve different attitudes towards the adaptation of a previously adapted literary work (“Twice-Told” 45, 47), and the “homage” and the “true remake” which imply different attitudes towards an original film. The “homage” pays tribute to a classic (“Twice-Told” 47) and “renounc[es] any claim to be better” (“Twice-Told” 49), while the “true remake” “combines a focus on a cinematic original with an accommodating stance which seeks to make the original relevant by updating it” (“Twice-Told” 49); Leitch specifies that “the producers of the [true] remake wish not only to accommodate the original story to a new discourse and a new audience but to annihilate the model they are honoring—to eliminate any need or desire to see the film they seek to replace” (“Twice-Told” 50). The “true remake” would, then, appear to be more ambivalent than the “homage,” since it both honors and effaces.

The idea that the remake seeks to annihilate the original film is fairly common in writings about Hollywood remakes of foreign films. Raphaëlle Moine (2007) has argued that films like *Cousins* (Joel Schumacher, 1989) and *Three Fugitives* (Francis Veber, 1989) attempt to erase the original French films, while Sébastien Rongier (2007) has gone even further by saying that any remake is “the construction of an erasure” (161). It is, however, doubtful that the erasure is ever that total, seeing as

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<sup>3</sup> Protopopoff mainly considers remakes in terms of their source material: a film, a piece of literary fiction, or both (17).

Hollywood often asks the original directors—Francis Veber for *Three Fugitives* or more recently Takashi Shimizu for *The Grudge* (2004)<sup>4</sup>—to direct the remakes of their own films. Moreover, some of the original films have been successful among American niche audiences of foreign films and/or horror movies. In 1999, *Le Dîner de cons* (Francis Veber, 1998) grossed \$4 million by the end of 1999, a fair amount for a foreign film in the U.S., although, granted, nothing compared to the \$73 million grossed by *Dinner for Schmucks* (Jay Roach, 2010) in 2010.<sup>5</sup>

In any case, Constantine Verevis (2006) has proven since that remaking is not always synonymous with erasure. By resorting to the term “pre-sold title,” he draws attention to the fact that it is often in the producers’ interest that they acknowledge that their film is a remake of a well-known film. This is especially the case of Hollywood remakes of domestic films. On the official film websites and later in the DVD extras, “filmmakers often enthuse about the ‘timeless’ attributes and ‘classic’ status of originals before going on to insist upon their own value-added transformations” (Verevis 17). Furthermore, the economic relationship between original and remake does not just go one way, as the original film often benefits from the release of the remake; DVD releases of the original movies frequently come out the same year as the remake, and they can often be “found side by side on the shelves of rental outlets” in the U.S. or on the web (Verevis 12). Generally speaking, it would seem then that Hollywood producers remake foreign films in order to exploit a narrative that has proven successful, but that when remaking domestic films, they are just as much tapping into the associations the original film evokes in popular culture. Thus, exploiting a “pre-sold title” and a successful narrative need not go hand in hand: a close remake like *Quarantine* (John Rick Dowdle, 2008) does not maintain the original title, whereas a non-remake, like *Prom Night* (Nelson McCormick, 2008), that merely maintains the basic premise of the original, does. Respect and acknowledgment do not necessarily imply fidelity to the original narrative, as Greenberg’s typology rightly indicates; Verevis has noted that contemporary remakes are increasingly non-remakes, “with all new characters, settings and situations” (22).

If the producers want the audience to know that the remake is based on a previous film as a guarantee of the remake’s quality, it is equally doubtful that they care

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<sup>4</sup> Luc Besson was asked to direct the American remake (John Badham, 1993) of *Nikita* (1990) but turned down the offer.

<sup>5</sup> *Låt den rätte komma in* (Tomas Alfredson, 2008) grossed over \$2 million, while *Let Me In* (Matt Reeves, 2010) made over \$12 million.

whether viewers actually watch the original film. This is where Leitch's two stances come into play: the "homage" presupposes that the remake should be viewed alongside the original; the "true remake" presupposes that the remake should be viewed in place of the original. Leitch's stances thus indicate two very different views of the relationship between remaking and technique. With the "homage," technique is not seen as an improvement since the original cannot be improved on in the first place. The whole point of *Psycho* (Gus van Sant, 1998), as Dominique Sipièrè has noted, is to view the two films side by side and see what choices Gus van Sant made, notably regarding the usage of color (Sipièrè 253). In other words, the "homage" often becomes what Leitch calls in his book on adaptation—and let us not forget that remakes are a form of adaptation (Protopopoff 17; Hutcheon 170)—a "revision," i.e., a study and/or critique of the original (*Adaptation* 108);<sup>6</sup> this is notably the case of *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1992) which claims to faithfully adapt the source novel, yet taps just as much into the intertextual network of *Dracula* and vampire films.

With the "true remake," however, technique and technology are instrumental in accomodating and updating the original. Thus, the "true remake" is somewhat steeped in a teleological faith in progress, the "homage" in nostalgia. In the end, both stances are very ambivalent about the remaking process. The "homage" renounces improving on the original but remakes it anyway, while the "true remake" rests, as Leitch has noted, on the "paradoxical promise" that it is "just like its model, and that it's better" ("Twice-Told" 44)—Leitch's use of "and" here is paramount. Leitch then calls on the "trope of disavowal" in order to delineate the "dance of invocation and denial" typical of the remake ("Twice-Told" 52). For Leitch, avowal is immanent to disavowal:

Disavowal—that is, the combination of acknowledgement and repudiation in a single ambivalent gesture—is apt in far more specific ways to the remake's model of intertextuality, since remakes by definition establish their value by invoking earlier texts whose potency they simultaneously valorize and deny through a series of rhetorical maneuvers designed at once to reflect their intimacy with these earlier texts and to distance themselves from their flaws. ("Twice-Told" 53)

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<sup>6</sup> This is also the case of the usage of color in *Night of the Living Dead* (Tom Savini, 1990), and color and sound in *Nosferatu* (Werner Herzog, 1979).

This disavowal, produced by “rhetorical maneuvers” that are both formal and paratextual, concerns not only aesthetics—the extent to which the remake assumes its intertextuality, starting with its own relationship to the original, but also including its relationship to other films, including future remakes—but also technique and technology, insomuch as the idea that the remake can improve on the original inscribes its own future obsolescence within the remaking process. In short, the remake’s disavowal involves the extent to which the remake assumes the prefix “re-.”

The blockbuster remakes of domestic horror films Hollywood has been dishing out for the past ten years provide a welcome corpus for a study of the remake’s ambivalent “stance.” This cycle includes remakes of films, mainly from the 1970s and 1980s,<sup>7</sup> that were both independent low-budget films like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974; Marcus Nispel, 2003) and major Hollywood productions like *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976; John Moore, 2006); films that were box office hits like *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978; Rob Zombie, 2007) and others that were fairly unsuccessful like *My Bloody Valentine* (George Mihalka, 1981; Patrick Lussier, 2009); films that have received much critical attention like *Dawn of the Dead* (Romero, 1978; Snyder, 2004) and others that have gone ignored like *House on Sorority Row* (Mark Rosman, 1983; Stewart Hendler, 2009). In short, this cycle has homogenized a fairly heterogeneous body of films, something which a comparative study of their aesthetics confirms—for instance, the remakes tend to resort to typical slasher film strategies and their music scores are almost identical (Roche 270-71). Bigger budgets enable the producers to hire well-known actors, often from TV series (Roche 292), use 35mm or digital cameras and Dolby Digital sound, and resort to more sophisticated special effects, including CGI and 3D for the more recent remakes like *My Bloody Valentine 3D* (Patrick Lussier, 2009) or *Piranha 3D* (Alexandre Aja, 2010).

The motivation for remaking some of these films has often less to do with the quality or availability of the narrative than with the familiarity of their titles. Many of the remakes are, in effect, non-remakes that tend to reprise the same premise—a psychokiller stalking the prom, a sorority house or a graduation party—but modify the characters and situations to the extent that, in some cases, they probably would not

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<sup>7</sup> This cycle was preceded by a remake of *House on Haunted Hill* (William Castle, 1959; William Malone, 1999), followed by *House of Wax* (André De Toth, 1953; Jaume Collet-Serra, 2005).

even need to secure the rights of the original film if it were not that they wanted to use the title. Yet, if cultural memory seems more economically viable than the individual spectator's, these remakes ultimately tap into both. Many of them play on expectations of the fans of these cult movies by altering the outcome in order to provide a different answer to the original whodunnit; this is the case of films like *Prom Night* (2008) which takes up the false lead of *Prom Night* (Paul Lynch, 1980), and *My Bloody Valentine 3D* (2009) which switches the hero and the killer of *My Bloody Valentine* (1981). Even remakes of lesser known films will recycle a famous scene from the original. This is the case in *Silent Night* (Steven C. Miller, 2012) where one of the victims is impaled on some decorative antlers. Of course, this reference works on two levels: if the reference to *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (Charles E. Sellier, Jr., 1984) were lost to some viewers, other horror movie fans would, no doubt, identify the original reference to the famous meat hook scene since the original scene was already a reimagining of the famous meat hook scene from the classic *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974).

So however small the fan base of a given movie is, the remakes never fail to address them, probably because they realize that those members of the audience are even more active on internet than mainstream audiences. My impression is that the American horror remakes of the 2000s are targeting three types of audiences: (1) older fans of the genre who know the original and will go and see the remake out of a nagging curiosity; (2) younger fans of the genre who may or may not have seen the original, but could be interested in seeing Rob Zombie's latest film; and (3) wider audiences who will pick the remake because they are in the mood for a horror movie and the title may ring a bell (Roche 17). I suspect that the viewers who are more likely to discover the original after seeing the remake would belong to the second category. My hunch is that, although the filmmakers address the first two categories in the interviews and DVD extras, the budgets of the remakes are a clear indication that the remakes are mainly aimed at the third category, which is necessary to make a profit on opening weekend and immediately make up for production costs. In this respect, the rhetoric of address in the paratext of the remakes is largely a denial of the remake's economic terms: the paratext is aimed at the mid- to long-term audience, that is fans of the horror genre, when the remake, like any film, is just as determined (if not more so) to bank on an immediate neophyte audience. As Leitch has pointed out, "most remakes do their best to satisfy" all audiences ("Twice-Told"

41). I would add that this is in keeping with Hollywood policy to avoid alienating potential consumer groups, even if this means producing “consciously ambivalent and ambiguous” films (Elsaesser 99).

I would like to turn to a case study of the “stance” of the remake that started the cycle of Hollywood remakes of American horror movies of the 1970s and 1980s, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Marcus Nispel, 2003), and at the way the recent release of *Texas Chainsaw 3D* (John Luessenhop, 2013) has made the 2003 remake simultaneously redundant and significant.

*Texas* (2003) is a clearly “acknowledged” remake, but it has been fairly transformed. It keeps the basic narrative—five teenagers traveling in a van fall into the hands of a psychotic family—the geographical and temporal setting—Texas in 1973—and key motifs—the hammer, the meat hook and the chainsaw—but it adds a contemporary frame story which relates the disclosure of documents thirty years after the events, and invents new characters with different names; only Leatherface gets to keep his, the name obviously belonging to cultural memory just as much as the movie’s title. With a budget of less than \$100,000, *Texas* (1974) was shot in 16mm and blown up to 35mm, had unknown actors, a mono soundtrack and a limited number of special effects, much of the violence being suggested through the editing and the sound effects. With a budget of over \$9 million and *Pearl Harbor* (2001) director Michael Bay producing, *Texas* (2003) was shot in 35mm, with actors who have starred in successful TV series—Jessica Biel from *7th Heaven* (1996-2006) and Eric Balfour from *Six Feet Under* (2001-2003)—or even auteur films—R. Lee Ermey from *Full Metal Jacket* (Kubrick, 1987)—and sophisticated special effects that enabled the film to indulge in high levels of gore. Hiring the cinematographer of the original film (Daniel Pearl), who was just starting out in 1974, is, perhaps, the clearest indication of the producers’ ambivalent enterprise: his presence guarantees that they are making the “same” movie—he even claims they used the same technique for the meat hook scene<sup>8</sup>—only “better,” since he now has more experience and knowledge of the technology of cinema.

A study of the abundant material on the DVD of *Texas* (2003) sheds further light on the producers’ ambivalent, not to say incoherent, discourse. They repeatedly

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<sup>8</sup> On the DVD commentary “L’équipe technique” [78:40].

proclaim that the original is a classic,<sup>9</sup> and director Marcus Nispel even admits he was “scared” Tobe Hooper would not like the remake when he met him at the premiere.<sup>10</sup> Yet if the producers hired a screenwriter who was a fan of the original, they hired a director who worked in music videos, confessed to his lack of familiarity with the genre and had never even seen the original film.<sup>11</sup> Though the paratext addresses fans of the genre and of the original film, the industrial terms of the blockbuster clearly target more mainstream audiences. Indeed, the producers conducted “research showing that 90% of the film’s anticipated core audience (eighteen to twenty-four year old males) knew the title of Tobe Hooper’s original but had never seen it” (Verevis 134); significantly, they retained the popular spelling of the title rather than the original title with “chainsaw” in two words.

Apart from a few scattered shots like the lateral establishing shot in which the teenagers’ van appears to be crushed under the empty Texas sky, the 2003 remake’s “stance” is mainly established in the opening shots, which is fairly typical of remakes (Leitch, “Twice-Told” 40) and comic book adaptations (Boillat 2014). The 2003 prologue both revisits and expands on the 1974 intertitle and opening voiceover. The most obvious homage to the 1974 film involves the voiceover: the same sentence is spoken by the same actor, John Laroquette [0:40]. Or almost. To start with, the names of the main protagonists—which the 2003 film has changed—are not mentioned. The second major modification made to the text is the addition of “the files” that have “collected dust” “for over thirty years” and the “1,300 pieces of evidence” [1:30]. By maintaining the same time-setting as *Texas* (1974)—August 18, 1973—*Texas* (2003) indicates that both films tell the same story, but the evidence it supplies invalidates the “veracity” of the earlier film. Whereas the 1974 voiceover and intertitle merely state that the event is “one of the most bizarre crimes in the annals of American history,” *Texas* (2003) sets out to prove it by adding photographic images: black-and-white for the archive footage, color for the contemporary shots of the cold case division of the Travis County Police Department. The evidence includes an establishing shot of the Hewitt residence filmed in 1973 [1:00], a pair of glasses [1:05], the *Mad* magazine banner the teenagers have on the ceiling of the van with

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Bay in *Chainsaw Redux* *Chainsaw Redux: Making a Massacre* [8] Blair in *commentaire équipe technique* [2], Kosa in *Commentaire audio histoire* [15 :30]

<sup>10</sup> On the DVD commentary “La production” [82:15].

<sup>11</sup> On the DVD commentary “La production” [18:20, 29:15].

the victim's name (Morgan) on the "evidence" sticker [1:25], and the scratch marks on the staircase wall identified by the policeman during the crime scene walk-through [2:10]. These images, items and events reappear in the course of the film [4:20, 46:00, 76:15]. In other words, the images, more than the voiceover, are supposed to provide proof that *Texas* (2003) is giving us the "real" story; the shot of the "case study" written by a doctor and entitled "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" even justifies the change the filmmakers brought to the spelling of the title [2:35]. The juxtaposition of black-and-white and color images, and the voiceover are highly reminiscent of sensationalist TV docudramas like *A Current Affair* (1986-1996), with the archive footage seemingly providing the underpinning for the reconstitution of real events that is the main bulk of *Texas* (2003).

The voiceover's stopping during the police crime scene walk-through would tend to confirm the idea that the images speak for themselves. Yet, on the contrary, the images, which started before the voiceover, are only retroactively constituted as "evidence" by the voiceover thirty seconds into the film. In other words, the voiceover is necessary to present these images as "real" as opposed to fictional. This brings to mind Susan Sontag's comments on the relationship between a photograph and its caption, that is, that "the contribution of photography always follows the naming of the event" (19). Thus, the voiceover invokes the original, the images deny the original, but the denying images require the invoking voiceover in order to deny, thereby undermining the denial. The generous budget of *Texas* (2003) allows it to mimic the technology of the 1970s and erase the 1974 film, yet ultimately, it is the slightly modified 1974 voiceover that legitimizes its technological maneuver. All the more so as the "authenticity" of the images is called into question halfway through the film. Indeed, the archive footage, that was meant to legitimize the main body of the film, is revealed to be a fabrication halfway through the film, when the second establishing shot of the Hewitt house reveals that the black-and-white shot of the house in the opening credits was, in fact, a smaller version of the same shot [41:05].

*Texas Chainsaw 3D* (2013) was clearly marketed as a sequel to the 1974 film. As such, it ignores the 2003 remake and replaces—or remakes—the 1986 and 1990 sequels to the 1974 film. Like some remakes, the producers sought legitimacy by seeking support from the producers of the 1974 film (Kim Henkel and Tobe Hooper). The official website even displays Hooper's stamp of approval—"INCREDIBLE! A PERFECTLY TERRIFYING FOLLOW-UP TO THE ORIGINAL"—while another

section devoted to the cast and crew includes lengthy bios of actors Marilyn Burns and Gunnar Hansen. Yet though the 2013 sequel appears to acknowledge exclusively the 1974 film, its terms are not as straightforward as might seem at first. The posters by no means indicate that the film's a sequel, and the title is somewhat misleading. The absence of the words "The" and "Massacre" seem to indicate that it is not a remake, yet the absence of "2," "Part II," or a subtitle like "Forty Years Later" gives no indication as to its being a sequel. In fact, the shortened version of the original title recalls the shortened version fans sometimes use in fanzines, on blogs and bulletin boards,<sup>12</sup> so that the usage of "3D" in place of "Part II" gives the overall impression that we are going to watch the 3D version of *Texas Chainsaw*, aka *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Once again, the title is meant to attract a wider audience than the teasers, websites and DVD extras would suggest, an audience that would go see the film on the sole basis of their familiarity with the pre-sold title and an opportunity to watch a technologically updated version of a classic film.

The prologue of *Texas Chainsaw 3D* (2013) confirms this seemingly straightforward and yet absolutely incoherent stance. It opens with a voiceover, this time the heroine's panic-stricken voice, recycles some of the sound effects, notably the zinging sound and some low ominous notes, and reprises a series of shots from the 1974 film—the swing, the windmill, the attacks on Kirk, Pam, Jerry and Franklin—in the order they appear in the 1974 narrative [0:25]. However, the selection process somewhat rewrites these scenes. For instance, Pam's discovery of the room with the macabre furniture is eliminated so that Leatherface's attack on her appears sudden, an impression reinforced by the addition of a high-pitched note to provoke a startle effect. The 1974 film has been remade into a contemporary slasher,<sup>13</sup> replete with edgy editing. The 2013 prologue modifies not only the tone of the 1974 film, but also some of the diegesis. Digital technology is employed to replace actor Jim Siedow, who played Old Man in *Texas* (1974), with another actor, Bill Mosley, who played another part (Chop-Top) in the 1986 sequel and who is here renamed Drayton [2:15]. This is justified by the fact that this character is in the 2013 sequel's first scene, a showdown at the Sawyer house inspired by the beginning of *The*

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<sup>12</sup> See November 13, 2010 interview with Share Cherrie on <<http://www.horror-asylum.com/interview/share-cherrie/interview.asp>>.

<sup>13</sup> Jean-Baptiste Thoret has argued that the film is by no means a slasher (16).

*Devil's Rejects* (Roz Zombie, 2005). There is no justification, however, for renaming the 1974 Sally Sarah.

So the foggy frame utilized in the 2013 prologue does, in effect, materialize the distance the 2013 sequel establishes between itself and the 1974 film, a distance that is reinforced by the use of 3D. Though the 2013 sequel claims to be a sequel to the 1974 film, it is also a reboot, and thus a remake, as many viewers have noticed. Like *Friday the 13th* (Marcus Nispel, 2009), it impossibly reprises elements from the whole franchise, including the 2003 remake. Though it replaces the 1986 sequel, it nonetheless retains the family name, the Sawyers, which Hooper introduced in that film. And though it ignores the 2003 remake, it names Leatherface after the little boy, Jedidiah, the 2003 teenagers meet in the Old Crawford mill, and remakes the crime-scene walk-through of the 2003 prologue [58:05]. In this scene, a distancing effect is again introduced through technology, this time diegetically, as the Super-8 camera of the 2003 prologue is now replaced with the iPhone Officer Marvin uses to film his exploration of the Miller basement, Sheriff Hooper and Mayor Hartman acting as stand-ins for the spectator.<sup>14</sup> *Texas* (2013) thwarts viewer expectations aroused by the references to *Texas* (1974) and (2003), first by having Officer Marvin kill Nikki who lunges at him from a chest freezer like the 1974 Pam [64:15], and then by having Leatherface attack Deputy after he has stopped filming (instead of while he's filming as in the 2003 remake) [64:45]. The recycling of yet another scene from *Texas* (1974) is thus doubly distanced, first by the intertextual frame provided by the 2003 remake, and secondly by the technological frame within the 2013 diegesis.

The *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* films show how ambiguous and similar the stances of the remake and the sequel/reboot ultimately are because avowal and recognition are ultimately immanent to disavowal and disregard. Though remakes are inevitably caught in an intertextual web, I would, however, caution against equating the remake with intertextuality, which is what Verevis tends to do. I would argue, rather, for an approach to the remake (and to adaptation) similar to what Rick Altman proposes for film genre. Pragmatically, remakes are films that have been identified as such by their producers and/or audiences. The decision whether or not the film is a remake can change in time: hence, viewers and critics may decide that a film

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<sup>14</sup> This scene crosscuts with the scene where Heather looks at the evidence Sheriff Hooper has kept, another reference to the 2003 prologue.

marketed as a remake is, in fact, a “non-remake,” while an instance of plagiarism is, in fact, a remake. The case of the Hollywood remakes of domestic horror films provides ample proof that one cannot just propose a taxonomy of the remake in an end note as if it were unproblematic, or satisfy oneself with a monolithic view of the remake as erasure. Leitch himself must have felt ill-at-ease with his usage of the adjective “true” in his discussion of various stances, since it disappears over the course of his article where the term “remake” ends up standing alone. Even when it poses as an “homage,” the stance of the remake is fundamentally ambivalent, for it recognizes the value of the original, sometimes even legitimizing it, thereby expressing faith in the values of the past, yet proposes to make it relevant, notably through technique and technology, thereby expressing a faith in progress. In so doing, however, it simultaneously binds itself with the original intertextually and often commercially—and thus fails to sever all ties *in spite of* technique and technology<sup>15</sup>—and inscribes its own future obsolescence within the process—and thus establishes new ties with the original as a consumer product *because of* technique and technology. In this respect, the remake is paradigmatic of contemporary marketing strategies: like various home appliances we warily acquire, the remake banks on its brand to make money, but is made to last a limited time only.

## Filmography

*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. Directed by Tobe Hooper. Written and produced by Kim Henkel and Tobe Hooper. With Marilyn Burns (Sally Hardesty), Allen Danziger (Jerry), Gunnar Hansen (Leatherface), Teri McMinn (Pam), Edwin Neal (Hitchhiker), Paul A. Partain (Franklin Hardesty), Jim Siedow (Old Man or Cook), and William Vail (Kirk). Vortex, 1974. DVD. Universal Pictures, 2006.

*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Directed by Marcus Nispel. Written by Scott Kosar. With Jessica Biel (Erin), Eric Balfour (Kemper), Andrew Bryniarski (Leatherface), R. Lee Ermey (Sheriff Hoyt), Erica Leerhsen (Pepper), Jonathan Tucker (Morgan), and Mike Vogel (Andy). New Line Cinema, 2003. DVD. Metropolitan, 2004.

*Texas Chainsaw 3D*. Directed by John Luessenhop. Written by Adam Marcus, Debra Sullivan and Kirsten McCallion. With Alexandra Daddario (Heather Miller), Dan Yeagr (Leatherface), Thom Barry (Sheriff Hooper), Scott Eastwood (Carl), Tania Raymonde (Nikki), and Paul Rae (Burt Hartman) and Trey Songz (Ryan). Leatherface Productions and Lionsgate, 2013. DVD. Metropolitan Video, 2013.

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<sup>15</sup> Remaking a foreign film according to Hollywood standards has, of course, much to do about technique and technology.

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