

Kathleen Lock, “Remaking the Past: Hollywood, Memory, and Movie Generations”

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Film remakes, reboots, and sequels perpetually generate, sustain, and renew popular media texts, whose enduring economic and cultural relevance adds up to more than Hollywood’s deeply ingrained profit principle. In this talk, I argue that these movies actively shape how the film industry, cinema, and audiences imagine themselves as they constantly negotiate past and present, stability and change through a serial dynamic of repetition and variation. Film remakes of *Stella Dallas*, gender-swap reboots, or sequels like *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* and *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* transform Hollywood’s past into a usable past and become sites where conservative and progressive ideologies are negotiated time and again. Film remakes, reboots, and sequels always promote the continuing relevance of certain stories, characters, and cultural values over possible others. At the same time, they reactivate movies and meanings, which, at least in theory, comes with an intrinsic capacity to reframe, rewrite, and revise the past so that it can be made compatible with current tastes and attitudes. But how does remaking the past impacts generational renewal through experiences of new versions that simultaneously

build on, continue, and challenge legacies and established meanings? Bringing cultural memory together with generation theory, I introduce my concept of *movie generations* to explore the constitutive role of media experiences – and remaking in particular – for processes of generation building.

**Kathleen Lock** is Professor of American Studies and Media Studies at Leibniz University Hannover and director of the Emmy Noether Research Group “Hollywood Memories: Cinematic Remaking and the Construction of Global Movie Generations,” funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG; 1.4 million EUR). Her research focuses on the role memory and cultural repetition perform on the levels of identity formation and for the maintenance of imagined communities. Her first book, *Kolumbus in den USA* (2014), examines the commemorative constructions and deconstructions of Christopher Columbus in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States. She has also published widely on remakes, sequels, reboots, and the nostalgia franchise as well as on TV series revivals, and has written, edited, or co-edited six books and special issues on these topics. Her second book *Hollywood Remaking: How Film Remakes, Sequels, and Franchises Shape Industry and Culture* came out with University of California Press in 2024.