

"Détournement as Civil Disobedience: Mash-ups, Re-Mixes and the Recontextualization of Sound and Images as Political Statements"

A Parapolitical-Cultural Essay

by

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Abstract:

Détournement is diversion, displacement, the “subversion, devaluation and re-use of present and past cultural production, destroying its message while hijacking its impact.”, “the fluid language of anti-ideology” and “a negation of the value of the previous organization of expression”. When an artist uses appropriated samples of music or images from popular culture to make social commentary or political statements, is it protected free speech when it violates trademark and copyright laws? Can we peacefully coexist with those who turn-around and use cultural artifacts in ways not intended by their creators? Modern trends in subvertising, culture jamming and hacktivism using mash-ups and re-mixes parallel methods used in the 1930s Avant-Garde and 1960s Pop Art and Situationist movements. In the digital media age, such manipulations are viral, enjoying an environment where they replicate, change and re-replicate like no other time in history. They confound the notion of ownership and purposefulness of the media being recontextualized for political and other non-commercial purposes, including “Détourntablism”.

1. Historical Context and Background:

“Yankee Doodle” was originally a song sung by the British to make fun of the rural and unsophisticated upstart colonists. The Library of Congress’ webpage has the story correct. http://www.loc.gov/teachers/lyrical/songs/yankee_doodle.html By changing the words to the well-known tune by the Revolutionaries, its intent was effectively reversed

and instead it was re-made to poke fun of those who oppressed them, including the use of music and song for propaganda purposes. It is a good thing there were no copyright laws back then, or our de facto national anthem may never have been a source of inspiration to a nascent republic based on liberty and freedom. Money certainly changes things.

In an interesting twist, Abolitionist, Unitarian and social activist writer of the lyrics for the song “Battle Hymn of the Republic” in 1861, Julia Ward Howe of South Boston, created the “Suffrage Song” based on the music for the patriotic anthem “America”. Later union activist Ralph Chaplin of the Industrial Workers of the World made his 1915 song “Solidarity Forever” based on the tune of Wards’ “Battle Hymn”, which was based on the tune for “John Brown’s Body”, which was taken from a popular hymn at the time, “Say, Brothers Will You Meet Us”.

<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/exhibits/music/protest.html>

Union activist Joe Hill took the popular song “Casey Jones” and reworked it to make Casey the hero into a “Union Scab” in 1911 in response to a railroad strike.

<http://www.kued.org/joehill/voices/caseyjones.html> “Nearer My Job to Thee” in 1913 was sung to the tune of “Nearer My God to Thee”. One of my favorites is “The Good Old Picket Line” which was sung to the tune of the “The Good Old Summertime”.

http://www.uml.edu/tsongas/activities/1999_08_activity.htm More up to date, and of importance to the current crop of anti-war activists would be 1969s “Vietnam Songbook” by Barbara Dane and Irwin Silber. <http://www.vietnamsongbook.org/home.htm> Other “sung to the tune of” protest songs made their way into the lives of many oppressed people and gave them what they needed most at the time – hope.

Kurt Schwitters was a pioneer of collage art and laid an aesthetic foundation for assembling “found objects”. While we are more interested in found audio and video “objects” the same principles apply. Dorothea Dietrich, an art professor at Princeton University termed collage as:

“(A) work of art (that) is no longer the result of traditional artistic craftsmanship – the carefully honed skill, usually acquired at the academy, of applying paint to canvas to achieve a realistically looking image or expression. Rather, collage is the result of a

process of assemblage that in itself highlights the break with tradition and redefines the artist as a manipulator of prefabricated forms.”

Dietrich, Dorothea. The Collages of Kurt Schwitters: Tradition and Innovation. Princeton NJ 1993.

This leap is a real threat to neo-traditionalist forces devoted to a pathology of knowledge bordering on being an inflexible and humorless purist ideology.

John Welsh, a musical composer had this to say:

“In summary, a collage allows pre-made objects to co-exist, thereby becoming one new artwork . . . The parts of the collage have had a previous life, a previous function. A new life for these objects results when the artists divorces [sic] the intended function from the object itself. This aspect is further enhanced when the parts are assembled and a new work emerges. The artists choose the degree of relatedness between the patches. In any event, it is the viewer who must make a unique assessment and provide the meaning between the patches and thus for the entire work.”

Welsh, John. "Music in The Air: Here and There – A Radio Landscape."

Interface 1984

John Cage’s “Radio Music” <http://www.johncage.info/workscage/radiomusic.html> from 1956 is a recording of someone, or up to eight people, seemingly randomly tuning around the radio dial. In fact the “score” calls for fifty-six changes in frequency between 55 and 156 kHz. Of course there will be copyrighted material appearing at these performances. The Fluxus Attitude (rather than “Movement”) was very involved with using what is around us to create “art” is a way never before appreciated. Started in 1962 by George Maciunas, the idea was for the triumph of elegant simplicity over stifling perfectionist complexity with the use of a DIY (Do-It-Yourself) aesthetic that continues today on the Internet in many enterprising and creative forms. Today with the new enabling tools available, it has been expanded into DIY-BYC, (Do-It-Yourself, Because-You-Can). Of note are Allan Kaprow’s 1960’s “Happenings” that have a modern analogue among fans of RPG’s (Rome Playing Games), a more formalized and rules-based activity with scripts for the role-players to perform much like the participants in the Happenings with the outcome being indeterminate.

The Korean-born video artist Nam June Paik <http://www.paikstudios.com> takes many otherwise banal images from our television commercial space and creates amazing video installations, most notably the 1974 piece titled, “Electronic Superhighway”, which some critics see as a commentary on how we no longer need to drive down an actual highway to see advertising billboards when they are being piped into our homes. A personal hero of mine, his work gave me encouragement to go beyond what was acceptable and enter the “dark side” and try to pull back the thin veneer of commercialism and consumption to expose the false values of a seemingly corrupt society.

Dickie Goodman’s http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dickie_Goodman “break-in” records used snippets of popular songs as early as 1956. Most famous for his “Watergate” novelty record that parodied the administration of Richard Nixon with a pretend press conference where Goodman asks the pointed questions and the answers are the snipped song lyrics. Goodman is considered to be a pioneer of what we now know as sampling. His light-hearted jabs at the powerful were an early influence on many, including myself. His son Jon wrote a book about his father titled, “The King of Novelty”.

No discussion of the uses of “Détournement” or “creative vandalism” is complete without citing Guy Debord, <http://www.nothingness.org/SI/debord.html> the Lettrists in the 1950s and the 1956 “User's Guide to Détournement”,

<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/presitu/usersguide.html> which includes this,

“It is in fact necessary to eliminate all remnants of the notion of personal property in this area. The appearance of new necessities outmodes previous “inspired” works. They become obstacles, dangerous habits. The point is not whether we like them or not. We have to go beyond them.”

The rise of the Situationist International (SI) in Europe gave a brand name to an idea that had been developing for some time. His 1967 book “The Society of the Spectacle” set into motion a new way of seeing our artificial cultural and media construct. We can see the very same forces more at work today in that mass media, and the corporate advertisers who pay their bills, have no reason to give airtime to those who would challenge their position or attempt to undue the relationships that make the media unwilling to question the motives of said corporations. We always heard of “Communist

Plots”, but what of the many “Capitalist Plots” all around us at any time of the day? The mantra “You can’t buy us if you can’t sell us.” states a clear delineation between those normative conformists seeking approval and “success” (on other’s terms) and those seeking a greater, deeper and more personal form of expression, at times through “high order agit-prop”. The absence of the possibility of cooptation is a real threat to the status quo.

“But most films only merit being cut up to compose other works. This re-conversion of preexisting sequences will obviously be accompanied by other elements, musical or pictorial as well as historical.” - Debord

Early “hacks” as Civil Disobedience included the creation of media that looked just like the original, but included content counter to them. Standard Cold War era “dirty tricks” included the now famous “Mad Monster Party” where an organization’s flyer for an event was re-mixed to include the text “Free Beer”. As part of the FBI Counter Intelligence Program’s communications to and from members of radical Left organizations such as the Black Panthers and the New Mobilization were disrupted causing internal strife and dissension. These would be distributed with the hope that when the thirsty throng arrived there would be trouble. Fake letters written on letterhead from companies sent to media outlets or to other companies caused some momentary confusion. Fighting fire with fire and taking the suspect tactics of the so-called oppressors and using them against them to expand consciousness came to pass.

A good example of the self-replicating and viral character of various turned-about messages can be seen in the experiment in phenomenology done by Shepard Fairey and his “Obey Andre the Giant” stickering campaign. His graffiti-esque inspired aesthetic came from the sub-culture of skate-punks near the Rhode Island School of Design. <http://www.obeygiant.com/main.php?page=articles> His webpage’s subheading is: “Manufacturing Quality Dissent Since 1989”. Like the ubiquitous drawing of “Kilroy Was Here” on every possible surface during World War II, the “Obey Andre” image has transcended the ego-driven “tag” of the graffiti artist to become mass-produced fine art.

Simulacra is a term used to describe the imperfect copy that makes an apathetic and melancholy world of the *hyperreal*, “A copy of a copy which has been so dissipated in relation to the original that it can no longer be said to be a copy.” - Gilles Deleuze and Jean Baudrillard’s “Difference and Repetition” in 1968 and translated by Paul Patton, NY: Columbia Univ. Press in 1994. The compositing of many copies becomes *Pastiche*, a form of parody and homage, usually on the light-hearted respectful side of things – fan fiction being a good example. Delving further we can take a look at the practice of *Psychogeography*, the “instinctual exploration of the emotional contours of one’s environment” – Dr. Alastair Bonnett, “The Situationist Legacy” in *Variant 9*, 1991. Regardless of the definitions, jargon and terminology involved, the result is the same – the mere tinkering with existing forms is a means to an end, to change minds.

2. Examples and Ideas:

Disabling payphones in the 1960s <http://www.2600.com> to allow free calls was a noble effort, but seldom did those enjoying the service connect the “mistake” with any form of social revolution nor did they connect the fuzzy dots and question exactly why they have to pay for phone calls at all. Radio DJs at times played songs prohibited by their management and attributed the act to a mistake or to faulty memory. When the war in Iraq began, MTV stopped playing videos with “military or war” content regardless of what side of the issue it may have been on. When MTV formalized the informal and made the “Ultimate MashUps” show featuring the collaboration of Jay-Z and Linkin Park, they took a step in the right direction since any commodification of the underground trend draws more attention to the situation from whence it arose. Creating simulations and hacks gave rise to the formalizing of the informal in that the terms “Hacktivists” and “Subvertising” were embraced, particularly by the groups AdBusters and the Yes Men. “Buy Nothing Day” and “Steal Something Day” being annual events designed to provoke and prod a somnambulant populace. Electronic Civil Disobedience will only increase as consumers see their rights diminished by both government and corporations in league with each other for mutual benefit.

Today the commodification of dissent appears to be in evidence when I saw an “Anarchy” decal on the back window of a new BMW. The true anarchist would probably set fire to the car, if not to the dealership from whence it came, in an act of destroying the false life it represents. The driver probably also wears a Che Guevara t-shirt bought at the local mall. This shows us again the wide divide between theory and action.

Debord wrote,

"The spectacle is not a collection of images, rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images. It is this very mediation that is seen as the enemy and a destructive debasing force in need of being attacked and fought on every level possible. Of note is the sentence from the original journal of the SI, “The integration of present or past artistic production into a superior construction of a milieu.” *Internationale Situationiste Issue #1, June 1958.*

We are now all soaking in it, like so many hands in so much perfumed dish soap.

The difference between “artists” and “entertainers” is that the first can be indifferent to the wants, needs and desires of their audience and the latter very much care about being liked by their audience in order to have commercial success by creating little more than *kitsch*. Greil Marcus <http://www.eyecandypromo.com/GM/Greil.html> wrote about *détournement* that,

“The theft of aesthetic artifacts from their own contexts and their diversion into contexts of one’s own devise” and “A politics of subversive quotation of cutting the vocal cords of every empowered speaker, social symbols yanked through the looking glass, misappropriated words and pictures diverted into familiar scripts and blowing them up”. Marcus, Greil “*Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*” Harvard University Press, 1990.

Those so moved must become amateur sleuths of Semiology in order to decode and then recode the signs and symbols within the art, music, literature and video content of our culture. Eye wash, pabulum or objective use value is subjective - and changing daily.

Situationists have been termed a group seeking a society based on creativity; pleasure and free play where people actively participated in the reconstruction of every moment of life seize control over their own lived space through the creation of unique situations, certainly a revolutionary idea. I term them the *Outré Autre* – the Outraged Other. I

embrace creating the “lie that dares to tell the truth” as termed by Susan Sontag in her 1964 essay, “Notes on Camp” that appeared in the *Partisan Review* at a time of <http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/theory/Sontag-NotesOnCamp-1964.html> social and cultural upheaval including the rise of “Pop Art” in its many forms. “Avant Garde culture is the imitation of imitating.” wrote Clement Greenberg in his 1939 book, “Avant Garde and Kitsch”. From Barbara Kruger’s biting media criticism to the playful musical creations of Tom Smith’s band To Live and Shave in LA, taken from the title of a Ron Jeremy porno movie, we see an irreverent parody of entertainment. Bands like Stockholm Syndrome, Modern Error, the Evolution Control Committee, Telekinesis for Cats Today and Negativland take us through the looking glass and force us to reassess the man-made artificial constructs around us. What seems to be missing today most is simple irony. Camp attitude can be the defense of marginalized forms, like the hazy quasi-legal world of mash-up and remix DJs, artists and producers – a neo-folk subculture worshipping “obscurata”, in-jokes and clever references to pop culture.

New York musician Mike Forzano’s “WW3” audio from 1986 and the video from 1988 I made for it used Voice of America and Radio Moscow shortwave radio propaganda broadcasts mixed with samples from the “Woodstock” movie soundtrack, including Jimi Hendrix’s instrumental rendition of “The Star Spangled Banner” and Ritchie Havens’ “Freedom”. I performed a mostly “live” version of this piece at the Gallery of Social & Political Art in Boston and included the looped voice-over, “Them’s fightin’ words!” (One of the few unprotected forms of speech) and “Listen carefully, can you hear me? Are you listening?” I also sampled the video montage from the 1974 Alan J. Pakula film, “The Parallax View”. <http://www.dvdtalk.com/dvdsavant/s76parallax.html>

All of this was done without us benefiting or being aware of the philosophical underpinnings of our transgressive exploration into government sponsored Cold War radio propaganda, including fear-mongering and use of audio cues and symbols to manipulate listeners’ perceptions for a reason, with some form of covert intent.

A good example of perpetrating fraud upon the media were the fake news events conjured up by one Joey Skaggs, <http://www.joeyskaggs.com> including his famous press

conference and photo op in New York City for the pet brothel – the Cathouse for Dogs. More information can be found here: <http://pranks.com>. From his “Manifesto” we can see how this prank concept can be applied to music and in my case, music videos.

“By unhinging the context for expectation, pranks explode the patterning which narrows and shrinks down our imaginative potential. What distinguishes a painting from wall paper, or literature from stock market reports is the tearing and ripping apart of old forms and structures to create new perceptions which renew and refresh life itself. All art attempts to rid life of banality; to expunge the habituation effect whose cause is "daily living."

When one hears the first few bars of a popular song that then turns into something else altogether, the mash-up hack did its job, it fooled you the same way someone listening to a union song from 1912 may be tricked when they heard the music to a hymn that had its lyrics recontextualized. It is a small blow against a large state sanctioned media empire, but it has the potential to not only offer up some social commentary, but it can also change the way the listener thinks, and that is a real danger to consumer society.

When Kanye West said on television after Hurricane Katrina, “George Bush doesn’t like black people”, little did he know his words, and his song “Golddigger” would be sampled and used in several mash-up audios and videos commenting on the underwhelming federal response to the New Orleans catastrophe. <http://www.submedia.tv> and <http://www.submediatv.com>. The group Justice through Music <http://jtmp.org/songs.php> has a collection of similar songs, including the “Anti-War Mashup” by someone who calls themselves “Jools Jonker”. OneGoodMove.org is a great Blog that includes many contemporary anti-war protest songs including some mash-ups and remixes sung to the tunes of such popular songs as; “Cheeseburger in Paradise” by Jimmy Buffett, “Friday I’m In Love” by The Cure, “Four Dead in Ohio” by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, “Rainy Day Woman” by Bob Dylan and one set to Steppenwolf’s “The Pusher”. http://onegoodmove.org/1gm/1gmarchive/2003/03/antiwar_songs.html

“Bootlegs, Mash-Ups and Bastard Pop” is the subtitle of the French webpage www.bootlegsfr.com where many mash-up DJs post their homebrew creations without fear of legal recourse. The “off-shoring” of suspect content is a trend I have seen as

being a harbinger of things to come. The ease with which these remixes can be created at home with freely downloaded software only encourages those who wish to combine the lyrics of one song or songs with the music of others to create a hybrid work without traditional provenance and ownership. A suitable definition comes from online journalist Annalee Newitz, “Mash-ups: anti-authoritarian folk music for a generation whose 'establishment' is represented by corporate intellectual-property owners.”

<http://www.alternet.org/columnists/story/19164> AlterNet’s subheading is, “The Mix is the Message”. She does acknowledge that as “derivative works”, mash-ups do not have a legal leg to stand on. Of course things could change.

With offbeat monikers that hide their real identities, artists like Danger Mouse and his “Grey Album” (a mash-up of the Beatles White Album and Jay-Z’s “Black Album), <http://www.illegal-art.org/audio/grey.html> and http://www.bannedmusic.org/albums/grey_album.php stirred up so much controversy that February 24th 2004 was dubbed “Grey Tuesday” so as to make people aware of the growing ongoing battle in regards to copyright law. The mashers create for the sake of creation’s sake and if and when they want to go “above ground”, some of their unauthorized remixes are simple labeled “For Promotional Use Only” in an effort to protect themselves and gain notoriety so as to parley their skills and sub-cultural reputation into a legitimate vocation. Another good resource for these works is: <http://bootlegism.free.fr/index.htm>

The real looming issue here is the redefinition of “fame” as well as success. Mash-up DJs and remixers are mostly anonymous and protected, not on the cover of magazines, recognized on the street by adoring fans or in it for self-aggrandizement or ego-gratification. Instead they cultivate the cult of the “rep” much like a Black Hat Hacker who builds a mythical legend around their skills and prowess in an arcane arena. It is impossible to disappoint fans by maturing, growing and changing styles because they can just assume another fake identity and spin a whole new legend for a new alter-ego. The inability to “own” their illicit works is an odd paradox. As if in an Objectivist/Ayn Rand nightmare, “second-handers” can take the fruits of their “labor” and there is no redress of

grievances other than an e-mail flame war of idle threats. As in the film “Spartacus” when the Romans ask the captured slaves, “Which one of you is Spartacus?” slowly a throng of hands rise up to claim the name, and the coming punishment, each shouting out loudly and proudly, “I’m Spartacus!”. The collective irresponsibility of the mash-up DJs negated by their intense sense of community and interest in protecting their “thing” from those who just “don’t get it” and who can crate the dangerous “likelihood of confusion”.

Paul Miller, aka DJ Spooky, has taken the ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Pierre Felix Guattari and massaged them into magical musical compositions capable of distilling the most turgid treatises in philosophy to danceable ditties. Guattari’s thoughts and feelings that capitalism has a schizophrenic and neurotic aspect to it similar to, but different from, the idea we are in a society of profound hypocrisy, the nuance here being in the first case we are oblivious self-deluded victims and in the second, active accomplices and co-conspirators in the charade. Of interest to us today, Gilles Deleuze wrote,

"Maybe speech and communication have been corrupted. They're thoroughly permeated by money and not by accident but by their very nature. We've got to hijack speech. Creating has always been something different from communicating. The key thing may be to create vacuoles of non-communication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control." <http://www.rhizome.org/> - their webpage’s sub-heading is, “Connecting Art and Technology”.

DJ Spooky’s book “Rhythm Science” from 1994 is on MIT Press and includes a CD of his remixes. The book has many salient passages, but it was this one that set me on the path I now travel creatively.

“... I’m not really concerned with the academy per se. Frankly, by the start of the twenty-first century, the academy is such a reflection of class structure and hierarchy that it tends to cloud any real progressive contexts of criticism or discourse. By Dj-ing, making art, and writing simultaneously, I tried to bypass the notion of the critic as an authority who controls narrative, and to create a role that’s resonant with web culture: to function as content provider, producer, and critic all at the same time. It is role consolidation as digital performance.”

I remixed his remix of the Belgian SubRosa Audio Archive’s recording of Gertrude Stein reciting her poem, “A Completed Portrait of Picasso (would he like it?) and mashed it up with a similar piece by Univ. of Wisconsin Professor William Sethares’ “A Portrait of

Stein” that I titled “The Gertrude Stein Remix Project” and which was performed live as part of the Somerville (MA) ArtBeat festival held in Davis Square in 2006 – truly an example of pastiche. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxRl_rh1NR0

Mark Amerika <http://www.markamerika.com> is a multimedia artist and professor of Art and Art History at the University of Colorado who created the text for a video titled “Society of the Spectacle: A Digital Remix”, with audio by Trace Reddell <http://www.du.edu/%7Etreddell> and video by Rick Silva <http://ricksilva.net>, which explores the many ways we have embraced Debord’s Spectacle without even knowing it. His upcoming book on MIT Press is titled “META/DATA”. Our slavish devotion to the artificial constructs that distract us from reality includes the “paltry contests” of politics, sports, owning the newest and shiniest car and wanting to be at the top of the “Hit Parade” musically or at the box office in film. Adoption of this rhetoric could easily give rise to a new form of the anti-celebrity akin to the anonymous mash-up DJs and re-mix producers who reject rigid hierarchies and strict control of information. The cult of celebrity is an empty world devoid of the lasting values that could save us from ourselves, our wasteful and resource diverting lust for the pseudo-products to fill that empty part of ourselves, and the need for external validation that creates more competition instead what we need – cooperation for survival.

One more plug for MIT Press. Hillel Schwartz’ 1996 book, “Culture of the Copy” delves into the postmodern world of the knock-off in its many forms. From the world of Copier Art to the problem of cut-and-paste plagiarism back to the mechanical pantograph and the contemporary equivalents – the CD and DVD burner, and Peer-to-Peer networks. Of interest to those obsessed with consumer products is the website Counterfeit Chic. http://www.counterfeitchic.com/culture_of_the_copy/

In 2004 a call went out from Phillip Torrone <http://www.flashenabled.com> of Brooklyn NY to flood the world with mash-ups as a form of civil disobedience. The negation of the negation is surely positive, right? The debate on this very idea can be seen best between the words of Electronic Frontier Foundation founder John Perry Barlow and the

“Fair Use Day” (74 days from today) and pragmatic types like Blogger Darren Barefoot <http://www.darrenbarefoot.com> who terms such activities as “lousy civil disobedience” and a waste of time and energy.

Barlow said, “My view is if we just keep pressing the system where it breaks, eventually the system is so broken and so obviously broken that there’s no choice but for people to start evolving another economic model. And that’s actually what’s already happening. Rather rapidly. If you want to share something - share it. If you want to use something - use it. Try to do so ethically in the sense that, you know, (you) don’t take things without attribution, attribute.”

DJ Flood’s forty minute British radio audio collage titled “Raiding the 20th Century” remixes samples of many songs into an entirely new form of audio art. While there may be no overt political message in the piece, the piece itself may very well be an indictment of the ever-increasing corporate control of media, in particular his use of the 20th Century Fox symphonic instrumental intro their films. <http://www.djflood.com/index2.html>

An enlightened and hopeful example along the lines of “formalizing the informal” was when Trent Reznor and his band Nine Inch Nails encouraged remixing of two of their songs “Only” and the “The Hand That Feeds” via their web site in an interactive contest for their fans to participate in and be the judges by voting for and downloading the best remixes. The cross-promotional marketing for this went so far as to have it on the AcidPlanet webpage. <http://www.acidplanet.com/contests/nin> The actual MP3 files of the remixes are available here: <http://www.ninremixes.com> My favorite is a remix by Nathan Chase titled, “The Ghost That Feeds”, that adds in selected music and lyrics from “The Ghostbusters” theme song by Hank Parker Jr.

<http://www.nathanchase.com/2005/04/ghost-that-feedsray-parker-jrs.html>

Trent writes, “Well, the experiment of releasing **The Hand That Feeds** in Garageband format was a resounding success. For those of you unaware, I essentially gave away the master multitrack sessions for that song for you to remix / reinterpret / ruin. Last I checked, there were hundreds of remixes and info posted **here** alone. I’ve enjoyed and cringed at what you’ve done with my song. Thank you (I think)...

Again, there is no agenda here other than for you to explore experiment and have fun with it. Depending on how this goes we may construct a more formal community of remix postings and/or possibly some sort of “official” endorsement by means of an EP or something. I’m looking forward to hearing what you come up with...”

<http://www.nin.com/access/only>

The use of familiar songs with changed or new lyrics continues to this day. “Critter Carols” is a collection of recontextualized Christmas songs from the National Environmental Trust to communicate the need to protect the Endangered Species Act from any legislative changes. <http://www.net.org/esa/crittercarols.vtml> In another vein, or lung, the famous Australian song “Waltzing Matilda” has been remixed with new lyrics and a new title, “Free Marijuana” as another chapter of protest music with familiar roots takes hold. <http://www.nimbinaustralia.com/mardigrass2000/freemarijuana.html> So as not to appear too biased, there is a Conservative variant, “Cut and Run” sung to the tune of “Let It Snow”. <http://www.renewamerica.us/columns/daley/060912> I see these disruptive practices as an analogue to Marcel Duchamp painting a moustache on the Mona Lisa, less a great work by Leonardo da Vinci than just another “found object” to be used for a new purpose.

My own contribution to this long history in opposition to “The Culture Industry” (as it was termed by Theodor Adorno) http://www.wright.edu/~gordon.welty/Adorno_84.htm is the “Condy-R/Jay-Z Remix Project” a video and audio immersion- now on Version 3.0. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFGBNoqpho0> What began as a five minute video and audio remix of her 9-11 Commission testimony and his raps and rhymes for my community access television program in 2005, has grown into a piece now over twenty minutes long. Juxtaposing her saying things like, “Al Qaeda, Iraq, Saddam Hussein and Weapons of Mass Destruction” with him singing, “Give it to me, but don’t bullshit me!”, creates wild ride when set to a video montage of war imagery and photos of both of them. The inherent racial aspect to this piece is another layer of meaning and questioning of “Who is more black?” and “Who do you believe?” in that her academic, oil business and establishment credentials are fundamentally at odds with his Hip-Hop “street player” identity. I was first a videographer who got into audio production and DJing by necessity when I needed to splice together audio elements to better explore the recontextualizing of the many pop culture artifacts and found objects (we seldom question or bother to challenge) as my favorite form of “creative vandalism” - while tip-toeing between the proverbial raindrops.

The value system in America is going through a change. I found parallels to it in an article that appeared in the July 1964 issue of *Esquire* magazine by Robert Benton and David Newman, who both wrote the screenplay for the 1967 film “Bonnie & Clyde”. In the article they describe the subtle differences between the “old” and the “new” sentimentality. In our case, those seeking to cling to the old way of thinking on intellectual property are at odds with those tolerant of using appropriation as a new form of expression, critique, commentary and at times - civil disobedience.

“Old Sentimentality had “values” that everyone could see, bywords that meant the same to all: Patriotism, Love, Religion, Mom, The Girl. The values of the New Sentimentality are not out there emblazoned on banners. They differ slightly from man to man, because one of the definitions of New Sentimentality is that it has to do with you, really just you, not what you were told or taught, but what goes on in your head, *really*, and in your heart, *really*.

Here are the tenets: Personal interest is the abiding motivation. In the Old way you had ideals, causes, goals that were in some way beneficent to all. In the New, your primary objective is to make your life fit your style. There is Professionalism above all. For example, the Old concept of “selling out,” which used to drive good men crazy, causing them to cry in their beer and bemoan their wasted talent (writing ad copy, for instance), has disappeared. Now we glory in what pros we are, and a man loves himself for writing the best jingle on the market.

We used to be sentimental about Common Sense. To have it meant you did the Right Thing, considered its effects on all concerned, acted wisely. Now Common Sense has been supplanted by Sharpness. We love ourselves when we are really sharp. We love to see evidence of a sharp cookie winning the day, as long as he isn’t a villain.”

I am reminded of Susan Sontag attempting to explain Camp,

“...as the answer to the problem: How to be a dandy in the age of mass culture. The dandy was overbred. His posture was disdain, or else ennui. He sought rare sensations, undefiled by mass appreciation. He was dedicated to "good taste."

The connoisseur of Camp has found more ingenious pleasures. Not in Latin poetry and rare wines and velvet jackets, but in the coarsest, commonest pleasures, in the arts of the masses. Mere use does not defile the objects of his pleasure, since he learns to possess them in a rare way. Camp - Dandyism in the age of mass culture - makes no distinction between the unique object and the mass-produced object. Camp taste transcends the nausea of the replica.”

The new battle lines are not in the galleries and salons of Paris as in the 1930s, nor are they in the streets or quads of college campuses as in the 1960s, but in our virtual online world of the computer and the Internet – and within each of us.

Biography:

James L. Cypher lives in Somerville Massachusetts and is a multimedia artist DJ and VJ who works under the name Joey Daytona <http://www.JoeyDaytona.com> who uses appropriated music and images to make social commentary and counter-cultural political statements. He studied communications at Emerson College in Boston and has a weekly community access television show in Somerville. He is a writer, photographer and documentary video producer. He was part of Chris Korda's "Church of Euthanasia", <http://www.churchofeuthanasia.org> a web-based hoax and experiment in using street theatre to create social commentary. He was also involved with Lydia Eccles' "Unabomber for President" <http://www.notbored.org/manley.html> campaign based in Boston. He works at the Larz Anderson Auto Museum as their Operations Manager, is the Membership Chair for the National Association of Automobile Museums, is a member of the Society of Automotive Historians and is a member of Zeta Phi Eta, a national, professional co-ed fraternity for the communications arts and sciences. Recent video projects include; "History Will Not Absolve Us: Dallas 11-22-63", "Going to Shanksville: The Heroes of Flight 93", "The Condy-R/Jay-Z Remix", "Energy in Motion: The Middle East, Belly Dancing, Oil & War", "Reporter Fluff" a remix of cable TV news set to DJ Flood's "Raiding the 20th Century" and the Industrial band Ministry's version of Black Sabbath's song "Supernaut", and "Streetbeef/I Want 2 Go Home" where I take the mash-up of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' In the Wind" and the Pixies "Where Is My Mind" and set it to the video of street protests during the 2000 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles then took the Beach Boy's cover of a Calypso song popular with GI's and war protesters during the Vietnam War for the lyric, "This is the worst trip I've ever been on" and setting it to documentary video of the Battle for Fallujah, also available on the Joey Daytona Channel on YouTube.

<http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=JoeyDaytona>

In the works is "The Life & Times of Barney Oldfield – America's First Racing Hero" and a short video project titled, "La Venda Sexy – The Sexy Blindfold" based on the 1970s Chilean secret police torture chamber underneath a discotheque, where the loud dance music drowned out he screams of the sexual chamber of horrors below.