

Part I

Conceptual Perspectives: Delineating and Pushing the Boundaries of Remake Studies



The Film Remake as Prism: Towards a Model of Systematic Textual Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

As demonstrated by the rich academic output of scholars in remake studies, the comparative assessment of two highly similar film texts ‘is particularly well-suited for scholarly analysis as it is able to disentangle, locate or “defamiliari[s]e” the familiar, the banal, the unattainable and often invisible and render it more visible’ (Cuelenaere, Joye and Willems 2019: 264). Remakes are generally known for showing many narrative commonalities with their source films, which, after comparison, makes the sometimes highly detailed (often latent and ideologically instructed) adjustments or adaptations more palpable. Hence, by juxtaposing film remakes with their filmic predecessors and inquiring into the localising and adapting processes of their (changed) narratives, one can obtain a unique glimpse into the workings of ‘making meaning’ in films. Yet, if one wishes to be as scientifically rigorous as possible, it is at least equally important to take into consideration how exactly this textual juxtaposition is carried out. In 2002, Quaresima remarked that ‘[t]he critical literature on the remake may seem vast, but it is made up almost entirely of descriptions, or of limited comparative analyses of paired texts, carried out according to the most diverse and unsystematic criteria’ (78). Since then, I would argue, there have been little to no serious attempts at conceiving a descriptive textual model (with clear criteria) that helps in more systematically analysing film remakes.¹

One of the leading scholars of television format studies, Moran, argued that, because of the serial principle present in all television formats, it seems appropriate to systematically analyse television formats through the method of semiotics, as it ‘helps identify repetition as a recurring feature of popular fiction and entertainment, whether the form be printed stories, popular

song or television program production' (Moran 2009: 11). As recent (both theoretically and empirically driven) research shows, the industrial, cultural and textual process of formatting television content is (to a certain extent) comparable to the process of remaking films (see, for example, Verevis 2017; Labayen and Morán 2019). Therefore, it might be useful to look at how scholars in format studies have been analysing these television formats textually in the past decades – of course, taking into account the commonalities and differences between both cultural artefacts and adapting the model correspondingly. As such, in order to systematise the comparative textual study of film remakes, I found that a set of descriptive textual codes helps in structuring the process of analysis (see Cuelenaere, Joye and Willems 2019 for an example of the method applied to Flemish-Dutch remakes). The underlying assumption and objective here is actually indebted to a structuralist thought where 'behavior, institutions and texts are seen as analy[s]able in terms of an underlying network of relationships, the crucial point being that the elements which constitute the network gain their meaning from the relations that hold between the elements' (Stam 2005: 18). The goal of this chapter is, therefore, to identify the mechanisms that form the basis for a text, which will eventually aid us in understanding the remake process and, in a next step, 'discover' the meanings of (and around) those texts that went through it.

At first glance, it may seem that a systematic textual organisation is incompatible with the late post-structuralist – or, indeed, Foucauldian – discursive idea that meaning is always governed by socio-culturally and historically defined discourses. Yet, as argued by Berry-Flint (2004), this (very justified) post-structuralist criticism does not necessarily imply that a more systematised approach to textual analyses (in his case, genre analysis) has become impossible or obsolete. A discursive stance 'does not disregard the importance of textual organi[s]ation; it simply sees films as sites rather than sources of meaning. Their reception is thus primarily determined socio-culturally because of the ways that social discourses organi[s]e what sense viewers make of films' aesthetic and phenomenological effects' (Berry-Flint 2004: 38). Indeed, even if one is convinced of the idea that the work of semioticians is highly myopic – in the sense that it disregards cultural specificities and adheres meaning to the text itself – it can still 'form the matrix, and provide much of the vocabulary, for approaches ranging from the linguistic, psychoanalytic, feminist and Marxist to the narratological, reception-oriented and translinguistic' (Stam 2005: x).

Put simply, the textual framework that I will clarify in the following adopts the structuralist idea that defines a text and thus a film text, as an amalgam of codes and mechanisms that together form a structure. Yet, as film remakes are generally quite clearly connected to their source (texts), one should naturally integrate an analysis of those remade texts as well – with 'source text' taken broadly, thus not only referring to 'acknowledged' source text(s). Therefore,

by systematically analysing a set of films – or, in this case, tandems of source films and their remakes – through a set of clearly defined codes, and looking for specific patterns, one can get a hold of the mechanisms that transform these texts and create meaning. However – and this is where the discursive influence comes in – in a next step, one should open up the overall structure by adding human agency (both in individual and cultural forms) to the equation, thus acknowledging that cultural artefacts’ meanings are always polysemic and that meaning always comes into being intertextually and discursively. Hence, ‘a concern with the historical, social and cultural aspects [. . .] can at least help counter the frequent recourse to the structuralist goal of “discovering” deep structures and ahistorical essences’ (Van der Heide 2002: 35). This suggests that the formal elements in texts are always simultaneously social (that is, not individually, nor collectively, but rather inter-subjectively defined) properties, inscribed in one or more cultures. Hence, given that the meanings of a film are, inter-subjectively ‘created’ and, therefore, part of a never-ending process of interpretation, one should not only analyse the film remake textually, but also investigate its discursive nature. As argued by Verevis (2006: 101), ‘textual accounts of remaking need to be placed in a contextual history, in “a sociology [of remaking] that takes into account the commercial apparatus, the audience, and the [. . . broader] culture industry”’, mirroring Staiger’s (2000) historical materialist approach. Consequently, the next essential phase in the analysis is to conduct production and reception research. In conclusion, the model that I will describe in the following helps in descriptively analysing film remakes. Yet, the analyst that uses it should acknowledge that merely describing the similarities and differences is insufficient. A more holistic analysis of the film remake necessitates, next to a descriptive layer, an interpretative layer calling for both production and reception analysis. Therefore, the model will demarcate the lines between textual and extra-textual elements of analysis as clearly as possible.

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF FILM REMAKES: FORMAL, TRANSTEXTUAL AND CULTURAL CODES

Moran (2009) stated that various scholars from many different fields have attempted to address the issue of cultural transformation by building on models of adaptation. Yet, he continues, these attempts have hitherto resulted in highly abstract or idealist versions of models, which, however useful theoretically, have perhaps been less so when applied methodically, or, indeed, practically. When investigating the remaking of television formats, one of the important analyses to be done is concerned with the process of adaptation or translation, for which Moran builds on Heylen’s (1994) work in the field of

translation studies. Subsequently, Moran came up with three different types of codes – namely, linguistic, intertextual and cultural codes – which range from elementary to more complex degrees of text. It is important to note that these codes should not be seen as mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they signify a multi-layered and complex process of remaking, which means that these codes interact and overlap rather than forming clearly distinct textual matters. These codes are, therefore, to be seen as a suggestive set or structuring of ideas that ‘can help frame the discussion of the adaptation process relating to TV formats’ (Moran 2009: 46) and, for our purposes, to the analysis of film remakes.

Before elaborating on Moran’s model and adapting his way of framing the textual analysis of remaking television formats to the film remake process, it is necessary to critically reflect on his focus on the process of localisation. Indeed, one of the important underlying mechanisms that Moran seeks to locate with his framework is culturally driven and generally typified as ‘localisation’. In other words, Moran built his entire model around that specific notion, indirectly assuming that the process of localising textual elements in television formats is quintessential if one wants to understand commonalities and differences found through the use of the textual codes. Applying this to transnational or cross-cultural remakes, one should, therefore, be equally wary of interpreting the found textual differences solely in terms of localisation.² In addition, what is often taken for granted when conducting cross-cultural analyses is that through the found differences culturally local themes or essential contextual factors are inevitably revealed (Livingstone 2003). Such an assumption overstates ‘internal homogeneity while underplaying heterogeneity, ambiguity and borderline phenomena’ (Livingstone 2003: 479), which can partly be solved by deliberately tracing cultural similarities as well.

Another justified critique for the localisation approach can be summarised in what is typified as the ‘cultural opacity’ of the scholar. In other words, the analyst who investigates film remakes may, of course, lack an adequate comprehension of a specific cultural context. Therefore, when tracing the mechanism of localisation in the analysis of film remakes, one should acknowledge a few pitfalls: First of all, there is no final or perfect way of ‘correctly’ interpreting a text culturally. Thinking that one can ‘correctly’ understand a text culturally will not result in a ‘wrong’ interpretation, but rather in what has been defined as projective appropriation – that is, the projection of one’s own belief system and theoretical viewpoints on (film) texts from other cultures (Willemsen 1994). Probably even more problematic is when an analyst ‘adopts an ethnographic persona by reading texts as culturally, socially and historically authentic, thereby interpreting social behavio[u]r and even the presence of art[e]facts and particular landscapes as culturally accurate’ (Van der Heide 2002: 31–32). As such, the preferred relationship between analyst and cultural object of research is labelled ‘creative understanding’ (Willemsen 1994): a dialectical interconnection where

‘the analyst is conscious of his or her own cultural location when engaging in the analysis of cultural texts [which necessarily involves] a process of “othering” oneself, but not of becoming (or attempting to become) the “other”’ (Van der Heide 2002: 29).

Moreover, as I have argued earlier (see Cuelenaere, Joye and Willems 2019), the comparative analysis of film remakes itself helps when interpreting similarities and differences culturally, simply because narratives of both the source film and remake are often very similar, making the differences more explicit. Indeed, ‘[w]hen the border asserts itself so blatantly, there are ways of acquiring an intra-cultural interpretation (note that this is an interpretation and not an explanation) for the analyst to consider’ (Van der Heide 2002: 31). This mirrors Bakhtin’s notion of ‘outsidedness’ (1986), arguing that meaning often ‘reveals’ itself more clearly when it is placed in contact with other (alien) meaning(s), resulting in dialogue. Even though apples and oranges can, of course, be compared, ‘there is perhaps more to be gained, because the range of variables is narrower, by comparing a ripe apple to one that is worm-eaten, or by comparing a market-ready Granny Smith to an equally saleable McIntosh or Fuji’ (Wierzbicki 2015: 166). Hence, a possible solution of the above-mentioned pitfall can be found in the dynamics of the comparative film analysis itself. Of course, it is much recommended to compare the findings and results also with analyses by other analysts, ‘preferably from other cultural and ideological perspectives’ (Van der Heide 2002: 31). Moreover, research in the field of television formats shows that localisation processes ‘might be much more limited, unintentional and more constrained than is usually argued’ (Van Keulen and Krijnen 2014: 290). As such, if one wishes to understand the film remake more holistically, the textual analysis of film remakes is only one step in the right direction. Indeed, one should not only look at culturally driven (for example, employing cultural stereotypes to create recognisability) decisions in the remake process, but equally so the personally (for example, bringing homage to the source film), industrially (for example, omitting scenes because of budgetary reasons), textually (for example, genre-specific constraints) and even accidentally motivated (for example, forgetting to change specific elements while filming) choices (Cuelenaere 2020). The model, therefore, wishes to point to the importance of keeping a distance between *what* has been changed in remakes, *why* it has been altered, *how* this has been done, by *whom* it was done and, finally, *what* this all means.

Starting from the theoretical basis put forward by Moran (2009) – and clearly signalling where I modify or take distance from his model – I will now elaborate on a framework (see Table 1) that distinguishes between three different codes (formal, transtextual and cultural). This set of codes should help the analyst in more systematically studying film tandems.³ The general idea is that they inform, structure and guide the textual analysis. As such, these codes

Table 1 The Descriptive Model

Formal code	Transtextual code	Cultural code
- <i>Mise-en-scène</i>	- <i>Intertextual</i> elements (presence of an <i>indirect</i> source text in the text): quotation and allusion	- Explicit cultural references (clear and manifest)
- Cinematography	- <i>Architextual</i> elements (relationship between the text and a text of its kind)	- Implicit cultural references (unclear, implied)
- Sound	- <i>Hypertextual</i> markers (explicit reference to <i>direct</i> source text, or hypotext)	
- Editing	- <i>Metatextual</i> elements (references of one text on another text)	
- Characters	- <i>Intratextual</i> elements (reference to [the status of] the text itself)	
- Narrative	- <i>Paratextual</i> elements (textual elements that accompany the text)	

(and, therefore, the model) are to be seen as instruments or possible means, not an end in itself. Moreover, as mentioned above, the codes overlap in many ways; yet, in accordance with Moine (2013),⁴ I claim that it is specifically at the moment of imbrication that these codes become interesting and prove to be productive. Also, it is of course perfectly possible to employ the model only partly in a comparative analysis – for instance, by focusing solely on the transtextual codes while ignoring the formal and cultural codes. Lastly, the model could equally function as a set of parameters for more quantitatively oriented analyses of film remakes.

Formal Code

The poetics of cinema arguably differs from a literary or televisual one. Yet, Moran (2009) adopts the concepts of form and style, as defined by Bordwell and Thompson (2004), when describing the ‘linguistic code’. Given that Bordwell and Thompson have actually coined the umbrella term of ‘film form’, consisting of a formal as well as a stylistic system, I call the textual set that deals with form and style the ‘formal code’. The film form signifies the overall system of relationships between the different elements or parts, consisting of both the formal and stylistic system which constantly interact (Bordwell and

Thompson 2004). Put simply, the formal system broadly consists of the narrative or non-narrative, and how these are discursively constructed. These may also include the themes of a narrative, or specific acts, as well as differences in time and space. One could also add focalisation points or the overall structure of how scenes are arranged. Equally important are the characters that are part of the (non)narrative, how they behave, their names, their histories and so on. The stylistic system, on the other hand, deals with the *mise-en-scène* (clothing, make-up, props, locations), cinematography (camera use, colour, light), sound (rhythm, silence, tonality, musical scores) and finally the editing. Simplified, the first system looks at *what* is being told on screen, and the second at *how* this is being done – yet, both these systems cannot be seen as isolated or highly distinct from each other.

Moran argues that '[a]t this level, the adaptation of a program format will involve one or more of these [...] codes in a relatively simple operation of omission, inclusion, substitution or permutation' (2009: 46). As we are dealing with at least two film texts and given that these naturally are put in a comparative framework, things get a bit more complicated. Indeed, describing the processes of 'omission', 'inclusion', 'substitution', or 'permutation' all depends on which film was analysed first. However, a rule of thumb here could be that one should always keep the broader aim or focus of the analysis in mind and openly communicate which approach was taken and why. For instance, it often makes sense to analyse films and their remakes in a chronological way, asking which film or script was released first, and which film(s) came after that and was, therefore, directly based on one or more of those previous texts. The danger of the latter approach, however, is that one can fall into the trap of seeing the direct source film as more original – which often results in connecting value to this status – only because it was 'first'. Yet, at the same time it should be acknowledged that, when explaining processes of, for instance, omission and inclusion, a linear chronology is always already implied – which basically justifies or normalises said approach.

Transtextual Code

The second type of translation that Moran adds to his adaptation model is the very broadly defined 'intertextual code'. In Moran's view, these intertextual elements are a lot less discrete than the previous code, as they connect 'with specific bodies of knowledge held by particular communities' (2009: 48). Consequently, this code transcends the texts themselves and looks at the broader industrial, as well as national contexts which shape these texts. Finally, Moran also sets the overarching element of genre under this code. For the sake of methodological clarity, as well as conceptual hygiene, I decided not to integrate an actual

contextual analysis (such as information gathered through in-depth interviews) in the textual model. Instead of using such a broad (and, *in se*, both textually and extra-textually defined) code, I suggest to exchange the idea of intertextuality with Genette's conceptualisation of textual transcendence, which signifies 'all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts' (1997: 1). There is no straightforward way to fully, or indeed ahistorically, define the film remake textually. Yet, it could be said that, in comparison to non-remakes, a film remake is more clearly defined by (its relationship with) one or more previous source texts. Indeed, 'the smallest common denominator uniting [the] attempts to come to grips with the remake seems to be their tendency to restrict the notion of remaking to intra-medial re-workings of texts' (Heinze and Krämer 2015: 10). If one wants to analyse film remakes textually, it therefore seems logical to fully consider the textual relationships that exist between a film remake and its direct and indirect source texts.

In the 1980s, Genette stated that the object of a theory of literary forms should not solely consider the text itself, but rather its so-called textual transcendence – the textual connections with other preceding and succeeding texts. Here, Genette builds on Kristeva's notion of intertextuality (1980), which states that every text is a mosaic of quotations, absorbing and transforming other texts. However, as asserted by Prince in the foreword of one of Genette's books, 'though all literary texts are hypertextual, some are more hypertextual than others, more massively and explicitly palimpsestuous' (Genette 1997: ix). This is probably the realm where the film remake belongs. There have been several scholars (for instance, Horton and McDougal 1998; Quresima 2002; Zanger 2006; Moine 2013) who have adopted Genette's poetics intending to define the film remake and its relationship(s) with other texts. In *Film Remakes*, Verevis (2006), building on Stam's work (2005), suggested that Genette's work on transtextuality may also be helpful when analysing film remakes and comparing them to their source text(s) (see also Herbert 2008). Therefore, in the following pages I will elaborate on Genette's notion of transtextuality and zoom in on its different categories and subcategories. Hence, I will adopt his poetics and associated (sub)categories and demonstrate how these can be used to systematically compare film remakes with their source texts and thus help us build a more cohesive methodology to scrutinise remakes textually.

Genette classified five types of transtextual relationships and listed them 'more or less in the order of increasing abstraction, implication, and comprehensiveness' (1997: 1): intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality and hypertextuality. These categorisations prove to be useful tools – mainly as a way of framing the (trans)textual findings – when comparing film remakes with their direct and indirect source texts. They can be adopted in at least two ways: On one hand, they guide the analyst in finding transtextual relationships between two or more texts (in a broad sense, they are quite

clearly operationalised); on the other hand, they can help the analyst in better describing (that is, in a more detailed way) what happens on screen. Building on, and slightly diverging from, the application of Genette's framework by Stam (2005) and later Verevis (2006) on film analysis and film remake analysis, respectively, I will demonstrate why adding the transtextual code to the textual model is valuable.

The first type of relationship that Genette discusses is the intertextual one, which he defines in a stricter sense than generally conceived – that is, as 'a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another' (1997: 1–2). Yet, in the context of film remakes, I would argue that it becomes even more convenient when it is narrowed to only the presence of an indirect source text in the text. Otherwise, this category would include both the indirect (to many different source texts) and the direct (to the direct, often 'acknowledged' source text[s]) relationships, which are two distinct matters in the analysis of film remakes. In a next step, Genette concretises this type of relationship by supplying some subcategories, of which two are useful when analysing film (remakes): quotation and allusion. In the model I propose, quotation can appear as a direct insertion of one or more clips of whatever other film (except for the direct source text[s]) into the film text. An allusion could be interpreted as a more abstract form of quotation, as it 'can take the form of a verbal or visual evocation of another film' (Stam 2005: 211).

Another type of relationship between a film remake and direct or indirect source texts may be called architextual – that is, its designation as being part of one or more genres. For the remake model, it makes sense to broaden this category to those elements that link the film text to one or more texts of its kind. Examples of such elements could be both textual and paratextual (see below), such as the usage of genre-specific tropes, motifs or clichés. They may also consist of specific phrases, quotations, themes and other conventions or rules. Including this type of relationship into the model answers the need to extend the comparative analysis of film remakes with source texts to other film texts that are, for example, part of the same genre.

The third type of relationships that can be found when comparatively analysing film remakes is the hypertextual one. This is different from the others, as it presupposes a direct and explicit relationship with its source text(s), instead of an indirect and possible implicit one. Indeed, hypertextual markers point towards explicit references to the direct source text(s) (or, as Genette described it, the hypotext[s]) of the film remake. A hypertextual relationship can be established in many different ways: through dialogue, the use of specific props, the names of characters, or even direct insertions of clips of the source film.

Another kind of relationship between the film remake and other texts is a metatextual one – namely, where the film itself, or parts of it (critically) comment

on another film text, or body of texts (genres, for example). Next is the so-called intratextual relationship, which signifies references to the (status of) the text itself, or ‘refer[s] to the process by which films refer to themselves through mirroring, microcosmic, and mise-en-abyme structures, while auto-citation would refer to an author’s self-quotation’ (Stam 2005: 211). Lastly, paratextual elements are those that directly accompany the text (such as the opening and end credits, post-credit scenes and so on). Important here is that the notion of paratextuality is in fact defined in a much narrower sense, which means that I clearly steer away from Genette’s signification and the general use of the word. This is, however, necessary, since this model wants to emphasise a more holistic analysis (see above) that also includes production and reception research, including, for example, the analysis of trailers, teasers, press material or even film reviews.

Cultural Code

The last code that I would like to add to the textual model is the cultural code, which consists of both explicit and implicit references to a cultural context or situation. Of course, there exists a whole range of cultural references that could be found in a film text: humour; religion; language; gender; stereotypes; nudity; sexuality; specific situations; periods; and broader political, judicial, economic and geographical circumstances. There are several reasons why this type of element requires a different code: First, categorising these references as a separate code forces scholars to not interpret every commonality or difference between source text and remake in terms of localisation (see above). Secondly, and this might seem to contradict the former, it is clear that a lot of the omissions, additions and other transformative processes in film remakes are often being done to cultural elements, which is why they deserve a separate code. Lastly, there are many different ways of altering such cultural codes, based on different underlying motives or incentives. Because of this – and for the sake of the model’s overall clarity – it makes sense to integrate a distinction between the textually found codes and cultural processes of, for example, localisation or delocalisation (which give meaning to those codes and, therefore, form the interpretative layer).

This cultural code is theoretically informed by Hjort’s concept of banal aboutness (2000) and the study of imagology. The latter points towards ‘the study of national and cultural images as represented in textual discourse, [which] is a fruitful approach for disciplines dealing with textual change’ (Van Doorslaer 2019: 56) – the approach being descriptive instead of explanatory. As such, this (sub)discipline wishes to theorise national and cultural stereotypes comparatively, concentrating ‘on more constructionist models, away from essentialist definitions’ (Van Doorslaer 2019: 57). Lastly, according to van Doorslaer (2019), adopting imagology as a lens

also marks the importance of ‘diachronic viewpoints or the centrality of change and hybridity’ (62), as well as the role of the mediating ‘author’ or, in our case, the filmmakers. The concept of banal aboutness, however, follows Billig’s notion of banal nationalism (1995), which contends that nationalism (in film, for example) should not be reduced to only the explicit or apparent references to, or indeed the reproductions of, the nation. Applied to the realm of film and slightly (yet not fully) steering away from the loaded term ‘nationalism’, Hjort coins the concept of banal aboutness, signalling those elements that mirror the material aspects of a specific culture which make a film ‘about’ that culture (2000: 99). Moreover, she creates the essential division between banal occurrences of aboutness and the type ‘that is constitutive of full-blown themes of nation’ (Hjort 2000: 101). What defines the difference between both instances is the degree to which the reference (taken broadly) is vital or fundamentally important to the narrative. As such, focal attention acts as the defining characteristic between films that are about a nation and films that have the nation as a central theme – which should not be conceived of as binary, but as existing on a continuum.

Explicit and implicit cultural references are found in both banal and thematised representations of the nation, which means that one or more explicit references to a specific cultural context do not necessarily make a film nationalistic in a thematic way. To operationalise these concepts more clearly, it could be said that explicit cultural references are those elements that clearly (from the analyst’s perspective) refer to an extratextual cultural reality, leaving nothing implied. In every case, this makes a film ‘about’ a specific culture or nation and, in some cases, makes the nation the central theme of the film. Think, for example, of the use of (popular) television programmes, known magazines or newspapers, theme parks, (local) celebrities, food, art, locales and so on. In contrast, implicit cultural references are those elements that are implied but not manifestly or obviously uttered. These references are mostly found in specific representations or portrayals of, for example, sexuality, nudity, religion, sports, ethnicity, cultural habits or traditions, as well as in humour, stereotypes, clichés and the like. Imagology’s focus on stereotypes might be of interest here. Throughout its existence as a discipline, it has pointed towards at least three recurring (overarching) findings: the stereotypical oppositions of North–South (for instance, in Italy, Belgium, France, or even Europe as a whole) and centre–periphery (a country’s capital city versus the rest), as well as the more meta-reflexive finding that ‘there are contradictory stereotypes available for more or less each country, showing the relativity of typicality’ (Van Doorslaer 2019: 62). Obviously, there is no clear theoretical line that can be drawn between explicit and implicit cultural references. This suggests that they function more like conceptual frames or lenses which can help trace these cultural elements, in line with the overall goal of the proposed model: framing the discussion of the remake and systematising its analysis.

CONCLUSION

The descriptive textual model explored in the preceding paragraphs is only a first step to grasping and understanding the film remake process. Therefore, the next step is to gather and interpret the found data while looking for specific patterns. Even though interpreting textual findings often comes in an almost natural or intuitive way, one should always try to be as reflexive as possible. Weber (1949) once wrote that it ‘is not the “actual” interconnections of “things” but the conceptual interconnections of problems which define the scope of the various sciences’ (cited in Koshul 2005: 69). Hence, the outcome of one’s analysis is always (at least partly) determined by the theoretical lenses one adopts when analysing film remakes. These lenses are indirectly accompanied by specific goals as well as assumptions about the interpretation of data. Consequently, although theories never just come into being – because ‘they need a leap, a wager; a hypothesis, to get started’ (Moretti 2000: 55) – a self-reflexive and iterative approach seems highly justifiable. Such an approach demands to constantly repeat the whole research process in a circular manner, instead of a linearly defined process of data selection, collection and analysis. Hence, the proposal to more systematically analyse film remakes by introducing the textual model described above does not imply that one has to strictly adhere to the latter model (in its current form). Indeed, I consider my textual model as a continuous work-in-progress, open for interpretation, variation and uses. This equally implies that, if done critically, the present model could also form the basis for a comparative descriptive analysis of other serial screen formats, both inter- and intra-medial (such as sequels, serials, franchises, series, or reboots). Aware of the fact that employing a textual model is only one measure to bring about scientific rigorousness, with this chapter I hope to (at least) convince that finding a similar language is quintessential, if one aims to forge a scientific field that is theoretically and methodologically sound, as well as empirically driven.

NOTES

1. Probably, the only exception would be Verevis’ semantic/syntactic model (2006) – based on Altman’s genre theory – which is useful, yet somewhat underdeveloped and not widely adopted in the context of film remakes.
2. The process of localisation is, moreover, often interpreted solely in terms of the nation. This reminds of what is known as methodological nationalism – that is, (unconsciously) holding the idea that the nation-state is the natural starting point for every explanation of data (Beck and Sznaider 2006).
3. Although I conceived the model specifically for the analysis of film remakes, the model could certainly form the basis for scrutinising other, similar forms of serialities (see the concluding paragraphs of this essay).

4. Moine actually talks about the categories proposed by Genette (which I will adopt in the transtextual code), but the assumptions and conclusions are equally applicable to the codes I propose. The original quote is the following: 'les catégories proposées par Genette se révél[ent] beaucoup plus productives quand on les envisage non de façon cloisonnées, mais qu'on s'intéresse à leurs zones de recouvrement ou de cohabitation partielle' (Moine 2013: 41).

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