

The Art of Remixing

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Kirsten will be graduating in December 2011 with a double major in Professional and Technical Writing and Creative Writing. She is on staff for *Cardinal Sins* (and served as editor-in-chief 2010-2011), works for *The Valley Vanguard*, tutors at The Writing Center, and participates in several other on-campus clubs and jobs. She will seek a career in editing after graduation.

Note: This video, *The Art of Remixing*, may be viewed at the following website: <www.svsu.edu/writingprogram/braun-awards/braun-awards-publications/2011.html>. An overview and bibliography are provided below.

The art of remixing is all around us. It involves taking pieces of others' works, recombining, and making them into something new. Lawrence Lessig, professor of law at Harvard Law School and author of *Remix*, says, "Whether text or beyond text, remix is collage; it comes from combining elements of . . . culture; it succeeds by leveraging the meaning created by the reference to build something new" (Lessig 76). Therefore, collage artists are not simply stealing from others, but using what they made, in collaboration with other ideas, to make something with new and different meaning. These collages can be of images, text, sounds, or video. In my video, I've included all of these elements. The video clips were taken from YouTube, the music is from a collage artist named Girl Talk, the images come from various websites, and the text comes from the theory we studied in class.

When remixing, it is important to consider copyright. Excerpts of copyrighted material can be borrowed for educational purposes, news reporting, critical comments, or parodies. For example, "A Fair(y) Use Tale," a video made by Professor Eric Faden from Bucknell University, uses small clips of Disney animated movies to educate about copyright terms. In my own video, I've taken clips of this video to help introduce the rules of copyright. So I take what Faden has remixed, and remix the parts again to make something new. Later in my video, I take small clips from other animated films (sources other than Disney) to send my own message.

Essentially, we are always remixing and rewriting something. Roland Barthes, French literary theorist, says that the writer's "only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner 'thing' he thinks to 'translate' is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely." Basically, Barthes is saying that nothing written or formed is new; it is simply a collage of others' works. Barry Mauer, author of "Nietzsche at the Apollo," says, "Thus anyone who speaks or writes is by definition a collage artist." My video shows that everyone can be a collage artist, and it can be exciting and rewarding to take something old and turn it into something new.

Works Cited

- Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Image / Music / Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977. 142-7. Print.
- Lessig, Lawrence. *Remix*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC. London, 2008. Print.
- Mauer, Barry. "Nietzsche at the Apollo." *New Media/New Methods*. Ed. Jeff Rice and Marcel O'Gorman. Parlor Press. Indiana, 2008. 243-263. Print.