

Film Appreciation
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Lecture – 42
Film Sequels, Remakes and Cult Films

(Refer Slide Time: 00:12)



Good morning. So, today we are going to talk about a very exciting area of film studies; that is film remakes, film sequels and film series. Before I start going deep into the area I would suggest that those few of you who want to know more about this topic; they should read this book by Constantine Verevis is called film remakes. So, it is a seminal book on film remakes. So, we know what is a sequel; a sequel carries a movie forward, a plot forward; for example, let us consider the Godfather film. So, the first Godfather ends with the death of Don Corleone, as played by Marlon Brando and his son, taking over; his son Michael Corleone, that is Al Pacino, and he taking over the empire and there is also that famous Mounties with the killing of the rival mafia families. So, this is how the movie ends; the previous dons and (refer time: 01:42) his supporters; they kissing Michael Corleone's hand and thus, giving him the power that once belong to his father.

Now, the second Godfather takes the entire story forward. We have to remember that the Godfather was based on Mario Puzo's novel on the same title and while the first Godfather is based on the novel. The second Godfather, the second part, the sequel is entirely a

creation of Francis Ford Coppola. So, we have been talking about the new view director and how they wanted to be authors and one of the major desires of the authors was to completely, to have complete control over the materials, including writing their own materials. So, Coppola was not too happy with the first Godfather, because it was into based on its own work, but he was more excited and he considered it his more fulfilling achievement.

Because the second Godfather was after all, his own creation, including the return part of it. So, that is a just brief introduction to whatever sequel is. A sequel starts once the earlier film ends. A series or a franchise goes on and on as we have seen oceans series. So, oceans need not be sequence. They are not there more like a series and after all, they are all remake of a famous and very popular TV show of the 60s. So, the ocean was also based on TV show, starring the so called Red Pack. So, that was what the recent ocean series is. So, it can go on and on without or being much familiar with what happened in earlier part of it.

So, that is a series. Remakes is more complicated, because you are taking something better already being there; a text, whether it is literary text or cinematic text or even again, like ocean series, you know; it has been in existence in form of a TV show. The Saint also, the movie starring Well Kilmer, was based on a TV show, starring Raja Moore. So, all these are extremely complicated, commercial industrial and esthetic categories and practices; it is not very simple to understand the theory of remakes. So, they much that goes on when somebody makes a remake; for example, let us consider our own Don; Shahrukh Khan's Don. I mean if you consider the 70s don, starring Amitabh Bachchan it is so much a movie of the 70's.

You know, you have the film playing on Amitabh Bachchan superstardom and his double role and also, the fact that the good guy lives on. So, that was so 70s that movies have to have a kind of moral center, but when we look at the post liberalized Don and we see that it is the first, is the good guy that gets killed halfway through the film. Of course, we are told this only at the fair end of the movie. The so called villain or the empty hero; he lives on and there is also a sequel to this Don. So, it more and it has been accepted in a big way by the audience. So, we are taking about another star for post liberalized times and his kind of audience. So, he is not just a national level super star, but Shahrukh is also a global phenomenon and a very popular star. The second don or the new don, Farhan Akhtar's directorial adventure; it carters more to a different kind of an audience.

So, therefore, it may be a remake, but then it is a remake with major twists.

So, every remake and it has to cater to its audience and the changing socio political culture of its times. So, that is something that we have to understand; remaking is not an easy job; remaking is also a very complex, complicated task. So, we know that in the Godfather, the second Godfather; it deals mostly with Michael Corleone's, consolidating his power; whereas, in the third Godfather, the focus is on Michael, a much older man, trying to divest himself of his power and atone for his sins. In a life comes of full circle for Michael Corleone; that is the idea. So, that is what a sequel does. Now, all sequence need not be numbers. So, we have first or second or third Godfather, but then, we have very popular sequels such as The Mummy Returns, which is a sequel to The Mummy.

Then, we have the Last World, which is a sequel to the Jurassic park and even something as Light Heart Desk, joining initially born(refer time: 08:08), a 2011 movie, which is the sequel to Join in English, a very popular film by Rowan Atkinson. These films refer to the earlier films in the titles and again, they continue a sort of franchise. Again, we have film such as Super Man. So, it is all very complicated; it is not easy to understand Super Man 1, Super Man 2, Super Man 3, and then, those are numbered sequels and then, in between, there was a lull and again, we come back to Super Man Returns in 2006. Then we have more recently, we have you know, which was produced by Christopher Nolan. Again, we can say the same think about the Batsman series; I mean Batsman was something else, altogether when it is started as a TV show in the 60s.

It was more like a cartoon show, but Tim Burton gave it a dark edge. Batman was no longer a cartoon, cartoonish show. His movies with Michael Keaton were quite deep and then, Christopher Noland of course, as we all know from with his dark night series. He took the characters to another level, giving it more shades, more new answers, more edges. So, that is what we mean when we say that it is a very complex and an open ended category; very post modern category. Now, we know that we also consumers of James Bond movies, along with Indiana Jones, Terminator, Rocky, Dirty Harry, Pink Panther, Rambo, Karate Kid, Ghost Busters, Star trek Aliens, Cars and every movie can be read or watched in itself. By itself and the consumers on these films, will look forward to the another, to the next installment of the franchise.

Now, these films are generally major studio production and are high concept films. Now, see we are talking about film as an industrial practice; there is a concept called high. The

term called high concept, where which means big budget, big studio and big sets and very often, having big stars. So, even in an animation like cars, it is not that there are no stars. You have Paul Newman, doing the voice for one of the characters. Again, in the Lion King, you have several major stars, doing voice over verse for the animated characters, including Jeremy Irons and Nathan Lane and also, Rovenet Kingston. So, what I am trying to tell you is that these are franchises or high concept films; they are not cheap. They have large budgets. They have wide distribution and they resort to mass skill advertising.

These films, at the end of it, are important part of our growing up. All of us have grown up with this type of films and once, these films are packaged, repackaged, rereleased, remade; we all look forward to these and they have now, become a part of our film going experience. Now, sequels may not always be very worthy or very popular; for example, we have been talking about Roman Polanski's China Town, a quite often in this course, but Jack Nicholson's the Two Jacks, which is the 1990 film, is not at all a worthy successor to China Town. Here again, Nicholson plays the hard boy detective Jack Grittis and he reprises his earlier role and finds himself at the center of new deception, new lives, but things are not the same. For a remake or a sequel, one has to really do wonders with the subject as was seen in the efforts of Christopher Nolan in the dark knight.

Films such as a Scarface, the three must get here. They have been made and then remade several times, and every time, they meet with a huge amount of success. So, Scarface was originally, a Howard Hox movie, starring called Paul Runic and Scarface is an Alpacino movie, directed by Brand Nipama and scripted by or it was written by Oliver Stone. So, it was a huge manual success. So, it all depends on the treatment that the directors or the writers give, and also the fact how important that the film may be for the audience, the target audience, and for the catering to the contemporary times. Three Musketeers and all the remakes and adaptation of Jane Austin or Charles Dickens or even Shakespeare's works; these are universal in appeal and they always meet with varying degrees of success. So, remakes are attempts to make again, an earlier film often, using similar characters and story lines.

There are many reasons here, aside from technological ones behind remakes, but some are also related to the notion of popularity. Now, Three Musketeers has been made, remade several times, and the most recent version also, provides work share style martial arts action sequences, which is funny, because these are the times we are living in and

you can't, perhaps, the director must have felt that you no longer can rely on the old kind of audience. So, to cater to the newer kind of audience, you have to resort to these Sci-fi and martial arts practices. There is another story that attempts to, was not so well appreciated by the audience as well as by the critics. A very worthy remake *Escape Fear*; now, *Cape Fear* was basically a black and white, 1962 film and this was remade by the Martin Scorsese, starring Robert De Niro and Nick Nolte.

Robert De Niro plays the role of the psychopath, who is seeking Vendetta. This role was originally played by Robert Wickham. Now, both Robert Wickham and Gregory Peck starts from the earlier *Cape Fear* and appearance in the newer version. Again, we can consider that how is Scorsese is playing homash to the original version of his Scorsese, being such in cine field. Also noteworthy is Scorsese *The Departed*, which is an Oscar winning remake of the Hong Kong film *Infernal Affairs*. I would like you to watch the two scenes; one is from *Infernal Affairs* and then, you should also watch the same scene from *The Departed*; this is the rooftop scene. So, here is the link.

From the 80's onwards, a new pattern of dealing with series, sequels and remakes emerged in Hollywood. This included film makers such as Martin Scorsese, who did *Cape Fear* in 91, Steven Spielberg, who did *Readers of the Last Hour* in 1981, John Lucas's *Star Was of 1977*, Francis Vodcapola did (refer time: 16:43) *Dracula* in 1992 and his *Dracula* is not the bloodthirsty *Dracula* that we used to, we were used to from the 40s of the 50s, but this is a more sophisticated, more refined kind of a *Dracula*, as played by the Reol Man. Then we had of course, Brian De Palma's *De Scarface* is a supreme achievement and Paul Shedder's *The Cat People*. So, most of these films are, they have nostalgic values; in other words, these films nostalgically invoke old genre. Sometimes remix count on the audiences' memory of their own famous predecessors as with the invasion of the body snatches in which, the star and director of the original 1956 movie make brief appearance.

At times, other remakes have obscure predecessors for current audiences; for example, *Victor Victoria* is a remake of the 1993 German film, *Victor and Victoria* and *True Lies* which we makes the 91 French film, *Le Total*. In India, Mehaboob Khan remade his own film *Bharath* as *Mother India*; older movie is a forgotten classic, but the newer vision that is *Mother India*, is a timeless classic. It has a universal appeal. I would like to talk about now, two films, which most of you would be familiar with. These films are both from the 80s. Now, the remakes are from the 80s and from our own country. First is [FL]which is

a remade version of Stanley Donen's *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, which is about seven brothers, who are outing the backwoods. Then the oldest among them, played by Howard Keel; he finds a pretty cook as a wife. Now, his brothers too want to follow in his footsteps. The result is a highly energetic and entertaining musical. Here is a scene from *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.

Now, Rajan Setu directed [FL] in the earlier 80s. It stars Amitabh Bachchan; this too is a musical, but it reinvents itself as a major Bachchan vehicle. Now, see we have to remember that *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* is a (refer time: 19:34) film. It is not a vehicle for the stars Howard Keel or Jane Powell, but [FL] is now, remembered for various set pieces with Amitabh Bachchan. Focus is so much on one major star, who is a mega star and other characters definitely, do not get as much as scene space as they did in *Seven Brides for seven Brothers*. So, this is one aspect of key element of a remake. You see, in the 80's when Amitabh Bachchan was at the peak of his superstardom, his fans, his audiences expected that their stars would be seen throughout the film.

So, therefore, there is a double role created for him, which does not exist in the original as well at all. The idea is definitely to play on Amitabh Bachchan's angry young man image; therefore, the desire for the second role in the movie and also, to give him a major chunk of scene time. So, here is a scene from [FL]. I would also like to talk about a wonderful film, which is more like middle of the road kind of cinema, *Bemisal*. Now, this Hrishikesh Mukherjee film is a remake of a classic Bengali film *Amish Shah* that, film starred Uttam Kumar. *Bemisal* starred Amitabh Bachchan, has very complex characters. He is a contentious doctor, but he had been a trouble teenager and he have suffered a lot, and he is brought up by very kind family. Now, while in the original, the role is played with great Allen by Uttam Kumar. The remake focused on Amitabh Bachchan's performance as a angry young man; although, it is not the kind of the run of the mill kind of film that generally, we associate the commercial cinema category with.

So, here is a scene from *Hamezi Osaka*, and if you watch *Bemisal*, you can watch the same sequence with Amitabh Bachchan doing a similar song. Now, remakes fall into several categories. So, we have the category of readaptation; readaptation are being as faithful as possible to the original source; for instance, the various adaptation of Charles Dickens or Jane Austin's novels. So, here is a faithful adaptation of Emily Brownson *Weathering Heights*, a novel that has been very often, adapted on the films screen. This *Weathering Heights* is a TV film, starring Tom Hardy. Remakes can also be made more

contemporary or updated; for instance, Buzlama's Romeo plus Juliet and Clueless with Alicia Silverstone.

These are the updated versions of the classic tales; one is by Shakespeare and the other is based on Jane Austen's Emma. So, these adaptations wear a transformation attitude towards the original text. Here is the scene from Clueless, which is an adaptation of Jane Austen's Emma. I would also like to talk about Kurosawa; Kurosawa's Yojimbo is a 1961 film and it is about a masterless samurai, played by his favorite Toshiro Mifune film, who goes from place to place, earning he living with his old skills. He comes to a village with two business clients, fighting each other and what follows is a big time entertainment film, along the lines of popular westerns. Now, Kurosawa's Seven Samurai was remade in the US and there its alternative title, The Magnificent Seven and the lone samurai hero Yojimbo was the inspiration for Clint Eastwood's Man with no Name Persona, most obviously, in the fistful of dollars and then, Bruce Willis did his own interpretation of Yojimbo in Last Man Standing, which is a 1996 film.

So, here is the opening scene from Yojimbo by Akira Kurosawa. You can also compare the opening sequence from the Last Man Standing, starring Bruce Willis. Now, Kurosawa's reworking of two Shakespearian plays, Macbeth King Lear into Thrown of Blood and Ran, respectively, are considered some of the best adaptation of Shakespeare's works. Also remarkable is the way he used this no theater traditions to interpret Shakespeare. So, of course, if you want if you watch the Thrown of Blood, you will understand how highly stylized version of Shakespeare's Macbeth, combining the elements of no theater. Here, I would like you to watch our own adaptation by Vishal Bhardwaj in his Maqbool. The Manchurian Candidate is yet another great movie, which has been adapted and remade recently.

The original version, the 1962 version was directed by John Frankenheimer and this is a cold war thriller about brainwashing conspiracy, the dangers of international communisms, McCarthyism, political associations and political intervene. Now, the central roles are played by Lawrence Harvey and Frenska Natrel. Lawrence Harvey is the son; it is son who is brainwashed and the setting is the Korean war. He is the Korean war hero, who is brainwashed particularly, by his own mother and he is programmed as an agent to assassinate a US presidential candidate. The film is set in the early 50s during the height of right wing McCarthyism, at time of tense political paranova with the overriding fear that communists will soon take over. Its two memorable scenes are the

opening brainwashing sequence, staged for prisoners of war as a garden club party and a climax scene, during a political conventions in Medicinist square garden. The film can be regarded in several categories. It is a war film; it is a science fiction film; it is also a black comedy and a political thriller at one level.

So, here is the scene from The Manchurian Candidate which is 1962 version. The Manchurian Candidate, the 2004 version was directed by Jonathan Damm, starred Denzel Washington and here, the remake is now updated for the contemporary types; that is what I was telling you about that remake in order to be successful and the remake; the remade version of The Manchurian Candidate was an acclaimed commercially and critically version, and it update itself from cold war paranova for the war on Terror age. So, again it situates itself into the socio political climate of the United States. So, the villains here now, are no longer the communists or even the Iraqis, whom our hero finds himself, fighting in (refer time: 28:08) the during the eve of desert, operation desert storm. Instead, the winners are the military industrial complex big vicks, who thirst for profit and control of the oval office.

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What do you understand when we say that this film has a cult, following this film has a cult status? Now, if you look at it very academically, a term suggest any film that for a reason and which is unrelated to its inherent or intrinsic, artistic qualities; the film has or the work has attracted excessive devotion from a group of fans. So, any work that attracts devotion and questioning devotion from a group of loyal friends; it becomes a cult work. You need not worry too much about or you need not argue too much about the artistic

merits or demerits of the work, because the work is popular among a certain section of people; it becomes a work of cult. So, it acquires a cultist status. Now, for instance, the Hollywood director Edward Wood, on whom, Tim Burton made a movie called Edwood with a Johnny Depp, playing the lead. Now, his films have gathered a cult following. The expression that is generally used in relation to Edward wood was that he was so bad, but he was very good. Wood's films were cheap and low budget and inexpensive so much so that, in his famous Plan 9 from outer space, which is a 1958 science fiction horror thriller. The spaceships were represented by paper plates and you could see that, but it doesn't really matter.

Here is a scene from Plan 9 from outer space by Edward d Wood. The Rocky horror picture show is yet another popular cult movie. It is now, a great cultural phenomenon. This combines the conventions of science fiction, musical and horror films with also, elements of gender interrogation. So, the plot concerns the misadventures of Brad and Janet, a young couple inside a strange mansion that becomes a cross on a stormy night. Greeting them at the door, is a ghoulish butler called Refract, who introduces them to a weird group of party goers, dressed up in outline dish outfits. Things get stranger by the moment. Now, cult films are also known for their peculiar titles. So, in the 70s, we had a couple of directors, who would cater to a section of audience and entails them with titles such as Faster Pussycat get Killed, Fing Flaming Ghoose and Santa Claus conquers the Martians and Attack of the Fifty Feet Women.

Now, these movies may not be artistically, much too talk about; however, at the core of it, they have diehard audience and film makers such as Quentin Tarantino; they swear by these films, you know. So, even in Kill Bill, you will find elements from Faster Pussycat. So, that is the cultural impact of certain kinds of cult films. Ziggy's Stardust was directed by DA. Pendekar and starred the rock legend, David Bowry in the lean. The film celebrates rock and roll, the glam rock and also offers a three types on celebrity; life, death and loss of fame. It had a cult following primarily, because of its music and the appeal of David Bowry. In more recent times, we have someone, like Tim Burton, who has made mass attacks, which is his take on Edward's science fiction films of the 50s. The setting is Washington DC and Las Vegas. The plot is very simple.; the earth is visited by a group of Martians and different people across America responded differently.

Here is a scene from Mars Attacks. Cult films are often confused with the so called B pictures. Now, what are B pictures? There is not much of a difference. Let me tell you;

they are used; the twin terms are used interchangeably. B films are those that have questionable phase and decorum again, like cult films. They would rarely find a place among top notch film festivals and also at the Oscar awards. They are also characterized by eccentric characters by unpredictability of the plot and general idiosyncrasy. Now Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* is a perfect example of a B picture. When it was first released, Tarantino was not worthy has become now. Again, it has corky and eccentric return all over it.

The characters are unpredictable. The violence and the film as in category of, fall in the convention of all B pictures. It was cheaply made. It did not win any major award at time of its release. Again, as its characteristic in Tarantino, the film borrows liberally from the past, including the color coded names of its characters from 1974 film, *The Taking of Palhem 123* and also, the last 20 minutes of that film is a total borrowing from the Hong Kong film, *City on Fire*. *Reservoir Dogs* did poorly at the box office, since reviewers mourned of the audience, especially, because of its famous (refer time: 34:47) scene; however, today it is a cult film that the diehard fans can bristle of all the dialogues without much project. I would like to end today's talk with *Reservoir Dogs*, the opening scene.