

Re-Presenting Fear: The Slasher Remake as Cumulative
Hypertext

Jo Murphy

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Abstract

This thesis argues that the slasher remake functions as a cumulative hypertext, incorporating content not only from the original film, but also the many sequels and intertexts that exist between original and remake. In doing so, it expands analyses of the film remake beyond issues of fidelity to the original, and shows that sequels and intertexts are a crucial consideration when analysing remakes of franchise or previously adapted films.

The first chapter surveys the slasher sub-genre's history and place within genre theory (with specific reference to theories of horror), highlighting the fact that the implication of sequels, cycles and series for genre theory, and subsequently, the remaking of genre films, is an area which has been commonly overlooked.

The second chapter looks at the history of remake studies, and uses Robert Stam's concept of the cumulative hypertext (drawn from Gerard Genette's work on intertextuality) as a theoretical framework within which to consider how the slasher remake draws content from each slasher franchise's sequels and intertexts, as well as the original film. The third and fourth chapters analyse three slasher remakes, *Halloween* (2007), *Friday the 13th* (2009) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (2010) in terms of how they have retained and adapted content from the original franchise, in order to affirm and explicate their function as cumulative hypertext.

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"You just can't win. If it's too similar to the original, everybody wonders what the point was, but if it's too different, everybody complains that it's too different. I found that with Halloween II, everyone talked about what it wasn't, and not what it was. 'You can't do that with Michael Myers; you can't do that with Loomis.' It's like people have a set of rules in their minds about how these things should function."

- Rob Zombie, director of *Halloween* (2007).¹

¹ Williams, Owen. "Rob Zombie Talks Lords of Salem." *Empire Online*. 21 February 2011. <<http://www.empireonline.com/news/story.asp?NID=30225>>. Web. 03 March 2011.

Introduction

The slasher remake, a cinematic phenomenon which started with Rob Zombie's remake of John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) in 2007, marks a form of remaking and repetition that encompasses not only the events of the original film, but also its many sequels, paratexts and intertexts. The stories of *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* (1980), and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) have not just established themselves within the bounds of a single film, but across an entire franchise. Furthermore, these extended stories have been cemented by popular culture: for example, Jason Voorhees' iconic hockey mask, drawn from the third installment of *Friday the 13th* (1982), has appeared in all sequels since, been referenced everywhere from *Simpsons* episodes to comic books, and has displaced cultural awareness of how he appeared in the two previous films.

As Rob Zombie's quote on the previous page suggests, how people engage with and understand these franchises has become a critical concern for the way which they have been remade. The way in which the slasher remake retains and adapts content not only from the original films, but also their many intertexts, raises questions about what exactly these films are remaking and why, as well as questions about how other remakes of genre, sub-genre or franchise films in general engage with the various intertexts which have already played upon, and in some cases, transformed our understanding of, the original film that is being remade.

The critical framework for this study is provided by genre studies, remake studies, and especially theorizations of adaptation. Specifically, in his essay *Beyond Fidelity: the Dialogics of Adaptation*², Robert Stam draws upon Gérard Genette's concept of the hypertext, which describes a property which "transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends"³ a pre-existing property, or hypotext. Stam argues that, since a single hypotext can give rise to an endless number of hypertexts, then a hypertext which is created many years after the original property can function as a cumulative hypertext, not only drawing upon the hypotext, but all the other hypertexts which exist in the interim. This idea, carried through into remake studies by Constantine Verevis⁴, is a perfect description of what we see in the slasher remake. Furthermore, the similarities between slasher remakes, resulting from the sub-genre conventions they abide by and the franchise mentality they all encompass, makes them ideal sites to begin thinking about the ways in which the remaking of franchise films gives rise to the cumulative hypertext through retained and adapted content.

Introducing The Films

Slasher films *The House on Sorority Row* (1983), *Prom Night* (1980) and *My Bloody Valentine* (1981) have also been remade, however this thesis will restrict its analysis to the three largest and most prolific slasher franchises: *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th*, and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. This is partly due to length

² Stam, Robert. "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation". *Film Adaptation*. Ed. James Naremore. Rutgers University Press, 2000: 54-76. Print.

³ *ibid* p66

⁴ Verevis, Constantine. *Film Remakes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005: 20.

constraints, but primarily because these three films represent the slasher franchises and remakes with the greatest number of sequels⁵ and pop cultural references, thus providing the widest range of easily identifiable examples of how these remakes function as cumulative hypertexts.

Halloween, directed by John Carpenter and released in 1978 is, to date, one of the most successful independent films of all time⁶. It has seven sequels, the first five of which form a linear progression, with the last two ignoring the events of installments three through five to reboot the narrative continuity of the franchise. The first film features a young boy, Michael Myers (Will Sandin), killing his elder sister Judith (Sandy Johnson) on Halloween night, and escaping from the asylum in which he is incarcerated exactly fifteen years later, to stalk and kill the babysitters of his hometown of Haddonfield, including Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis). The first sequel (1981) reveals that Laurie is Michael's sister, and the rest of the franchise revolves around this family relationship.

In 2007, Rob Zombie released his remake of *Halloween* (carrying the same title as the original film). This film, for the most part, follows the events of the original, while extending the first and final act, and incorporating the family relationship between Laurie (Scout Taylor-Compton) and Michael (Tyler Mane) into this film's plot. The film received mixed reviews⁷, ranked first at the box office in its opening weekend, and had a total domestic gross of just over 58

⁵ See appendix 3 for a plot summary of each installment in the *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchises.

⁶ Rockoff, Adam. *Going to Pieces: The Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2002. P50. Print.

⁷ CBS Interactive. "Halloween Reviews, Ratings, Credits, and More." *Metacritic*. Web. 1 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.metacritic.com/movie/halloween>>.

million USD⁸ (approximately double that of the last *Halloween* sequel). A sequel to the remake, *Halloween II*, was released in 2009.

Friday the 13th, directed by Sean S Cunningham and released in 1980, is the story of a mother, Pamela Voorhees (Betsy Palmer), who begins killing the teen counselors who are trying to re-open the camp where her son Jason (Ari Lehman) drowned 21 years earlier. It has nine sequels, all of which involve an adult Jason resurrected to keep intruders out of the camp, in order to carry on his mother's work.

The remake that follows these sequels, directed by Marcus Nispel under the guidance of Platinum Dunes, a company which specializes in remakes and other forms of cinematic repetition (eg: sequels), was released in 2009. The film begins with the death of Mrs Voorhees (Nana Visitor), then moves to Jason (Derek Mears) killing off teens staying at Crystal Lake. The film received an overwhelmingly negative critical response, though public response was somewhat more ambivalent (in alignment with reviews of the original franchise).⁹ It was more financially successful than the *Halloween* remake, with a total domestic gross of almost exactly 65 million dollars.¹⁰

Released in 1984 and directed by Wes Craven, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is the story of Freddy Krueger (Robert Englund), a child murderer burned alive by the

⁸ Internet Movie Database. "Halloween (2007)." *Box Office Mojo*. Web. 1 Apr. 2011. <<http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=halloween07.htm>>.

⁹ CBS Interactive. "Friday the 13th Reviews, Ratings, Credits, and More." *Metacritic*. Web. 1 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.metacritic.com/movie/friday-the-13th>>.

¹⁰ Internet Movie Database. "Friday the 13th (2009)." *Box Office Mojo*. Web. 1 Apr. 2011. <<http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=fridaythe13th09.htm>>.

residents of Elm Street, who then comes back to haunt the dreams of his killers' children. He kills the teenagers of Elm Street by appearing in their dreams and inflicting wounds with his razor-fingered glove. As he does so, the same fatal wounds appear on their physical bodies. The film has six sequels, each featuring the resurrection of Freddy Krueger to haunt the dreams of a new generation of Elm Street children. Nancy (Heather Langenkamp), the protagonist from the first film, appears sporadically throughout the series.

The remake of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, released in 2010, is the second slasher remake overseen by Platinum Dunes, and was directed by Samuel Bayer. It follows the narrative structure of the original closely, however it identifies Freddy Krueger (Jackie Earle Haley) as a paedophile rather than a child murderer, getting revenge on the children who exposed him as well as the parents who murdered him. Like *Friday the 13th*'s remake, it received extremely negative reviews from critics, and mixed reviews from the public.¹¹ The domestic gross was 65 million, but with a production budget nearly double that of the other two slasher remakes mentioned here, it can be considered to be the least financially successful of the three.¹²

Though these three remakes all follow the narrative structure of the original relatively closely, it is important to recognize that the sequels which exist in the space between original and remake are crucial parts of the over-arching story of

¹¹ CBS Interactive. "A Nightmare on Elm Street Reviews, Ratings, Credits, and More." *Metacritic*. Web. 1 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.metacritic.com/movie/a-nightmare-on-elm-street>>.

¹² Internet Movie Database. "A Nightmare On Elm Street (2010) ." *Box Office Mojo*. Web. 1 Apr. 2011. <<http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=nightmareonelmstreet10.htm>>.

the characters, places and events we see in the original films. Discussion of sequels and intertexts and how these might affect the remaking of franchise films (or even films with a single sequel) is an area which has been commonly overlooked. Through identifying and discussing the slasher remake as a cumulative hypertext, we can begin to think about the implication of sequels, cycles and series on how films are remade, and extend these ideas to remakes and adaptations of other franchise films.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter one will address issues of genre, a necessary consideration given that all the films discussed here fall within a single sub-genre. It will first consider how discussions of the horror genre emerged from genre theory more widely, and within that, discussions of the slasher sub-genre. It will outline the conventions of the slasher, so that the way in which these function within the slasher remake can be discussed in subsequent chapters. The history of the slasher will also be discussed, so that the implications of shifts and changes within the sub-genre for how these films have been remade can be considered in later chapters. It will look at how the slasher remake exists at the apex of a huge surge in horror remaking beginning in the late 1990s, and how this has affected the way in which the slasher remake functions.

Chapter two will turn to issues of remaking, in order to show how the slasher remake situates itself within this theoretical framework. It will show how the

concept of the cumulative hypertext has been carried through to remake studies from adaptation studies, and unpack this concept further.

Chapter three will discuss how the slasher remake retains content from the original film and franchise, breaking this down into three basic trends that can be identified in remakes from this sub-genre. These are: the referencing of characters and tropes as they appear most frequently across and outside the franchise, adherence to the narrative structure of the original, and adherence to the conventions of the slasher film. Each of these trends will be discussed with reference made to how they relate to Stam's functions of the cumulative hypertext, then identified as they appear in each of this thesis' three case study films.

The fourth chapter will echo the structure of chapter three, addressing three trends that can be identified in the way the slasher remake adapts content from the original film and franchise. These are the filling of gaps within the franchise mythology, the updating of technology (both within the narrative and with regards to the films' production), and how they have taken into account the shifts and developments which occurred in the sub-genre during the nineties.

Through discussion of genre, remaking and the films themselves, this thesis will identify the remakes of *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* as cumulative hypertexts. It will assert that studies of the film remake must extend their focus beyond consideration of the remake's fidelity to the original, and take into account the intertexts which exist between original and remake. It

is crucial that we consider cultural knowledge of and engagement with these intertexts if we are to understand how films, and in particular, franchise films (such as the slasher), have been remade.

Chapter One

The Slasher Film: History and Theory

This thesis focuses on the remaking of slasher films, and argues that the slasher remake functions as a cumulative hypertext (a concept to be fully explicated in the next chapter). In order to understand the slasher remake, and the place of the slasher within the horror genre and genre theory, it is necessary to survey genre theory more generally.

Genre Theory

Though discussion of individual film genres can be traced back as far as the 1940s and 50s with André Bazin¹³ and Robert Warshow's¹⁴ essays on the Western, genre studies did not come on the agenda of film theorists until the 1960s and 70s, in tandem with the development of film studies as a formalized, academic discipline. Genre studies marks a shift away from a concentration on the artist as the arbiter of meaning in a film, which had been the dominant approach to cinema since the 1950s, and towards a concentration on social context.

In essence, genre studies seeks to categorise films based on common elements.

This classification system has its foundations in literature, where genres were

¹³ Bazin, André. "The Western, or the American Film Par Excellence" and "The Evolution of the Western." *What is Cinema?* Trans. Hugh Gray. Vol. 2. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971: 140 -157. Print.

¹⁴ Warshow, Robert. "Movie Chronicle: The Westerner." In *The Immediate Experience*, revised ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001: 105-124. Print.

used for the same purpose, and many film genres have literary counterparts (for example, the horror genre). The earliest theoretical work on film genres was primarily concerned with how genres are defined, and the methodological difficulties found in this process. A particularly popular and contentious area of focus was the “empiricist dilemma,” or the attempt to find a solution to the circular logic involved in identifying the conventions of a genre (to find the defining characteristics of a genre, we must look to the films, but in order to know what films to look at, we need to know what characteristics define them). This circular logic can be identified in the literature on the slasher to be outlined later in this chapter. Edward Buscombe, writing for *Screen* in 1970¹⁵, suggested that the best solution was to establish a canon of highly regarded genre texts, and use these as the fixity against which all later genre works could be judged: however, as Andrew Tudor¹⁶ notes, the establishment of this canon would involve the same circular logic that Buscombe was trying to eliminate. It would also seriously impede discussions of genre evolution, privileging the old above the new. Tudor’s own suggestion, however, is equally problematic. He posits that the conventions of a genre could be found by finding a common cultural consensus for each genre’s conventions, yet deciding what this cultural consensus means, and how it would be established, would be near impossible. The empiricist dilemma, though intensely discussed, was never solved.

¹⁵ Buscombe, Edward. "The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema," *Screen* 11.2 (1970): 33-45. Print.

¹⁶ Tudor, Andrew. *Theories of Film*, New York: Viking Press, 1974: 135-8. Print.

Alongside discussions of methodology, an interest in where genres are located is evident from the earliest theoretical work on genres, though it was perhaps not made explicit until the mid to late 1970s. Buscombe and Tudor's work clearly implies that genres are located in texts, and they rely on the assumption that genre texts can be read "correctly." Steve Neale, influenced by screen theory, proposed in 1980 that genres must be understood as discourses, located in the relationships between text, audience and studio. Rick Altman's 1984 article in *Cinema Journal*¹⁷ is extremely useful in that it shows how existing genre analyses can be split into the semantic and the syntactic (focusing on genres' textual properties), yet he also makes note of the irreconcilable argument between those who argue that genre film production is shaped by audience demand, and those who believe audiences are lured into the positions Hollywood shapes for them (suggesting genres are also located in audiences and production as well as texts, though he does not give more than passing references to the former).

Alongside these theoretical discussions of genre more generally, work on individual genres was being developed. This early work, for the most part, appeared unconcerned with the issues plaguing those working on the larger, theoretical issues of genre. Most of them, for instance, employ an empiricist approach to identifying genre conventions, without attempting to avoid, or even acknowledging, the circular logic this involves. We also see in these individual analyses the suggestion that different genres are located in different places, as opposed to the more universal view seen in early genre theory, where it is

¹⁷ Altman, Rick. "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre." *Cinema Journal* 23, no. 3 (Spring 1984). P6 - 18. Print.

implied all genres function in the same way. The horror genre, for example, is discussed almost exclusively in terms of audiences, whereas for the Western, much more attention is paid to the generic conventions found in the text (particularly iconography).

These differences are necessary as genres are defined and unified in different ways. For example, the Western, an extremely popular object of analysis for early genre theorists, has relatively standard iconography and narrative structure across all its films: hence, this is what is used to identify and compare them. The musical, on the other hand, is more varied in terms of its iconography (such as props and costuming), but frequently makes use of the same stars, and is characterized by musical interventions throughout the narrative. In contrast to the Western, therefore, we find discussions of the musical genre are more inclined to focus on the genre's syntactic elements (how the films are temporally constructed), or its perceived ideological characteristics. A good example of this can be found in Rick Altman's book *The American Film Musical*¹⁸, which uses the structural and ideological characteristics of the musical to construct a systematic account of the genre, while acknowledging the multifarious stylistic characteristics it encompasses.

For broader genres like comedy and our focus, horror, it is difficult, if not impossible, to talk about genre conventions with regards to shared, consistent use of iconography or syntax. Their unifying principal aims, to amuse, or to scare/horrify, encompass a broad range of visual and narrative traditions, while

¹⁸ Altman, Rick. *The American Film Musical*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. Print.

still functioning as a collective. As a result, unlike the Western or the musical, discussions of iconography and syntax are usually relegated to work on their sub-genres (smaller groupings with distinct, isolating traits): these sub-genres are treated in almost exactly the same way as genres, and to date, no theoretical work on sub-genres (as distinct from genres) exists. The slasher is a good example of a sub-genre defined primarily on the basis of iconography and syntax, as will be shown later in this chapter.

Horror

With regards to horror as a whole, in order to make some sense of how these films function as a group, we see an enormous amount of emphasis placed on audience reaction. Horror is simply so broad, encompassing themes and images from alien monsters to teenage serial killers, that spectatorship is the only place unifying, totalizing theories of horror can easily be located. As Paul Wells points out, the horror genre has been “addressed in the light of its theological and moral perspectives, its sociological and cultural dimensions, its politics of representation, and its configuration as a set of texts particularly conducive to psychoanalytic approaches,”¹⁹ focusing on how the horror film represents the concerns and fears of the society it is presented to, and the pleasures this may offer. Furthermore, as Christine Gledhill suggests, horror even makes discussions of genre history and evolution difficult, demonstrating “a heterogeneity of inputs

¹⁹ Wells, Paul. *The Horror Genre: From Beezlebub to Blair Witch*. London: Wallflower Press, 2000: 7. Print.

and developments, rather than the integrated evolution of generic tradition attributed to the western or gangster film.”²⁰

The first work devoted to the genre was Clarens’ *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film* in 1968²¹. Clarens begins with a survey of horror films in an attempt to provide some form of historical overview of the genre. As stated previously, this is no easy endeavour, and academic attempts at horror histories usually point out trends, rather than seeking to provide a neat, evolutionary theory (given that the latter, as mentioned above, is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for this genre). Some trends identified,²² though not intensely discussed, in these historical overviews include the rise of horror in the Hollywood studio system in the 1930s, the genesis of the horror sequel in the 1940s, and the shift to psychological horror in 1960.

After his survey, Clarens turns to notions of catharsis to explain the popularity and existence of horror: he seeks to explain the horror film as representative of “a constant, ever present yearning for the fantastic, for the darkly mysterious, for the choked terror of the dark.”²³ In this aspect of Clarens’ work, we find an attempt not only to explain, but also to justify, the existence of horror in terms of

²⁰ Gledhill, Christine. "Horror." *The Cinema Book*. Ed Pam Cook. London: British Film Institute, 1985: 99. Print.

²¹ Clarens, Carlos. *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film*. Capricorn Books, New York, 1968. Print.

²² Examples of this include, but are not limited to, Balio, Tino. *The American Film Industry*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985: 298 -302. Print; Neale, Stephen. *Genre and Hollywood*. London: Routledge, 2000: 95. Print; Schatz, Thomas. *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking and the Studio System*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1981: 87 - 97. Print; Tudor, Andrew. *Monsters and Mad Scientists: a Cultural History of the Horror Film*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1989: 33 -35. Print.

²³ Clarens p. xi.

why it is worth studying. This is characteristic not only of early work on horror, but also of all work on it since: for example, Steffen Hantke's edited volume on the horror film, published in 2010²⁴, includes the same acknowledgment of academic and cultural disdain toward the horror film we find in works published in the 1970s and 80s (notable examples including Robin Wood, Andrew Tudor and Christine Gledhill²⁵).

Because of horror's heavy focus on reception and social context, it aligned itself well with the rise of psychoanalytic theory in film in the late 1970s. This can, in part, account for the increased number of books on horror that emerged in the 1980s. Psychoanalysis presented another way in which to legitimize the study of horror (beyond, though related to, the catharsis doctrine), as well as a way to unify some of its conventions. Charles Derry's²⁶ work is a particularly good example of the use of psychoanalysis to unify seemingly unrelated forms of horror. Though he splits horror into three sub-genres (horror of personality, horror of Armageddon, and horror of the demonic), he explains and justifies each form of horror in terms of what aspect of our unconscious fears and anxieties they feed into, or play upon.

²⁴ Hantke, Steffen (ed). *American Horror Film: The Genre at the Turn of the Millenium*. Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2010. Print.

²⁵ Wood, Robin, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film", *Movies and Methods II*, ed Bill Nichols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985: 195-220. Print; Tudor, Andrew. *Monsters and Mad Scientists: a Cultural History of the Horror Film*. Wiley-Blackwell, 1989. Print; Gledhill, Christine. "Horror". Pam Cook, ed. *The Cinema Book*. London: British Film Institute, 1985: 104-109. Print.

²⁶ Derry, Charles. *Dark Dreams: a Psychological History of the Modern Horror Film*. South Brunswick: A.S. Barnes, 1977. Print.

It can also be suggested that the rise of psychoanalytic approaches to horror was enabled by the rise of horror films featuring psychotic and/or serial killers, a form of horror that would dominate the genre in America from the 1960s through to the 1990s, with major resurgences in 1996 with *Scream*, and in 2007 with the remake of *Halloween* (both to be outlined later in this chapter). The first of these psychologically based horror films, by all accounts, was Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* in 1960. Because this form of horror explains its villains through psychological means (rather than the supernatural) and does frequently feature villains with Oedipal issues, it was perhaps inevitable that psychoanalytic theory would become a significant part of horror genre theory and analysis, as this form of horror became more popular and established. It should also be noted that as studies of the horror genre were emerging, film theory was undergoing a psychoanalytic turn, and this will have affected how these films were received and analysed at this time. Some significant works on psychoanalysis and the horror film from this period include Derry's *Dark Dreams: a Psychological History of the Modern Horror Film*, Steve Neale's Lacanian analysis of the monster in his book *Genre*, and Harlan Kennedy's *Things that go howl in the id*²⁷. These texts adopt a psychoanalytic approach by using Freud and Lacan's theories of the subconscious to explain both the appeal of the horror film, and some of its broad recurring themes (primarily, the monster).

As the first strains of feminist film theory turned away from the sociological and toward the psychoanalytic in the late 1970s (for example, Laura Mulvey's article

²⁷ Kennedy, Harlan. "Things that go howl in the id". *Film Comment* 18.2 (1982): 37-39. Print; Neale, Stephen. *Genre*. London: British Film Institute, 1980. Print.

Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, Janet Bergstrom's article *Enunciation and Sexual Difference* and Tania Modleski's book *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*²⁸), the horror genre became a popular site of discussion for feminist film theorists. It is here we first begin to see discussions of the slasher film: given that this sub-genre almost always features a female hero and a male villain, it could not easily be ignored by those discussing gender and the horror film, especially given that it was the dominant form of horror in the 1980s. These analyses are clearly influenced by their feminist focus, consistently reading the horror film, and within that, the slasher film, as misogynist.

Though content analyses such as those of Cowan and O'Brien, Molitor and Sapolsky, and Weaver²⁹ have shown that males are victimized just as frequently as females in these films (with females having a higher survival rate), these feminist analyses are of interest in that they have strongly affected how slasher films have been understood and discussed. *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender and the Modern Horror Film*³⁰ by Carol Clover and *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis*³¹ by Barbara Creed are two particularly significant works, with Clover's analysis of the slasher film's female hero, who she names

²⁸ Bergstrom, Janet. "Enunciation and Sexual Difference," *Camera Obscura* 3 (1979): 33-69. Print; Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16.3 (1975): 6 - 18. Print; Modleski, Tania. *The women who knew too much: Hitchcock and feminist theory*. New York: Methuen, 1988. Print.

²⁹ Cowan, Gloria, and Margaret O'Brien. "Gender and Survival vs Death in Slasher Films: A Content Analysis." *Sex Roles* 30.3 (1990): 187 - 196. Print; Molitor, Fred, and Sapolsky Barry S.. "Sex, Violence and Victimization in Slasher Films." *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 37 (1993): 233 - 242. Print; Weaver, James B. "Are "slasher" horror films sexually violent?" *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 35.3 (1991): 385 - 392. Print.

³⁰ Clover, Carol. *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender and the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992. Print.

³¹ Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.

the Final Girl, extending its influence beyond academia and into popular culture (for example, the notion of the Final Girl is referenced within the *Scream* series). This idea will be further explicated in subsequent sections and chapters. While Clover's work focuses on the female as victim, Creed's work addresses the female in the slasher film as monster, identifying the female heroes of the slasher films as "female castrator"³², and the killing of female victims as symbolic castrations. She also addresses Mrs Voorhees in *Friday the 13th* as a prime example of the "castrating mother."³³ Though this link between the slasher film and castration anxiety has had nowhere near the level of influence we see with Clover's concept of the Final Girl, it is representative of the kind of thinking that dominates work on the slasher film, constantly aligning sex and violence. Though this is only a feature of a small proportion of slasher films (as the aforementioned content analyses pointed out), it has certainly influenced how these films have been read, and in turn, remade. This will be discussed further in the next section, and again in subsequent chapters.

The Slasher Sub-Genre

Despite its significance within the history of horror, the slasher sub-genre has received little serious scholarly or critical attention: as Jim Harper states, "most writers are content to dismiss the entire sub-genre as misogynist trash," and critics generally consider the slasher film to be "neck and neck with hardcore

³² *ibid* p124

³³ *ibid* p126

pornography in the race to become the most execrable type of film.”³⁴ This view is no doubt compounded by the fact that the slasher film emerged during a period when horror cinema was predominantly approached from a psychoanalytic and/or feminist viewpoint (as outlined above). Adam Rockoff presents a similar account of the slasher film’s status within academia, stating that “if there is something commendable about writing a book on cinema, then there is something less noble about writing a book on horror films, and something downright perverse about writing a book about slasher movies.”³⁵

Of the existing literature devoted purely to the slasher film, as stated above, many writers focus upon the representation of women in the slasher. This is perhaps related to the fact that feminist film theory was emerging at the same time as this sub-genre, alongside psychoanalytic analyses of the horror film. These feminist works, as Steve Neale notes³⁶, presume the audience of the horror film to be predominantly male, and argue that the female in horror films is always the victim, or the monster. Feminist writers turn the killer’s weapon into a phallic object, and read the villains either in terms of sexual repression or violence. Notable examples of this kind of reading include work by Christine Gledhill (1985), Tania Modleski (1986), Carol Clover (1992), and Barbara Creed (1993)³⁷,

³⁴ Harper, Jim. *Legacy of Blood: A Comprehensive Guide to Slasher Movies*. London: Critical Vision, 2004: 2. Print.

³⁵ Rockoff, Adam. *Going to Pieces: The Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2002. Print.

³⁶ Neale p99

³⁷ Gledhill, Christine. "Horror". Pam Cook, ed. *The Cinema Book*. London: British Film Institute, 1985: 104-109. Print; Modleski, Tania. "The Terror of Pleasure: The Contemporary Horror Film and Postmodern Theory." *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*. Ed. Tania Modleski. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986: 155-66. Print; Clover, Carol. *Men, Women*

The aforementioned readings are refuted by Pinedo, who argues that the slasher is “an imaginary staging of women who fight back with lethal force against male figures who stalk and try to kill them.”³⁸ She also notes that many of the claims made about the genre’s male audience are anecdotal, rather than statistical. However, even Pinedo is unable to provide a more objective account of the sub-genre. Though she disagrees with the discussion of these films by feminists, she displaces this with a focus on how the horror film might identify the killer as ethnic other. It must also be noted that almost all available literature was written prior to the 1990s, before the slasher film was revived by Wes Craven’s *Scream* (1996) and significant shifts and changes occurred within the sub-genre.

To date, only three texts exist which take a more universal view of the slasher film, approaching it in terms of its iconography, history and marketing as well as its representation of gender. These three books, which will provide the history and working definition of the slasher film here, are Adam Rockoff’s *Going to Pieces: The Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film*, Vera Dika’s *Games of Terror: Halloween, Friday the 13th and the Films of the Stalker³⁹ Cycle⁴⁰*, and Jim Harper’s *Legacy of Blood: A Comprehensive Guide to Slasher Movies*. As Dika’s book takes a strictly formalist approach and precedes the slasher revival of the nineties, and Harper’s book comprises mostly of film reviews, Adam Rockoff’s text

and Chainsaws: Gender and the Modern Horror Film. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992. Print; Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.

³⁸ Pinedo, Isabel Cristina. *Recreational terror women and the pleasures of horror film viewing*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1997. Print.

³⁹ This is Dika’s own term, and is interchangeable with the term “slasher film”.

⁴⁰ Dika, Vera. *Games of Terror: Halloween, Friday the 13th and the Films of the Stalker Cycle*. Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1990. Print.

(specifically the chapter “What is a Slasher Film?”) will be used as the primary source of information and critique. Rockoff and Harper’s texts have a strong industrial focus, and Dika’s a strong textual focus, making them of particular use here, as industrial and textual factors are perhaps the most influential with regards to how these films have been remade. The displacement of theoretical issues in favor of these approaches can be attributed to the fact that these texts are attempting to account for the entire phenomenon, rather than explain it.

Tropes of the Slasher Film

As Rockoff notes, finding a clear definition for the slasher film is difficult, given the “tough, problematic and fiercely individualistic” nature of the films this sub-genre encompasses. The simplest definition, “a maniac with a knife slaughtering a group of young, good looking teenagers in a myriad of gruesome ways”⁴¹ is easy, but problematic: *When a Stranger Calls* (1979) involves a teenager and a knife-wielding maniac, but, as Rockoff notes later in his book, this is by no means a slasher film. *Cabin Fever* (2002) is a blood-soaked and graphically violent film that employs an impressively wide range of killing techniques, yet this is not a slasher either. For this reason, Rockoff approaches the conventions of the slasher film as paradigmatic, selecting elements that “are prevalent in enough films” to form a “workable, however malleable, definition of the slasher.”⁴²

⁴¹ Rockoff p5

⁴² Rockoff p5

Rockoff's definition of the slasher film is based around six basic tropes, each of which can be identified in at least two of the three slasher films discussed in this thesis. Though Dika was the first to attempt a clear definition of the slasher film, her account only deals with the formal elements of the slasher, and a study of how the slasher has been remade requires consideration of its narrative elements also. The tropes Rockoff proposes are reflected in both Harper and Dika's work. These are 1. the killer, 2. the past event, 3. the killer's weapon/modus operandi, 4. the female protagonist, 5. setting, and 6. the red herring. Though all of these have precedents in earlier forms of horror (for example, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre's* (1974) characterization of Leatherface, or *Psycho's* use of a female protagonist and red herring), the slasher sub-genre brought these together to create a highly successful formula.

As Rockoff notes, the killer of a slasher film is not always a "supernatural boogeyman who wears a battered hockey mask and wields a machete,"⁴³ but usually an individual who has suffered some kind of trauma, and as a result, seeks vengeance- "and the bloodier, the better."⁴⁴ This directly relates to another of Rockoff's paradigmatic rules of the slasher film: the past event. For most (if not all) slasher films, a past event will strongly influence the killer's actions. The killer will witness or be subjected to some form of humiliation or trauma prior to the events of the film (made known to the viewer in the form of a prologue or allusion), and on the anniversary of that event, "usually designated by a holiday

⁴³ *ibid* p6

⁴⁴ *ibid* p6

or traditional celebration”⁴⁵, they will return to wreak havoc. Dika expands on this slightly, considering the aforementioned trauma or humiliation to cause the killer to experience a sense of loss (broadly defined), which they respond to with rage. ⁴⁶

The weapon used by this killer is perhaps the most important aspect to consider when deciding whether a film belongs to this sub-genre. Rockoff correctly states that “in slasher films, never does the terror-stricken victim run blindly through the woods only to be gunned down in a hail of bullets...never does she start the car’s engine- which inevitably fails to turn over anyway- only to be blown to smithereens in some elaborately constructed booby trap.”⁴⁷ The slasher film, in keeping with its name, is fairly consistent with regards to how its victims are killed: a knife is traditional, but any metal object will suffice. Some weapons can also be specific to a particular villain, or an important part of their persona: two obvious examples of this are Freddy Krueger’s knife-fingered glove in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and the fisherman’s hook in the *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (1997) trilogy. Furthermore, Rockoff asserts that the slasher villain’s modus operandi makes these killings very different to those in action films, or other forms of horror. Unlike action film killings, these deaths are “intensely personal” and visceral: as Harper notes, even when the weapon is used as a missile, it will almost always be at close range.⁴⁸ The slasher weapon is also unique in terms of its marketability: the audience is “intimately familiar”

⁴⁵ ibid

⁴⁶ Dika p55

⁴⁷ Rockoff p7

⁴⁸ Harper p46

with the weapon, “having seen it used in a previous scene or displayed in glorious full color on the film’s one-sheet.”⁴⁹ This second point will be picked up in subsequent chapters as a significant and influential factor in how these films have been remade.

It is at this point Rockoff turns to gender and the slasher film, refuting the claims of writers such as Carol Clover and Barbara Creed who saw the slasher as highly misogynist, its weapon as phallic object, and the “penetration of knife into flesh...as a symbol of violation.”⁵⁰ Rockoff correctly notes that both men AND women are killed indiscriminately, and that even if the deaths of women seem to be more prolonged than those of men, it is “certainly a stretch to propose that this was ever a conscious choice on the part of the filmmaker.”⁵¹ He also addresses the highly influential concept of the “Final Girl”, outlined by Clover in her 1992 book. Clover asserts that the audience of the slasher film is forced to identify, as a result of the film’s structure, with its female hero. She considers this female hero, who she labels the Final Girl, to conform to a specific set of traits, including resourcefulness, intelligence, disinterest in sex and drugs, and boyishness⁵².

Rockoff sees merit in Clover’s claim that the heroine of the slasher film is usually masculine enough not to “disturb the structure of male competence and

⁴⁹ Rockoff p7

⁵⁰ Clover p13

⁵¹ Rockoff p9

⁵² Clover p13

sexuality”⁵³ and agrees that “one of the most enduring images of the slasher film is that of the beautiful heroine screaming in abject terror”⁵⁴, but as a general rule, sees the idea and description of the Final Girl as a “gross over-analysis.”⁵⁵ While the three franchises and remakes studied in this thesis do have female heroines, as Rockoff points out, the Final Girl is not a standard feature of the sub-genre. The original version of *Prom Night* has both a male and a female survivor, as does the original version of *My Bloody Valentine*, and all the installments of the *Scream* trilogy see at least two male lead characters survive, with Dewey Riley (David Arquette) still alive after appearing in all three films⁵⁶. Furthermore, these female heroines do not always fit the characteristics set forth by Clover. Laurie Strode, for example, may be well behaved and an outsider in the first installment of the *Halloween* franchise, but she is hardly resourceful: she spends a great deal of the film running and hiding, and depends on Dr Samuel Loomis to save her and defeat the killer.

Dika and Harper also address the concept of the Final Girl. Harper, like Rockoff, notes that this character type does not appear in all slasher films, but still considers it to be one of the paradigmatic rules of the sub-genre and an important part of any study of the slasher film, as all the female protagonists (when they appear) share certain characteristics. These include intelligence, resourcefulness and the ability to sense danger: much the same characteristics set forth by Carol Clover in her original assertion of the trope (mentioned above).

⁵³ Rockoff p13

⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁶ The first installment saw Randy and Dewey as male survivors, the second Dewey and Cotton Weary, and the third Kincaid and Dewey.

Dika is perhaps more pragmatic, avoiding an explicit denial or affirmation of Clover's claims and simply addressing that which is on the screen in front of her: she notes that the teenage protagonists are generally "white, middle class Americans,"⁵⁷ and that the female heroine, repeated in enough films to be worth mentioning, is masculine in her "dominance of the film's visual and narrative context."⁵⁸ In keeping with Rockoff and Harper's treatment of the subject, this thesis will address the Final Girl primarily as an idea and paradigmatic rule that has strongly influenced public understanding and interpretation of this sub-genre rather than as a definitive, consistent feature of the slasher film.

Setting is the final trope to be discussed here, and one that is particularly important to this thesis' discussion of retained content in the third chapter. The settings of slasher films are usually ones which leave the victims isolated from anyone who could help them, somewhere the victims have a good knowledge of (giving them a slight advantage over the killer), and, significantly for this thesis, one which is generic and familiar to the audience. The fact that these environments could belong to any small town, summer camp or street in suburban America contributes to the films' widespread success, and the ease with which these settings are translated to sequels and remakes. *Halloween's* setting of Haddonfield, for example, is described by Rockoff as one which "perfectly captures the familiarity and subtle nuances of small town USA,"⁵⁹ and Camp Crystal Lake as "a universally recognized place associated with

⁵⁷ Dika p55

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ Rockoff p10

adolescence.”⁶⁰ Dika, as part of her almost completely formalist analysis, suggests much the same: she notes that “the entire action takes place in a single setting...the stalker film is usually positioned in a middle-class American setting, one that fosters the greatest degree of ‘likeness’ to the members of the film-viewing audience.”⁶¹ Harper does not spend as much time on setting, but one interesting point he makes is that all these settings are ones that appear “safe”: the specific example he gives is the town of Woodsboro in *Scream*, “such a secure place that teenage boys in leather jackets can crawl in and out of second floor windows without paranoid neighbours calling the police.”⁶²

There is one final point, not explicitly stated by Rockoff in his introductory chapter; one that is worth bringing up here with regards to this thesis’ definition of the slasher film, and is crucial to any understanding of the slasher film and its progression as a sub-genre. This is the notion of the “red herring:” Harper suggests that this is generally seen in the form of a wrongly identified suspect, and Dika in the form of the viewer constantly trying to guess the outcome of each situation. The three films studied in this thesis certainly feature this trope: the original *Nightmare on Elm Street* plays with the idea that Freddy Krueger cannot possibly be real (that there must be a logical explanation for each dreamer’s death), and *Friday the 13th*, as Rockoff states later in his book, implements unmistakable visual clues to convince the audience that the killer is a man, rather than a middle-aged woman. *Halloween* consistently refers to Myers as “the boogeyman”, with several of its young characters convinced that Myers must be

⁶⁰ *ibid*

⁶¹ Dika p58-59

⁶² Harper p52

this mythological terror, rather than a former resident of their neighbourhood. This point will become particularly important when considering developments within the sub-genre and how it has been revived: the way in which films that rely on deceiving and shocking the viewer manage to keep doing this when the audience already knows the story.

History of the Slasher Sub-Genre

There are two main theories as to how the slasher sub-genre was formed, and its conventions established. While most generic horror texts, such as Charles Derry's highly regarded *Dark Dreams: A Psychological History of the Modern Horror Film*, discuss the slasher film as the heir to *Psycho* (1960), or part of a natural progression, Rockoff presents a different theory as to the rise of the Golden Age of the slasher film. He states that it was not so much evolution, as a "big bang", and "that big bang was *Halloween*."⁶³ It is clear that the slasher film has predecessors, and it certainly derives from that which came before it: if not for the shift to horror of personality in the 1960s, arguably, the slasher film would not exist. Rockoff is by no means arguing that the slasher remake is a completely isolated phenomenon (even providing a whole chapter on the pre-history of the slasher in his book), but rather, is asserting that an evolutionary theory is too simple. The history of the horror genre as a whole certainly supports Rockoff's suggestion: as stated earlier in this chapter, historically, horror has never lent itself well to over-arching evolutionary theories. The slasher's references and influences are varied: it owes as much to the Italian

⁶³ Rockoff p49

giallo as it does to the American rape-revenge film. As a result, it is impossible to plot a neat, linear progression that slowly pushed the slasher toward its most popular form. Furthermore, unlike films that have neatly evolved out of something else, the slasher film has a clear origin point: though there are precedents for all the elements which make up the slasher formula, *Halloween* was the first to bring them all together. Harper echoes Rockoff's assessment of the slasher film's origins, stating "the story of the slasher movie and its meteoric rise to popularity begins, of course, with John Carpenter's *Halloween*."⁶⁴

As stated above, the three authors being used here consider the slasher sub-genre to have emerged in 1978 with John Carpenter's *Halloween*. *Friday the 13th*, released two years later, is generally considered to be the second slasher film, repeating the formula seen in *Halloween* while deviating "with some regularity from conventions which have since become mainstays of the genre."⁶⁵ These deviations helped establish the rules of the sub-genre as paradigmatic, somewhat flexible rather than completely cemented, giving audiences a new story and set of shocks within a familiar structure and known sub-genre (the kind of film Dika proposes the audience will most enjoy). The popularity of the slasher increased as the 1980s began, with *Prom Night* (1980), starring Jamie Lee Curtis, earning back its modest budget more than ten times over, while sequels to both *Halloween* and *Friday the 13th* performed extremely well at the box office in 1981.

⁶⁴ Harper p12

⁶⁵ Rockoff p76

Due to the staggering number of slasher films released in the 1980s each book privileges and discusses different films, with Harper's including a large number of short reviews in order to provide the most extensive survey possible. Dika's book does not spend much time discussing the status and development of the slasher film, yet both Rockoff and Harper agree that the slasher film began its slow decline after the release of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* in 1984. While sequels to the three slasher films studied in this thesis remained popular, as Rockoff states, "audiences had...tired of the old formula- that of a maniac decimating a group of teenagers- but were unwilling to support a new approach to their lagging genre"⁶⁶ (such as the relatively profitable yet highly unpopular *April Fool's Day* in 1986, which, as the title suggests, flaunted the tropes of the slasher but turned every single one into a red herring).

While Rockoff is fairly ambivalent about the late eighties slasher film, noting the success of *Child's Play* (1988) and the late eighties sequels, Harper considers most late eighties slasher films to be of a very low quality. He describes the typical late eighties slasher as containing little violence or blood, and "an excess of nudity."⁶⁷ Although assessment of the films suggests that Harper's selected sample is not necessarily representative of the state of the slasher in the late 1980s more generally, it is clear that the slasher film was waning in quality, and certainly in popularity by the end of this period. As Rockoff explains, the sequels to already-popular slasher films could still pull in a profit if they kept their budgets low enough, but "new and original slasher films...were consigned to

⁶⁶ Rockoff p163

⁶⁷ Harper p88

video, unable to scare up any national distribution or exhibition.”⁶⁸ It was not until 1996, with the release of *Scream*, that the slasher was once again seen as a viable sub-genre.

The Nineties: Revival

The significance of *Scream* in the history and development of the slasher film, and the horror film in general, cannot be over-estimated. Harper frequently refers to films as pre or post-*Scream* in his book, as a shorthand way of explaining their take on the rules of the slasher film. Rockoff devotes an entire chapter to the slasher revival of the nineties, and almost half of its seventeen pages are devoted to the *Scream* trilogy (five to the first film alone). *Scream* also marks the beginning of strong academic interest in postmodernism and intertextuality in horror films.

As Andrew Syder⁶⁹ so astutely notes, *Scream* was certainly not the first example of a postmodern horror film, it simply made evident and brought into popular consciousness the postmodern tendencies which, as Syder argues using films ranging from *Cat People* (1942) to *Se7en* (1995), have been present in the horror genre since its very beginnings: in order to scare us with the unknown, they must play upon our knowledge of the expected/unexpected. Robert Stam suggests that postmodernism has contributed to film by calling attention to “a stylistic shift

⁶⁸ Rockoff p177

⁶⁹ Syder, Andrew. "Knowing the Rules: Postmodernism and the Horror Film." *Spectator* 22.2 (2002): 78. Print.

toward a media-conscious cinema of...ironic recyclage.”⁷⁰ The work of Jacques Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson is particularly significant for film studies. The former asserts that the images and signs circulated by the media completely dominate our reality, to the point that these signs have *become* our reality, no longer connected to the thing they are meant to represent⁷¹. The latter uses the term “historicism” to describe films which recycle old images, drawing upon film history to create a simulated version of that history, using other films’ stylistic traits in the absence of the meaning and significance that underpinned them⁷². All of this is a useful description for what we see in the *Scream* series, and later, the slasher remake. As will be discussed in later chapters, these films create frames of reference and meaning by drawing upon familiar images from the Golden Age slasher, as well as other sources within popular culture.

On a related note, it can also be suggested that though genres and sub-genres are inherently intertextual (always discussed in terms of how films relate to each other), *Scream* marked the beginning of a trend, to be discussed further later in subsequent chapters, for explicit pop cultural referencing and self-reflexivity in horror (primarily slasher) films. In alignment with postmodernism, work on intertextuality suggests that, as Julia Kristeva puts it, “every text takes shape as a mosaic of citations, every text is the absorption and transformation of other texts.”⁷³ In *Scream*, and in turn, the remakes, we see these various intersections

⁷⁰ Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction*, p308

⁷¹ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*

⁷² Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 1991.

⁷³ Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez and trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon Roudiez. Oxford: Blackwell, 1980: 146. Print.

with other texts exposed: the way this occurs in the remake will be fully explicated in the next chapter, with specific reference to Stam's application of Gerard Genette's work on the different forms of intertextuality to film adaptation, and how this has been picked up by remake studies.

Rockoff states that during a period when it would be extremely difficult to get a production company to look at a slasher script, *Scream*, then known as *Scary Movie* (the title later changed to avoid assumptions it was a parody) gained so much attention because "there was something different about it."⁷⁴ Unlike the eighties sequels, "the dialogue was witty, self-referential, and seemed to capture the authenticity of modern teenage jargon."⁷⁵ Its characters were culturally aware enough "to understand the conventions of the slasher film, and still young and naïve enough to ignore them."⁷⁶ Unlike the slasher franchise sequels which had descended into black comedy, this film had plenty of in-jokes, but at the same time, "was scary. Really scary...a script of raw and terrifying power."⁷⁷ *Scream*, released on December 20, grossed over 100 million by the end of its theatrical run and became "*the* movie to see"⁷⁸ (Rockoff's emphasis).

The immensely popular *I Know What You Did Last Summer* followed a year later, earning over 72 million dollars and proving that *Scream* was not a singular anomaly. These new releases, the three most prominent of which are *Scream*, *I Know What You Did Last Summer* and *Urban Legend* (1998), maintained the

⁷⁴ Rockoff p178

⁷⁵ *ibid*

⁷⁶ *ibid*

⁷⁷ *ibid*

⁷⁸ *ibid*

slasher paradigm outlined in the previous section, while finding ways to expose and re-invigorate it for contemporary audiences. Some significant shifts noted by Rockoff and Harper include: a different form of female heroine; use of contemporary teenage jargon; incorporation of modern technology (eg email, cell phones); an emphasis on family and relationships; and in-jokes for the slasher aficionado (for example, the casting of Robert Englund and Brad Dourif in *Urban Legend*, noted by both authors). As stated above these shifts serve to update the slasher while still maintaining that which made it popular and marketable in the first place.

Both books finish with the decline of the nineties slasher film, with *Urban Legend: Final Cut* (2000) bringing in only 21.5 million (less than quarter of *Scream's* gross)⁷⁹ and according to Rockoff, “critics pronounc(ing) that films which left much to the imagination, like *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), which grossed 140 million, and *The Sixth Sense* (1999), which grossed 293 million, heralded an end to the graphic violence of the slasher.”⁸⁰

Rockoff ends his book on a note of optimism, suggesting that the future of the slasher film is bright, and asserting that “for over twenty years, the slasher film has mirrored the resilience of indestructible killers...it has weathered periods of stagnation only to return with a vengeance...slasher films are here to stay.”⁸¹

Harper agrees with this sentiment, pointing out that “as successful as they were, neither *The Sixth Sense* nor *Blair Witch* inspired more than a handful of copycat

⁷⁹ Rockoff p194

⁸⁰ *ibid* p193

⁸¹ *ibid* p194

films: unlike *Halloween*, which continues to inspire, twenty five years after its release.”⁸² Neither writer predicted the remake phenomenon, but their unwavering belief that the slasher film would experience another revival has certainly been rewarded. It is at this point that available scholarship on the slasher film leaves off (including Rockoff and Harper): several years before the slasher remakes discussed in this thesis were made, and were able to bring this sub-genre into its third wave of popularity.

The Slasher, Cycles and Series

Throughout discussions of the horror genre and slasher film, little attention has been paid to the importance of sequels and franchises, though as mentioned previously, these have been identified as a feature of the horror genre since the 1940s. As a result, the implication of cycles, franchises and series for horror remaking has not been discussed. In subsequent chapters, I will argue that in order to understand how the slasher remake relates to the original film and its intertexts, we must consider how the remake may be affected by audience knowledge of, and engagement with, the intertexts which exist between original and remake. The slasher remake is an ideal site to begin thinking about some of these issues, which are extremely important for those addressing remakes of genre or franchise films in general.

⁸² *ibid* p30

The Slasher/Remake

The first slasher remake was Rob Zombie's *Halloween* in 2007, but the slasher remake is by no means an isolated phenomenon, instead sitting at the apex of a massive increase in horror remaking during the new millennium. The horror remake has been a relatively consistent form of filmmaking since the 1930s (with several silent horror films being remade as 'talkies', such as Tod Browning's remake of his own 1927 film *London After Midnight* in 1935, re-named *Mark of the Vampire*), however this period shows an extremely sharp and consistent increase in remaking within this genre, and a higher number of horror remakes per year than any other decade.⁸³ The cause(s) of this is debatable, but the notoriety of Gus van Sant's remake of *Psycho* in 1998 and the fact that horror remaking steadily increased from this point onward indicates that this could provide the beginning of a working timeline for the new millennium horror remake.

When van Sant released his shot-for-shot remake of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, the film was poorly received on the grounds that the original did not need to be updated. Interestingly, a significant amount of the negative feedback directed at van Sant's remake did not simply stop at suggesting that it was an exercise in futility, but instead continued on to dissect the film, looking at each place where it had supposedly gone wrong, and providing some reason as to why each moment of change or repetition had failed. Roger Ebert suggested that the film should not have been made in colour, that the clinical diagnosis scene at the end,

⁸³ See appendix two.

“a completely unnecessary scene in the original”, should not have been retained, and that the whole thing felt like “watching a provincial stock company doing the best it could without the Broadway” cast.”⁸⁴ Slavoj Žižek believed the film ought to have tried harder to “achieve the uncanny effect of the double”, something which would have caused the audience to “all the more powerfully experience that we are dealing with a totally different film.”⁸⁵ The inference of this dissection was that while the shot-for-shot remake was more cinematic experiment than marketable commodity, the remake was certainly a viable form of filmmaking and able to generate public interest. These reviews reveal that the film remake is, and is expected to be, much more complex than a simple replication of earlier content: this complexity will be elaborated on in subsequent chapters.

One horror remake a year was relatively standard during the nineties, but by the mid-2000s, this had accelerated to a minimum of three per year. Interestingly, all of the films being remade during this period⁸⁶ acquired a high level of public awareness and engagement: like *Psycho*, they had a pre-existing audience, were heavily discussed prior to their release, and were able to market themselves based on the status of the original film. As Constantine Santas states, it was not uncommon before van Sant’s experiment for “average, run-of-the-mill successful movies” to be remade, and to be “quite successful at the box office”⁸⁷, but this

⁸⁴ Ebert, Roger. "Psycho (review)." *Chicago Sun Times* 6 Dec. 1998. *Psycho: rogerebert.com: Reviews*. Web. 4 July 2010.

⁸⁵ Žižek, Slavoj. *Enjoy your symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and out*. 2. ed. New York: Routledge, 2001: 206. Print.

⁸⁶ See appendix two

⁸⁷ Santas, Constantine. "The Remake of *Psycho* (Gus van Sant, 1998): Creativity or Cinematic Blasphemy?" *Senses of Cinema* 10 (2000). *The Remake of Psycho*. Web. 3 June 2010.

period marks something quite different: as Santas puts it, these are films which are made “to emulate the success of the original”, films which “have gained the status of significant works of art which are difficult to replace or imitate.”⁸⁸ It can be suggested, therefore, that van Sant’s film heralded a new attitude to remaking, where the boundaries of what can and should be remade, and how this might be done, were re-negotiated.

The horror remakes which followed van Sant’s *Psycho* showed a much higher degree of revisionism than their predecessors, perhaps linked to the fact that van Sant’s attempt at near perfect imitation had failed so dismally: though they would maintain the basic plot line of the original story and market themselves as remakes, various measures would be taken to surprise those familiar with the original, and make the films relevant to contemporary audiences. Post-*Psycho*, it became apparent that Van Sant’s “whole generation of movie-goers who hadn’t seen it” were much more aware of older films than he anticipated. As James Macdowell suggests, “even if there is a whole generation who have not seen the original, there are likely to be far fewer (almost none?) who have not heard of it and know nothing of the plot,” as it has “now been spoofed and referenced almost into meaninglessness.”⁸⁹ Simply put, van Sant underestimated the level of pop cultural saturation contemporary audiences experience through a variety of media (a point which will be discussed further in the next chapter). A high degree of revisionism, while maintaining basic plot points, takes into account what audiences can be assumed to know through references and repetitions, and

⁸⁸ *ibid*

⁸⁹ MacDowell, James. "What value is there in Gus van Sant's Psycho?" *Offscreen* 9.7 (2005): *Offscreen: What Value is there in Gus van Sant's Psycho?* Web. 4 June 2010.

gives the remake's existence some kind of credibility beyond being, as van Sant called his own work, an "experiment."⁹⁰

All these highly revised, post-*Psycho* remakes managed to prove themselves a much more viable commodity than their predecessors, even though they did not always manage to gain fan and/or critical acclaim. These remakes showed a much higher degree of revisionism, while still trading on the name of the original: though the remake of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was poorly received by fans and critics, for example, it was still the number one film on its opening weekend, and with a lifetime gross of just over 107 million dollars, it more than recovered the 9.5 million dollars spent to make the film.⁹¹

Though a higher degree of adaptation (i.e., more changes and updates) proved to be the key to greater financial success, it is worth noting that the specific pattern of retained and adapted content in the post-*Psycho* horror remake appears to be completely arbitrary. What is retained and what is adapted varies significantly from film to film. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2003) retains the character of Leatherface, but changes the motivation of the teens traveling to his hometown. *Black Christmas* (2006), on the other hand (another film considered a forerunner to the slasher) completely changed its killer. Taking yet another approach, *The Amityville Horror* (2005) kept the narrative of the film exactly the same, instead updating the special effects, dialogue, and graphic nature of the horror scenes. It

⁹⁰ *ibid*

⁹¹ Internet Movie Database. "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (2003)." *Box Office Mojo*. Web. 1 Apr. 2011. <<http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=tcm03.htm>>.

can be suggested that this variation is due to the fact that while these are all films from within the horror genre, the genre conventions they follow are broad enough that the remakes are not influenced by the same strict set of rules and tropes as the highly formulaic slasher. Furthermore, it can be argued that the slasher remakes, being much more heavily referenced in popular culture, and with a much higher number of sequels, have a different set of issues to deal with when selecting what content to adapt and retain: something that will be fully elaborated in subsequent chapters.

As well as forming part of the horror remake phenomenon, it is worth noting that these films also form part of a massive resurgence in sequels and other forms of repetition. In 2007, only twenty percent of films made represented original material (as opposed to being based on a pre-existing literary or filmic property)⁹². This trend in consumption shows that people were interested in seeing stories they already knew retold: this, alongside and as part of the surge in horror remakes, also suggests a market perfectly primed for the slasher remake. The adapting of not only pre-sold, but also pre-loved properties had been proven successful in both these forms: hence, at the height of this phenomenon, it was possible for remakes of highly canonized and frequently referenced films to be picked up by studios, with the success of the earlier remakes of such films suggesting there was little chance of boycott or risk. The earlier remakes provided filmmakers a guaranteed map or method by which to do this. *Psycho* proved it COULD be done, and the remakes and sequels that

⁹² Jess-Cooke, Carolyn and Verevis, Constantine. Introduction. *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel*. Ed Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010: 2. Print.

followed proved it could be done very successfully. The market was, by 2007, perfectly primed for an attempt at remaking the Golden Age slasher franchises: given new attitudes toward remaking and the immense popularity and notoriety of the originals, remaking the slasher almost guaranteed immense profits.

The slasher remakes were all released in quick succession: and interestingly, the same films that preceded the Golden Age of the slasher were remade just before the wave of slasher remakes began⁹³. *Halloween* was released in 2007, with a very minimal amount of marketing (the first cinematic trailers were released just months before the release of the actual film, and a Comic Con discussion panel was held the July before the film was released). This first slasher remake gained some critical acclaim (much more so than any of the remakes which preceded it), and did well at the box office – in unadjusted US dollars, it is the most successful installment of *Halloween* to date. This was certainly a risky move on the part of Dimension Films: arguably, the original *Halloween* is as revered as *Psycho* by its fans, and the lapse in time between original and remake is almost ten years shorter than that for *Psycho*, making arguments about the necessity of an update even more likely. Both films have aged remarkably well: their minimal use of special effects means that any attempt to update these films is going to be much more complex than simply re-creating scenes with advanced technology. In spite of trepidation on the part of fans and critics, the revisionist-yet-reverent approach seen in this film, and the selection of a respected horror director (Rob Zombie) proved successful.

⁹³ See appendix two.

Prom Night, released the following year was much more revisionist than Rob Zombie's remake of *Halloween*, but once again, Dimension Films had a successful slasher remake on their hands. Shortly after, Platinum Dunes, the production company responsible for the remake of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, sought the rights to *Friday the 13th* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Unlike the earlier slasher remakes, the marketing for these was viral. Each had both teaser and full-length trailers, clips were released on YouTube, and *Nightmare* had guerilla clips⁹⁴ on MTV. Both were financially successful, though neither did as well critically as their predecessors.

At the present time, Platinum Dunes has been unable to find funding to remake the sequel to *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, or to make another installment of *Friday the 13th*.⁹⁵ Dimension Films had also planned to make another installment of *Halloween*, but this is currently on hold. Though the first remakes of both were relatively successful (the *Friday the 13th* remake being the highest grossing slasher of all time in unadjusted dollars, surpassing even *Scream*), the critical and financial losses of *Halloween 2* (2009) and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning* meant that second installments for horror remakes of any kind were perhaps too much of a risk. It is possible that, following the release of *Scream 4* (2011), the reboot⁹⁶ and remake market, particularly for the slasher, will

⁹⁴ Refers to a type of advert which appears to be hi-jacking another advert's slot, cutting the other short.

⁹⁵ Brad Fuller, one of the three Platinum Dunes producers regularly updates fans on the status of these films via his verified Twitter account, which can be found at <http://www.twitter.com/bcfuller>.

⁹⁶ A reboot is a film which continues the story of a pre-existing property. This differs from the sequel in that the reboot completely re-starts the narrative continuity of the property, re-writing and ignoring the anterior texts which immediately followed the original – a sequel, by comparison, adds itself to the story arc of the other installments.

experience a revival (if the revivals in the nineties and for the first set of remakes are to be considered a solid precedent): for the time being, however, the slasher remake can be taken to refer to a discrete set of films, starting with *Halloween*, and ending with *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. The fact that we are dealing with a discrete set of films across three years means that it is possible to identify trends as being present in every slasher remake.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how the slasher fits into wider discussions of genre theory, and specifically, work on the horror genre, and has suggested that the implications of cycles, series and sequels for this genre and sub-genre have not yet been sufficiently addressed. It has outlined the history and conventions of the slasher sub-genre, showing how these conventions have been adapted over time. Subsequent chapters will look at how the remakes have approached these conventions. It has outlined the history of the new millennium horror remake, suggested how the retaining and adapting of content from the original films has been negotiated, and has briefly discussed how the slasher remake fits into this trend. Chapter two will situate the slasher remake in relation to literature on remaking, covering how the remake has been discussed and has functioned historically. This will enable discussion of how the slasher remake situates itself in relation to the history and theory of remaking, and in turn, Robert Stam's work on hypertextuality.

Chapter Two

Remakes and the Cumulative Hypertext

This chapter will cover the history of what we might call ‘remake studies’, looking briefly at its origins in genre and adaptation studies. It will look at different categories and issues that have been applied to the remake, and consider how these might be useful in understanding how the slasher remake functions. It will outline the concept of the cumulative hypertext and suggest how the slasher remake functions in this way, embracing not only the original film, but the sequels and intertexts which have played upon it in the space between original and remake.

Remakes

In spite of claims about Hollywood’s *current* lack of originality⁹⁷, the recent surge of remakes is not completely unprecedented: as Constantine Verevis states, “cinema has been repeating and replaying its own narratives...from its very beginnings.”⁹⁸ Those works which addressed the remake outside the context of adaptation or genre studies were primarily focused on how films are adapted across cultures (for example, the surge of French-to-American remakes in the 1980s)⁹⁹, and were more interested in the dissection of specific original/remake

⁹⁷ Northover, Kylie. "Originality overrated in Hollywood's hands." *The Age - Melbourne, Australia*. Web. 12 May 2010. <<http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/movies/originality-overrated-in-hollywoods-hands-20100702-ztst.html>>.

⁹⁸ Verevis p1

⁹⁹ Examples of these remakes include, but are not limited to, *Three Men and a Baby* (1987, dir Leonard Nimoy), *Breathless* (1983, dir Jim McBride), *Down and Out in Beverley Hills* (1986, dir

pairs than making claims about the remake, its functions and its possibilities more generally. Early discussions of the remake such as Bazin's 1952 essay *Remade in America*¹⁰⁰ do not attempt to theorize, define or justify the remake, but rather use it as a platform to discuss whether films can or should be 'translated' into other cultures. Though theoretical studies of the remake in its own right (as distinct from studies of adaptations and intertextuality) did not emerge until Michael Druzman's 1975 survey *Make it Again, Sam: A Survey of Movie Remakes*¹⁰¹, the foundations for what would come later can be found in adaptation studies, a field which has its foundations in George Bluestone's seminal 1957 work *Novels into Film*¹⁰².

Throughout its history, adaptation studies has tended to read films in terms of their syntactic and semantic similarity to the property on which they are based, frequently discussing the adaptation in terms of its fidelity to the original. This has parallels in early genre studies where, as suggested in the first chapter, attempts to solve the empiricist dilemma frequently fell prey to privileging the conventions of older genre texts as being those against which all later genre films should be judged. As James Naremore states, "even when academic writing on the topic (adaptations) is not directly concerned with a given film's...fidelity to a beloved source"¹⁰³, it will tend to privilege the original text over the adaptation, and "be...constitutive of a series of binary oppositions...literature versus cinema,

Paul Mazursky), *Cousins* (1989, dir Joel Schumacher), and *The Man With One Red Shoe* (1985, dir. Stan Dragoti).

¹⁰⁰ Bazin, André. "Remade in America." *Cahiers du Cinema* 2.11 (1952): 54 -59. Print.

¹⁰¹ Druzman, Michael B. *Make it Again, Sam: A Survey of Movie Remakes*. South Brunswick, New Jersey: A. S. Barnes, 1975. Print.

¹⁰² Bluestone, George. *Novels Into Film*. California: University of California Press, 1957. Print.

¹⁰³ Naremore, James. "Introduction." *Film Adaptation*. ed. James Naremore. Rutgers University Press, 2000: 2. Print.

high culture versus mass culture, original versus copy.”¹⁰⁴ Robert Stam echoes this sentiment, considering the language of adaptation theory to be rife with moralistic judgments. He states that there are some grounds for labeling an adaptation as faithful or unfaithful, based on the sense of betrayal we feel when a film fails to live up to our love of the original but he argues that this notion of fidelity tells us more about our attachment to the original text, than it does about its adaptation.¹⁰⁵

Alongside this strong focus on fidelity, adaptation studies has, for the most part, restricted itself to discussions of cinematic adaptations of novels, privileging these over other forms of adaptation (such as the comic book film, films based on television series, or the film remake). As Christa Albrecht-Crane and Dennis Cutchins suggest, the commonly accepted definition of “adaptation” within film studies as a film based on a literary source forces discussions of the remake to “another branch of the cinematic tree,”¹⁰⁶ though there is a great deal of overlap between the two. The establishment of remake studies as distinct from adaptation studies can also be suggested to result from the specific issues that arise when creating a copy within the same medium as the original, issues that are displaced within adaptation studies by intense discussion of how fidelity can be maintained when an adaptation crosses medial boundaries¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*

¹⁰⁵ Stam p54

¹⁰⁶ Albrecht-Crane, Christa, and Cutchins, Dennis. *Adaptation Studies: New Approaches*. New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010: 27. Print.

¹⁰⁷ For further information on this limited focus within adaptation studies, see Naremore p1-15, and Leitch, Thomas. “Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads”. *Adaptation* 1.1 (2008): 63-77. Print.

Many of the issues dealt with by scholars when establishing the field of adaptation studies have been carried through and applied to studies of the remake. Remake studies, for example, also shows a strong tendency toward privileging the original text over the remake: this is perhaps best illustrated in academic and critical approaches to Gus van Sant's *Psycho*, as outlined in the previous chapter. It also, like adaptation studies, references work on intertextuality: this is to be expected, given that literary adaptations and film remakes are copies of other texts, and this will affect not only their creation, but also their reception. The central concept of this thesis, the cumulative hypertext, comes to both remake and adaptation studies from Gerard Genette's work on intertextuality, to be outlined later in this chapter.

It is difficult, though perhaps not impossible, to construct an all-encompassing definition for the film remake, as distinct from other instances of film adaptation (such as the literary adaptation or sequel), and other forms of intertextuality and citation. On the one hand, suggestions have included "films based on earlier screenplay" (Mazdon), "new versions of existing films" (Grindstaff) and "films that to one degree or another announce to us that they embrace one or more previous movies" (Horton and McDougal)¹⁰⁸. These all pose problems, however, and need to be further refined: Horton and McDougal's definition, for example, describes the parody just as well as it describes the remake, and Grindstaff and Madzon's both encompass the re-adaptation, sequel and re-boot. On the other hand, given the range of ways in which a remake can function, it is important to

¹⁰⁸Grindstaff, Laura. "A Pygmalion Tale Retold: Remaking La Femme Nikita". *Camera Obscura* 16.2 (2001): 134. Print; Horton, Andrew and McDougal, Stewart (eds). *Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998: 3. Print. Mazdon, Lucy. *Encore Hollywood: Remaking French Cinema*. London: British Film Institute, 2000: 2. Print.

avoid too strict a definition (consider the differences between van Sant's *Psycho* and the heavily revised remakes which followed, outlined in the previous chapter): as Verevis states, any attempt to restrict the remake to a specific set of textual structures risks the exclusion of borderline examples, and the canonization of certain favorites.¹⁰⁹

As a result of the wide range of films and practices the term "remake" encompasses, several authors have attempted to create sub-categories of remake, some of which can be considered to relate to the slasher remake, and some of the processes it involves (to be elaborated later in this chapter). Two of the scholars Verevis addresses in his introduction, Druxman and Greenberg¹¹⁰, suggest that remakes can be compiled into three categories, based on their own definition of the remake, differentiated by the remake's approach to, and appropriation of, its source film.

Druxman's first category is the "disguised remake": an example of this (which post-dates Druxman's work) is Steven Spielberg's *Disturbia* (2007), a film which follows almost exactly the same narrative structure as *Rear Window* (1954), yet does not acknowledge Hitchcock's film as source material. Normally, an acknowledgment of the source would be found on the film's website, in a hard copy press pack (if available), or in the film's credits: *Disturbia* does not acknowledge *Rear Window* in any of these ways. Both films feature men confined

¹⁰⁹ Verevis p2

¹¹⁰ Greenberg, Harvey Roy. "Raiders of the Lost Text: Remaking as Contested Homage in Always". *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 18.4 (2001): 164 -71. Print.

to their homes (one by injury, one by electronic bracelet) who think they see a murder take place, and have to prove it happened while still confined to their home. The similarities between these two films are so great, in fact, that Steven Spielberg, Paramount Pictures and Dreamworks were successfully sued for not paying for the rights to *Rear Window*.¹¹¹

Druxman 's second category is the "direct remake", the category into which all of my case study films fall. While direct remakes may make changes and additions to the original film's plot, these films fully acknowledge the fact that they are based on earlier productions. In the case of the slasher remake, this acknowledging of earlier sources goes far beyond just the original film, a consideration we do not see in Druxman's work (suggesting that this is more a feature of contemporary remakes than those available to Druxman in 1975). *City of Angels* (1998) is a good example of the kind of films Druxman places within this category, being a direct (albeit loose) remake of the German film *Der Himmel über Berlin* (1987). It acknowledges this in the end credits and on the film's official website¹¹².

Druxman's third category, the non-remake, consists of films that have the same title but entirely different content. Brian de Palma's 1976 horror film *Carrie* falls into this category: while it may have the same name as William Wyler's 1952 film, de Palma's blood-soaked horror film about an abused telekinetic girl is a far

¹¹¹ Boucher, Geoff. "Disturbia is a rip-off of Rear Window, lawsuit claims." *Los Angeles Times* 10 Sept. 2008, sec. Hero Complex. Web. 12 July 2010.

¹¹² Warner Bros. "City Of Angels." *City Of Angels*. Web. 2 Apr. 2011. <<http://city-of-angels.warnerbros.com/>>.

cry from Wyler's tale of a naïve young woman taking on the big city. This category is perhaps a little hazy and broad, given that all films with the same title need not be compared. It does become useful, however, when attempting to differentiate between remakes, and films which co-incidentally carry some of the same properties. These categories, based in commerce, are primarily concerned with how properties are recycled and sold: all of these categories rely on the premise that the remake is based on a sole original property, and may or may not acknowledge this original source.

Greenberg's three categories of the remake align themselves well with Druxman's, while modifying them in order to take a more authorial approach (as opposed to Druxman's commercially based analysis). He differentiates remakes not only on the basis of whether they have acknowledged the material upon which they are based, but also further differentiates them based on their approach to the source material. His first two categories, the "acknowledged, close remake" and "the acknowledged, transformed remake" fall into Druxman's wider category of the direct remake (which pertains to all remakes which acknowledge their source material, regardless of transformations). The acknowledged, close remake covers remakes which replicate the original with little or no change to its semantic and syntactic elements – van Sant's *Psycho* is perhaps the quintessential example of this. The acknowledged, transformed remake substantially changes elements such as time, characters and setting, but acknowledges the original in some way, even if only in the end credits (the above example of *City of Angels* works here also). Greenberg's third category is the unacknowledged, disguised remake: this aligns itself with Druxman's disguised

remake, covering films which are clearly based on earlier properties, but give no formal indication of their source.

Anat Zanger adopted a similar approach to Greenberg in his book “Film Remakes as Ritual and Disguise: From Carmen to Ripley”¹¹³, where he suggests that there are two kinds of remaking writers and directors engage in: once again, he reduces the remake to issues of authorship, as opposed to issues of commerce. The first of these is ‘cultural repetition’, where basic narrative structures such as the Cinderella story are unconsciously repeated: a good example of this and the one provided by Zanger is *Pretty Woman* (1990), where the protagonist, Vivian (Julia Roberts), is a lower-class woman transformed and rescued by a prince. The second category Zanger presents, and the one we see in these three slasher remakes, is highly controlled and conscious auto-repetition. He uses the Greek word “palimpsestos” to describe this form of remaking, a Greek word for when “one text has been superimposed on another in such a way that the old writing may be partly visible through the new.” This analogy is particularly well suited to the cumulative hypertext, as the traces of many older texts, or palimpsests, can potentially be seen through the new. This type of comparison implies an informed viewer, that those who go and see this auto-remake will be familiar enough with the original film to be able to appreciate these shadows and repetitions.

¹¹³ Zanger, Anat. *Film Remakes as Ritual and Disguise: From Carmen to Ripley*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006. Print.

These categories are certainly useful when trying to understand how a particular remake functions, however, as Verevis suggests, “the concept of the remake is never simply reducible to issues of industry and commerce or matters of influence and authorship.”¹¹⁴ He therefore continues on to discuss the remake as a concept located in the texts themselves, turning to Thomas Leitch’s¹¹⁵ sub-categories of the remake as an example of a textual approach.

Leitch provides us with four sub-categories of remake: the re-adaptation, the update, the homage, and the true remake. These categories are distinguished by virtue of the remake’s similarity to the original property, or lack thereof: though they provide good insight into how remakes function textually, they are plagued by the moralistic judgments that accompany discussions of fidelity to a source text (as outlined above). The re-adaptation is a film which seeks to create a more faithful version of a literary property, and which considers any other earlier films based on the same property to be inconsequential. A recent example of this can be found in the film *Let Me In* (2010): though it could easily be mistaken for a remake of Swedish film *Let The Right One In* (2008), it is instead another adaptation of the same book.¹¹⁶ The similarities between both adaptations are uncanny, yet the slight differences between the two films indicate that each group of filmmakers had different views on what was most essential to the story. The update is a remake that adopts an overly revisionist and transformative stance, seeking to compete directly with the original film and create an improved

¹¹⁴ Verevis p10

¹¹⁵ Leitch, Thomas. “Twice-Told Tales: The Rhetoric of the Remake”. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 18.3 (1990): 138-49. Print.

¹¹⁶ Lindqvist, John Ajvide. *Let the Right One In*: London: Quercus, 2007. Print.

version. The homage pays tribute to the original film, subordinating itself to the source material, and the true remake combines the original source material with updates and additions in an attempt to make the original more relevant to contemporary audiences.

Turning to my object of study, while the recent slasher remakes certainly have been transformed from the original, the enthusiasm of the directors and writers for the original refutes the idea that they are attempting to surpass it, or see it as somehow lacking: hence, they can be considered to function as both homage and update. This bridging of categories perhaps indicates some of the issues with Leitch's categories, and once again, the problem with judging a remake by virtue of its closeness to the source text: though as mentioned in the previous chapter, the slasher remake shows a relatively high degree of revisionism, this does not necessarily indicate a lack of reverence for the original on the part of the filmmakers.

The aforementioned additions and changes in the true remake or update can occur in several different forms: Terrence Wandtke, in his work on the kinds of adaptation that occur when a comic book is translated from the page to the screen, has suggested several categories of revision which can be easily and usefully applied to the true remake. The first type of revision Wandtke proposes, and the most common, is the additive revision. These revisions "can be read as

the logical outgrowth”¹¹⁷ of a character or story: the remake of *Friday the 13th* primarily contains additive revisions, starting the film with the death of Jason Voorhees’ mother (an event that occurs at the end of the original film), then resurrecting Jason himself and adding a new story for how he discovered his trademark hockey mask, as well as a new set of victims. This type of revisionism allows directors to add something completely original, while still retaining or carrying on from the original content. The second form of revisionism is fundamental revision, where “major changes...signal a departure from what has been presented before in a specific...narrative.”¹¹⁸ This form of revisionism occurs frequently in the slasher remake: the shift of Freddy Krueger from child murdering factory worker to paedophile preschool janitor between the original and remake of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is an example of a fundamental revision. A particularly interesting fundamental revision is also found in the new version of *Halloween*, where the final showdown between Laurie and Michael occurs in the old Myers house, and she is the one who appears to kill him, rather than Samuel Loomis (Malcolm McDowell). The final category suggested by Wandtke is the critical revision: this relates to “interpretative positions that ultimately have an impact on the way...stories are told (or retold, as the case may be).”¹¹⁹ This category of revision interprets the term “critics” as broadly as possible, including bloggers, academics, fans and others who comment upon the work being produced. This form of revisionism is difficult to find empirical evidence for, however it can still be identified. One example of this can be found

¹¹⁷ Wandtke, Terrence. *The Amazing Transforming Superhero: Essays on the Revision of Characters in Comic Books, Film and Television*. North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2007: 40. Print.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid* p17

¹¹⁹ *Ibid* p22

in the influence of test audiences on the final cut of the *A Nightmare on Elm Street* remake: following a round of test screenings in Los Angeles, several scenes were added¹²⁰. A second can be found in the remake of *Halloween*, where Rob Zombie has used critical discourse around the original film to inform his depiction of the child Myers.

In Wandtke's categories of revision, unlike the aforementioned categories posited by Leitch, Greenberg, Zanger and Druxman, we see the implication that remakes and adaptations exist in a much more complicated intertextual web than just that of original and remake. This is a crucial consideration with regards to the slasher remake: in order to understand how and why the slasher remake retains and adapts content from the original film, analysis of its syntactic and semantic elements must be extended beyond consideration of its fidelity to the original film, and take into account how the slasher has been sequelized, understood, evolved and received.

For this reason, it is necessary to turn to adaptation studies: our understanding of the copy with regards to these remakes is irregular, as they draw from sequels and intertexts as well as the original film. Robert Stam's concept of the cumulative hypertext, drawn from Gerard Genette's concept of hypertextuality, is an ideal framework within which to consider these films, and the issues that arise from their particular method of remaking.

¹²⁰ Faraci, Devin. "A recurring nightmare on Elm Street." *Chud.com*. Web. 24 Feb. 2010. <<http://www.chud.com/articles/articles/21773/1/a-recurring-nightmare-on-elm-street-/Page1.html>>.

The Cumulative Hypertext.

The primary focus of adaptation studies, according to Robert Stam, concerns issues of fidelity. He suggests that this is unsuccessful as an exclusive methodological principle, and proposes that strict fidelity becomes impossible by the very nature of adaptation: when something is shifted from one medium to another, or placed within a different context, it is inevitable that something will change. Therefore, it is necessary to implement Stam's recommendation that instead of considering fidelity as a trope of adaptation, critics should draw upon the wide range of other tropes available within adaptation theory; these include, but are not limited to, "reading, dialogization, cannibalization, transmutation, transfiguration, and signifying."¹²¹ He provides as an example "translation", suggesting that considering adaptations as translations will account for the inevitable losses and gains that a translation brings, and remove the original-copy hierarchy that plagues readings based on fidelity to the source text.

Stam states that far from needing to be as close a copy as possible, adaptations can take an "activist stance toward their source...inserting them into a much broader intertextual dialogism." He turns at this point to Gérard Genette's 1982 *Palimpsestes*¹²², in which Genette posits five types of transtextuality ("all that which puts one text in relation, whether manifest or secret, with other texts"¹²³), some of which, Stam believes, are extremely relevant and useful for adaptation

¹²¹ Stam p62

¹²² Genette, Gérard. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky. University of Nebraska Press, 1997. Print.

¹²³ Genette p1

theory. These five are intertextuality, relating to the co-presence of two texts in the form of quotation, allusion and parody; paratextuality, relating to the relationship between a text and its paratext (the commentaries and messages around the text); metatextuality, relating to the critical relation between one text and another; architextuality, relating to an author's willingness or refusal to describe a text in its title, and finally, hypertextuality, which Stam considers to be the most suggestive and useful of Genette's five categories. Hypertextuality refers to the relationship between what Genette calls the "hypotext" and "hypertext", in which the anterior hypotext (original) is transformed, modified, extended and/or elaborated on by the hypertext (adaptation).

Stam elaborates on this final category, suggesting that adaptations can be classified as hypertexts which have transformed pre-existing hypotexts through "operations of selection, amplification, concretization and actualization,"¹²⁴ and "critique, extrapolation, analogisation, popularization, and reculturalisation."¹²⁵ He further goes on to state that the hypotext-hypertext relationship is not just restricted to a pair of texts, but can be affected by "diverse prior adaptations" (including sequels, allusions and other forms of referencing) to form a "larger, cumulative hypertext."¹²⁶

In his 2005 book *Film Remakes*, Constantine Verevis picks up Genette's category of hypertextuality and Stam's notion of the cumulative hypertext, and applies it to the film remake. He suggests that "film remaking can be regarded as a specific

¹²⁴ Stam p66

¹²⁵ *ibid* p68

¹²⁶ *ibid* p66

(institutionalized) aspect of the broader and more open-ended intertextuality”¹²⁷ described by Stam and Genette. He notes that every remaking invites a double reading: that which is introduced in the hypertext can affect the way the original hypotext is seen and understood, and in turn, affect any subsequent hypertexts. He further suggests, drawing upon Eric Cazdyn’s¹²⁸ work on adaptation and translation, that though most critics are concerned with using the original as a semantic fixity against which the remake can be judged, more interesting questions pertain to the aspects of the remake which enable the identification of what it is copying, and the nature of the transformations the remake works upon the original (ie, how it retains and adapts content).

Verevis’ remarks are extremely relevant to the slasher remake. The slasher remake clearly functions as a cumulative hypertext when considered in light of these comments, as a result of the way it considers how other texts, such as sequels, parodies and allusions, have transformed understanding of the original. The slasher remake is an ideal place to begin considering some of these issues, as each slasher remake retains and adapts content in extremely similar ways (which is to be expected, given the highly formulaic nature of the sub-genre). This repeated pattern of retaining and adapting content to form a cumulative hypertext in the slasher remake can be reduced to six basic functions, three for retained, three for adapted. These will be outlined in the next two chapters, and illustrated using the remakes of *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*.

¹²⁷ Verevis p21

¹²⁸ Cazdyn, Eric. *The Flash of Capital: Film and Geopolitics in Japan*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002. Print.

Conclusion.

Looking at the history, theory and different forms of the film remake, it becomes clear that the slasher remake forms an important part of these discourses, while simultaneously constructing itself in a way that makes it unique within them, resulting from its function as cumulative hypertext. Looking at the way in which the remake retains and adapts content is a very interesting consideration in light of Stam and Genette's comments around the hypertext. The next two chapters will look at trends in the retaining and adapting of content in the slasher remake, and use these to affirm and interrogate the slasher remake's function as cumulative hypertext.

Chapter Three

Retained Content in the Slasher Remake

Genette's concept of hypertextuality is inextricably caught up in the binary of hypotext (original) and hypertext (copy), and how the latter relates to the former. We see the same concern carried through to Stam's cumulative hypertext, but on a much larger scale, considering not only the hypotext-hypertext relationship, but also the relationship between all hypertexts that have emerged from that one hypotext. Thus, how the slasher remake retains content not only from the original film, but also that film's sequels and other intertexts, becomes a crucial consideration here. The similarities in retained content across all slasher remakes, and the large number of earlier hypertexts available to the three case study remakes of this thesis, as suggested earlier, makes these films an ideal site to begin thinking about how other recent remakes, particularly those of franchise and genre films, might function in this way.

The retention of content in the slasher remake, as stated previously, follows three basic trends, which can be used to affirm the slasher remake's status as cumulative hypertext. These are: 1. adherence to the original film's narrative structure, retaining elements of syntax, the same cause and effect sequences, and the original film's story, 2. the retaining of repeated and frequently referenced tropes from each franchise, as opposed to simply using that which appeared in the first film, and 3. adherence to the rules of the slasher film.

These three consistent uses of retained content will be described as they appear in the remakes of *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th*, and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. As stated in the introduction, these have been selected as case study films because though they are not the only slasher remakes, they are certainly the most prolific, with the largest number of intertexts to reference and retain content from.

Adherence to Narrative Structure.

The first aspect of retained content I will address here is the remake's adherence to the narrative structure of the original film. This relates to Stam's operation of "concretization" in the hypertext, affirming and cementing the storyline of the original film, or in this case, the original franchise. Though all my examples contain some additions and elaborations (to be discussed in the next chapter), the basic sequence of events remains the same: the same causes lead to the same effects, and for the most part, that which is added is part of the original film's story, even if it is not included in the plot. Even *Prom Night*, the most heavily revised slasher remake (to the point that it borders on a total re-imagining), retains the basic narrative elements of its predecessor by basing the film around a prom night massacre, and a known rapist who escaped on the anniversary of the crime for which he was incarcerated.

The primary effect this concretization of narrative structure guarantees is relatively simple: if the film follows the narrative structure of the original, it can market itself as a remake, as opposed to another sequel, or a random cannibalization of pre-existing cultural material (a term which could easily be

applied to the “mash up” slasher film *Freddy vs Jason*). Though sequels to the Golden Age slasher franchises could still bring in a small profit if they were made on a low budget- for example, the tenth installment of *Friday the 13th*, made in 2002 on a budget of 14,000 dollars managed to make a profit of almost 17,000 dollars – die-hard fans alone cannot sustain a film which needs to compete against an ever-increasing number of blockbusters. Keeping the narrative structure the same and marketing the film as a remake broadens the target audience to those who have not yet engaged with the original franchise, whereas a sequel or reboot implies that knowledge of the previous installment is needed, or at the very least preferable. This point is raised by Stam with regards to the cumulative hypertext, and how it is able to function as a sort of shorthand for those who have not engaged with the original hypotext, earlier hypertexts, or both.¹²⁹

Beyond affirming the film’s status as remake, the retention of basic narrative structure serves to affirm the status of the original: it is inevitable that the original film will become the fixity against which the remake is judged, and keeping the narrative structure the same suggests that those remaking the film are just as interested in paying homage to the original as they are to re-invent it. (to be described later in this chapter). As Verevis suggests, a faithful adaptation “serves to affirm the identity and integrity of the (presumed) original”, and a “highly canonized text” (such as these slasher films are) is likely to generate “more concern over the accuracy of the translation”¹³⁰ – this is reflected in the

¹²⁹ Stam p66

¹³⁰ Verevis p82

aforementioned critical response to van Sant's remaking of *Psycho*. In essence, a sense of fidelity is essential if the filmmaker wishes to gain support that goes beyond the fan audience, and in this case, a culture which has been exposed to the legacy of these texts for twenty to thirty years. Wandtke re-iterates this in his work: though some revisions in the superhero narratives he addresses gained popular acceptance and were adopted into the canon, the ones which deviated too far from the established story were often rejected. Though, as Wandtke suggests, every generation needs a new and updated version of the story (given that each generation has different tastes, concerns and ideals), they still desire to preserve the essentials of the character and mythology. This comes back to the issues of fidelity discussed with regards to the remake of *Psycho*, and the revisionist remakes which followed: though an exact copy is undesirable, that which deviates too far from the property on which it is based will also fall prey to rejection and criticism.

Halloween

Though the remake of *Halloween* extends its first and final acts significantly (as will be shown in the next chapter), the basic narrative structure remains the same across the film, and throughout almost the entire section of the film devoted to Michael's return to Haddonfield. In both original and remake, as a child, Michael murders his sister Judith at his family home in Haddonfield, Illinois on Halloween, is incarcerated at Smith's Grove until adulthood, manages to escape, and returns to Haddonfield on the anniversary of his first Halloween murder to stalk and murder a group of teenage girls (including Laurie Strode).

Though several more deaths have been added to the remake, Michael's basic trajectory once he arrives in Haddonfield remains the same. Like the original, Laurie first sees Michael when he is waiting outside her school, watching them through the window. When Laurie signals her friends to look, he has disappeared. He then appears again in the bushes as Laurie and her friends walk home, and her friends taunt him. While Laurie prepares to babysit, Michael visits the graveyard, steals a Myers tombstone, and leaves a dead fox in its place. He then returns to town, and begins his second Halloween killing spree. The first of these killings, Lynda (Kristina Klebe) and her boyfriend (Nick Mennell) is visually extremely similar to the original film: though it takes place in a different house, the pacing is exactly the same, and Michael still (for no clear reason) enters the bedroom dressed in a white sheet and Lynda's (now dead) boyfriend's glasses. Michael later ends up at the Doyle house, where he terrorizes Laurie and the two children she is looking after: Laurie manages to get the children out of the house, but does not manage to escape herself until Dr Loomis intervenes. Though the ending has been changed slightly to have Michael shot at the Myers house, the number of gunshots is still the same (six).

As a whole, *Zombie's* film maintains narrative structure by keeping the climax points in the narrative the same (including moments such as when Laurie first spots Michael in the bushes, and when Michael steals a tombstone and leaves a dead fox in its place) when the narrative shifts from the extended childhood sequence to the replicated events of the original film. The way in which the film is paced provides a strange sense of *déjà vu*, without sacrificing the suggestion

(implied by the extended first act) that this film is not simply seeking to be a carbon copy of Carpenter's original. Furthermore, keeping these climax points the same gives us some indication of what the writers and director considered to be the most important parts of the original narrative, and introduces new viewers to the key points of the original film.

Friday the 13th

Though this film does not exactly follow the story arc of the original film (as we see in *Halloween* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*), it does follow the basic pattern of events we see in every *Friday* film except the fifth: an amalgamation of similar hypotexts, to create a hypertext that is simultaneously familiar and able to do the unexpected. The basic pattern of these films, and the one carried through to the remake, is as follows: a group of teens comes to Crystal Lake, unaware of the events which happened there. Someone attempts to warn them (or re-tells the story of Jason as a campfire myth), but the teens ignore the warning/story (usually on the grounds that the person telling them is an unreliable source). Jason begins slaughtering them one by one, until someone manages to (temporarily) send him back to the depths of Crystal Lake. Though we cannot be sure of how the teens are going to be killed by Jason, or even exactly when, we can rest assured that their ignorance and bravado will not go unpunished.

The repetition of specific pieces of narrative from each of the first four films alongside the retaining of this basic structure allows the film to situate itself within the *Friday the 13th* mythology: showing these pieces gives fans of the

franchise a sense of where they are time-wise. For example, the death of Jason's mother, shown at the beginning of the film, indicates to the informed viewer that the events we are about to watch take place after the events of the first. Showing Jason wearing the burlap sack at first, and then finding the hockey mask, suggests that the events of the second half of the remake take place around the time of the fourth film, prior to Jason's death and resurrection at the hands of Tommy Jarvis (Corey Feldman). This selection and relatively verbatim retaining of pieces of narrative, as stated above, allows the filmmakers to present us with a hockey-masked Jason without breaking the franchise's canon. Similarly, these same narrative pieces would allow fans to identify the film as being a cohesive part of the franchise's over-arching mythology and timeline, as it can be deduced from the visual and narrative events of this remake that the events of this film could easily have occurred before the Tommy Jarvis story arc (given that it is implied that Jason has slaughtered many more teens than the specific ones shown in each film).

A Nightmare on Elm Street

The remake of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* adds flashbacks (whereas the original only employed dream sequences) and changes the site of Freddy's eventual demise to one which is featured in several sequels (the abandoned car yard), but the basic sequence of events once again remains the same. Freddy starts appearing in the dreams of the teenagers of Elm Street, and though at first they try to convince themselves he is not real and their shared dream must simply be the result of a shared experience or conversation, each death makes them more

paranoid, as does the fact that the injuries they sustain in their dreams are really there when they wake up. They start looking into who this man is and why he is determined to kill each one of them, and when Nancy pulls a piece of his clothing out of her dream, she realizes she must bring Freddy into her world in order to have a chance at defeating him. The addition of an important location from the franchise's sequels (the car yard) to the original film's narrative highlights how this remake functions as cumulative hypertext, incorporating a piece of sequel content that would no doubt be familiar to fans of the original franchise.

Like *Halloween*, this film constructs itself around the climax points in the original film's narrative, and this makes the film feel familiar while still maintaining an element of surprise and suspense. Furthermore, it can be argued that in the case of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, retaining this basic narrative structure makes the speculation around Freddy's motives and innocence more powerful and less predictable (to be discussed further in the next chapter), by showing the audience the familiar, then making them question it. This relates to Stam's operation of amplification in the hypertext.

Use of Repeated and Frequently Referenced Tropes

In his book, Verevis discusses the notion that the content of a remake is by no means a faded imitation of a superior original, but instead can be considered a citation, grafted into a new context¹³¹ (relating to my point above about affirming the status of the originals, and particularly relevant to the slasher

¹³¹ Verevis p83

remake's use of multiple, albeit related, sources). In each slasher remake, the characters and images used (for example, the villains and the visual aspects of each character's death) will be retained as they have been most frequently referenced in popular culture, and any sequels. This relates to Stam's operations of selection (choosing particular elements to repeat from both the hypotext and earlier hypertexts), amplification (highlighting those elements), and reculturalisation (placing them within another cultural context – such as the remake).

For most slasher remakes, this simply means carrying through that which has been used in every installment, for example, the appearance of Freddy Krueger, or the setting of *Prom Night*. For others, however, this means using material only featured in the franchise's many sequels. This qualifies as retained rather than adapted content, as, regardless of whether they are from the original or a sequel, these are all things which have been preserved intact from another film by virtue of their importance to the franchise mythology. The retaining of semantic elements from across the franchise, and furthermore, the selection and amplification of that which is most important to, and repeated across, the franchise mythology, identifies these films as being more than just carbon copies of the original film. It confirms that they exceed themselves, and should be discussed as cumulative hypertexts.

The way in which these remakes encompass the events of the whole franchise highlights and affirms their status as cumulative hypertext. As mentioned previously, Verevis states that in the case of a property which has been subject to

multiple re-workings and re-adaptations (such as the slasher film, with its string of sequels and pop cultural references), “new hypertexts do not necessarily refer back to original hypotexts, but rather encompass the entire chain of remakings.”¹³² This is exactly how the slasher remake functions: it retains elements of the entire franchise, in order to, as Cazydyn states, recognize that “the original is not only what it is, but also that it exceeds itself.”¹³³ These are very much franchise films, and the sequels can be just as important to our understanding and knowledge of these characters and events as what was presented to us in the first installment: the penultimate example of this being *Halloween*, where the fact Laurie is Michael’s sister has affected every representation and reading of this character since it was introduced, even changing our perception of the events of the original film. Though, as suggested in the second chapter, most work on remakes and adaptations only focuses on the relationship between original and copy, in the case of the slasher remake, we are made to consider them as copies of an original which has previously been re-read, reworked and extended by other texts.

As well as picking up on what has become most important within the franchise itself, the slasher remake also prompts us to think about that which has become important in terms of popular culture: those things which have come to define and represent the films across a variety of media. In his semi-annual “state of the slasher address”, fiction author, blogger and literature professor Stephen Graham Jones writes that some horror films have become “so ingrained in our

¹³² Verevis p83

¹³³ Cazdyn p117

popular culture that you feel like you've seen it, even if you haven't, thus making actual viewing redundant."¹³⁴ While it is certainly too cynical to suggest that watching the original slasher films is no longer necessary, Jones raises an interesting point. The Golden Age slasher franchises have been referenced everywhere, from the television show *Robot Chicken* to pornography: it is almost impossible to engage with popular culture and not come across a reference or image from one of these films. Some notable examples include appearances by Freddy Krueger and Jason Voorhees in two of the Halloween episodes of *The Simpsons*, the use of the *Friday the 13th* theme music in *Spiceworld: The Movie* (1997), a poster for *Halloween* on one of the walls in *Fight Club* (1999), and *Halloween* is the film Donnie and Gretchen attend in *Donnie Darko* (2001). Given that the first appearance of Freddy Krueger in *The Simpsons*, for example, was in the 1994 Halloween special of the cartoon, it is certainly plausible that younger viewers of the 2010 remake have been indirectly exposed to Krueger's image for as long as they have been able to watch evening television.

Furthermore, the way in which popular culture re-presents references to these films to us can often, possibly through sheer over-saturation, eclipse our knowledge of the film itself: this is perfectly illustrated in Wes Craven's *Scream* where, after years of seeing the hockey-masked Jason, Casey (Drew Barrymore) becomes convinced (fatally so) that he has been the killer for the entirety of the *Friday the 13th* franchise, when the killer in the original was in fact his mother. Crucially, it is this later incarnation of Jason, as killer, which has been retained in

¹³⁴ Graham Jones, Stephen. "State of the Slasher Address 3: There will be (more) blood." *San Antonio Current*. 7 May 2010. Web. 20 July 2010. <www.sacurrent.com/blog/default.asp?perm=70327>.

the remake (after an incredibly fast run-through of the events which preceded this version of the character): to avoid alienating those only familiar with *Scream*. Therefore, it makes sense that the filmmakers would wish to incorporate the franchise's best-known and most marketable image, even if that means remaking the events of four films, instead of just one.

The acknowledgement of pop culture and sequel content not only gives rise to Verevis' and Stam's multi-layered cumulative hypertext, but also to what Wandtke refers to as the critical revision, or in this case, a critical retaining: in the case of the slasher remake, the interpretative position that has been taken up by younger viewers, and also by fans and critics, becomes just as important to the success of these remakes as the content of the original films themselves.

The critical revision is certainly not new to the remake, or the slasher sub-genre, and fits well within the concept of the cumulative hypertext, given that it can encompass any and all of the intertexts which exist between original and anterior hypertext. As suggested above, the slasher film frequently makes use of sequel content when re-presenting its villains, and even in the absence of other sequels and adaptations, remakes have been known to engage with the critical discourse and additive comprehension surrounding their predecessors (for example, the remake of *The Last House on the Left* (1979) refused a script which incorporated supernatural elements in order to continue the discussion of "true horror" the original film sparked, and van Sant's *Psycho* includes a masturbation scene, playing into the identification of Norman Bates (Vince Vaughn) as sexually repressed/deviant as well as suffering from dissociative identity disorder). What

makes it of interest here is the consistency with which every slasher remake retains content in this way, and will consistently take into account the franchise as a whole, instead of attempting to simply re-create the original film.

Halloween

The adult Michael has retained the same costume for all of his appearances in the *Halloween* franchise¹³⁵: dark grey/blue jumpsuit, and the same white-faced rubber mask with black hair attached (originally a modified version of a William Shatner mask). With regards to his motivation for returning to Haddonfield, however, the content which has been retained is not from the original film: rather, it is a piece of information introduced in the sequel, which was used to retrospectively explain the events of the first film.

As suggested earlier in this chapter, the Laurie-Michael sibling relationship has been a staple feature of the franchise since said sequel, and has completely transformed and re-defined popular understanding of the events of its predecessor. The scrawled “sister” on the asylum wall in the original film, for example, originally assumed to refer to Judith, can now easily be read as a reference to Laurie. Though Carpenter’s original idea was for Michael to be indiscriminately stalking and killing babysitters in his hometown¹³⁶, the sequel gave him a motive which has completely eclipsed this reading.

¹³⁵ See appendix three for short descriptions of each installment of the *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* franchises.

¹³⁶ Rockoff p51

As stated earlier, retaining content here does not just mean replicating the original film, but keeping those things from sequels and other media which have affected the way we know and understand them. It makes sense, therefore, that something which has not only affected our understanding of the character across the entire franchise, but retrospectively changed how we view the events of the first film, would be included in the remake – particularly as we are shown Michael’s childhood here, and not retaining this piece of information about his family would be in direct violation of the original franchise mythology.

Though most of what we see of Michael’s childhood in the remake is an original contribution by Rob Zombie (to be discussed further in the next chapter), the few details of Michael as a child provided to us in the 1978 version are carried through to the remake, virtually intact. For his Halloween costume in both original and remake, Michael wears a clown suit: the filmmakers went to great lengths to ensure the mask was suitable for the time period, acquiring a clown mask from the 1970s, and making exact replicas for use in the film (as it would allow them to do multiple takes and not be concerned about blood splatter or cracks in the original plastic mask)¹³⁷. The costume is the same colours, blue and orange. He still uses a kitchen knife of exactly the same shape and length for his first murder. This attention to detail suggests not only a reverence for the original work, but also the expectation that fan audiences would want to see a child Michael who matched up with the one they saw in the original, even though the 1978 representation of this character only appeared for a few seconds.

¹³⁷ Zombie, Rob. Director’s commentary. *Halloween: Two Disc Special Edition*. Dir. Rob Zombie, 2007. DVD. Weinstein Company, 2007.

Interestingly, once again for budget reasons, this Illinois-set film was filmed in California. The location for the remake is only a few blocks from the location of the original¹³⁸. This enables the uncanny sense of the double that was suggested to be missing from van Sant's *Psycho*: the characters in the *Halloween* remake are walking the same streets, the shots are exactly the same, yet the viewer is intensely aware (as a result of the added content which opens the remake, and the use of a new cast) that they are watching an entirely different film. A good example of this appears in the scene in which Laurie is walking to school, followed by Tommy Doyle (Skyler Gisondo). The camera angle and framing of the shot is retained intact from the original, to the point that it would be almost impossible to differentiate the between the two if not for the use of different actors.

Similarly, a great deal of attention has been paid to the details of the Myers house, despite it only appearing in the original film very briefly: Judith's bedroom is still on the second floor, for example, and the stairs Michael climbs to get to her are almost exactly the same height and angle as those in the original film. Overall, the retaining of frequently referenced tropes and features from the full franchise mythology in the remake of *Halloween* marks this as a film which is equally concerned with how the 1978 film is known and understood by fans as it is with respecting and replicating the original property.

¹³⁸ *ibid*

Friday the 13th

Though Jason Voorhees did not appear until the sequel of *Friday the 13th*, and his iconic hockey mask did not appear until the third installment, it is this later version of Jason that we see in the remake: the hockey-masked killer who has been referenced everywhere from *The Simpsons* to *South Park*, in VH1 Fashion Awards posters (a rhinestone studded Jason mask was used to promote their “killer night of fashion” in 2000) and franchise sequels throughout the 27 years between *Friday the 13th Part III* (1982) and the 2009 remake. In order to deliver the killer loved by fans and expected by those with only a superficial, mass-mediated knowledge of the franchise, while still remaining faithful to the original franchise and film, Nispel and Platinum Dunes have retained not only the climax of the original film, but also several elements from the next three sequels. Essentially, this remake functions as a kind of ‘Cliff’s Notes’ version of the first four installments, followed by a new set of killings (to be discussed in the next chapter): hence, creating a remake which functions as a cumulative hypertext, as opposed to a hypertext which simply copies the events of the original film.

From the first film, they retain the death of Mrs Voorhees, the deformed child Jason, and a voice double for Betsy Palmer was found (Kathleen Garrett). This voice double was hired to re-create, as closely to the original as possible, the speech from the original film where Mrs Voorhees explains why she set out to kill all the teenagers at Camp Crystal Lake¹³⁹. From the second film, they retain

¹³⁹ CraveOnline Media. "Betsy Palmer on the New Friday the 13th." ShockTillYouDrop.com. 29 Jan. 2009. Web. 1 May 2010. <<http://www.shocktillyoudrop.com/news/topnews.php?id=9386>>.

the campfire story re-telling of the events at Crystal Lake, the shrine he keeps of his mother's head, and Jason wears the burlap sack which he used to cover his face in this film during the first set of killings. From the third film, they have retained the fact that Jason finds his hockey mask in a barn. Like *Halloween*, this suggests that the filmmakers are as concerned retaining that which has become central to the franchise as a whole, as they are with replicating the events of the original film. Furthermore, it highlights the fact that Jason is the most important aspect of the franchise: all retained elements point to significant parts of the character's history and mythology.

The appearance of Camp Crystal Lake has also been carefully rendered, with many elements from the original franchise retained: though the franchise has not been filmed at Camp No-Be-Bo-Sco since the first installment, the remake goes to great lengths to re-create some of the settings from the original film. The faded Camp Crystal Lake sign is an exact replica of the sign used in the original film, for example, and the location selected was another Boy Scout camp with a similar layout. This aspect of retained content is particularly important as, like Jason, the camp has appeared in every single '*Friday*' film except the 1985 fifth installment, which features a copycat killer at a mental institution. The camp is just as notorious and central to the film's marketing and referencing as the undead killer who resides there, as is evidenced by the wide availability of Camp Crystal Lake shirts¹⁴⁰, and the naming of related media (for example, the video game is

¹⁴⁰ CTF Media. "Friday the 13th t-shirts - Jason Voorhees t-shirt, Crystal Lake tees." *Chasing the Frog*. Web. 30 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.chasingthefrog.com/fridaythe13th-t-shirts.php>>.

named 'Escape from Crystal Lake', and the 2003 documentary about the franchise's history is named *Return to Crystal Lake*).

Arguably, alongside Jason and the camp, Henry Manfredini's theme music is the best known, most repeated and most referenced element of the franchise (appearing in places from *The Simpsons* to the *Spiceworld: The Movie*). It is the only aspect of the franchise to have been included in every single installment, including the fifth (which, as mentioned, omits Crystal Lake and has a copycat killer instead of Jason). Its primary function is to signal the presence of the killer, usually before the hapless victim or the audience can see him anywhere nearby: including this in the remake creates a level of anticipation which an unfamiliar theme would not have been able to achieve.

A Nightmare on Elm Street

Following the pattern set by the two previous films, the remake of *Nightmare On Elm Street* retains its villain as he has appeared across the franchise, and in other media. Though Freddy Krueger's burned face has been updated, due to the availability of better prosthetics and techniques (to be discussed further in the next chapter), all the character's other physical features have been retained intact. He still wears a red and green striped jumper and a fedora hat, and his weapon of choice is still a knife-fingered glove. He retains his wisecracking dialogue, briefly featured in the first film and used more and more frequently as the franchise progressed (some lines are repeated verbatim from the original). Retaining the appearance and persona of Freddy Krueger is, on many levels,

almost non-negotiable for a remake or reboot of the *Elm Street* franchise: he is its best known symbol, most effective marketing tool, and a point of connection for both fans, and those who only have a superficial, pop cultural engagement with the franchise.

Once again, in alignment with the other two films, *Nightmare on Elm Street* has replicated some of the settings which are essential to the franchise mythology. Freddy's boiler room remains much the same as it did in the original franchise, Nancy's (Rooney Mara) house is the same basic size, shape and color it was in the original, and the high school hallway where the blood-filled body bag is dragged along the floor uses the exact same color scheme as the school in the original. This could be attributed to the fact that these settings are so generic and thus they will be replicated by default (for example, public high school lockers do not vary much from school to school): however, the generic nature of the settings is in itself significant. As Craven famously said, "every town has an Elm Street"¹⁴¹, and one of the things which made the Golden Age slasher so successful (as outlined in the first chapter) is its ability to translate itself to the viewer's own surroundings. By choosing, once again, not to make Springwood visually distinct from other places, the remake is able to retain the eerie sense of familiarity that helped make the original film so successful.

Like *Halloween*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* exactly matches some of the shots and frames of the original, primarily when re-creating the most prolific death scenes and nightmares from the first film. Perhaps the best example of this is the

¹⁴¹ Screams and Nightmares p61

bathtub scene, where Freddy reaches his hand up between the sleeping Nancy's knees while she lies in the bath: the only difference between the two shots is that the remake has a slightly better view of Nancy's face. We can also see this in the scene where Kris (Katie Cassidy) appears in a body bag: as she is dragged down the hall, the positioning of her body and the trail of blood is exactly the same as the original film. The careful framing of these moments, coupled with the ominous music attached to them, implies that these are the aspects of the original that the writers and director considered to be most important, and thus deserving of the attention needed to exactly re-create the shot/sequence. The moments deemed important are usually those which are important for causality reasons, and those which are most recognizable as a result of pop cultural referencing (and subsequently, the most marketable).

Adherence to the Rules of the Slasher Film

The fact that these remakes still follow the rules of the slasher film is an aspect of retained content which is partly, but not entirely, incidental: because these are remakes of slasher films, it can be expected that they will be similar enough to the originals that they will follow the rules simply as a result of replication. In order to still be slasher films as well as remakes, they must retain the semantic elements of the sub-genre as seen in the originals. But, beyond that, throughout its history, the slasher has relied on strong adherence to the formula in order to be successful. It consistently calls for reinvention within a recognized paradigm. This can be said to contribute to Stam's function of concretization in the hypertext: as every installment of these franchises follows the rules of the

slasher, carrying these through to the remake affirms their importance to the franchise as a whole.

The initial decline of the slasher film in the late eighties/early nineties was perhaps, as Rockoff and Harper suggested, due to the formula being too well known, that every slasher film released in the 1980s was beginning to look like a faded imitation of the ones which had come before. For a sub-genre that relies on shocking people with the unknown and unexpected, over-predictability was a death sentence. On the flip side of this, new slashers of the 1980s which deviated too far from the paradigm, usually in an effort to create a new, exciting supernatural killer, were no more successful than those which showed no innovation at all. *Leprechaun* (1993) went straight to video: the supernatural aspects of this film deviated too far from the slasher formula while still maintaining pieces of it, and the villain's killing method did not match with the one which gives the slasher its name (though Krueger did kill people in their dreams, he always did so using a metal implement). The second wave slasher, beginning with *Scream* and ending with *Cry Wolf* (as outlined in the first chapter) functioned and fell in much the same way: it declined when the films became, once again, overly predictable, but films which deviated too far from the formula while still attempting to brand themselves as slashers were not successful either (for example, *Cherry Falls* in 2000).

What can be drawn from this is that in order for the slasher remake to be successful, it needed to offer some form of change, deviating from the now completely familiar narrative structure of the original films while still retaining

enough content, or playing by the rules enough, for the film not to be written off as too deviant, a non-slasher. A good example of such a rejection is seen in the critical failure of *April Fool's Day* in 1986: because this film was marketed by Paramount as a slasher despite marked differences from the traditional slasher format, fans became angry and considered the film's deviations from the slasher formula to be an irreverent joke.¹⁴²

It can further be suggested that these films have retained the tropes of the sub-genre for reasons of consistency. Not being mindful of these conventions when working with new content would have led to ruptures and inconsistencies between the new content and that which has been carried through from the original film. In order to be effective, the added and adapted content must seamlessly integrate itself into that which has been retained from the original film. A good example of this is perhaps the slasher convention that dictates that the slasher killer will never use a gun, but rather implements which allow them to get up close and very personal with their victims. If Rob Zombie had elected to show the child Michael Myers with an affinity for BB guns, this would have made his decision to pick up his trademark knife seem strange, and unnecessarily cumbersome. The same would apply for Freddy Krueger in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*: the children he abuses are shown with cuts and scratches in the added flashback sequences, rather than bullet wounds or burn marks. This means that the transformation of janitor Fred Krueger into the knife-clawed Freddy is less of a leap, and his form of revenge matches up well with what it was the children

¹⁴² Rockoff p163

condemned him for, leading to his death and subsequent resurrection as dream demon.

So, by default, through the repetition of a story which already adhered to the rules of the slasher, and as a result of the need to maintain the paradigm while innovating within it as a semi-assurance of success, these remakes also follow the formula.

Halloween

The rules of the slasher are followed throughout the film, including through Zombie's original contribution to the franchise. With regards to the weapon used by the villain, even as a child, Michael shows no affinity for guns: even when he is killing rats and cats, his method of killing is intensely physical and visceral. He is always in physical contact with his victims, in some form or another. This is perhaps even further highlighted when Michael has the opportunity to pick up Loomis' gun at the end of the film, and chooses not to. The use of a gun would not only break the rules of the slasher film, but deviate heavily from the established character mythology. Though he uses some other methods at various points throughout the film (for example, a large piece of wood, and strangulation), his weapon of choice is still a long-bladed kitchen knife.

The past event is used to great effect here: Michael's first Halloween massacre is shown in greater detail than ever before and, as mentioned above, the Laurie-Michael sibling relationship is introduced. Though deviating from this rule of the

slasher could have made for a very interesting film, and one which matched up well with the motiveless killers of torture porn (which was at its height of popularity the year before *Halloween* was remade), it would have, once again, deviated too far from the established character mythology, alienating fans and possibly restricting the audience to an 18+ age group (assuming that if it had aligned itself with torture porn, it would have required a similar rating).

The setting of the film is, as stated above, kept the same, and to much the same effect. As the rules of the slasher dictate, the setting of the slasher film will be somewhere familiar to a wide range of people: the streets of Haddonfield in this film are just as generic as the first. The fact the remake, like the original, was filmed in California but could pass for Illinois is evidence of just how familiar and commonplace this setting is.

Friday the 13th

Though Jason has, and always has had, a wider range of killing techniques than the other slasher villains being discussed in this thesis, he still fits the slasher paradigm in that he never uses guns, bombs and the like to kill his victims, preferring instead sharp or heavy objects. His preferred weapon, as in the original franchise, is a machete, which fits perfectly with the tropes of the slasher.

The setting of this film, like the original, continues to follow the slasher paradigm, in spite of some small shifts and changes in its appearance (for

example, showing us the cabins on the opposite side of Crystal Lake, and the inclusion of a huge marijuana field). The fact this film could take place anywhere in America is highlighted by the dialogue between the first group of teenagers when they decide to stay the night beside Crystal Lake. Wade (Jonathan Sadowski) tries to tell them that this must be the same place where “some woman, she went fucking nuts, killed all the counselors...her son, Jason, he came back.” The other teens laugh this off on the grounds that “this story could have happened anywhere” and that many, many other places are called Crystal Lake.

The driving force of almost all slasher villains, the past event, is retained as an important part of this remake. Though this story spends most of its time of the adult Jason, it makes a point of showing the viewer the events which led to him killing any teenager who sets foot on the site of the old camp. This piece of information not only helps to maintain the film’s classification as remake, but also to introduce this past event to those unfamiliar with the franchise mythology.

A Nightmare on Elm Street

The weapon of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Freddy’s razor-bladed glove, is just as iconic as anything else about this villain: and, though Freddy’s dream world would allow him to materialize any weapon he wanted, he chooses to use the bladed glove he constructed while he was alive. This not only helps the remake stay true to the character, but also ensures it does not deviate from the slasher paradigm (as outlined in the first chapter, slasher villains almost always use

weapons that require physical contact with their victims). The setting of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, like the other films, has been kept as generic as the original.

This remake takes two of the tropes of the slasher, and heightens them. The first of these is the past event: while in the first film, the event which caused Freddy to start killing the children of Elm Street is barely mentioned, in the remake, we see Freddy running away from the parents, and being burned alive. The second trope this remake makes great use of is the “red herring” – the original film used the distortion between dream and reality (whether Freddy is real or not) to engage with this trope of the slasher, however, in the remake, as we already know for certain Freddy is real, this becomes less effective. The remake instead calls the past event into question, suggesting that Freddy may have been innocent, or that the story their parents tell may not be entirely true: as so little information about Freddy’s death was given in the original film, and almost no mention whatsoever was made of his life, this red herring is able to be inserted without violating franchise mythology.

Conclusion

It is clear from looking at these examples that the slasher remake’s use of retained content contributes to its status as cumulative hypertext. Though these remakes have a strong sense of fidelity to the original, this ought not to be an exclusive methodological focus: instead, we must also consider the other cultural and cinematic influences that may be at play here. These are evident in how

narrative structure, the tropes of each franchise, and the rules of the slasher film have been addressed. The next chapter will consider the adaptation of content, and how this can also be said to contribute to the slasher remake's status as cumulative hypertext.

Chapter Four

Adapted Content in the Slasher Remake

In his book *Convergence Culture*, Henry Jenkins suggests that while “creators do not ultimately control what we take from their stories...this does not prevent them from trying to shape our interpretations.”¹⁴³ He uses as his example Neil Young, one of the creators of the *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy, who stated that one of their greatest challenges when adapting this famous trilogy was finding a way to shift the viewer’s perception of a story they were already intimately familiar with, to find the space to make their own original contribution to the mythology. Young cites here the origami unicorn in the director’s cut of Ridley Scott’s *Bladerunner*, used to make viewers question whether Deckard (Harrison Ford) is a replicant¹⁴⁴, a small piece of information, plausible within the framework of the original edit, but that causes the viewer to see the events in a whole new way. ¹⁴⁵ Jenkins refers to the shift in understanding caused by this piece of information as “additive comprehension.”

Interestingly, it is additive comprehension that we are dealing with in terms of adapted content in the slasher remake: a search for the “origami unicorn”, an attempt to update the films for new viewers and fans alike, while still presenting them with a seemingly faithful remake. Considering the aforementioned failure

¹⁴³ Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press, 2006: 123. Print.

¹⁴⁴ In the director’s cut of *Bladerunner*, dream sequences have been added for the character of Deckard, where he sees a unicorn running through the woods. At the end of the film, one of the other characters leaves him an origami unicorn, suggesting that he knows what Deckard has been dreaming, and thus raises the question of whether Deckard is a replicant, an android whose thoughts, dreams and memories are all given to them by their creator.

¹⁴⁵ Jenkins p123

of van Sant's *Psycho* and the rejection of both slashers and remakes that were too revisionist, it becomes clear that a delicate balance between retained and adapted content must be maintained.

The adapted and added content in the slasher remake, like its retained content, is primarily dictated by three different conventions. First, the slasher remake will take into account the shifts and developments which occurred in the sub-genre in the nineties when, as the previous chapter outlines, the rules of the slasher were bent, but not broken, to revive a sub-genre that had become overly predictable. Second, the original contribution made to the narrative by those remaking these films will not break with or deviate from the character and franchise mythologies established in the Golden Age films, but will instead 'fill the gaps': this usually takes the form of back-story, as in the original films the events leading up to the plot are not shown or explained in explicit detail. Finally, technology will be updated, both in terms of the film's production, and the technology used by the characters within the film.

These adaptations help affirm the slasher remake's status as cumulative hypertext: the cumulative hypertext must not only retain content from the original and any earlier hypertexts, but must also be a hypertext in its own right, transforming and re-presenting the original. Furthermore, many of these adaptations pertain to the slasher revival of the nineties, highlighting how generic intertexts and allusions (such as the references to these franchises in *Scream*) can form some of the layers that make up the cumulative hypertext.

Original Contribution

As outlined in the previous chapter, the need for an original contribution within a recognized framework is something that is essential to both the slasher, and the remake (particularly the post-*Psycho* horror remake). This relates to Jenkins' and Young's notion of delivering the "origami unicorn"¹⁴⁶: the need to provide viewers familiar with the original property with "that one piece of information that makes you look at the films differently."¹⁴⁷ However, on the flip side of this, as Wandtke suggests, radical revisions have "little staying power": for a revision to gain popular acceptance, it must take into account the established tropes and conventions of the property being revised (as mentioned with regards to the retaining of narrative content).

Once again, this highlights the delicate balance between retained and adapted content that must be maintained for a remake to be commercially and critically successful. The fleshing out or adapting of a main character's back story is an extremely popular method of doing this, and furthermore, a well established trend within the slasher sub-genre: in the sequel to *Halloween*, for example, it was revealed that Laurie was Michael's sister, and in the third installment of *Scream*, it is revealed that Sidney's (Neve Campbell) half-brother Roman (Scott Foley) was the one who convinced Billy Loomis (Skeet Ulrich) to go on a killing spree, sparking the events of the entire franchise. It allows those remaking the film to easily deliver the "origami unicorn" while still maintaining that which

¹⁴⁶ The director's cut of Ridley Scott's *Bladerunner* added an origami unicorn to the ending of the film, suggesting that Deckard may be a replicant.

¹⁴⁷ Jenkins p123

made the original property successful: and hence, this technique has been carried through to the slasher remake. This relates to Stam's operation of "actualization" in the hypertext, taking events that are just implied or are narrative possibilities, and making them part of the new text.

Given that all remakes, even the most faithful, try to deliver their "origami unicorn" in some way, it may seem that the evidence of this particular aspect of adapted content across all slasher remakes is to be expected, rather than an anomaly that is seen in remakes of this sub-genre alone. However, the way in which the slasher remake attempts to deliver new information is always in the form of an additive revision, rather than attempting to completely re-write the events of the original franchise. This is characteristic of the cumulative hypertext, adding another layer to a series of revisions, rather than attempting to completely re-imagine the events of the hypotext and all prior hypertexts.

Additive revisions can take many forms, as most stories, particularly those with as many 'chapters' as the ones we are dealing with here, have gaps that can be filled. As discussed above with the slasher remake, this tends to take the form of back-story, or in the case of a few, an extension of the plot (allowing them to keep the basic narrative structure the same, while simply extending or filling parts of it). We also see in the slasher remake the repeated use of a false ending: that is, there is a final act which follows what the viewer expects to be the ending. This gives the slasher remake room to frighten and unsettle the viewer, without completely disturbing the narrative of the original: as we well know

from later installments, the slasher villain is always resurrected, and this added final act draws that fact back into the timeframe of the original.

This is a particularly effective way of enabling additive comprehension: by showing the aftermath of events, we understand the impact on their victims or just how far-reaching the consequences of the known story are, and by providing more back story, we understand the previous events of the film and its characters in a whole new way. Furthermore, the adding of a new final act shows the viewer that the killer they know so well is still capable of surprising them. As mentioned above, this also has a strong precedent for being a successful way in which to provide an original contribution to a cemented story, a recent example being Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins* (2005), which chose to address the time between the death of Bruce Wayne's parents and the rise of Batman (a period consistently omitted in film up to this point, and one free from the constraints of the established Batman mythology).

Halloween

In the original 1978 film, Michael's childhood is confined to a single scene, where he kills his sister on Halloween night. Most of this is in the form of a point of view shot, with the viewer watching through Michael's eyes as he follows his sister Judith upstairs and stabs her to death with a kitchen knife: we then see a single shot of a young boy dressed in a clown costume, clutching a kitchen knife before it cuts to the title card. This gap between the child and adult Michael includes his time incarcerated at Smith's Grove: we see the adult Michael go on a rampage

and escape, but we know nothing of his treatment, or how he grew up to become “The Shape.”

In Rob Zombie’s remake, however, Michael’s childhood takes up approximately half the film, with his first Halloween killing spree delayed until about a quarter of the way through the film (as opposed to being the very first scene). The film begins in the Myers home, where we learn that Michael has an obsessive relationship with his mother (Sheri Moon Zombie) and baby sister “Boo”, and is frequently abused by his stepfather (William Forsythe) and Judith (Hanna Hall). He wears a clown mask which he refuses to remove until his stepfather tears it off his face and, several times throughout the scene, he is teased by his sister and stepfather for being effeminate and/or sexually deviant. He then goes to school, where he is bullied by older boys who know his mother is a stripper, and we learn during the scenes at Michael’s school that he has been killing small animals, photographing the remains, and keeping some of the dead creatures in his locker. Dr Loomis appears for the first time here, instead of at the adult Michael’s parole hearing (which is his first appearance in the original film): he suggests to Michael’s mother that this signifies a serious behavioural problem, and that he would like to try and help her son.

The first killing in the film occurs shortly after this, a murder which is never shown, or even implied, in the original film. In the original, it is assumed that the murder of Judith is the child Michael’s first and only killing. In the remake, Michael follows one of his school tormentors (Daryl Sabara) into the woods and, after putting on his plastic clown mask, bludgeons him to death with a large

branch, remaining unmoved as his classmate begs for mercy. Later that evening, after Michael has been out trick-or-treating alone (as a clown, the same Halloween costume he selected in the original film), the film moves to his first Halloween slaughter: in the remake, however, Michael kills not only Judith, but also his stepfather, and Judith's boyfriend (Adam Weisman). It is at this point he finds his iconic white mask, which he wears for Judith's murder (in the original film, he stole this from a store after escaping from Smith's Grove as an adult). This establishes Michael as a much more psychologically complex character, though it slightly demystifies his Halloween massacres, taking away the senselessness which helped make the character so frightening in the original franchise.

The film then foregrounds Michael's time at Smith's Grove insane asylum, which, as noted above, is never shown in the original film. This section mainly comprises Michael's sessions with Dr Loomis, showing him becoming more and more withdrawn, and developing an even more intense obsession with masks (constructing hundreds of his own from papier mache, and eventually refusing to be seen without one). He begins talking less and less, eventually becoming completely silent. The childhood sequence ends with Michael brutally killing a female nurse (Sybil Danning) with his eating utensils. His mother goes home and commits suicide, and we hear her baby screaming in the background.

Essentially, what Zombie has done with this background sequence is suggest reasons for the distinctive features of the Michael that we saw in the original film. Furthermore, he provides his "origami unicorn" in suggesting that Michael

and the Shape are two sides of a dissociative/multiple personality: the difference between the sweet child Michael and the killer he becomes when he puts a mask on are quite profound. *Zombie* provides yet another opportunity for additive comprehension in creating a much closer, long-term relationship between Dr Loomis and Michael: this gives the viewer a whole new perspective on how Dr Loomis was able to predict Michael's behaviour, making his decision to try and shoot Michael toward the end of the film much more complex.

Friday the 13th

In the remake of *Friday the 13th*, the original contribution is at the beginning and end of the film: the middle part is essentially a race through the events of the first, second and third films (as outlined in the previous chapter). This allows, once again, for an original contribution which fills gaps in the character mythology, rather than totally re-working or re-writing it.

In the original *Friday the 13th*, we follow Alice (Adrienne King) when she runs away from the site of Mrs Voorhees' murder. In the remake, however, we are left in the clearing to see that Jason was watching as his mother was decapitated, and we witness her issuing an order to him to carry on her work, and avenge her death (something that is implied as his motivation in the sequels, but never actually shown). The remake then carries this through the entire film, with Jason kidnapping a girl who looks almost exactly like his mother (Amanda Righetti), and keeping relics (such as her head) in his underground home. Rather than re-

writing the character, once again, this adaptation takes something that is implied in the original franchise, and makes it explicit.

The second instance of added/adapted content occurs after this sequence: the franchise mythology dictates that Jason kills anybody who dares camp at the old campsite, so this addition works in well. A group of teenagers are looking for a legendary marijuana crop and, while looking for it, decide to camp near a bunch of old cabins: which one of them correctly identifies as the campsite where another group of teenagers was slaughtered, before writing it off as just another scary story. The re-telling of the story of Jason in the form of an urban legend or campfire story is also a staple of this franchise, established in the first sequel. When they begin exploring the old cabins and engaging in various forms of deviant behaviour, Jason comes out and slaughters the entire group except for Whitney, who he kidnaps (because of her aforementioned resemblance to Jason's mother).

The addition of tunnels under the campsite, allowing Jason to get from place to place unseen, can also be considered an additive revision which does not break, but rather adds to, the existing franchise mythology: Jason frequently appears out of nowhere, and a tunnel system explains his ability to do so. Once again, this is an example of Henry Jenkins' "additive comprehension": the new information that enables viewers to see the character and story they know so well in a different way, without being asked to engage in a form of cognitive dissonance, or believing two contradicting stories at the same time.

A Nightmare on Elm Street

The remake of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* provides us with a slightly different form of original contribution to that seen in the remakes of *Halloween* and *Friday the 13th*, but it can still be said to function by filling gaps in the existing character mythology.

In the Samuel Bayer remake, rather than killing children in the neighbourhood, Freddy physically and sexually abuses them. Though this may seem like a direct violation of the franchise mythology, it can be argued that the specific crime he commits is somewhat incidental: the basic storyline simply requires him to be acquitted of a horrible crime against a group of children, the Elm Street parents to seek their own justice, and him to come back seeking revenge. This easy shift from murderer to molester is enabled by the fact that Freddy's past is barely mentioned, and certainly not shown, in the original film, and that his origins have been slightly revised and re-read previously in other media (such as the spin-off television series *Freddy's Nightmares*, which changes the reason for Freddy's acquittal). This relates to Terrence Wandtke's notion of revision versus evolution, where changes can be made to update or re-imagine a character, yet these changes must keep the essential facts about the character the same in order to gain popular acceptance.¹⁴⁸ It can also be suggested that this shift was likely to gain acceptance with fans as it was Wes Craven's original idea for the character: the studio made Craven change Freddy from molester to murderer in

¹⁴⁸ Wandtke p6

order to avoid accusations that they were attempting to exploit the wave of highly publicized child molestation cases in California in the early 1980s.¹⁴⁹

Having this shift allows Bayer and Platinum Dunes to flesh out Freddy's background much more, and suggest that the children themselves (not just the parents) had a relationship with Krueger while he was alive: this is certainly plausible within the franchise mythology, and helps to explain why Krueger has only appeared now, filling a significant plot hole in the original film (why Krueger has never appeared in the children's dreams before). In the original franchise, Krueger's powers came from the children's knowledge and fear of him (a fact first introduced at the end of the original film): in the remake, it is suggested that the trauma of what happened to them as children has caused the young adults of Elm Street to block out their memories of Freddy, and it is only once Dean (Kellan Lutz) begins getting counseling and trying to remember what happened in his childhood that Freddy begins entering their dreams.

On a related note, this addition of flashbacks and a pre-existing relationship between Freddy and the children fleshes out the main characters and their relationship not only to Krueger, but with each other. In the original film, the teenagers of Elm Street are friends, and the fact they are all seeing Freddy really has nothing to do with their connection to each other, but rather the connection between their parents. In the remake, it is suggested that they all knew each other as children, but simply can't remember. This forges seemingly unlikely friendships, and makes the interactions between characters more interesting: for

¹⁴⁹ Robb p66

example, Jesse's (Thomas Dekker) refusal to acknowledge that he has seen Freddy is made much more complex when he is withholding this information from people he doesn't trust or like, rather than simply wanting to appear brave in front of his girlfriend. Furthermore, the fact that these relationships are gradually developed throughout the remake (as opposed to their constant, unchanging presence in the original film) makes the fact that they went to the same preschool but don't remember meeting each other until years later seem more strange. It also assists in building suspense as they all band together to try and understand, and subsequently defeat, Freddy.

Technology

Secondly, the slasher remake will update the technology used, both in terms of the films' production and its use within the narrative. Once again, this may seem incidental, however it is worth noting that not all remakes choose to significantly update their effects, nor do they deliberately set themselves in a different time period (one in which things like cell phones and Google are available). This highlights the importance of intertexts and earlier hypertexts to the slasher remake, as this is evidence of it taking into account that which has happened between original and remake, as well as shifts and updates within the sub-genre.

Within the slasher sub-genre, there is a strong sense of one-upmanship with regards to special effects, particularly across a franchise. Furthermore, the Golden Age slasher was applauded for its unique and creative use of special effects (moments of particular note include the blood fountain in *A Nightmare on*

Elm Street, and the death of Jack (Kevin Bacon) in *Friday the 13th*). It is not entirely clear why the slasher remake would choose to use computer generated imagery when, as Rockoff suggests, the effects in these films have aged extremely well – and certainly, with regards to the films' budget, it would make more sense to have worked with practical effects: however, in some instances, it has afforded them the opportunity to try new and more spectacular death scenes than ever before seen in the franchise. The remake of *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, for example, is able to show Kris' body being slashed open as she hangs in the air, rather than having to rely on before and after shots. *Sorority Row* makes use of computer-generated effects to be able to make its killings not only more spectacular, but more ironic: for example, a girl at a Greek party is killed when a beer bottle is shoved right down her throat.

This form of updating relates to a preconception that audiences will want more gore: consider, for example, the success of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* remake, which contains much more gore and explicitly shown violence than the original, and the critical failure of van Sant's *Psycho*, which did not adapt itself to actualize the violence the original implies. Furthermore, the slasher remake was preceded by the rise of the torture porn sub-genre, a set of films so brutally, sadistically and explicitly violent that *New York Times* film critic David Edelstein concluded that America had simply become "nuts about torture."¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Edelstein, David . "Now Playing at Your Local Multiplex: Torture Porn." *New York Magazine*. 28 Jan. 2006. Web. 5 Jan. 2010. <<http://nymag.com/movies/features/15622/>>.

With regards to the narrative of these films, technology plays a much greater role, and assists the filmmakers in bringing these stories into a contemporary setting. Cell phones feature prominently in all these remakes, though the ability to talk and run at the same time does not make these characters any more likely to survive than their predecessors. In fact, technology frequently fails them: electronic alarm clocks fail to go off (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*), cell phone numbers are proven false or unable to be traced (*Sorority Row*), global positioning systems lead them in the wrong direction, and subsequently to their death (*Friday the 13th*). The fallibility of technology is a strong theme across these remakes, one which can be said to have developed from the nineties slasher film (particularly evident in *Scream 2*)¹⁵¹, which, as stated above, highlights how these generic intertexts function as one layer of these cumulative hypertexts.

Halloween

In *Halloween*, technology is used to clearly separate added content from retained content. As stated in the previous chapter, John Carpenter's original film was applauded for its use of Steadicam: when the remake shifts from Myers' fleshed out childhood into the narrative of the original story, the film begins using Steadicam, and replicating many of the shots used by Carpenter. For Zombie's original contribution, he frequently uses still and hand-held camera. This shifting

¹⁵¹ Thornley, Davinia. "The Scream Reflex: Meta Horror and Popular Culture." *Metro* 150 (2006): 140 - 147. Print.

of technology allows *Zombie* to pay homage to Carpenter, while subtly highlighting and showcasing his own work.

Though we do see characters using cellphones in this film, making the film more accessible to contemporary viewers and acknowledging what a huge feature of the sub-genre this particular piece of technology has become, it is worth noting that the fallibility of technology has been a less prevalent theme across the *Halloween* franchise than in the other two slasher franchises being discussed here. Michael does not have Freddy's supernatural powers, so he is unable to manipulate technology in the same way (for example, when Freddy's tongue emerges from the phone, or when he enters a videogame in one of the sequels), and given that his primary hunting ground is suburbia, we do not get the same "middle of nowhere" technology failures (eg cellphone reception) seen in *Friday the 13th*, and unlike Jason, Michael has never been trapped or fooled by technology (for example, the hologram used to trick Jason in *Jason X*). The presence of cellphones takes into account shifts in culture and the subgenre, while acknowledging some of the traits that make Michael unique as a slasher villain.

Friday the 13th

In the *Friday the 13th* remake, the primary update of technology is with regards to the narrative rather than the film's production, though a sharper picture and colour manipulation are evident (a blue wash is used at the start of the film, and during several of the daytime killings, a slight yellow wash is apparent). Also,

improved technology allows for more elaborate killings: though the deaths in the original were graphic and made great use of makeup and prosthetics, the availability of more advanced technology affords this incarnation of Jason a much wider range of killing techniques. The death of Amanda (America Olivo), whose sleeping bag was hung from a tree into a campfire used a combination of digitally enhanced flames and blended footage to simulate her being burned alive, and when Jason kills with a machete (his weapon of choice, in both the original franchise and the remake) they were able to have this as a single shot, as opposed to showing Jason throwing the machete, and then cutting to his victim.¹⁵²

In terms of the film's narrative, as soon as the film moves into the present day (immediately following the flashback to Jason's mother we see at the very beginning), the use of technology becomes an integral part of the narrative. The first group of teenagers who come across Crystal Lake do so using a Global Positioning System, and the second group use the navigation system in their car to lead them across Crystal Lake to the old campsite. Cell phone use is also featured throughout the film. Rather than their many gadgets enabling the teens of this installment to avoid the major problems of the first, such as getting lost in the woods and landline phones being cut off, it frequently fails them, and/or leads to their death. As suggested in the second chapter, the unreliability of technology allows the filmmakers to increase the sense of unease for contemporary viewers, while drawing upon a theme which has been evident

¹⁵² Lesnick, Silas. "Friday the 13th: Compositing Kills at Camp Crystal Lake." *Animation World Network*. Web. 8 Jan. 2011. <<http://www.awn.com/articles/production/ifriday-13th-compositing-kills-camp-crystal-lake>>.

right from the slasher's genesis. It also takes into account the failure of technology that was a prevalent theme in the nineties slasher, adding this layer to its accumulation of hypertexts.

A Nightmare on Elm Street

It is perhaps in this film that the updating of technology is most evident in terms of its place in the narrative, and also in terms of updating the technologies used to create the film.

Firstly, as in the original film, Nancy and her friends are seeking information about this man who is appearing in their dreams and killing them off one at a time. In the original, they did this by interrogating their parents: in the remake, they are able to use search engines to type in clues and, as a result, find out that this is happening to all the other children who went to the same preschool. One of the new victims in this film, Marcus Yeon (Aaron Yoo), is discovered during one of Nancy's web searches, and we see his death via his video weblog (something completely unprecedented in the sub-genre, though as mentioned earlier, several second wave slasher films such as 2005's *Cry Wolf* have used online messaging as part of the killer's modus operandi). Marcus films and posts several segments (watched by Nancy) where he describes what he is seeing in his Freddy-induced dreams, the effects of sleep deprivation, and implores his audience to let him know if this is happening to anybody else. At the end of the final weblog, his eyes start to close and, as soon as he falls asleep, his head is smashed violently into the screen of his computer.

Secondly, the use of cell phones is seen frequently throughout the film, and they even become an integral part of the blurring between dream and reality we see in this remake. Though the characters in the original film spoke frequently on their landlines, in the remake, they keep in touch via cell phone. Nancy uses her cell phone as an alarm when she is in the bathtub and, instead of her mother banging on the door, she is woken by a friend calling: it turns out, however, that the phone call was simply part of a dream and, as Freddy informs her, so was her setting the alarm. Like the remake of *Friday the 13th*, highlighting the fallibility of technology is an effective way to bring the events of the original film into a contemporary setting, while acknowledging a consistent and increasing trend across the history of the sub-genre.

With regards to the film's production, it is clear that the filmmakers have used updated technology to create the effects seen in the original: sometimes to great effect and, at other times, to the detriment of the film's visceral impact. The makeup used on Jackie Earle Haley has been supplemented by CGI, and the availability of more sophisticated makeup means that Freddy indeed looks like a human burn victim, instead of a hook-nosed monster (a look caused by the original rubber prosthetic). When Freddy comes out of the wall over Nancy's bed, this is also done through CGI: however, this lacks the weight and visceral impact of the original film, where Robert Englund did indeed lean out of her wall – through stretch nylon painted to match the surrounding wallpaper. The blood fountain scene has been incorporated into the scene where Nancy's staircase becomes liquid: the use of computer generated imagery allows the filmmakers to

not only easily include these iconic images from the original film, but to combine and deliver them in a new and interesting way.

Nineties Updates

As outlined in the previous chapter, the resurgence of the slasher film in the nineties was enabled by a number of shifts and changes which took the formula that had made the slasher so popular, and adapted it to a contemporary context. This both widened its appeal, and allowed it to escape the over-predictability that had begun to plague the sub-genre in the late eighties. When looking at the slasher remake, it is clear that these remakes not only follow the rules of the slasher as they existed when the original films were released, but also take into account the updates of the nineties. Once again, there is a precedent for this, though it has yet to be a consistent feature across remakes in any genre or sub-genre: Verevis uses as his example the film noir remakes *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1981) and *Body Heat* (1981), both of which take into account shifts and updates in the genre in order to become a “contemporaneous noir.”¹⁵³ This acknowledgment of updates within the sub-genre relates to Stam’s notions of popularization and reculturalisation within the hypertext and, as mentioned previously, highlights the fact that the cumulative hypertext can draw from a wide range of intertexts.

The first significant shift from the nineties slasher revival which is taken into account in the remake is how nineties slasher presented us with a very different

¹⁵³ Verevis p119

form of female hero, best known by Carol Clover's aforementioned label "the Final Girl." Characters such as Sidney in *Scream*, Julie (Jennifer Love Hewitt) in *I Know What You Did Last Summer* and Natalie (Alicia Witt) in *Urban Legend*, worked within the archetype established in the Golden Age slasher film, while updating it for audiences more accustomed to a new kind of female hero. There are three traits which clearly distinguish the nineties final girl from her predecessor. First, her appearance: the final girl of the nineties embraces her femininity and does not dress more conservatively than her friends. With heroes like Buffy, Ripley and Sarah Connor proving popular at this time, the final girl no longer needed to be androgynous to believably dominate the frame and match the physical prowess of the killer. Even Sidney, the nineties Final Girl who matches the most closely with the Golden Age archetype, wears some makeup, has tidy hair and though not overtly feminine in her clothing choices, is by no means a tomboy. Second, an intensely personal relationship between the Final Girl and the killer will be introduced and finally, on a related note, the final girl of the nineties will display unbridled anger, and a desire to exact revenge on the killer, rather than concerning herself only with screaming for help and surviving. This updated archetype is certainly evident in the remake: both female heroes in the *Friday the 13th* remake, for example, have perfectly glossy hair, basic makeup and visible cleavage, and all the characters in *Sorority Row* are perfectly kept sorority sisters.

As well as updating the final girl archetype, the nineties slasher film also placed a greater emphasis on secondary characters. Though in the Golden Age slasher the final girl was the only one who could stop the killer and was left as sole survivor,

in the nineties, she was able to do these things with help from a group of friends and/or allies: for example, Gale Weathers and Dewey Riley in *Scream*, or Ray in *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. This is carried through to the remakes, where the final girl is still very much the protagonist, but relies on her friends to survive (and often, at least one of them will make it through the events of the film). We also, on a related note, see a more racially diverse cast: the *Scream* trilogy contains several non-Caucasian characters (increasing in number and prominence as the franchise progresses), and *Cry Wolf* takes place in an extremely multi-cultural British boarding school. In the remakes, we see at least one character of non-Caucasian descent in each group of teenagers: *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Friday the 13th*, for example, have the same actor (Aaron Yoo) playing the “token Asian.”¹⁵⁴

Thirdly, like the nineties slasher, the remake also makes use of intertextual referencing, either explicitly (as in *Scream*) or implicitly (as in *I Know What You Did Last Summer*). The nineties slasher revival was, in part, due to the fact that these second wave slasher films were willing to acknowledge that the audience already knew the conventions of the sub-genre, even if they had only engaged with it on a superficial level. Of course, this is even more relevant with the remake, where the audience’s prior knowledge of the film is more than just structural: they know the characters, the storyline, every twist and turn and how the film ends. These remakes, as mentioned above, refer to both themselves, and the other installments of the franchise.

¹⁵⁴ A term attached to Asian characters who are placed within the narrative in order to make the film seem more racially inclusive, yet are often the subject of stereotyping and jokes.

Finally, once again as mentioned above, they take into account critical discourse around the films. *Halloween*, for example, turns Michael into a sexually repressed psychopath: even though there is no concrete evidence for this in the film, this is how the character has frequently been read and understood, and thus, this is how he is constructed in the remake. This is evidence of a critical revision, but also the remake's status as cumulative hypertext. The casting of famous actors from within the horror genre is yet another way this occurs: for example, Brad Dourif, a well-established horror actor who was cast in *Urban Legend* (alongside the infamous Robert Englund), has been cast again in the remake of *Halloween*. Again, this contributes to the slasher remake's status as cumulative hypertext, drawing upon the nineties films which transformed our understanding of and engagement with the slasher sub-genre.

Halloween

It is clear that the Laurie in *Halloween* follows the Final Girl archetype as it was revised in the nineties, particularly when compared with the same character in the 1978 film. The physical appearance of Laurie in the remake is no more or less conservative or effeminate than that of her two best friends. When it comes to the opposite sex, she does not show the blind fear and extreme discomfort the original Laurie Strode displayed: instead, she gets excited at the possibility of going on a date. When she shoots Michael at the end of the film, she does so in blind rage, rather than abject terror: much more in alignment with the final girls of the nineties than her counterpart in the Golden Age.

Taking into account the second update identified, the supporting cast in the remake of *Halloween* becomes much more important than it was in the original film. We are actually shown Michael's family life (including his mother), and Dr Loomis is presented as a much more three-dimensional character. Laurie's parents are shown, allowing the adoption storyline to be fully integrated into this film, and they play a part in defending her from Michael (whereas in the original film, they are absent for the entire duration). The character of Annie Brackett (Danielle Harris) is drawn back from the sequels into this text, and she survives alongside Laurie. Annie's father, Sherriff Brackett (Brad Dourif), is a much more important character in this film also, providing several explanations about Laurie and Michael's past.

With regards to the inclusion of non-Caucasian characters, this remake uses a Hispanic and black character in two minor roles: the cleaner at Smith's Grove, and the worker the adult Michael steals his clothing off. The lesser degree of multi-racial casting in this remake (in comparison to the other two remakes being discussed here) can be attributed to the film's characterization of the child Michael as a poor white boy in the middle of a white, middle-class neighbourhood, the same neighbourhood Laurie Strode still inhabits seventeen years later.

To move to the final nineties update outlined here, the remake of *Halloween* certainly makes great use of intertextual references outside of its own franchise. Whenever a character is watching television in this film, they are watching a

horror movie which has either already been remade, or was in the works to be remade at the time of the film's release. Notable examples include *Dawn of the Dead*, remade in 2004, and *The Thing From Another World*, remade in 1952: the latter also functions as a reference to the director of the original film, as this remake was also directed by John Carpenter. Furthermore, it makes use of actors and actresses already established in the horror genre, a form of in-joke for the horror aficionado which was popularized in the nineties slasher: for example, Brad Dourif, who plays Sheriff Bracket has featured in horror films from *The Exorcist* to *Urban Legend*.

Friday the 13th

Friday the 13th's final girl, Whitney, also fits the nineties archetype. When she first appears in the film, she is on a camping trip with her friends (in search of the marijuana field), and she sneaks off with her boyfriend after nightfall (before being interrupted by Jason). She is perhaps more resourceful than her counterpart in the 1980 film, Alice: Whitney manages to briefly manipulate Jason into releasing her, whereas Alice was incapable of convincing Mrs Voorhees to hold off her attack. Her clothing choices are, once again, not notably different from that of her friends. When she finally kills Jason, or apparently kills Jason, by putting his head in a wood chipper, we once again see evidence of pure anger and a desire for revenge. In the original film, as Alice swings at Mrs Voorhees, she is simply concerned with her own survival, desperately trying to defend herself. Vengeance for her friends is not her driving force (we see this repeated in the

flashback sequence right at the beginning of the remake). When Whitney kills Jason, she does so in a fit of fury.

The secondary cast is extremely important here, to a greater degree than in the remake of *Halloween*. Whitney's brother (Jared Padalecki) survives the entire movie, and is able to defeat and outsmart Jason (temporarily) in much the same way as this film's Final Girl. Jenna (Danielle Panabaker), one of the teens staying at the cabin opposite Camp Crystal Lake, assists Whitney's brother in finding her in the underground tunnels: which, arguably, he would not have been able to do without help.

Also in alignment with the second nineties update addressed here, this cast is much more racially diverse than the all-white cast of the original, with an African American and Asian character forming part of the second group of teenagers: and, once again carried through from the nineties, these characters play upon the "token Asian" and "token black" character stereotypes. The African American character, for example, is trying to become a rap artist.

Though intertextual references from outside the franchise itself are almost completely eclipsed here by the complex web of references to other installments of *Friday the 13th*, some evidence of this can be found in its casting of popular teen stars: though the Golden Age slasher tended to favor unknown teen actors and actresses, the nineties slasher took the opposite approach. Sarah Michelle Gellar, for example, was featured in *Scream 2* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, both released a year after she first became known for her role in *Buffy*

The Vampire Slayer. Neve Campbell (*Scream*) and Jennifer Love Hewitt (*I Know What You Did Last Summer*) were also featured in popular television series at the time of their casting. For *Friday the 13th*, Whitney's brother is played by Jared Padalecki, who had risen to fame several years earlier in the television series *Gilmore Girls*, playing the role of Dean. Whitney is played by Amanda Righetti, who starred in teen drama *The OC*, and pop singer Willa Ford plays Chelsea.

A Nightmare on Elm Street

Nancy, the final girl in this film, is perhaps closer to the Golden Age archetype than the nineties Final Girl and those in the other two remakes being discussed here, but the influence of the nineties can still be seen in the way the character has been re-imagined. Though this version of Nancy is framed as an outsider, she develops an intimate relationship with Quentin (Kyle Gallner), and is more artistic than conservative (she is frequently shown painting and sketching). In her most distinct similarity to the nineties Final Girl, when Nancy finally confronts Freddy, she shows more anger than fear, swearing at him and refusing to give in, even when he tells her that she will never wake up.

The supporting cast is once again more important here than it was in the original, to a similar degree as the remake of *Friday the 13th*: while Nancy's boyfriend dies in the original film, in the remake, he plays a significant role in helping her investigate and defeat Freddy. Furthermore, before they die, each supporting cast member gives Nancy an important piece of information about Freddy, and how/why he is coming after them – Kris tells her that Dean had been

looking into his childhood and that they all went to preschool together. Jesse tells her that Freddy can only get them if they fall asleep, as well as how Kris died. Marcus Yeon tells her to look in the basement of the preschool, where she finds evidence confirming that Freddy had indeed sexually and physically abused her as a child.

The most explicit intertextual reference here (beyond, of course, the original film) is to the story of the Pied Piper. Quentin brings this up while in the bookstore, briefly explaining the story of a man who was wronged by a village, so he came back to take their children after having a vision of Freddy holding this book. The alignment of the Pied Piper with Freddy is certainly interesting, and suggests that this story is much more complex and historically grounded than viewers may have initially assumed. The casting of Jackie Earle Haley as Freddy also assists in placing this remake in a much wider intertextual web – he has played a paedophile before in *Little Children*, and is perhaps best known for his portrayal of Rorschach in the cinematic adaptation of the graphic novel *Watchmen*: another film in which he portrays a man solely interested in his own perceptions of revenge and justice, and willing to commit violent and sadistic crimes in order to satisfy these.

Conclusion

The slasher remake's status as cumulative hypertext is evident in the way it adapts and adds content to the original film. It makes its own original contribution to the franchise in the form of back story and an extended final act, commenting on and adding to the hypertexts and original film that preceded it.

Similarly, it updates its use of technology, bringing together the texts it draws upon, and reculturalising and popularizing them (two of Stam's functions of the hypertext). By taking into account the shifts and developments which occurred in the sub-genre in the nineties, it further identifies itself as a cumulative hypertext, drawing upon more than just the original film and franchise by acknowledging the texts which transformed understanding and consumption of the original franchise in the interim between original and remake.

Conclusion

The concept of the cumulative hypertext suggests that adaptations and remakes do not just take into account the original property they are replicating, but can also take into account the many intertexts which exist in the gap between original and remake, creating a remake with many layers and a wider frame of reference for viewers. The recent wave of slasher remakes brings this type of remaking to the fore, through its clear referencing of other installments of the franchises to which the original films belong, and its adoption of the shifts and developments which have occurred in the subgenre since the release of the original (in particular, the slasher revival of the nineties). This is a critical consideration in order to understand how these remakes, and other remakes of franchise, sequelised, frequently referenced or genre films function, acknowledging that they are much more than carbon copies.

This thesis has shown how discussions of the slasher sub-genre have emerged from literature on the horror genre more widely, pointing out a significant lack of discussion around horror franchises, cycles and series, and as a result, their implication for remaking. It has also provided an outline of the history and conventions of the slasher, showing how this sub-genre emerged and has developed. It has also provided a comprehensive account of the new millennium horror remake, highlighting the new approach to remaking we see in this period, and how this has affected the retaining and adapting of content in the slasher remake. It has then shown how the slasher remake fits into wider discussions of remaking, and then used the concept of the cumulative hypertext, drawn from

Stam's work on adaptations and Genette's work on intertextuality, to provide a theoretical framework in which the slasher remake can be understood, given that due to the multitude of texts and intertexts it draws upon, our understanding of the copy/remake here is irregular.

Finally, it has shown how trends in the slasher remake's retaining and adapting of content contribute to its status as cumulative hypertext, identifying places where it has drawn from the original films' many sequels and intertexts, as well as from the original film itself. It has done this using the remakes of *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, because of the ease with which intertexts and the functions of the hypertext can be identified within these particular remakes.

Future Research

The identification of the slasher remake as a cumulative hypertext opens up a number of critical possibilities. This model could be adapted to interrogate how other remakes of franchise films draw upon the sequels and intertexts from the original franchise, rather than simply drawing its content from the original film. It could also be extended to discussions of the increasing number of reboots and sequels being released, for example *Scream 4*, *Tron: Legacy* (2010), the three most recent installments of *Star Wars*, and the upcoming reboot of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*¹⁵⁵. By looking at how these properties retain and adapt content

¹⁵⁵ For a copy of the official press release from Warner Bros. and Joss Whedon's response, see Finke, Nikki. "Warner Bros Reboots 'Buffy The Vampire Slayer'." *Deadline.com*, 22 Nov. 2010.

from the original film and its intertexts, we can better understand not only how these new installments function, but also the significance of particular themes and images from the original(s).

This also opens up discussion of how the remake has changed since the release of van Sant's *Psycho* in 1998, both in terms of how these remakes take into account their own cultural and historical significance, but also the kinds of films which are now being remade, rebooted and sequelised: arguably, this period not only marks the emergence of the cumulative hypertext as a more common form of cinematic repetition, but also a period in which highly canonized films are more likely to be remade.

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A Nightmare on Elm Street. Dir Samuel Bayer. New Line, 2010.

A Nightmare on Elm Street. Dir Wes Craven. New Line, 1984.

Alien: Resurrection. Dir Ridley Scott. 20th Century Fox, 1997.

April Fool's Day. Dir Fred Walton. Paramount Pictures, 1986.

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Black Christmas. Dir Glen Morgan. Dimension Films, 2006.

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Cherry Falls. Dir Geoffrey Wright. Rogue Pictures, 2000.

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City of Angels. Dir Brad Silberling. Warner Bros., 1998.

Cousins. Dir Joel Schumacher, Paramount Pictures, 1989.

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Dawn of the Dead. Dir Zack Snyder. Universal Pictures, 2004.

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Der Himmel über Berlin. Dir Wim Wenders. Orion Classics, 1988.

Disturbia. Dir DJ Caruso. Dreamworks, 2007.

Donnie Darko. Dir Richard Kelly. Pandora, 2001.

Down and Out in Beverly Hills. Dir Paul Mazursky. Buena Vista, 1985.

Fight Club. Dir David Fincher. 20th Century Fox, 1999.

Freddy vs Jason. Dir Ronny Yu. New Line, 2003.

Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare. Dir Rachel Talalay. New Line, 1991.

Friday the 13th Part 2. Dir. Steve Miner. Paramount Pictures, 1981.

Friday the 13th Part III. Dir Steve Miner. Paramount Pictures, 1982.

Friday the 13th Part VI: Jason Lives. Dir Tom McLoughlin. Paramount Pictures, 1986.

Friday the 13th Part VII: The New Blood. Dir. John Carl Buechler. Paramount Pictures, 1988.

Friday the 13th Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan. Dir Rob Hedden. Paramount Pictures, 1989.

Friday the 13th. Dir Marcus Nispel. New Line, 2009.

Friday the 13th. Dir. Sean Cunningham. Paramount Pictures, 1980.

Friday the 13th: A New Beginning. Dir Danny Steinmann. Paramount Pictures 1985.

Friday the 13th: Final Chapter. Dir. Joseph Dito. Paramount Pictures, 1984.

Halloween 4: The Return of Michael Myers. Dir. Dwight H Little. 1988.

Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers. Dir. Dominique Othenin-Gerard. Galaxy International Pictures, 1989.

Halloween II. Dir. Rick Rosenthal. Universal Pictures, 1981.

Halloween II. Dir. Rob Zombie. Dimension Films, 2009.

Halloween III: Season of the Witch. Dir. Tommy Lee Wallace. Universal Pictures, 1982.

Halloween. Dir. John Carpenter. Compass International Pictures. 1979.

Halloween. Dir. Rob Zombie. Dimension Films, 2007.

Halloween: H20. Dir. Steve Miner. Dimension Films, 1998.

Halloween: Resurrection. Dir. Rick Rosenthal. Dimension Films, 2002.

Halloween: The Curse of Michael Myers. Dir. Joe Chappelle. Dimension Films, 1995.

I Know What You Did Last Summer. Dir. Jim Gillespie. Columbia Pictures, 1997.

I Still Know What You Did Last Summer. Dir. Danny Cannon. Columbia Pictures, 1998.

I'll Always Know What You Did Last Summer. Dir. Sylvain White. Screen Gems, 2006.

Jason Goes to Hell: The Final Friday. Dir. Adam Marcus. New Line, 1993.

Jason X. Dir. James Isaac. New Line, 2002.

Leprechaun. Dir. Mark Jones. Trimark Pictures, 1993.

Let Me In. Dir. Matt Reeves. Overture Films, 2010.

Let The Right One In. Dir. Tomas Alfredson. Sandrew Metronome, 2008.

Little Children. Dir. Todd Field. New Line Cinema, 2006.

London After Midnight. Dir. Tod Browning. Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 1927.

Mark of the Vampire. Dir. Tod Browning. Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 1935.

My Bloody Valentine 3-D. Dir. Patrick Lussier. Lionsgate, 2009.

My Bloody Valentine. Dir. George Mihalka. Paramount Pictures, 1981.

Pretty Woman. Dir. Gary Marshall. Touchstone Pictures, 1990.

Prom Night. Dir. Nelson McCormick. Screen Gems, 2008.

Prom Night. Dir. Paul Lynch. Avco Embassy Pictures, 1980.

Psycho. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Paramount Pictures, 1960.

Psycho. Dir Gus van Sant. Universal Studios, 1998.

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Return to Crystal Lake: the Making of Friday the 13th. Dir Jeffrey Schwarz. Warner Home Video, 2003.

Scream 2. Dir Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 1997.

Scream 3. Dir Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 2000.

Scream 4. Dir Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 2011.

Scream. Dir. Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 1996.

Se7en. Dir David Fincher. New Line Cinema, 1995.

Sorority Row. Dir. Stewart Hendler. Summit Entertainment, 2009.

Spiceworld: The Movie. Dir Bob Spiers. Polygram Filmed Entertainment, 1997.

Terminator 2: Judgment Day. Dir James Cameron. TriStar Pictures, 1991.

The Amityville Horror. Dir Andrew Douglas. Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 2005.

The Blair Witch Project. Dir Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez. Artisan Entertainment, 1999.

The Exorcist. Dir William Friedkin. Warner Bros, 1973.

The House on Sorority Row. Dir. Michael Rosman. Film Ventures International, 1983.

The Last House on the Left. Dir Wes Craven. Hallmark Releasing Corp, 1972.

The Man With One Red Shoe. Dir Stan Dragoti. 20th Century Fox, 1985.

The Postman Always Rings Twice. Dir Bob Rafelson. Paramount Pictures, 1981.

The Sixth Sense. Dir M Night Shyamalan. Hollywood Pictures, 1999.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Dir Tobe Hooper. Bryanston Pictures, 1974.

The Thing From Another World. Dir Howard Hawks and Christian Nyby. RKO Radio Pictures, 1951.

The Thing. Dir John Carpenter. Universal Pictures, 1982.

Three Men and a Baby. Dir Leonard Nimoy. Touchstone Pictures, 1987.

Urban Legend. Dir. Jamie Blanks. TriStar Pictures, 1998.

Urban Legends: Bloody Mary. Dir Mary Lambert. Npp Production. 2005.

Urban Legends: Final Cut. Dir John Ottoman. Sony Pictures Entertainment, 2000.

Watchmen. Dir Zack Snyder. Warner Bros., 2009.

Wes Craven's New Nightmare. Dir. Wes Craven. New Line, 1994.

When A Stranger Calls. Dir Fred Walton. Columbia Pictures, 1978.

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That Hurts Me. Shadowmachine Films, and Stoopid Monkey Productions. *Robot Chicken*. Cartoon Network. 10 July 2005.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Selected List of Slasher Films

(note: as this sub-genre comprises of over 200 films from 1979 to 1996 alone, this list has been restricted to slasher films with over 1 million dollars lifetime gross, and/or those which have been referenced within this thesis).

A Nightmare on Elm Street. Dir Wes Craven. New Line, 1984.

A Nightmare on Elm Street. Dir Samuel Bayer. New Line, 2010.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge. Dir Jack Sholder. New Line 1985.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors. Dir Chuck Russell. New Line 1987.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master. Dir Renny Harlin. New Line 1988.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child Dir Stephen Hopkins. New Line 1989.

April Fool's Day. Dir Fred Walton. Paramount Pictures, 1986.

Black Christmas. Dir Glen Morgan. Dimension Films, 2006.

Bride of Chucky . Dir Ronny Yu. Universal Pictures, 1998.

Candyman. Dir Bernard Rose. TriStar Pictures, 1992.

Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh . Dir Bill Condon. Polygram Filmed Entertainment, 1995.

Cherry Falls . Dir. Geoffrey Wright. Rogue Entertainment, 2000.

Child's Play. Dir Tom Holland. United Artists, 1988.

Child's Play 2. Dir John Lafia. Universal Pictures, 1990.

Child's Play 3. Dir. Jack Bender. Universal Pictures, 1991.

Cry Wolf . Dir Jeff Wadlow. Universal Pictures, 2005.

Deadly Blessing. Dir. Wes Craven. United Artists, 1981.

Eyes of a Stranger. Dir. Ken Wiederhorn. Warner Brothers, 1981.

Freddy vs Jason. Dir Ronny Yu. New Line, 2003.

Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare . Dir Rachel Talalay. New Line, 1991.

Friday the 13th. Dir. Sean Cunningham. Paramount Pictures, 1980.

Friday the 13th. Dir Marcus Nispel. New Line, 2009.

Friday the 13th Part 2. Dir. Steve Miner. Paramount Pictures, 1981.

Friday the 13th Part III. Dir Steve Miner. Paramount Pictures, 1982.

Friday the 13th: A New Beginning. Dir Danny Steinmann. Paramount Pictures 1985.

Friday the 13th Part VI: Jason Lives. Dir Tom McLoughlin. Paramount Pictures, 1986.

Friday the 13th Part VII: The New Blood. Dir. John Carl Buechler. Paramount Pictures, 1988.

Friday the 13th Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan. Dir Rob Hedden. Paramount Pictures, 1989.

Friday the 13th: Final Chapter. Dir. Joseph Dito. Paramount Pictures, 1984.

Halloween. Dir John Carpenter. Compass International Pictures. 1979.

Halloween. Dir. Rob Zombie. Dimension Films, 2007.

Halloween 4: The Return of Michael Myers. Dir. Dwight H Little. 1988.

Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers. Dir. Dominique Othenin-Girard. Galaxy International Pictures, 1989.

Halloween II. Dir. Rick Rosenthal. Universal Pictures, 1981.

Halloween II. Dir. Rob Zombie. Dimension Films, 2009.

Halloween III: Season of the Witch. Dir. Tommy Lee Wallace. Universal Pictures, 1982.

Halloween: H20. Dir. Steve Miner. Dimension Films, 1998.

Halloween: Resurrection. Dir. Rick Rosenthal. Dimension Films, 2002.

Halloween: The Curse of Michael Myers. Dir. Joe Chappelle. Dimension Films, 1995.

He Knows You're Alone. Dir. Armand Mastroianni. Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 1980.

House of Wax. Dir. Jaume Collet-Serra. Warner Bros, 2005.

I Know What You Did Last Summer. Dir. Jim Gillespie. Columbia Pictures, 1997.

I Still Know What You Did Last Summer. Dir. Danny Cannon. Columbia Pictures, 1998.

I'll Always Know What You Did Last Summer. Dir. Sylvain White. Screen Gems, 2006.

Jason Goes to Hell: The Final Friday. Dir. Adam Marcus. New Line, 1993.

Jason X. Dir. James Isaac. New Line, 2002.

Joy Ride. Dir. John Dahl. 20th Century Fox, 2001.

Leprechaun. Dir. Mark Jones. Trimark Pictures, 1993.

My Bloody Valentine. Dir. George Mihalka. Paramount Pictures, 1981.

My Bloody Valentine 3-D. Dir. Patrick Lussier. Lionsgate, 2009.

My Soul to Take. Dir. Wes Craven. Rogue Pictures, 2010.

Popcorn. Dir. Mark Herrier. Studio Three Corporation, 1991.

Prom Night. Dir. Paul Lynch. Avco Embassy Pictures, 1980.

Prom Night. Dir. Nelson McCormick. Screen Gems, 2008.

Return to Horror High. Dir. Bill Froelich. New World Pictures, 1987.

Scream 2. Dir. Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 1997.

Scream 3. Dir. Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 2000.

Scream 4. Dir. Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 2011.

Scream. Dir. Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 1996.

Seed of Chucky. Dir. Don Mancini. Rogue Pictures, 2004.

Shocker. Dir. Wes Craven. Universal Pictures, 1989.

Silent Night, Deadly Night. Dir. Charles E. Sellier Jr. TriStar Pictures, 1984.

Slumber Party Massacre 3. Dir. Sally Mattison. New Concorde, 1990.

Sorority Row. Dir. Stewart Hendler. Summit Entertainment, 2009.

The Hitcher. Dir. Robert Harmon. TriStar Pictures, 1986.

The Hitcher. Dir. Dave Meyers. Rogue Pictures, 2007.

The House on Sorority Row. Dir. Michael Rosman. Film Ventures International, 1983.

Urban Legend. Dir. Jamie Blanks. TriStar Pictures, 1998.

Urban Legends: Final Cut. Dir John Ottoman. Sony Pictures Entertainment, 2000.

Urban Legends: Bloody Mary. Dir Mary Lambert. Npp Production. 2005.

Valentine. Dir. Jamie Blanks. Warner Bros, 2001.

Visiting Hours. Dir. Jean-Claude Lord. Twentieth Century Fox, 1982.

Wes Craven's New Nightmare. Dir. Wes Craven. New Line, 1994.

Wrong Turn. Dir. Rob Schmidt. Summit Entertainment, 2003.

Appendix Two: New Millennium Horror Remakes

- Thirteen Ghosts*. Dir. Steve Beck, Warner Bros., 2001.
- The Shaft*. Dir. Dick Maas, Buena Vista International, 2001.
- Carrie*. Dir. David Carson. NBC, 2002.
- The Ring*. Dir. Gore Verbinski. Dreamworks, 2002.
- The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Dir. Marcus Nispel. New Line, 2003.
- Willard*. Dir. Glen Morgan. New Line, 2003.
- The Toolbox Murders*. Dir. Tobe Hooper. Lionsgate, 2004.
- Dawn of the Dead*. Dir. Zack Snyder. Universal Pictures, 2004.
- The Grudge*. Dir. Takashi Shimizu. Columbia Pictures, 2004.
- Dark Water*. Dir. Walter Salles. Touchstone Pictures, 2005.
- The Fog*. Dir. Rupert Wainwright. Columbia Pictures, 2005.
- House of Wax*. Dir. Jaume Collet-Sera. Warner Bros., 2005.
- The Amityville Horror*. Dir. Andrew Douglas. Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 2005.
- When A Stranger Calls*. Dir. Simon West. Screen Gems, 2006.
- The Hills Have Eyes*. Dir. Alexandre Aja. Fox Searchlight, 2006.
- The Wicker Man*. Dir. Neil Labute, Warner Bros., 2006.
- The Omen*. Dir. John Moore. 20th Century Fox, 2006.
- The Hitcher*. Dir. Dave Meyers. Rogue Pictures, 2006.
- Pulse*. Dir. Jim Sonzero. The Weinstein Company, 2006.
- The Wizard of Gore*. Dir. Jeremy Kasten. Dimension Extreme, 2007.
- Black Christmas*. Dir. Glen Morgan. Dimension Films, 2007.
- Halloween*. Dir. Rob Zombie. Dimension Films, 2007.
- Prom Night*. Dir. Nelson McCormick. Screen Gems, 2008.

April Fools Day. Dir. The Butcher Brothers. Stage Six Films, 2008.

One Missed Call. Dir. Eric Vallette. Warner Bros., 2008.

Quarantine. Dir. John Erick Dowdle. Screen Gems, 2008.

The Eye. Dir. David Moreau. Lionsgate, 2008.

Shutter. Dir. Masayuki Ochiai. 20th Century Fox, 2008.

Funny Games. Dir. Michael Haneke. Warner Independent Pictures, 2008.

It's Alive. Dir. Josef Rusnak. First Look Pictures, 2008.

Mirrors. Dir. Alexandre Aja. 20th Century Fox, 2008.

Train. Dir. Gideon Raff. Millenium Films, 2008.

Friday the 13th. Dir Marcus Nispel. New Line, 2009.

My Bloody Valentine 3-D. Dir. Patrick Lussier. Lionsgate, 2009.

The Last House on the Left. Dir. Denis Iliadis. Rogue Pictures, 2009.

Children of the Corn. Dir. Donald P Borchers. Anchor Bay, 2009.

Night of the Demons. Dir. Adam Gierasch. Seven Arts Entertainment, 2009.

The Uninvited. Dir. The Guard Brothers. Dreamworks, 2009.

Sorority Row. Dir. Stewart Hendler. Summit Entertainment, 2009.

The Crazies. Dir. Breck Eisner. Overture Films, 2010.

A Nightmare On Elm Street. Dir. Samuel Bayer. New Line, 2010.

The Wolfman. Dir. Joe Johnston. Universal Pictures, 2010.

Piranha 3D. Dir. Alexandre Aja. Dimension Films, 2010.

Fright Night. Dir. Craig Gillespie. Touchstone Pictures, 2011.

Don't Be Afraid of the Dark. Dir. Troy Nixey. FilmDistrict, 2011.

The Thing. Dir. Matthijs van Heijningen Jr. Universal Pictures, 2011.

Appendix Three: Franchise Plot Summaries

Halloween:

Halloween (1978)

Six year old Michael Myers kills his sister Judith on Halloween night. Fifteen years later, he escapes from Smith's Grove Insane Asylum to return to his hometown of Haddonfield. He stalks and murders babysitters (Laurie Strode and her friends), before being gunned down by his psychiatrist, Dr Samuel Loomis.

Halloween II

Michael's body is nowhere to be found, and he manages to chase Laurie to the hospital. It is revealed that Laurie is Michael's sister, given up for adoption, and he will kill anyone who tries to get between them. He corners Laurie and Loomis in a waiting room, where Loomis causes an explosion. The film ends with Michael, engulfed in flames, falling down before Laurie.

Halloween 3: Season of the Witch

Dr Challis attempts to solve the murder of a patient in his hospital. He travels to the patient's hometown, and discovers the owner of the Silver Shamrock Novelties company is attempting to resurrect the macabre aspects of Samhain, an ancient Celtic festival. He plans to do so using masks with a fragment from Stonehenge in them, which will be activated when the company's commercial plays on Halloween night. The film ends with Challis screaming into the telephone, trying to stop the broadcast.

Halloween 4: The Return of Michael Myers

Michael survived the fire in Halloween II, but has been in a coma since that night. He awakes as he is being transferred back to Smith's Grove, and hears that Laurie died in a car accident, and has a daughter, Jamie. He returns to Haddonfield in an attempt to find Jamie, but is gunned down again by Dr Loomis, who also survived the fire. The gunshots cause him to fall down a mine shaft.

Halloween 5: The Revenge of Michael Myers

Michael survives the gunshots fired at him in the previous installment, and is patched up by a hermit he meets at the bottom of the mineshaft. One year later, he tracks Jamie to a children's mental health clinic nearby. Loomis uses Jamie as bait, and manages to capture Michael. Michael is taken into police custody, only to be broken out by a man dressed in black.

Halloween: The Curse of Michael Myers

The man in black who broke Michael out of jail tracks down Jamie, and tries to take her illegitimate child. Jamie runs, and is tracked by Michael, who kills her

and continues searching for her baby. The child is found by Tommy Doyle, the young boy Laurie was babysitting in the first installment, and he takes it home. It is revealed that Michael is driven by a curse called the Curse of Thorn, which forces the person to kill their entire family, in order to save all of civilization. It is then revealed that the man in black is a colleague of Dr Loomis, and part of a group devoted to protecting Michael so he can complete his task. With the help of Laurie's cousin Kara, Tommy manages to keep the child from Michael, and all of Michael's protectors are slaughtered. Michael is subdued and then tranquilized by Tommy.

Halloween H20: 20 Years Later

This re-boot does not take into account the events of installments four through six. Twenty years after the events of the second film, it is revealed that Laurie faked her own death, and is now the principal of a private boarding school under the pseudonym Keri Tate. She has a son who attends the school, and she lives in fear of Michael's return. Michael comes to the school, and begins killing the students. Laurie manages to help her son and his girlfriend escape, and then returns to the school to face Michael. She manages to defeat him, and in order to ensure he is really dead decapitates him.

Halloween: Resurrection

Three years after the events of the previous film, Laurie discovers that the man she killed was a paramedic, whom Michael had swapped clothes with after crushing his voice box. Unable to deal with the fact she murdered an innocent man and the fact that Michael is still alive, Laurie is committed to a mental institution. When Michael arrives at the mental institution, Laurie manages to corner him. In order to prevent herself from making the same error she did with the paramedic, she attempts to unmask Michael, and he kills her. Michael returns to Haddonfield and encounters a student film crew. He kills all of them except two, and they manage to electrocute and kill him.

Halloween (2007)

Young Michael Myers is living with his two sisters, stripper mother, and abusive stepfather. He is bullied at school, and psychologist Samuel Loomis is brought in to talk to his mother when the school discovers he has been killing animals and keeping their bodies. On Halloween, he kills one of the school bullies, and after his mother leaves for work, slaughters his elder sister, her boyfriend, and his stepfather. He is incarcerated in Smith's Grove asylum, where he shows no memory of the events, and becomes increasingly withdrawn, constantly wearing masks and refusing to speak. After he brutally murders a nurse with a butter knife, his mother kills herself, leaving Michael and his baby sister orphans.

Fifteen years later, Michael escapes and returns to his hometown of Haddonfield, where he begins stalking Laurie Strode and her friends Lynda and Annie on Halloween. Dr Loomis comes after Michael, and is told that Laurie is Michael's baby sister, adopted out after her mother's death. He kills Laurie's friends and

parents, and eventually comes to the house where she is babysitting. He kidnaps Laurie and takes her back to his former home. She cannot understand when he tries to show her that she is his sister, and runs away. Loomis shoots Michael repeatedly, but Michael manages to escape, crushes Loomis' skull and starts chasing Laurie again. The film ends with both characters outside, Laurie screaming as she shoots Michael in the head numerous times, and a flashback to Michael and Laurie as children.

Halloween 2 (2009)

The film starts with a short flashback to Michael and his mother at Smith's Grove, where she gives him a white horse toy. It then shifts to Laurie wandering the streets, covered in blood and in a state of shock. She is taken to the hospital, where Michael finds her and begins slaughtering anyone who tries to get in his way. The film cuts to Laurie waking up at the Brackett house one year later, implying the previous events were a dream. She goes to therapy, and it is revealed that she has been having recurring nightmares. Michael also starts having dreams of his mother all dressed in white, telling him to bring Laurie home on Halloween.

Laurie begins to have visions mirroring Michael's, of Michael as a young child and his mother dressed in white. Dr Loomis, who survived the events of the last film, is promoting a new book, which reveals to Laurie that she is Angel Myers (she was previously unaware of her adoption). She goes to a party to try and escape this knowledge, and Michael kills her friends. Michael flips the car Laurie tries to use to escape, and takes her to an abandoned shed. The police discover their location, and Dr Loomis says he can reason with Michael, but instead, he ends up trying to convince Laurie that the child Michael from her visions is not restraining her, and she can escape. Michael's mother turns to the adult Michael and says it is time to go home, so he kills Loomis, and is shot by Sherriff Brackett as he stands by the window holding Loomis' body. Laurie, apparently released from her visions, tells Michael she loves him, stabs him repeatedly, and then leaves the shed wearing Michael's mask. When she pulls off the mask she is in the isolation ward of a psychiatric hospital, where she is having a vision of her birth mother and a white horse. The film ends with a close-up of her face, smiling.

Friday the 13th:

Friday the 13th

A group of teenagers is being killed off as they prepare to re-open Camp Crystal Lake. The final teenager, Alice, discovers that the killer is Mrs Voorhees: her son drowned while two counselors were having sex instead of watching him, and she is determined the camp will never re-open. Alice, after a long fight, decapitates Mrs Voorhees. She attempts to cross the lake, and is attacked by a deformed boy. Alice wakes up in hospital, and is told no boy was found.

Friday the 13th Part 2

Jason Voorhees is revealed to be alive, and fully grown. He kills Alice, and then returns to Camp Crystal Lake to stop anyone coming in. Five years later, a group of new counselors arrives at the camp, and Jason kills them one by one. The last remaining counselor, Ginny, finds a cabin with a shrine devoted to the severed head of Mrs Voorhees, and slams a machete into Jason's shoulder. Jason is left to die as Ginny is taken away in an ambulance.

Friday the 13th Part III

Jason removes the machete from his shoulder, and goes to Chris Higgins' homestead to hide in the barn. Chris returns home with some friends and family, and Jason kills those who enter his hiding place. Taking a hockey mask from one of the victims, Jason leaves the barn to kill everyone who is left. Chris appears to kill Jason with an axe to his head, and is driven to hysteria by the night's events. She is taken away by the police as a result.

Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter

Jason is taken to the local morgue, where the axe is removed. Jason kills the coroner and a nurse, then returns to Camp Crystal Lake. A group of teenagers rent a house on Crystal Lake, and are killed by Jason. Jason then goes to the house next door, and is killed by Tommy Jarvis while Tommy's sister Trish distracts him.

Friday the 13th: A New Beginning

Tommy is committed to a mental institution, terrified Jason will return. He moves to a halfway house, and Roy Burns, whose son was killed by one of the patients at the mental institution, takes on Jason's likeness, and begins killing people at the halfway house. He is unmasked and defeated by Tommy, and two other residents.

Friday the 13th Part VI: Jason Lives

Tommy visits Jason's grave, after being released from another mental institution. He accidentally resurrects Jason when one of the metal spikes around Jason's grave is struck by lightning. Jason returns to Camp Crystal Lake, and begins killing those at the camp. Tommy finds Jason, chains him to a boulder, and tosses it into the lake, where Jason is left to die.

Friday the 13th Part VII: The New Blood

Many years after the events of the sixth installment, a girl named Tina tries to use telekinesis to revive her father, who drowned in the lake when she was a child. Instead, Jason is revived. Jason once again begins killing everybody at Camp Crystal Lake, before being returned to the bottom of the lake by Tina.

Friday the 13th Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan

Jason is resurrected by an underwater electrical cable at the bottom of Crystal Lake, and follows a group of students to Manhattan on their senior class cruise. He kills many of the students and crew, and the remaining students try and track him down. After a near miss, they abandon the ship and head for New York City in a row boat. Jason follows them, and goes on a killing spree through the city. The two remaining students, Rennie and Sean, are chased right through the city by Jason, until he falls into the sewers and is killed by toxic waste. His body becomes that of a small boy again, with the mask fused on to his face.

Jason Goes to Hell: The Final Friday

Jason is resurrected through unexplained means, and returns to Crystal Lake. He attempts to start killing again, but it turns out to be an FBI sting, and Jason is killed when they launch an explosive at him. His remains are sent to the morgue, and the coroner becomes fascinated by Jason's black, beating heart, which he begins to eat. He is possessed by Jason's spirit, and begins killing. The spirit begins jumping from host to host. It is revealed that only members of Jason's bloodline can kill him, and he will return to life if he manages to possess one of them. He has three remaining relatives, half-sister Diana, her daughter Jessica, and her granddaughter, Stephanie. Diana is killed, and Jessica is given a mystical dagger she can use to kill Jason. Jason is reborn when he possesses Diana's dead body, and Jessica eventually manages to stab him through the chest, releasing all the souls of the people he has killed. Demonic hands take Jason into hell, and when a dog later unearths his hockey mask, Freddy Krueger's knife-gloved hand bursts out of the ground, and drags it down to hell also.

Jason X

In 2008, Jason is captured by the government, and is being held at the Crystal Lake Research Facility. Two years later, after a number of unsuccessful attempts to kill Jason scientist Rowan decides he should be cryogenically frozen. Rowan's superiors try to steal Jason so they can research his extraordinary self-healing, but he manages to break free. Rowan manages to lure Jason into his cryonic pod, and Jason stabs the container holding the cryonic solution, freezing them both. In 2455, Earth has become so polluted that humanity has moved to another planet (Earth II). On a field trip back to earth, a professor, his three grad students and an android discover Jason and Rowan, and bring them back to their spaceship. They are able to easily re-animate Rowan and declare Jason dead. The professor, Lowe, orders one of the students to dissect Jason's body, but Jason comes back to life and kills them all. A contingent of soldiers who were also on the ship manage to blow Jason up, but he manages to resurrect himself as a powerful cyborg using the ship's medical station. Rowan uses a hologram of Crystal Lake to distract Jason, and a second explosion sends him and a sergeant hurtling toward Earth II. The film ends with Jason's mask falling into a lake, and two teenagers going to look for the "fallen star."

Friday the 13th (2009)

The film begins with a flashback to Jason's mother's death, before cutting to the present day where a group of teenagers are looking for a marijuana field. They decide to camp for the night, and one of them suggests the old cabins nearby is Camp Crystal Lake, recounting the events of the first film (as a real-life event). Jason emerges and kills them all, except Whitney, who shows an uncanny resemblance to his mother. The film then cuts to another group of teenagers going to stay in a cabin on the opposite side of Crystal Lake, and at the petrol station they meet Whitney's brother, who is convinced his missing sister is still alive. A short scene of Jason killing a redneck and stealing his hockey mask is shown. When the teens reach Crystal Lake, they are killed one by one, except Whitney's brother, who manages to free her from the underground cage that Jason has been keeping her in. They seem to kill Jason by putting his head in a wood chipper and throw his body in the lake. The film ends with Whitney and her brother sitting on the dock, and Jason suddenly comes out of the water and grabs her.

A Nightmare on Elm Street:

A Nightmare on Elm Street. (1984)

Tina has a dream in which she is stalked by a burned man with razor-fingered gloves. He slashes her, and when she wakes up, she finds identical cuts in her nightgown. The next day, she discovers her friend Nancy had the same dream, and they decide to have a sleepover with Nancy's boyfriend Glen, which Tina's boyfriend Rod gatecrashes. Tina has another nightmare, and Rod watches, unable to help, as Tina is flung all over the bedroom by an invisible force, mirroring the events in her dream. Tina is caught by the killer, and dies in real life. Rod is charged with the murder, and sent to jail. Nancy starts to have more nightmares, and discovers that Rod has been having the same dreams: Nancy's mother becomes increasingly distraught as Nancy becomes increasingly convinced that the man in their dreams killed Tina. Rod dies in jail, strangled by the burned man, and this is written off as a suicide. Nancy's mother takes her to a dream clinic, where she has another nightmare and her arm is badly cut: she manages to pull the killer's hat out of her dream. When drunk, extremely concerned by her daughter's injury, Nancy's mother tells her about Freddy Krueger, a man who the local parents burned alive after he was acquitted of a series of brutal murders, released because of an improperly signed search warrant. Her mother reassures her that Freddy cannot hurt her, yet places bars on the windows as "security."

Nancy and Glen devise a plan to trap Krueger, by pulling him out of Nancy's dream. Glen falls asleep while keeping watch, and is killed in a fountain of blood. Nancy manages to pull Krueger into the real world, and sets him on fire – he throws his flaming body onto her mother, and they sink, disappearing, into a bed. Nancy turns her back on Krueger, stating she doesn't believe in him, he is drained of his powers and she wishes for all his victims to come back. The scene

changes to Nancy leaving for school, farewelling her mother and getting into the car with Tina, Glen and Rod. Freddy possesses the car, and Nancy screams for her mother as it drives away.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge

Five years after the events of the original, the Walsh family has moved into Nancy's old house. Their son, Jesse, begins having nightmares where Freddy demands that Jesse kills for him. Lisa, Jesse's girlfriend finds Nancy's old diary, which strikes a chord with Jesse. He panics and goes to his parents, but this descends into an argument. Jesse begins walking the streets late at night, and is caught by his gym coach, who forces him to run laps. The equipment in the gym comes to life and the coach is slashed by Freddy's glove, which then appears on Jesse's hand. Freddy visits Jesse's sister and kills a whole group of his friends, using Jesse's body. Lisa leads him to the power plant where Freddy used to take his victims, tells Jesse that she loves him and that he can fight Freddy from the inside. Freddy begins to burn, and Jesse emerges from the ashes. The next day, the school bus suddenly starts speeding, and the film ends with Jesse and Lisa screaming as Freddy's hand impales one of their friends.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors

The film opens with Kristin Parker making a replica of an Elm Street house. She goes to sleep, and has a nightmare where Freddy slashes her wrists. Her mother decides this is a suicide attempt, and Kristin is sent to Westin Hills psychiatric hospital. The other patients are the last remaining children of the vigilantes who killed Freddy Krueger. Nancy Thompson is working at the hospital while taking a drug that prevents dreams and suggests this could help them, but as the drug is not yet approved, the doctor is unsure. Kristin has another nightmare, and discovers she has the power to bring others into her dreams when she drags Nancy in to help her, and she also has the power to bring them both out of the dream world. The doctor receives a visit from a mysterious nun, who reveals that Freddy was born in an abandoned wing of the same hospital (Westin Hills) after his mother was raped by a thousand maniacs, and that in order for him to be defeated, Freddy's body must be properly buried in consecrated ground. The other children start dying, and Nancy and the doctor are fired. Nancy convinces her father to help find Freddy's remains and bury him properly. Kristin is forcibly sedated, so Nancy and the remaining children attempt a group sleep session to help her.

The doctor and Nancy's father find Freddy's remains in an abandoned auto salvage yard, where the bones come to life, killing Nancy's father and rendering the doctor unconscious. Only Nancy and two of the children survive the journey to Freddy's lair, where he impersonates the spirit of Nancy's father and stabs her. She manages to come up behind him and make him stab himself with his own glove. At that moment, the doctor, revived, completes the burial of Freddy's remains, causing Freddy to disappear into white light. Nancy dies in Kristin's arms, and at the funeral, the doctor discovers that the nun was the spirit of

Freddy's mother. The film ends with the doctor falling asleep in the same house Kristin was replicating at the start of the film, and a bright light coming down.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master

Kristin, Joey and Kincaid, the survivors from the previous installment, have been released from Westin Hills. Kristin begins having nightmares again, and suspects Freddy has returned. She drags the boys into her dream, but the Elm Street house is empty – until Kincaid's dog, Jason, leaps out and bites her. She wakes up with bite marks on her arm, and Kincaid wakes to find blood on Jason's mouth. Kincaid wakes up the next day to find himself locked in the trunk of a car, in the auto yard where Freddy was buried. He sees his dog, digging and pouring fire nearby. Freddy is resurrected from the ground and kills Kincaid. He then kills Joey by drowning him in his waterbed. Kristin becomes concerned when her friends don't show up for school, and confides in her friend Alice, who tells her about a dream master spell. Kristin meets Freddy again in her dreams, and discovers that Freddy needed to collect her soul (as the last Elm Street child and Dream Warrior) to get more children. As she dies, she sends her powers to Alice, but they pass through Freddy first.

Alice tries to understand what happened, and who Freddy is, and her friends begin to die. After each death, she picks up new talents and abilities. She eventually ends up in a one-on-one battle with Freddy while trying to protect her unconscious friend Dan from him, though she is disadvantaged because she has a mortal body outside the dream world, and he does not. Alice remembers the dream master spell, and forces Freddy to look at his reflection, releasing all the souls inside him, tearing him apart. The film ends with Alice and Dan walking, and Alice seeing Freddy's reflection in the water.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child

Freddy resurrects himself in Alice's dreams, through the spirit of his mother. Alice and Dan plan to go to Europe together, but Freddy manages to get into Dan's dreams and kill him, making it look like a car accident. Alice is informed she is pregnant, and starts having dreams about a boy named Jacob. Alice's friends start dying one by one, and she discovers Freddy is using her child's dreams to pull his victims into the dream world, and that the boy Jacob she has been dreaming about is her son. Her friend Mark tells her that Freddy's mother's body was never found, and she must be released from her resting place in the tower of Westin Hills. Freddy kills Mark, and when Alice goes to the asylum, she discovers that Freddy is hiding inside her, and this is how he knew about Jacob. Freddy's mother's spirit is released, and she goes into the dream world to tell Jacob that he must use his powers to defeat Freddy. Jacob shoots a beam at Freddy, both are turned into infants, and are absorbed by their respective mothers. The film ends with the survivors having a picnic after Jacob is born, and all seems well, but children singing "one, two, Freddy's coming for you" appear as the film ends.

Wes Craven's New Nightmare

The film begins on the set of a new *Nightmare on Elm Street* film, where the glove prop comes to life and begins killing/maiming crew members. Heather Langenkamp's son disappears and as the glove approaches her husband, she wakes up during an earthquake at her home in Los Angeles.

She reveals she has been getting harassing phone calls from someone who sounds like Freddy, but writes it off as a prank. She appears on a television show where Robert Englund jumps out and scares her, and then she is asked to New Line's offices, where she is asked to reprise her role as Nancy in a new *Nightmare* film, written by Wes Craven. After the phone calls and the dream, she decides against it, but is told her husband has already agreed to work on the film and create a new glove for Freddy.

Her son has an episode where he talks in a voice not his own, and her husband dies in a car crash, with mysterious claw marks on his chest. She turns to Wes Craven for help, and he explains that he is working on a script where evil can be defeated if it is captured in a work of art, and that evil has taken the form of Freddy because it is a familiar one. He continues on to suggest that Freddy believes it is Heather who gave Nancy her power, so he is trying to break her down. Heather leaves, confused. Freddy starts attacking her son, and forces her to become Nancy by manipulating the world around her. Nancy and Dylan eventually defeat Freddy by locking him in a lit furnace, escaping to reality, where they find Wes Craven's script. The film ends with Heather reading the opening lines, at Dylan's request, and they describe the opening of this film.

Freddy vs Jason

Freddy is trapped in hell, furious that the parents of Springwood have learned how to prevent their children believing in him, rendering him powerless. Freddy turns himself into Pamela Voorhees, and convinces Jason Voorhees to rise again and kill the teens of Springwood, hoping he (Freddy) will be blamed, and the children will be forced to remember. Though Freddy is able to appear in the dreams of the teens after they overhear the police mention his name, he cannot harm them. Jason continues killing, and Freddy grows increasingly angry as people are becoming more scared of Jason than him. A group of the surviving teens decide to lure Jason back to Crystal Lake, and pull Freddy into the real world. As Freddy has managed to get his powers back, they instead tranquilize Jason, who engages in a fight with Freddy in the dream world. Both are pulled into the real world again. Jason is grievously wounded and thrown into the lake, and Freddy is beheaded by one of the teens. The film ends with the teens departing, and Jason rising from the lake, holding Freddy's laughing head.

A Nightmare on Elm Street (2010)

The film begins with Dean having dreams about a burned man, and he appears to slit his own throat as the burned man pulls his hand, invisible to everyone else. At the funeral, his friends see photographs of themselves with Dean as children,

but can't remember knowing each other before high school. Kris, one of the teens, begins having dreams about the same burned man, who seems to know who she is, and keeps taking her to a preschool. Kris is killed when the burned man kills her in her dream, and the same wounds appear on her sleeping body: her boyfriend Jesse, sleeping over at the time, is accused of the murder. Before he is caught, he goes to Nancy and tells her that she can't go to sleep, or she'll die too at the hands of Freddy (the name they hear sung by the children in their dreams). Jesse dies in jail, in the same manner as Kris. Nancy and her friend Quentin decide to investigate further, and Nancy's mother eventually tells them that Freddy was a man at the preschool they all went to, he was fired after hurting them as children, and that their nightmares must be repressed memories.

Quentin has a nightmare in which he sees Freddy being burned alive by their parents, and his father confirms that they went after Freddy to avoid forcing their children through a trial. Nancy and Quentin become convinced that Freddy is coming after them because they lied about what he did. They decide to go to the preschool, and due to their insomnia start dreaming while awake: during one of these episodes, Nancy pulls a piece of Freddy's sweater into the real world. At the preschool, they discover a secret room where Freddy used to take the children, and a shoebox full of pornographic photographs of a child Nancy, showing them that Freddy is actually coming after them because they told the truth. Nancy decides to go to sleep and pull Freddy into the real world, but Quentin falls asleep while he is supposed to be keeping watch. Freddy drags Nancy around a replica of her house after grievously wounding Quentin, explaining that he kept her awake and alive long enough that she would go into a coma, or eternal sleep. Quentin wakes up, and manages to wake Nancy, who pulls Freddy into the real world where she cuts off his clawed hand, beheads him, and burns the preschool down. The film ends with Nancy coming home, and Freddy coming out of a mirror to stab Nancy's mother.