

# Reclaiming Remix: The Critical Role of Sampling in Transformative Works - A Multimodal Semiotic Analysis of Rhetoric and Ideology in Critical Remix Video

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Remix is the practice of producing media objects composed of previously published media elements, which have been appropriated, repurposed and reconfigured in the creation of new works. There is growing confusion over the meaning of 'remix' in mainstream and academic discourse, which has resulted in a broadening of the term to include non-remixed cultural texts, such as remakes, adaptations and parodies. Remix is now considered by many to be a form of derivative work; however, it is a fundamentally transformative practice. Such generalizations have resulted in numerous non-commercial remixes being wrongfully accused of copyright infringement. // In attempting to address this widespread confusion, the following claims are advanced: 1) The presence of sampled source material is the defining aesthetic characteristic of remix that distinguishes it from other forms of media; 2) visual semiosis occurs differently in remixed and non-remixed content; 3) remix has the potential to communicate convincing propositions, in comparison to content that does not use sampled source material as evidence; 4) remix is being used by many as a political tool to circulate anti-capitalist counter-ideologies, representing a social libertarian worldview; however, many remixes suffer from inherent ideological contradictions, which negatively impact their potential to persuade users; 5) remix is not morally wrong, however the current legal system treats sampling as a form of theft, thus remix is often considered legally wrong. The assumption that cultural works should be considered a form of private property is no longer tenable in the digital age; thus, an alternate system is required to liberate online content and to balance the economic interest of cultural producers with the ability of the public to access and use a growing intellectual commons of cultural works. // 250 Critical Remix Videos were selected from a sample of 500 for further study and categorisation. 25 representative cases were considered in relation to a set of contextual factors and subjected to close readings using methods of visual semiotic, rhetorical and ideological analysis at the level of the individual shot. The results of this analysis were

synthesised with findings from the literature on medium specificity (Manovich, 2013; Krauss, 2000; Carroll, 1996), visual semiotics (Moriarty, 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2001; Noth, 1998; Barthes, 1997), visual rhetoric (Burke, 1966; Scott & Kenney, 2003; Hardt, 2005), ideology critique (Gramsci, 2011; Zizek, 2000; McGee, 1980) and the emerging field of remix studies (Navas, 2012; Sonvilla-Weiss, 2010; Sinnreich, 2010; Lessig, 2008; Horwatt, 2009), which led to the development of the five propositions outlined above. This research advances knowledge in the field of remix studies and establishes a solid theoretical framework upon which future remix scholars may build.