Streaming Movements and Cultural Identity in the New Order of Transnational Remakes

Movimentos do *Streaming* e Identidade Cultural na Nova Ordem dos *Remakes* Transnacionais

Alexis Parrot iD

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Alexis Parrot

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6438-6078

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, Brazil

The advent of streaming platforms established new demands and paradigms, generating a necessary reconfiguration of the creation and production processes of television content and formats. A recurring category of traditional television, the transnational remake starts to manifest itself with other contours, submitted to a new order of practices and meanings. What is gained and lost in translation from the local to the global exhibition? From the proposal of a systematisation of the strategies employed by the streaming industry in the production and exhibition of transnational remakes, this article organises a path supported by the analysis of some transnational franchises of serialised fiction from the broadcasting era (*The Office* and *Bron/Broen* [The Bridge]) and the streaming era (*Dix Pour Cent* [Ten Percent] and *La Casa de Papel* [Money Heist]) , recognising the leading role of Netflix in the industry. Structured chronologically in "movements", such systematisation draws on the analogy created by Erwin Panofsky (1978) between film and the medieval cathedral and moves alongside the historical timeline of Netflix's business models, as convened by Laura Osur (2016). Hopefully, the conclusions obtained offer relevant inputs for the debate on transnational remakes in television, highlighting their contribution to the processes of cultural affirmation and the identity construction of the realities they represent.

Movimentos do Streaming e Identidade Cultural na Nova Ordem dos Remakes Transnacionais

O advento das plataformas de streaming instaurou novas demandas e paradigmas, gerando uma necessária reconfiguração dos processos de criação e produção dos conteúdos e formatos televisivos. Categoria recorrente da televisão tradicional, o remake transnacional passa a se manifestar com outros contornos, submetido a uma nova ordem de práticas e significados. Da exibição local à global, o que se ganha e o que se perde na tradução? A partir da proposta de uma sistematização das estratégias empregadas pela indústria do streaming na realização e exibição de remakes transnacionais, o presente artigo organiza um percurso apoiado na análise de algumas franquias transnacionais de ficção seriada da era do broadcasting (The Office [O Escritório] e Bron/Broen [A Ponte]) e do streaming (Dix Pour Cent [Dez por Cento] e La Casa de Papel [A Casa de Papel]), reconhecendo o papel de liderança da Netflix no setor. Estruturada cronologicamente em "movimentos", tal sistematização se inspira na analogia criada por Erwin Panofsky (1978) entre o filme e a catedral medieval e caminha em paralelo à timeline histórica dos modelos de negócios da Netflix, conforme convencionada por Laura Osur (2016). Espera-se que as conclusões obtidas ofereçam subsídios pertinentes para o debate sobre remakes transnacionais na televisão, destacando sua contribuição para os processos de afirmação cultural e construção identitária das realidades que representam.

So, I realised that I could learn things that I couldn't learn any other way by reproducing them.

— James Benning, "Interview: James Benning on *The United States of America*"

Introduction

In 2017, director Sofia Coppola talked about how using the word *remake* was as bad as swearing in her family in an interview with *The Hollywood Reporter*: "my dad said nobody ever remakes a movie unless it's to make money. There's no other reason to do it" (Rooney, 2017, para. 2). The statement can be seen as a fine irony considering the director' work, as she was touring the festival circuit with *The Beguiled* at the time — a feature film for which she had just won the Best Director Award at Cannes — a *remake* of the 1971 film of the same name, directed by Don Siegel. According to the director of *Apocalypse Now* (1979), generalist and unflattering criticism of the remake is still being voiced today, usually anchored in a supposed lack of originality on the part of those who make

it, or through the profitmaking stigma that seems to haunt this audiovisual category, whether in film or television.

Perception of remakes differs in the academic sphere, however, and discussion of the subject provides for far more fertile ground. Authors such as Jennifer Forrest, Leonard Koos, and Sven Lütticken stand behind French critic André Bazin (1985/2018), who, over 60 years ago and contradictorily to the ideas of his time, could already see the virtue of loaned narratives and adaptations produced in the cinematic sphere. Forrest and Koos (2002) believe that it is precisely the inherent commercial character of the remake that invites suspicion and challenges us to lay it bare in order to recognise what is critical of its very nature. For his part, Lütticken (2004) believes it is possible (and prefers) a kind of remake that sees "the 'original' not as a *Vorbild* to be followed... but as something to be questioned and perverted" (p. 116). Heinze and Krämer (2015) add their voices to the discussion, to defend the remake as a complex cultural practice, structured more around a translation than a copy, from the dialogical character it establishes with its original.

Despite the exclusively cinematic perspective of such arguments, one cannot ignore their relevance to a comprehensive understanding of the remake as a transnational television phenomenon, as well as the implications of remakes on issues relating to culture and identity, especially in the context of subscription video on demand. It is also necessary to consider the research dedicated to connections made between television, media, and culture, about which there is vast literature available. Along these same lines, Castelló Cogollos (2004) points to the historical influence of the media on the construction of identity and its ability to create myths and symbols that directly interfere with how individuals position themselves in relation to their surroundings, which are then interpreted by culture. For Hall (2013/2016), the term "culture" refers to an existential reality expressed in a set, not of things, but of shared practices and meanings; in the production of meaning and sense of belonging, indicating the centrality of the symbolic domain in life in society.

Countries and territories assume, then, a fundamental role in identity discourses, because national cultures are one of the main sources of cultural identity (Hall, 1992/1999) and television is established as the most powerful media to disseminate and even create this identity in the interconnected and industrialised contexts of the modern world (Castelló Cogollos, 2004). Since international co-production, the adaptation of formats and the establishment of franchises have established themselves as cornerstones of the production-commercial chain of streaming, unraveling the intricacies of this type of operation becomes an indispensable step in any effort made to understand what is and how the television of our time works.

Open, as ever, to new possibilities, television is at the epicentre of a tidal wave of recycling and adaptations. Mehdi Achouche (2017) enthusiastically asserts that "the modern forms of remakes, with their reliance on seriality, reinterpretation, reinvention, and sampling, foreground the mechanics of contemporary storytelling

and offer, ironically enough, fresh ways forward for television to reinvent itself" (p. 77).

So that we don't get lost and carried away, even before establishing a more exact definition for the remake, it might be prudent to outline some examples of what cannot be strictly considered one. These include revivals — new seasons following previously cancelled series finished or not with a proper conclusion, bringing back the same actors and actresses in their previous roles (as occurred with, *Arrested Development* — Fox, 2003–2006; Netflix, 2013–2018; *Gilmore Girls* — WB, 2000–2006; CW, 2007; Netflix, 2016; and *Murphy Brown* — CBS, 1988–1998; 2018). Regardless of how much time has passed until the remake, they represent simple continuations, because "to qualify as a remake at the textual level, a new iteration must cancel any form of narrative continuity with its predecessor" (Achouche, 2017, p. 62). With this in mind, and following the same logic, *prequels* (such as *Better Call Saul*; AMC, 2015–2022, which shows events chronologically prior to those seen in *Breaking Bad*; AMC, 2008–2013) and spin-offs (such as *Frasier*, NBC, 1993–2004, whose protagonist was promoted to this position after having been a supporting character in *Cheers*; NBC, 1982–1993), do not fall into the same category.

With the limits having been established so as to exclude items other than the object of this study, the terms remake and adaptation shall be used hereinafter and shall be used in the sense established by Gemzøe (2020):

> I use the term "remake" to describe a new version of intellectual property within the same medium, e.g., making a new television series based on an old one. According to this definition, a film based on a book would not be a remake. (...) "Adaptation" is used as an umbrella term covering all new versions of intellectual property, including movies based on books and television series based on other television series. (p. 108)

As such, the numerous versions of British sitcom *The Office* (BBC, 2001–2002) produced in different countries and Swedish-Danish police series *Bron/Broen* (The Bridge; SVT1/DR1, 2011–2018) are remakes, although they are also adaptations. The examples selected were not done so at random; they represent the transnational remake, a classic television strand experiencing increasing appeal and influence nowadays, whether for the possibilities of language experimentation and cultural intervention it offers or for the expectation of commercial return. The translation of specific aspects of narratives originally produced in another country is expected to result in products with plots and characters identity-acclimated to the new cultural context and the particular market in which they will be exhibited.

> The degree of transformation varies substantially from one case to another, but when successfully carried out, the origins of the programme are so well-masked that it is unlikely that its audience will notice that it is a remake of a programme created in another

country. (Perkins & Verevis, 2015, p. 679)

While this operation was taking place in the broadcasting realm, the strategic resignifications required for the remake were clearer, as the target audience of each production (geographically limited by the area of the transmission) served as a cultural reference for the adaptation. However, from the appearance of paid television — the gateway to the internationalisation of channels — and, effectively, with the advent of streaming platforms — providing multinational reach via the internet — the equation has become more complex. While programmes would previously have been reformatted from one regional context to another regional context, each aimed at a narrow audience, streaming has rendered the scale of consumption global. In this passage from local to global[1], how are issues relating to the representation of identity affected? What is lost, and what is gained in translation?

Methodology

This article has been produced within the field of television adaptation studies. Employing a symbolic-interpretative analysis of significant cases, this paper aims to investigate parameters that have, for decades, been sustaining the vein of transnational remakes in the broadcasting model, in contrast to new approaches practised by streaming platforms, which establish a new order for this medium.

In terms of traditional television practices, the corpus employed will encompass the series mentioned previously: *The Office* and *Bron/Broen.* The selection process employed two criteria: relevance and reach. As an indication of relevance, the number of countries to which the series was licensed was considered, denoting both the support of critics and interest from audiences. Viewing licenses for British sitcom *The Office* were sold to over 80 countries, and detective saga *Bron/Broen* was licensed to over 200. Where reach is concerned, the rule applied was also quantitative, though the data considered was the number of remakes produced in other countries on at least three continents.

In addition to sparse episodes of all the series mentioned in the text, the following were watched in full: the original of *The Office* and the American version (NBC, 2005–2013), as well as Swedish-Danish crime series *Bron/Broen* and both seasons

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[1] Numerous fields of knowledge such as geopolitics, sociology, and communication have delved into studies of globalisation, providing definitions for terms indispensable to the development of this research, such as "local" and "global" — what Jéan-Sébastien Guy (2016) calls "twin concepts" (p. 42). For Peruzzo and Volpato (2009), the idea of place encompasses everything from technical aspects, such as physical limits — rivers, oceans, lakes, mountains, climatic differences, soil characteristics, political and economic aspects — to socio-cultural diversity, historical and linguistic aspects, identity, traditions, and values etc. (p. 146). The concept of global is necessarily associated with the phenomenon of globalisation and is opposed to what is determined as local: "the global would be like the queen in the game of chess, whereas the local would be like the king. The global/queen is capable of great movements across the board, whilst the local/king can only move one square at a time. Otherwise, both the global and the local ought to be envisioned as chess pieces engaging each other in a common open space" (Guy, 2016, p. 43).

thus far released of German remake *Der Pass* (Sky Deutschland, 2019–), in addition to *House of Cards*, *Dix Pour Cent* (Ten Percent) and *La Casa de Papel* (Money Heist), and the first season of *La Casa de Papel Coreia* (Money Heist: Korea; Netflix, 2022).

Movements of a Symphony Under Construction

In the 21st century television landscape, where streaming services have established themselves and reign, the audience has been expanded globally, but pulverised into numerous national markets. A new breviary of practices has been established, influencing even the definition of coproduction models — even between players and production companies based in different countries. Although international co-production has been a constant in the cinematic universe since the 1940s, the model has developed at a slower pace in television. Except for the United States, regulatory agents would vote to ban foreign television operators in their countries in the name of maintaining cultural sovereignty until as recently as the late 1980s (Chalaby, 2016). This positioning strengthened the national presence of broadcast television stations, which only increased the mostly self-produced programming with low-cost purchases of ready-made products from other countries (Hilmes, 2014).

While streaming service operations are decentralised from their corporate headquarters — as established in Ramon Lobato's (2018) definition of Netflix as a series of "national services linked through a common platform architecture" (p. 244) — it is possible to observe general policies put in place by a "headquarters", which conceptually coordinates each of the tentacles spread around the world. Still, it would be naïve to overlook the ideological implications of this panorama, since the largest global streaming companies (Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+ and HBO Max), operate territorially from the United States and under the aegis of values and symbols crystallised in the country's imaginary. One of the main criticisms to this supremacy would be the homogenisation suffered on a global scale by television formats from an essentially American point of view, a process defined by the term "Americanisation" (Moran, 2011).

Specifically addressing the issue of serialised fiction and its transnational production, licensing and exhibition flows (a context in which remakes occupy a prominent place), I systematised in *movements* the dynamics in which streaming platforms have been operating until the present day[2]. The nomenclature is inspired by the equivalence proposed by Erwin Panofsky (1978) between the film and the medieval cathedral, both produced

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[2]Curatorial platforms are excluded from this systematisation as they appeal to a different market, providing films and licensed content of a strictly authorial, artistic, or educational nature (such as Mubi in Portugal; SPCine Play and Itaú Cultural Play in Brazil, for example); as do film rental platforms (such as Looke); and Apple TV+ because, though they belong within the same commercial spectrum as Netflix or Amazon Prime Video, they are the exclusive producers of the content provided — an outlier of the subscription video on demand ecosystem addressed in this study.

via a cooperative effort in which all contributions have the same
degree of permanence... the role of the producer corresponded, more
or less, to that of the bishop or archbishop; that of the director
to that of the chief architect; that of scriptwriters to Scholastic
advisers, establishing the iconographic programme; and that of the
actors, camera operators, set assemblers, sound technicians, makeup
artists and other specialists whose work contributed to the finished
product, from sculptors, stained glass painters, bronze casters, skilled
carpenters and masons to quarrymen and lumberjacks. If each of
these workers are questioned, each will state, in good faith, that their
role is of the utmost importance - which is true, inasmuch as each
one is indispensable. (pp. 337–228)

In the wake of Panofsky and for the sake of scale, if cinematic products can
be thus considered, why could those made for television not metaphorically
be equated with a symphony? In terms of its execution, each musician in a
symphony orchestra would correspond to a member of the technical and artistic
crew, and the showrunner would take on the role of conductor, leading a collective
of professionals (performing roles as important as they are irreplaceable) gathered
to interpret the work of a composer (the screenwriter). A schedule (or a platform
catalogue) could then be equated to the annual concert programme put on by
the orchestra's concert hall; a sequence of performances of varied works that
make sense when seen together, like a single score.

Once this image has been established, each of the aspects that make up the
sum of television production processes can also be seen as symphonies, in the
same way as proposed of their products. This is what originated the idea of
structuring the stages through which these processes developed into *movements*.
The framework used was therefore a chronological structure divided into three
sequential *movements,* which do not cancel each other out: as one of them is
established, it begins to coexist concomitantly with the others.

In the first *movement*, streaming platforms paid for the rights to air finished and
previously aired programmes from various channels in various countries around
the world, thus making them available to other regions. The procedure does
not differ from that undertaken by channels and broadcasters throughout the
broadcasting era, except that it constitutes the entirety of the content made
available to subscribers of companies such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. With
no foundations constructed out of their own collection of audio-visual content (in
contrast to HBO Max and Disney+, for example, which came about years later,
though with a robust collection of products from the offset), the practice was
established as the only possible way forwards at the time when these platforms
began to assemble their catalogues.

In surveying the historical evolution of Netflix's business models, Laura Osur
(2016) proposes a timeline divided into three phases. This *first movement*
coincides with the second phase, which, according to the author's compilation,
began in 2007. Netflix functioned exclusively as a syndicator during this period,

mimicking a common practice in traditional American television.

In the *second movement*, which began in 2012 and following the success seen by Netflix, the platforms began to co-produce programmes in partnership with channels and production companies from various countries around the world (new seasons of old programmes and original programmes, as well as remakes), which included exchanges between different players of various nationalities conducted in a way that would have been unimaginable by the standards practised by traditional television channels and broadcasters.

Curiously (or symptomatically), the first production signed by Netflix — which was unprecedented in the universe of streaming services up until that point — was a transnational remake of political series *House of Cards*: an American version of the eponymous British miniseries (BBC, 1990). *Orange Is The New Black* (Netflix, 2013–2019) came the following year, which is not a remake but a literary adaptation. This initiative was a turning point for the market, signalling the path that would be followed by the entirety of the competition from there on out. Osur (2016) argues that the strategy of recurring (if not mandatory) "original programming" in the streaming industry from then on grew out of Netflix's vision of revisiting old television formulas and incorporating them. In this case, drinking from the source of cable television, notably HBO. Still following the author's proposal, this second movement is paired with the third historical phase of Netflix, in which the company starts to function as an internet television network.

Another notable series is *Dix Pour Cent*, a France 2 production originally aired on free-to-air French television and the first contained within both the first and the second *movements* established within this article. Once licensed and incorporated into the Netflix's catalogue, it went from domestic to global success and soon became a franchise as well. Two of these versions — the Indian and South Korean — were co-produced by the platform itself.

The plot of the series revolves around a talent agency in Paris during a critical period in which the partners go head-to-head with each other to re-structure the company's leadership following its founder's death. Featuring elite players in French cinema, each episode of the series features guest appearances in the form of the agency's clientele over the course of four seasons. Playing versions of themselves that are not always flattering, Juliette Binoche, Isabelle Huppert, Fabrice Luchini, and Jean Dujardin, among others, are pawns in a game that staggers biography with fiction. The series is a well-contrived (and entertaining) critique of striking characteristics of our time, such as the commodification of celebrity status, the search for fame and the massive consumption and proliferation of reality shows (and the false reality portrayed within them).

Unanimous acceptance of the series among critics and audiences made the competing platforms and channels want to each have their own *Dix Pour Cent,* having launched into co-production and licensing with this aim. Five transnational remakes have been made to date: the British *Ten Percent* (Amazon Prime

Video, 2022); Indian *Call My Agent: Bollywood* (Netflix, 2022), Turkish *Call My Manager* (HBO Max, 2022), South Korean *Surviving as a Celebrity Manager* (Netflix, 2022) and Italian *Call My Agent: Italy* (Sky, 2023); in addition to versions currently under development in eight more countries across Asia and Europe (*'Call My Agent!' Updates: More Global Remakes for the Hit French Series Under Development*, 2022).

Finally, in the *third movement*, platforms are investing in remakes of their own productions, performed in countries other than that of the original programme. Once again, Netflix is debuting the practice with the remake *La Casa de Papel Coreia* (Netflix, 2022), which will be discussed in detail further in this paper. Firstly, we must move back a few spaces on our board to examine the circumstances that guided the international flows and cultural exchanges of television production during the broadcasting era, which paved the way to where we are now.

A World Full of Offices, Bridges, and Borders

The success of recreated British sitcoms among American audiences in the 1970s led to a shift in the exchange between television programmes produced in the two countries. If before the licensing of British programs could only attract a limited audience, when shown on public television in the United States. The positive repercussions and high numbers of viewers achieved by series such as *All in the Family* (CBS, 1971–1979) and *Sanford and Son* (NBC, 1972–1977) — remakes of British *Till Death Us Do Part* (BBC, 1966–1975) and *Steptoe and Son* (BBC, 1962–1974), respectively —, established a new paradigm for the presence of British products in the North American television market. Even though in the following decades such favourable results only found substance through the adaptation of reality and competition formats — sedimenting a relationship of ups and downs, but never abandoned, as described by Steemers (2011) —, the advent of *The Office* remake gave the category back its prior status.

Totalling nine seasons, seven more than its British parent, *The Office US* (NBC, 2005–2013) chose to stick to the original model in the pilot episode only. From there, it went on to build its own personality, which was more consistent with the comedic tradition and collective consciousness of the United States. Cynicism made way to nonsense, reflecting what would, for British actor and writer Stephen Fry (2012), represent a fundamental difference between the sense of humour found in the US when compared to the UK. For Fry, even in comedy, the latter would tend to flirt with fatalism and an admiration for tragic heroism.

> The American comic hero is a wisecracker who is above his material and above the idiots around him (...). We [the British] want to play the failure. All the great British comic heroes are people who want life to be better and on whom life craps from a terrible height

and whose sense of dignity is constantly compromised by the world letting them down. (Fry, 2012, 00:01:36)

The daily life of a regional branch of a large office supply wholesale company has seen remakes produced and broadcast by television stations in 12 countries and three continents. What has remained common to every remake has been the humour seen in the daily quarrels arising from personal and power relations in the workplace, portrayed meta-linguistically through the filming of an alleged documentary about an office and its employees.

The Indian remake of the show, of which two seasons have already aired, has been subject to harsh criticism since it premiered in 2019 for being too faithful to the original. Rohan Naahar (2019), columnist for the *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, questions why a remake that is a carbon copy of the original would be made — like the *Vorbild* evoked by Lütticken (2004). In the remake game, the limits established in the name of "loyalty" to the original are often presented as a central point for the adaptation. However, the great debacle takes place when a translation from one local reality to another results in the subversion of the critical spirit, appointing towards the affirmation of what was originally disapproved or denounced. Despite the huge success and effective comedy of *The Office US*, for Booth and Ekdale (2011), the sitcom was "Americanised" in continental transit, and its subtext actually reinforces the bureaucratic hegemony previously satirised by the English original programme.

> *The Office* [US] has positioned itself as a place where bureaucracy exists tautologically: bureaucracy is there not to facilitate commercialism, but for bureaucracy's sake. (...) the British version satirizes the idea of a bureaucratic office by exaggerating the awkwardness and allowing its most sympathetic characters to escape and find a more fulfilling job.But in the American office, even our heroes become ensnared in the hegemonic web.Perhaps there is a mistranslation not in the details of the two, but in the very idea of satire: the American office is sanitized satire, a parody with no bite. (Booth & Ekdale, 2011, p. 206)

This analysis refers to the difference between how the comedic production of each country approaches the subject of failure, as postulated by Fry (2012). From the British *The Office* to its American counterpart, criticism of the corporate world's lack of humanity took an almost subliminal back seat, bypassing the original's political vein so as to provoke more innocent laughter. Despite its success worldwide, the series could not be more ideologically distant from the text that originated it.

Another series prolific in transnational remakes is *Bron/Broen* (literally: bridge). When a body is left precisely in the middle of the Oresund bridge, which connects Sweden to Denmark, both countries' police forces must come together to conduct a joint investigation. This is yet another rendition of the old story of two hostile cops who become partners by force of circumstance and end up overcoming their

differences as they spend time with one another and for the sake of the job. The young Swedish officer assigned to the case, Saga Noren, has a brilliant mind for solving crimes but is unable to understand basic social protocol — probably due to some form of functional autism, although this is never stated. She is joined by Martin Rhode, a middle-aged Danish detective whose ethical principles have eroded as his career has gone on.

This is a successful incursion of *nordic noir*[3] on television, and, interestingly, the original series is, in itself, representative of the transnational interactions on which this article focuses, having been co-produced by the public television stations of the two countries in which the series is set[4]. Depending on the region portrayed in the adaptations, the "bridge" after which the series is named could be transformed into a tunnel or a mountain — after all, what really matters are the articulations that take place around the territorial boundary between two nations. Bringing burning issues from the European political agenda to centre stage (such as terrorism, the rise of the far-right, and immigration), six other versions of *Bron/Broen* have been produced. Even though each new arm of the franchise works on issues specific to a different border, the politicised spirit of the Scandinavian source has remained. Robert A. Saunders (2017) identifies one of the programme's distinguishing features as its ability to display "the power and fragility of international borders" (p. 708). Praising the consistency with the original of the first two remakes — the American (*The Bridge*; FX, 2013–2014), set on the border between the United States and Mexico; and the Franco-British (*The Tunnel*; Sky Atlantic/Canal+, 2013–2017]), which turns the undersea Channel Tunnel into a crime scene — Saunders (2017) further states:

> shifting from inter-Scandinavian tensions to more robust geo-political differences on the Rio Grande and across the British Channel, *The Bridge* produces textual dissonance in its transplantation from place to place; yet, the series maintains a core critique of pervasive issues in the current globalised realm, providing the viewer of the suite of series with intertextual coherence (at least in terms of its geopolitical intervention). (p. 709)

The German version, *Der Pass* (Sky Deutschland, 2019–), takes place on the border between Germany and Austria, with the first season featuring the figure of the Krampus, Saint Nicholas' Christmas-time devilish companion who punishes those who do not behave throughout the year, according to the legends of the Austrian alps. Despite a complete change in the profiling of the protagonists and the construction of a diverse plot (centred on investigating serial killers),

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[3]A Scandinavian subgenre of crime fiction.

[4]It is worth remembering that in Europe, unlike the United States or Brazil, public broadcasting is the norm and not the exception. In transnational co-productions, public interest in the programming is prioritised to varying degrees, depending on the affiliation of the co-producers to the field of commercial or public television. This is not the only one, but one of many pieces to be moved and considered on the geopolitical board on which transnational co-production is manoeuvred, even if exercised increasingly collaboratively and with real space for negotiations to take place among those involved (Hilmes, 2014).

the political subtext was, nonetheless, preserved.

As they've spread around the world, both social satire, *The Office*, and politico-crime thriller, *Bron/Broen*, show that seeking to establish some intertextual coherence based on a model (as affirmed by Saunders, 2017) rather than a relation of strict fidelity, using the originals more as a springboard than as a ballast, may be the best way of achieving success with a remake. In dealing with transnational remakes, double the care must be taken to ensure one does not take the easy path of representations based on mere equivalences or comparisons.

Dedicating oneself to producing representations of a specific group (including addressing its imperfections and contradictions) is a process not only of affirmation, but of identity construction. As Benedict Anderson (1983/2008) has stated, "communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (p. 33).

Netflix's Positioning in the Streaming Industry, or "Take Me to Your Leader"

Although the algorithm — this oracle of our time — is still overused by the platform, Netflix's user experience and inclusion-focused initiatives choose to prioritise elements seen as mere details in the eyes of other companies. Netflix's investment into subtitling, dubbing, and audio descriptions of the products in its catalogue and its constant investment in increasing the number and capacity of dedicated servers lead to improved navigability, generating greater potential for attracting and retaining subscribers — or "clients", as the streaming companies themselves address their base of no longer "viewers", but "consumers".

Simple mechanisms such as providing a "top 10" or structuring a catalogue into certain genres and sub-genres have served as a basis from which competitors have also reformatted their interfaces. In addition to having laid the defining foundations of what composes an internet television network and how one operates (Osur, 2016), Netflix has also worked the globalisation of entertainment into the equation under a neoliberal vision of the economy, reducing the audience itself to just another commodity of the television market (Mirrlees, 2013).

Ideologically, Netflix's catalogue is constructed with a basis on a strategy of providing "a variety of discourses, genres, and aesthetics to satisfy each niche of its consumers" (Quinan, 2019, p. 2). In addition to these prerogatives, the platform adheres to a notably liberal prescription that tries to promote (a) local colour, so as to hook national niches in the countries in which it operates and (b) diversity (although often generalised), in the name of a veneer of tolerance and political positioning, anchored in political demands of contemporaneity — such as those expressed in movements that oppose xenophobia, fascism, and ethnic, racial, and gender prejudices. In parallel, it must comply with the norms established within the legislation of each country in which it operates,

including observing quotas for local products, as required within the European Community[5]. With this in mind, it is no wonder that co-productions involving several nationalities have become strongly established in their *modus operandi*. Within this landscape, franchises based on the transnational remake model have been assuming greater relevance, though not always in the same way as traditional television once did.

> Franchising is ostensibly about licensing; it is often associated with sporting teams, fast food, and service industries. However, franchising is also a strategy that is increasingly adopted by television producers who are looking to sell concepts, as well as programs, across national borders. The idea of franchising is predicated on an arrangement where the owner of a concept enters into a contract with an independent actor, a franchisee. The latter uses a specific model to sell goods of services under the former's trademark. (Keane & Moran, 2008, p. 156)

The predominance of formats over genres, as seen in the post-broadcasting era of the media (Moran, 1998), found franchises to be a prodigal vehicle with which to meet the needs and interests of the television industry on a global scale as, after all, "it is easier to copy someone's success than to take a risk with a new idea that has not yet been tested" (Keane & Moran, 2008, p. 168). From a commercial point of view, the relative security of investments into new products may explain the prominence of the transnational franchise model — but that's not all. While transnational remakes were already leading us towards "imagined communities", their franchises reflect the entire load of transformations contained within the surging global scaling of television production, helping expand Anderson's (1983/2008) concept to the greatness — according to Arjun Appadurai (1996/2004) — of "imagined worlds": universes built by the historically situated imagination of groups and people spread across the world.

> The new global cultural economy has to be considered a complex, stratifying, disjunctive order, which we can no longer make sense of in terms of the pre-existing centre-periphery models (even those able to explain multiple centres and peripheries). (...) An important fact in the world we live in today is that, across the globe, many people live in these imagined worlds (and not just in "imagined communities") and are therefore capable of contesting and sometimes even subverting the imagined worlds in the official mind and business mentality that surrounds them. (Appadurai, 1996/2004 , pp. 50–51)

From the "imagined communities" to the "imagined worlds", the social web of identities within them and the discourses that represent them establish their foundations in an increasingly broad and diverse polyphony of voices, hence their richness and capacity to intervene on reality. Recalling Castelló Cogollos' (2004)

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[5]Lobato (2018) states that "the European Commission revised the 2016 rules for Audio-visual Media Services, proposing a minimum quota of 20% of European content for all streaming services - including those based in the United States, such as Netflix and Amazon" (p. 247).

statement about the power of television in spreading and shaping identities in the modern world, the television format takes on a key role in the equation and "should be understood as a process of cultural negotiation in which new forms of culture are produced (. . .), where cultural influences and elements are amalgamated on various levels (production, text, and reception)" (Keinonen, 2016, p. 2). However, to address transnational remakes and their franchises as agents of cultural exchange in the context of streaming, it is also necessary to look through another magnifying glass and determine what is merely the homogenisation of symbolic and industrial processes within globalised entertainment trade routes. Take, for example, the *Dix Pour Cent* franchise.

In the British version of *Ten Percent*, the transition from French to English takes place more in the setting than in the narrative itself, when the founder of the agency becomes the father of its main partner, further highlighting the weight of family as a social institution. Other than that, the only significant observable change is the shadow cast by Big Ben replacing that of the Eiffel Tower in the late afternoon. The Indian version is restricted to subscribers in the South Asian market, which is consistent with the considerations raised throughout this paper. The Turkish remake, however, has been added to the catalogues made available to countries other than Turkey — Brazil included. Though it maintains the critical basis of the world of celebrities put forward by *Dix Pour Cent*, what is lost in translation among a large part of non-Turkish audiences is recognition of the artists playing themselves. Wouldn't a genuine interest in the country beyond its borders be better fuelled by screening originally Turkish programmes rather than rereading a work of another nationality? Global exhibition for a representation adapted and so regionally specific seems more like a programming mistake than a visibility opportunity for Ottoman culture. This search for identification with the national audience is so great that even the episodic character of the original *Dix Pour Cent* is abandoned to give way to a narrative of continuity, typical of the telenovela format, a product widely consumed by the local audience.

Even more fragile circumstances can be witnessed in the remake *La Casa de Papel Coreia*. The Hollywood crime film aesthetic — an effect of the Americanisation of a global programme managed and distributed by players ideologically guided by American precepts — were kept from the original Spanish series (*La Casa de Papel*, Atresmedia, 2017–2019; Netflix, 2020–2021), as was the plan to invade and take over a National Mint. Its possible virtues were, however, ignored; what was originally a parody turned into a mere farce.

Set in an unlikely dystopia that unites the two Koreas and advocates for a final victory of capitalism, the series simulates a politicisation it does not, in fact, possess, infantilising militant activists and political movements. The critique of capitalism, the driving force of the original narrative, comes to be enunciated directly in the dialogues and voice-over, taken from the programme's subtext and transformed into an educational feature, even providing moral justification for the criminal acts of the protagonist/narrator, Tokyo.

Another noteworthy element is the clothing worn by the gang. Failure to contextualise the *hahoe* masks worn as part of Korean theatrical tradition leads to the artefact becoming a simple allusion to the masks worn in the Spanish original. The organic way in which the legend of the Krampus is worked into *Der Pass* stands in stark contrast, taking on the dual functionality of evoking Austrian popular culture while providing a dramatic key that both enriches the narrative and moves it along. In *La Casa de Papel Coreia,* the *hahoe* masks worn are no more notable than any generic mask in the eyes of the global audience the series is aimed at. Exiled from their cultural meaning, the masks inhabit only a surface level of a *Koreanity*[6].

This operation can be considered collateral damage caused by cosmopolitanism, a concept that streaming has sought to establish as the standard of a new type of multicultural programming forged for global exhibition, which presupposes an ideological resignification of the very idea of borders as we know them.

> Cosmopolitanism crosses frontiers like a stowaway, as an unforeseen consequence of mundane market decisions: people develop a taste for a certain kind of pop music or "Indian" food; or they respond to global risks by sorting their rubbish or changing their diet; or they invest their money in states whose policies conform to the neoliberal ideal of responsiveness to the imperatives of the global market. (Beck, 2008, p. 19)

Products such as *La Casa de Papel Coreia* (as well as its positioning in the *movements* proposed within this article) reflect the growing efforts made by Netflix, in particular, and the streaming industry in general, both to awaken and take advantage of a "cosmopolitan sensibility"[7] (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020, p. 16) among audiences. Based on "a strikingly different type of flow, no longer bounded, limited or controlled by language, culture or national policies promoting national or regional programming or identity" (Straubhaar et al., 2021, p. 193), the practice points to a commercial model of cultural domination, throwing away any and all potential for symbolic intervention in reality and identity construction of the transnational remake.

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[6]The use of the term "Koreanity" fits the meaning provided by Barthes (1957/2019) of neologism "sininess", in *Mitologias* (Mythologies): "China is one thing, the idea which a French petit-bourgeois could have of it not so long ago is another: for this peculiar mixture of bells, rickshaws and opium-dens, no other word possible but Sininess" (p. 212).

[7]In a bid to understand why Danish series *Bron/Broen*, *Borgen*, and *Forbrydelsen* were so successful the world over, Jensen and Jacobsen (2020) identified their ability to provoke this kind of feeling, defining it as: "cosmopolitan sensibility [which] ranges from a 'stylistic sensibility' (where audiences clearly want to embrace and become familiar with diverse cultural influences), to a 'psychological sensibility' (where they appreciate and value the cultural and social differences), to a more 'political-ethical sensibility' (where audiences critique existing societal structures such as gender inequality and the power of the media over politics, against the backdrop of the series)" (p. 16).

Final Remarks

Despite an awareness of the risks and difficulties of grouping the practices of an ecosystem as dynamic and complex as television and its production processes into typologies or schemes, the task of structuring the *movements* proposed in this article was undertaken in a bid to identify patterns (even if of a very specific nature, as in this case), which may be significant, and if not, at least pertinent to the advancement of studies in the area.

It can be said that it is from an exchange between two specific regional cultures that transnational remakes are born. Their relevance lies in their ability to affirm the cultural identity represented and aid in constructing the identity of the audience for which they are produced. If the audience is local, a remake will reinforce a local identity (of that specific "imagined community"); if global, it contributes to increasing a "cosmopolitan sensibility" (an inevitable part of the identity of "imagined worlds").

Due to the global presence of streaming platforms, this "cosmopolitan sensibility" has been finding singular space for expansion among the most varied audiences. However, thanks to the globalisation of entertainment, an ongoing strategy for the establishment of the processes of cosmopolitanism of audiences has been identified within the numerous national markets where streaming services have gained traction.

Thinking specifically about the third *movement* and the proposed structure of *La Casa de Papel Coreia*, one of the notes from *Incidentes* (Incidents) by Roland Barthes (1987/2004) springs to mind. When faced with the difficulty of choosing a souvenir from Paris for an acquaintance in Morocco, the author ends up opting for "a coded, in other words, excessively useless, souvenir: a brass Eiffel Tower" (Barthes, 1987/2004, p. 26).

To suit the commercial and ideological interests of cosmopolitanism, transnational remakes are emptied of meaning, with dialogue and interactions between cultures rendered superficial. Stripped of their purpose, they become just another cheap bus station souvenir — a banal memento from a distant place we will never get to know. If each *movement* expresses a trend or pattern, should we then prepare for streaming platform catalogues to become infested with *brass towers*? — That is the question that needs to be asked.

Translation: New Words, Lda.

Biographical Note

Alexis Parrot is a researcher, screenwriter, and journalist. He is a master's student in the Postgraduate Degree in Communication at the Federal Fluminense University, specialising in media, culture, and the production of meaning, having gained a degree in social communication from the Federal University of Juiz de Fora. Parrot conducts research on fictional television series and is a member

of TeleVisões, a television and new media research group. Between 2016 and 2023, he was a columnist for online news website Dom Total, providing television reviews.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6438-6078

Email: a.parrot@uol.com.br

Address: PPGCOM UFF, Rua Professor Marcos Waldemar de Freitas Reis, s/n. Bloco A, Sala 202, Bairro São Domingos, Universidade Federal Fluminense – Campus Gragoatá, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, CEP: 24210-201

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