Embracing the Darkside
Plagiarism, Piracy, and Cut-and-Past Culture

David J. Gunkel
Northern Illinois University
dgunkel@niu.edu
Aguilera’s Vocal Track

Velvet Underground’s Music Track
The remix is the very nature of the digital...The recombinant (the bootleg, the remix, the mash-up) has become the characteristic pivot at the turn of our two centuries (William Gibson, 2005)
1) For the Record:  
The Original Concept of Recording

2) Mash-up & Remix:  
The Art of Recombinant Rock and Roll

3) Applications  
Incorporating Mashups in the Classroom
1) For the Record:
The Original Concept of Recording
Plato’s *Phaedrus*
First recorded account of recording technology
Writing has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect itself (Plato, 1982: 275d-e).
1. Recordings are secondary and derivative

The god of writing must also be the god of death... [writing] substitutes the breathless sign for the living voice (Derrida, 1981).
1. Recordings are secondary and derivative
1. Recordings are secondary and derivative.

The captivity of all manner of sound-waves heretofore designated as “fugitive,” and their permanent retention (Edison, 1878).
1. Recordings are secondary and derivative.
The common assumption is that the live event is “real” and that mediatized events are secondary and somehow artificial reproductions of the real (Auslander, 1999).

1. Recordings are secondary and derivative
2. Recordings preserve live performances
2. Recordings preserve live performances

From the moment of its public introduction, sound recording was understood to have great possibilities as an archival medium. Its potential to preserve sound indefinitely into the future was immediately grasped by users and publicists alike (Sterne, 2005).
Victor Talking Machine Company

2. Recordings preserve live performances

“His Master’s Voice”
Music ceases to have interest for us…the instant we become aware of the fact of literal repetition, of mechanical reproduction, when we know and can anticipate exactly how a given phrase is going to be modeled, exactly how long a given fermata is to be held, exactly what quality of accent or articulation, of acceleration, or retard, will occur at a given moment (Sessions, 1950).

2. Recordings preserve live performances
A clear judgment concerning the relation of serious music to popular music can be arrived at only by strict attention to the fundamental characteristic of popular music: standardization. The whole structure of popular music is standardized, even where the attempt is made to circumvent standardization (Adorno, 1941).
3. Recordings are promiscuous bastards.

Their reproduction with all of their original characteristics at will, without the presence or consent of the original source, and after the lapse of any period of time (Edison, 1878).
3. Recordings are promiscuous bastards
3. Recordings are promiscuous bastards
2) Mash-up & Remix: The Art of Recombinant Rock and Roll
1) Mash-ups complicate and suspend common assumptions about origin and originality.
2) Mash-ups are exceedingly and unapologetically redundant
The detail made available by recordings can increase our understanding and appreciation of the living thing (Brown, 2000).
The beginning of the chorus is replaceable by the beginning of innumerable other choruses. The interrelationship among the elements or the relationship of the elements to the whole would be unaffected. In Beethoven, position is important only in a living relation between a concrete totality and its concrete parts. In popular music, position is absolute. Every detail is substitutable; it serves its function only as a cog in a machine (Adorno, 1941).
3) Mash-ups question and undermine authority
Death of the Author

The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture… the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His 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" (Barthes, 1978).
You Don't Need a Sword to be a Pirate.

Respect Copyright Laws.
Visit www2.umflint.edu/piracy to learn how you can ensure that you're on the right side of the law.

Muzik-Knightz.Co.Uk
The Anti-Piracy Division

FBI ANTI-PIRACY WARNING
• Originality
• Creativity
• Authenticity
• Derivation
• Plagiarism
• Inauthenticity
• Promiscuity
• Repetition
3) Applications

Incorporating Mashups in the Classroom
1. Teach the Debate

PROHIBITION FAILED!
2. Give ‘em Theory
3. Engage the Popular
4. Practice Makes Perfect
Dr. David J. Gunkel (Ph.D.) is an award-winning educator and scholar, specializing in the study of information and communication technology (ICT). Formally educated in philosophy and media studies, his teaching and research synthesize the hype of high-technology with the rigor and insight of contemporary critical analysis. He is the author of over 35 scholarly articles, has published two influential books, lectured and delivered award winning papers throughout North and South America and Europe, is the managing editor of the *International Journal of Žižek Studies* and co-editor of the Indiana University Press series in Digital Game Studies. He currently holds the position of Professor in the Department of Communication at Northern Illinois University, and his teaching has been recognized with numerous awards, including NIU’s Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the prestigious Presidential Teaching Professorship.

http://gunkelweb.com
dgunkel@niu.edu