

Rhetoric and Remix: Reflections on Adorno's *Minima Moralia*

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This essay is a reflection on my online project Minima Moralia Redux, which is a remix of Theodor Adorno's book Minima Moralia. I discuss how I relied upon rhetorical principles to remix his work as a type of update for the time of network culture. I begin by providing a basic overview of my creative and critical approach, followed by how I see rhetoric and remix functioning. I continue to explain how I repurpose Adorno's work as a selective remix. I conclude with a reflection on recurring questions about "originals" and "copies." "Originals" and "copies" are two concepts that remain crucial in remix studies, which are closely linked to rhetoric as a foundational form of creative expression for all media. To reposition our relation to these two terms, I conclude by proposing repetition in terms of rhythmic loops as a means for creativity and criticism. I argue that all things in life repeat, and it is up to us to engage in an ongoing process of becoming in order to live historically.

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The Rhetoric of *Minima Moralia*, Part 1

Rhetoric broken down to its most basic element can be called "the art of speaking well."¹ In terms of contemporary times, it could be rewritten as "the art of remixing well," given that we are able to extend our views using pre-existing material almost in real time using different media formats. Remix [and rhetoric] is the use of all media for communication by way of appropriation, repurposing, copying and mimicking.

Scott Church explains that the process of selection in remix is rhetorical because the remixer chooses a sample over another.² This is an act of selectivity that is vital to contemporary forms of production, whether they be highly acclaimed works of art, or a basic e-mail message that includes pasted content that a person may want to share with another person. My remix of *Minima Moralia*,

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¹ This is a direct quote by the Roman rhetorician Quintilian which was previously quoted in an essay that discusses the relation of rhetoric and remix at length, see Scott H. Church, "A Rhetoric of Remix," *The Routledge Companion to Remix Studies*, eds. Eduardo Navas, Owen Gallagher, xtine Burrough (New York: Routledge, 2014), 43.

² Church, "A Rhetoric of Remix," 44.

which I titled *Minima Moralia Redux*, from this standpoint is a rhetorical work that, by way of appropriation, updates Adorno's book as an online project.³

Minima Moralia Redux functions as both a work of art and a data analytics research project, which enables me and I hope can help others in understanding how individuals develop works that appear to be autonomous and credited to a single person, but which in reality are only possible because many people are willing to share ideas and resources. It is my hope that we can eventually move past ideas of single authorial works to more open approaches that do justice to the way culture is actually produced in terms of collective knowledge exchange. For this reason, the following focuses on how I appropriate and remix Adorno's work. I do not discuss his critical position in detail, although I do mention it to contextualize the remix process.

I posted *Minima Moralia's Redux's* first entry on October 16, 2011. The goal, at the time, was to write an entry every week until the 153 aphorisms comprising Adorno's book were remixed. The initial goal was to finish the project within three years, but as things developed, it became evident that it would take much longer to finish. As I did research on Adorno, I inevitably developed related interests and ideas that took me in other directions, and led to different projects and publications. For this reason, at the time of this writing (2017) I am about half way through Adorno's 153 aphorisms, and it is not clear when I will eventually finish remixing his book. But for now, I can reflect on how the project started, where it stands, and how what I have produced can be reconsidered in terms of remix and rhetoric.

Minima Moralia Redux is divided into three parts, because the original book by Adorno is organized in this form. For the first part, consisting of fifty aphorisms, I examined each entry carefully, evaluating every word. I studied the history of particular words, and evaluated each sentence's relevance during the times when the book was written. I then considered how the entries could be understood and how they were at play in contemporary times. When I rewrote the aphorisms, I kept in mind how remixing functions in music and video, and considered how such approaches could function in writing to see what the results could be. I continue to use two translations for the rewriting of each entry. The first is by Dennis Redmond, available on Marxists.org,⁴ and the other is the official English publication of *Minima Moralia* translated by E. F. N. Jephcott for Verso Press.⁵

³ Early reflections on what I discuss in this section can be found in the blog posts: "about" <http://minimamoraliaredux.blogspot.com/p/about.html> (accessed February 15, 2017); "Preliminary Notes on Analysis of Theodor Adorno's Minima Moralia," <http://remixtheory.net/?p=820> (accessed February 15, 2017). Minima Moralia Redux can be viewed at <http://minimamoraliaredux.blogspot.com/>.

⁴ Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, Part 1, trans. Dennis Redmond, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1951/mm/ch01.htm> (accessed, February 15, 2017).

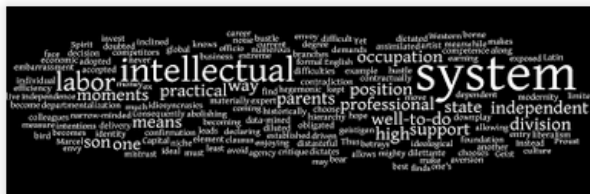
⁵ Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (New York: Verso, 1951).

A selective remix by [Eduardo Navas](#), October 16, 2011.

Text Source: [Theodor Adorno, Minima Moralia, Marxists.org, Part I, Aphorism 1](#). Accessed October 16, 2011.



Visualization source above and top of entry: [Eduardo Navas, Minima Moralia, 1, Many Eyes](#). Created October 11, 2011. Accessed October 16, 2011.



Visualization of remixed entry, [Eduardo Navas, Minima Moralia 1 Remix, Many Eyes](#). Created December 3, 2011. Accessed December 3, 2011

Posted 16th October 2011 by [Eduardo Navas](#)

Image 1: Bottom area of first post of Minima Moralia Redux.

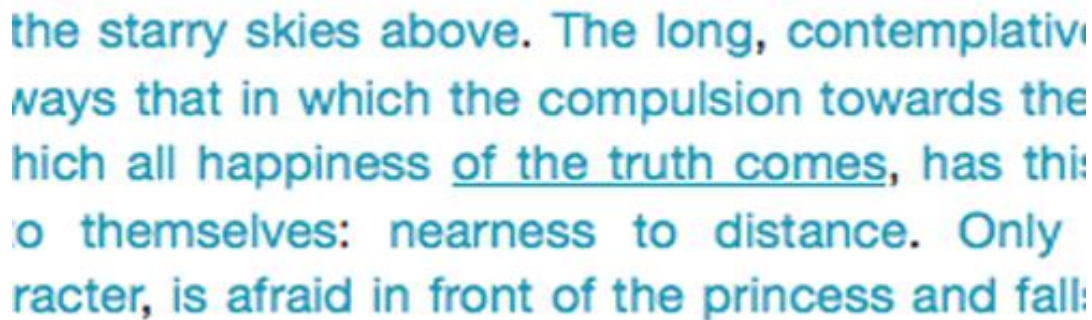
The first fifty entries also include word cloud visualizations, which I developed using Many Eyes, an online resource developed by Martin Wattenberg for IBM.⁶ The word clouds are useful to evaluate the repetition of words in the original and remixed versions of each aphorism. The visualization of the original aphorism is placed at the top of each blog entry. The main section of each post consists of the remixed text with a link to the online source available on Marxists.org. At the bottom is a thumb image of the same visualization along with a second visualization of the actual remix. (Image 1) These thumb images are presented with each post to provide a quick understanding of how key terms are reused and others omitted, while others are added in accordance to the principles of selective remixing. On the blog, the reader can click on the thumb images to view larger versions and compare them. (image 2).

⁶ The visualizations unfortunately are no longer available on Many Eyes. All of the visualizations are available with their respective entries on the *Minima Moralia Redux* blog. The former URL was <http://www.ibm.com/analytics/us/en/?q=minima+moralia>.

existing source material online, which is quite evident in the viral popularity of image and video memes. The selective remix consists of evaluating the source material and deciding what to leave and what to omit, as well as what to add, all while making sure that the source material remains recognizable.¹⁰ This means that certain parts or elements may be left intact while others may be radically changed. In the selective remix, a tension in terms of authorship develops, as the remixer clearly shows creativity quite similar to the author's. At the same time, the remixed work relies heavily on the cultural recognition of the author and his/her work.

Selectivity can take on different forms, and for the first part of *Minima Moralia Redux*, it made the most sense to me to engage with Adorno's writing as an intertextual exercise that also relies on sampling (copying and pasting), consisting of adding new content while deleting sentences, phrases and words in each entry. The selective approach, however, changed for the second set of aphorisms. This was in part necessary in order to explore other elements of remixing that are specific to online production.

The Rhetoric of *Minima Moralia*, Part 2



the starry skies above. The long, contemplative
ways that in which the compulsion towards the
high all happiness of the truth comes, has this
to themselves: nearness to distance. Only
character, is afraid in front of the princess and fall

Figure 4: "of the truth comes," part of a sentence of *Minima Moralia*'s aphorism 54 that, when clicked, opens a Google search with relevant results.

I began remixing *Minima Moralia*'s second part in 2015. Given that I consider art as a form that reflects on the times a work is produced, it became evident to me that Adorno's writing needed to be connected directly with the network on which it functions as a remix. For this reason, I decided to use Dennis Redmond's online translation as a direct reference for anyone wanting access to the content online.¹¹ Part two consists of linking phrases, parts of phrases, or single words, devoid of any punctuation, to corresponding Google searches. (Figures 4 and 5) The reader can click on any link and be taken to respective search results, which will change according to Google's updates.¹²

my basic definitions, see Eduardo Navas "Remix Defined," *Remix Theory: The Aesthetics of Sampling* (Wien/New York: Springer, 2012) 65-68. For two examples of the selective and reflexive remixes discussed, see David J. Gunkel, "1.15 Remix," *Of Remixology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 15-16; Tashima Thomas, "Race and Remix: The Aesthetics of Race in the Visual and Performing Arts," *The Routledge Companion to Remix Studies*, eds. Eduardo Navas, Owen Gallagher, xtine Burrough, 179-91 (New York: Routledge, 2014).

¹⁰ Navas, *Remix Theory*, 66.

¹¹ Available at Marxists.org: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1951/mm/>

¹² I do not describe the visualizations that accompany this article in detail. For a more in-depth description of how the entries are organized for the second set of aphorisms see: "Preliminary Notes on Theodor Adorno's *Minima Moralia* Part 3," <http://remixdata.net/2015/04/16/preliminary-notes-on-theodor-adornos-minima-moralia-part-3/>.

in the great speculative systems of idealism
 'man barbarism to each other. What peasant
 locates as autonomy in metaphysics, is the
 t conscripts vis-à-vis the women of the

Figure 5: “Truth,” part of a sentence of *Minima Moralia*’s aphorism 54 that, when clicked, opens a Google search with relevant results.

The concept of making every word in a text a link is certainly not new. Heath Bunting had already explored this possibility in 1998 with his net.art piece called *readme* (Figure 6), in which he took every single word in a review of his own work published in *The Telegraph*, and linked it to corresponding .com URLs, some which did not exist at the time, but Bunting’s argument was that they likely would in the future. Part two of *Minima Moralia Redux* technically functions in similar fashion to Bunting’s work, with the difference that words and phrases are linked to search results as opposed to specific URLs. In this way, the second part of Adorno’s book is part of networked communication, itself; that which he rigorously critiqued is immediately accessible in order to consider how particular words or phrases he used may be relevant at the moment a person is reading his work online.

THE TELEGRAPH, WIRED 50: Heath Bunting

Heath Bunting is on a mission. But don't asking him to define what it is. His CV (bored teen and home computer hacker in 80s Stevenage, flyposter, graffiti artist and art radio pirate in Bristol, bulletin board organiser and digital culture activist (or, his phrase, artist) in London (is replete with the necessary qualifications for a 90s sub-culture citizen but what s interesting about Heath is that if you want to describe to someone what he actually does there s simply no handy category that you can slot him into.

If you had to classify him, you could do worse than call him an organiser of art events. Some of these take place online, some of them in RL, most of them have something to do with technology, though not all. One early event that hit the headlines was his 1994 Kings Cross phone-in, when Heath distributed the numbers of the telephone kiosks around Kings Cross station using the Internet and asked whoever found them to choose one, call it at a specific time and chat with whoever picked up the phone. The incident was a resounding success: at 6 pm one August afternoon, the are was transformed into "a massive techno crowd dancing to the sound of ringing telephones", according to Heath.

More recently, in collaboration with his mother an ex-Greenham activist and bus driver he set up a bogus Glaxo website which mimicked the real one and asked employees to send in their pets for vivisection and experimentation. Glaxo were alarmed enough to issue a public statement, and have the offending site removed.

Figure 6: Heath Bunting, “[Readme](#),” (1998). Online artwork that links all words of a *Telegraph* review of Bunting’s work to specific .com URLs.¹³

¹³ A larger version can be found at <http://remixdata.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/BuntingReadMe.png>.

The second part of *Minima Moralia Redux* also borrows from *Traceblog*, a previous blog project which I finished in 2013.¹⁴ In *Traceblog* I made public, ghost logs of my searches online.¹⁵ The logs were results of automated searches produced with a free plug-in for Firefox called Track Me Not.¹⁶ For this project I wrote nothing, but rather made available material that was produced for me based on the “disguising” of my online activity. The second part of *Minima Moralia Redux* is similar in that I don’t produce anything, but rather repurpose Adorno’s aphorisms, as a series of links to search results that will continue to change as material is added and deleted on the Web. I consider this writing approach a curatorial exercise on sentences and phrases. The second part of *Minima Moralia Redux*, consequently, is an intertextual mashup of Bunting’s early net.art piece, my own approach to repurposing automated searches, and Adorno’s writing.

The linking of phrases and words for each entry in the second part of *Minima Moralia Redux* makes evident how we produce what we often define as original content. I realized that if I put an entire sentence into a Google search I would have Adorno’s publication at the top of the search, which meant that Google was able to recognize the string of terms as a direct “sample” from Adorno’s writing. I wanted to get diverse results that did not lead directly to Adorno, so I decided to adjust the search for a string of words that would provide a diverse result, not Adorno’s text within the first pages. This, at times, was not possible, but what became evident in this process is that we tend to develop our own work by repurposing pre-existing elements, ideas, and things. A single word search is likely to provide the most diverse result on Google, because the more specific the string of words, the more likely it is to reach a specific “sample” that may be deemed as an “original” work produced by a particular person.

In effect, the two parts of *Minima Moralia Redux* so far produced make evident that what we tend to recognize as original in any media is really a specific combination of elements that are remixed according to what individuals want to communicate, express, and share. Even when we speak, we are borrowing from a set of samples (words) archived in a database we carry, called our “memory.” Such combinations are seen as “property” when organized in a unique way and placed in a format that legitimates them as static products, such as a book, or, in terms of music, a major recording.¹⁷

Rhetoric Remixed

There are many rhetorical elements at play in *Minima Moralia Redux*. As is generally known, rhetoric, in part, consists of selecting certain elements over others to develop a unique message that can be attributed to a particular rhetorician. One could argue that rhetoric during the time of the Greeks played a communicative role not so different to what remix plays for us today. This can be better understood when we consider three of the basic elements of rhetoric: 1) “inventio” which consists of the selection of elements, 2) “dispositio” which is the arrangement of the selected

¹⁴ Eduardo Navas, *Traceblog*, <http://navastraceblog.blogspot.com/> (accessed February 15, 2017).

¹⁵ For a critical reflection on *Traceblog*, see Eduardo Navas “Traceblog,” in *Net Works: Case Studies in Web Art and Design*, ed. xtine Burrough, 137-44 (New York: Routledge, 2012).

¹⁶ Daniel C. Howe, Helen Nissenbaum, Vincent Toubiana, *TrackMeNot*, <http://cs.nyu.edu/trackmenot/> (accessed February 15, 2017).

¹⁷ I analyze this premise in more detail in Eduardo Navas, “Regenerative Culture,” <http://remixtheory.net/?p=1337> (accessed February 15, 2017).

elements, and 3) “elocutio” which is the style of presentation.¹⁸ Once we move past oral communication, these three elements become foundational for all forms of communication.

To contextualize *Minima Moralia Redux*, specifically, in terms of rhetoric, Adorno’s book *Minima Moralia* became my source for selecting elements (inventio), which I then rearranged by adding and subtracting material (dispositio), and shared it as blog posts that could be viewed online (elocutio). In contemporary times, this is a selective process not just in speaking or writing but any form of communication, whether it be a composite photograph, painting, or a combination of image music and text in multiple formats of time-based media. Thus, as a remixer, I effectively functioned as a type of rhetorician by selecting from Adorno’s writing to develop work that in my view presented relevant arguments for the times in which I wrote the entries.

As a remixer, I try to keep as much of Adorno’s voice at play. And I continue to be invested in making sure that Adorno’s theories remain his for the entirety of the project. In other words, it is not necessarily my opinion that is expressed in the remixes, although I do take creative license and adjust—even critique Adorno’s views within his own writing. The goal in the end is to consider how Adorno’s criticism would relate to current cultural variables, structures, and institutions of which he likely would have been critical. My position, then, is somewhere between that of an actual author and a mere mimicker as would be defined in terms of original and copy.

Taking this approach in order to reflect on how a particular critical position may change over time with a book such as *Minima Moralia*, I argue, is only fair given that Adorno himself believed in revising one’s view on life and the world. In the 1960s, he admitted that some of his critical analysis in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which he co-wrote with Horkheimer, functioned differently in 1969, and for this reason they did not stand by everything they wrote. They considered the book “a piece of documentation.” By stating this, Adorno and Horkheimer let the book be part of history.¹⁹ Based on this critical position on his part, it is very unlikely, for instance, that in 2017, the time of this writing, he would use the word “savage” as he did when he wrote aphorism 32 titled “Savages Are not More Noble.”²⁰ The result of this approach in *Minima Moralia Redux* is a new text that remains clearly in large part Adorno’s, but which I hope resonates with the language and issues of the twenty first century. *Minima Moralia Redux* because of my deliberate approach leaves open questions of original and copy in relation to authorship, which need to be reflected upon in more detail.

Originals and Copies

What is an original and what is a copy? Clearly *Minima Moralia Redux* could certainly be considered a copy of *Minima Moralia*, which would mean that it can only attain relevance by being evaluated in terms of how it remixed the preceding work. The fact that it is a remix means that certain things were changed, added, deleted as already discussed above, which leads to the question, can it be a work on its own right? This is a basic question that plagues remix as a creative practice—which leads to another question: can a remix be a work that stands on the same level of creativity as a work that is deemed original? I must admit that such questions were not that clear

¹⁸ Marcus Boon, “The Copia or the Abundant Style,” *In Praise of Copying* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard Press, University Press), 47.

¹⁹ Mark Horkheimer & Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), xi-xii.

²⁰ Aphorism 32, in the verso version, online it translates: “Savages are not better human beings.” *Minima Moralia*, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1951/mm/ch01.htm>.

to me when I started working on the aphorisms in 2011, but now that I have performed long term research, upon closer reflection on the outcome of the aphorisms posted online thus far, I consider *Minima Moralia Redux* to function according to Adorno's view on the work of art as an unfinished object, one that allows for resistance and criticism to remain viable.²¹

This aspect of my ongoing process is also informed by my interest in exploring the relation of originals and copies as often found in the practice of music remixes and particularly mashups. David Gunkel, in this regard, makes a relevant point when he explains that a remix or a mashup "does not confront recording practices and technology with some kind of new and radical challenge. It merely takes up, elaborates, and exploits something that is already part and parcel at the history of recording."²² This is also echoed by Marcus Boon who views originals and copies in terms of epistemology when he contextualizes both as "acts of designation, rather than guarantors of essence; as such they are impermanent and they can themselves be copied."²³

Both Gunkel's and Boon's interests are in debunking the privilege of originals over copies. Gunkel proposes that both remix, as a creative practice, and remix studies, as a field of research, have been defining the acts of appropriation and recycling on Platonic terms that give privilege to originals over copies; such a premise became the foundation of copyright law. This shift, Boon argues, began to take place in the 18th Century when the copy and the forgery were redefined: "Copying was an integral part of the visual arts until the eighteenth century, when the rise of originality and authenticity as aesthetic values, and the rise of various forms of intellectual-property law, retrospectively transformed the copier into a forger, and the multiplicity of similar and imitations into fakes."²⁴ In this sense, our understanding of a copy shifted as the concept of originality became redefined in terms of copyright. To contest this moral shift that in turn affects the general understanding of creativity in culture at large, Gunkel relies on Gilles Deleuze's theory of difference and repetition to make a case for simulations, that is copies of copies, as the means to move past the authority of originals; while Boon combines Western and Eastern philosophy to argue that there are no originals nor are there copies and that we should question binary definitions.²⁵ Both arguments propose the reconsideration of our processes of creation, communication and the forms we use to share things.

Criticism as a Minor Language

My goal with Adorno's book is for part one to repurpose, resample, and recontextualize each aphorism; and for part two, to turn each entry into direct online links in order to explore the creative process of remixing, as well as to reflect on the way criticism could be exercised when information related to the content is constantly changing around it.

I deliberately take the position of the subordinate, of the subaltern, of the *other*, of the *unoriginal*, in order to repurpose Adorno's material based on principles of a minor language, which according to Deleuze and Guatarri is a way of attaining autonomy by constantly redefining a major language; meaning, something considered the norm or the well-established. They discuss this in

²¹ Adorno goes in-depth about the art object in his book *Aesthetic Theory*. To read a very good account on Adorno's views on the work of art also in relation to mimesis, which is relevant to Boon in terms of copying see Tom Huhn, "Introduction: Thoughts beside Themselves," *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, ed. Tom Huhn, 1-18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²² Gunkel, *Of Remixology*, 73.

²³ Boon, *In Praise of Copying*, 28-29.

²⁴ Boon, *In Praise of Copying*, 115-116

²⁵ Boon, *In Praise of Copying*, 49.

all aspects of culture from language itself to social relations, “The notion of dialect does not elucidate that of a minor language, but the other way around; it is the minor language that defines dialects through its own possibilities for variation.”²⁶

In other words, it is through the minor that change happens. This is where the process of becoming takes place: “There is no becoming-majoritarian. Women, regardless of their numbers, are a minority, definable as a state or subset; but they create only by making possible a becoming over which they do not have ownership, into which they themselves must enter; this becoming woman affects all human kinds, men and women both.”²⁷ Women are presented as yet another example of minoritarian-becoming because they share elements with the major figure of men, yet it is the becoming-woman that can truly question and constantly define the concept of both men and women when an individual engages in critical reflection. What this means is that anyone could take on this minoritarian position if they are open to understanding the complexities of social and biological variables.

In other words, a man could take on the minoritarian position of woman understanding that his own position is the one being questioned and redefined. This could be done in various ways, from becoming truly open to arguments that question the concept of man to participating and fighting (and using their privileged position) in the struggles that women face, understanding that such engagement will only help both men and women in the process of *becoming*. For this to happen, a critical awareness is essential of all participants. From this stance, the critic is a minoritarian figure who shares elements that make possible debates with major figures. Critics are able to express views on the world with the difference that their goal is quite often to change that which is being critiqued by asking questions on what is deliberately presented as the norm.²⁸

Based on Deleuze and Guatarri’s propositions, then, criticism functions as a minor language. This is because it questions the norm, it reflects on the mainstream, the given, the popular. Criticism is actually quite unpopular, in part because people tend to feel uncomfortable when they engage in critical debates that question their opinions and beliefs; in effect, debates which are rhetorical exercises asking participants to reflect on their respective positions. In this process, participants are being asked to become minoritarian in order to understand that which is taken as the given, the norm, and by way of doing this, they engage in a process of becoming. But it is not easy to question what one may find comfortable or stable and for this reason criticism remains on the margins of the mainstream; it is scorned upon by those who are the subjects of critique, who often happen to be in power. But, when pushed to the periphery, or marginalized, what criticism is doing is allowing those who hold a privileged position to be constantly redefined. Like woman to man according to Deleuze and Guatarri, it is through the minor that the major can hope to change and evolve. And in this sense, *Minima Moralia Redux* is a minor work on a work that already functioned in terms of a minor language itself; thus, my project is minor to a second degree. The adding, deleting and changing selectively in the first part of aphorisms is a rhetorical questioning of not only Adorno, but also how what he wrote in the 1950s may have held a critical position at that time, and how such criticism may be relevant in our times. My remix of *Minima Moralia* can be

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, “Postulates of Linguistics,” *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 1998), 102.

²⁷ Deleuze and Guatarri, “Postulates of Linguistics,” 106.

²⁸ Deleuze and Guatarri discuss this in terms of answering questions with answers within other questions in order to challenge the command implicated in the norm or institutionalized thought of what they call the “order-word.” Deleuze and Guatarri, “Postulates of Linguistics,” 110.

seen as a becoming of criticism by way of questioning Adorno, a major-minoritarian figure who is both praised and questioned for his philosophical views on society and culture.

The process of becoming is also important for reevaluating the concepts of original and copy. Ultimately, even though I did not explain this at length in previous publications, but rather implied it in my analysis of dub music and appropriation in literature,²⁹ I don't see remix in terms of copies and originals, or copies of copies, but rather as a type of rhythmic loop that allows for the reinvention of creativity and criticism. This is the case when I engage with Adorno's aphorisms periodically to remix them.³⁰

One of the challenges of Western thought is the recurring drive for accumulation. Such a concept is what leads to value in abstract form. For those invested in culture, it is a quest for knowledge; this can even happen to the most well-intentioned when their goal becomes primarily the abstract understanding of things by posing questions, and coming up with new questions on already existing questions. This is an ideology one must keep in check for it can become an empty exercise of accumulation for accumulation's sake, not so dissimilar to the ideology of accumulation of wealth for the sake of more wealth as a means to power. Both cases point to an idea of progress by way of creating some sort of archive, or record that one can repurpose for increased value. One way to move beyond this is to see the recursion, reuse, and repurposing of elements in the world, of knowledge and wealth, not for attaining more knowledge, or wealth, but as a means to reinvent oneself in the moment. Nietzsche was well aware of this, and discusses it in terms of history as a necessity for the moment of living: "We need it for life and action, not as a convenient way to avoid life and action, or to excuse a selfish life and a cowardly or base action. We would serve history only so far as it serves life."³¹

This possibility is everywhere. It takes place every moment of our lives. It becomes most evident in music (remix makes this quite evident); it is also evident in the computational loops that drive contemporary network culture. All things in life repeat, and it is up to us to understand how such repetitions can become a means for living historically.

In this sense, the paradox of remix is that according to its basic meaning, it functions on a default state of resistance against becoming fully formulaic, while offering basic forms to repurpose material. And because it is unlikely to become a simplistic formula, it continues to remain on the margins of culture. Remix is a subgenre of all aspects of cultural production, of all aspects of life for that matter. Remix is a minor language.

²⁹ I am referring in particular in my discussions of the roots of remix in Jamaican culture, and appropriation as a critical form of repetition as discussed by Borges in his short story, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote." See chapter two and three in *Remix Theory*, "Remix[ing] Music," 35-61 and "Remix[ing] Theory," 111-120. I also explain my interest in repetition as an action or loop that can lead to something different such as mastering an instrument, or improving one's writing, see: "Bonus Beats" *The Causality of Remix*, 172.

³⁰ This is based on how hip hop has been discussed by cultural theorists. For a good summary of these views see Tricia Rose, "Soul Sonic Forces: Technology, Orality, and Black Cultural Practice in Rap Music," *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 65-74.

³¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History*, trans. Adrian Collins (London and New York: Macmillan, 1957), 3.