Chapter 7: Scripture Remixed: Recreation and Identity

I dream of seminaries as DJ schools, culturally engaged centers of remixing.
Steve Taylor[1]

In the summer of 2009, indie performing artist Imogen Heap was invited to the stage of TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design)—the influential non-profit hosted consortium of forward-thinking academics, scientists, and public-thinkers (recent speakers have included Al Gore, Jane Goodall, Billy Graham, and Bill Gates)—just to sing a song.[2] The lectures—typically featuring world-class politicians, scientists, and academics—rarely host musicians, and their choice of Heap, who records music in the living room of her London apartment, reflects not her chart-topping success, but the keen eye of media futurists. Though born in 1977, Heap is a performance artist of the digital generation. The classically-trained composer showed a natural affinity for composition at age twelve using an Atari and sequencing software. Today her music is cross dubbed "folk-pop-electronica," and though Heap plays piano, cello, clarinet, keyar, steel hang, and more, her real instrument is her Mac and the widely-available Pro Tools software, which records, modifies, samples, arranges, and mixes her professional quality songs, including the popular "Hide and Seek," featuring Heap's voice in harmonic layers modified by vocoder.

But the characteristics of Heap's music are remarkable not because she uses computers (common enough), but how her process is emblematic of content manipulation in digital culture—something we'll find that many junior high student can do with burgeoning aptitude. A few characteristics:

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[1] Taylor, *The Out of Bounds Church?*, 156.

[2] Imogen Heap, "Imogen Heap plays "Wait It Out"" (Digital Video presented at the TEDGlobal Conference 2009, Oxford, England, July 2009), http://www.ted.com/talks/imogen_heap_wait.html. Also see "About TED," *TED: Ideas Worth Spreading*, n.d., http://www.ted.com/pages/view/id/5.

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- Lossless, instant reproduction. The very word "digital" distinguishes itself from analog electronic technologies (VHS tapes or photocopies) by its encoding process that allows for copies are that infinite and unchanged in nature, regardless of the number of reproductions The grammar of musical production translates this to the "loop," which parlays the technology to a repeated melodic or rhythmic phrases—the stable of modern electronic and hip-hop and some singer-songwriter acoustic genres.[3] Imogen uses loop extensively in recording but also performance (live looping)—accompanied on stage with a MacBook Pro allowing the sound of many instrumentalists though she is the only person performing.

- Sampling. A signature of the hip-hop genre, sampling uses audio recorded from environmental noise of other pre-recordings as a portion of the new recording. Heap uses the sound of a dinner cooking in a frying pan in to create ambient distance in "Hide and Seek."[4]

- Collapse of traditional production roles. The traditional music industry has required artists, backing musicians, managers, studio engineers, music publishers, producers, record labels, retail partners, and rights management brokers (not to mention additional structures for concert/tour productions, music/critic journalists, *et cetera*). [5] Imogen Heap collapses nearly all these roles: she is artist, engineer, label, and marketer. Traditional information gatekeepers are eliminated.

- Blurred distinction between artist and audience. Adding the above characteristics to Internet interactivity adds a new dimension. In addition to the above roles, Imogen Heap demonstrably takes on the role of audience in her own creative space. Recording lyrics she wrote in the summer of 2009, Heap never completed the instrumentation, but instead used her video blog and Twitter feed to solicit digital feedback from "fans" (a passive term that may need to be reconsidered). Over five hundred digital natives created and recorded (using sampling and loops) musical creations using Heap's vocals, who because the audience of her own music, creating an "album" *from* her fans.[6]

[3] Loops used by modern electronica (including major subgenres, including trip-hop, dance, drum and bass, house, ambient, etc.) might be typified by Moby, hip-hop by Kayne West, singer-songwriter by Andrew Bird.

[4] Note that digital sampling usually combines with looping. The ability to instantly replicate or modify the loop sets it apart from analog sampling /looping, an early example of which might be the Beatles experimental track "Revolution 9."

[5] This is my contribution: I have written freelance music reviews of indie rock for several years

[6] See Heap discussing the project on YouTube. For results of the project, see www.twestival.fm to hear recordings of "Imogen Heap - The Song That Never Was," *Twestival.fm*, February 10, 2009, http://www.twestival.fm/.

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Is it any wonder that TED sees Heap as an artist in a wholly different cultural mold from the traditional recording artist? While the music industry is trying to recognize talent (nominating Heap for two Grammy Awards in 2006), the word "industry" recalls an age under assault from digital culture which radically reconfigures the means of production and the meaning of an artistic work.[7] Appropriately, as of this writing, new R&B electronic artist Jason Derulo holds the #3 spot on iTunes singles chart for "Whatcha Say," which heavily samples Imogen Heap's "Hide and Seek"—the appropriate cap to an illustrative example to our digital cultural feature*: remix.*

"Mixing and remixing denote a basic process of digital media… from the technological convergence of different media, to the cutting, looping, editing, merging, and superimposing of multiple sources within the same media."[8] In daily terms it looks like millions of home-crafted videos on YouTube, the open-source audio editor Audacity, or Photoshop layer tennis—a game or competition common to graphic designers who employ complex photo editing software to merge previous digital images with new ones. The Pew Internet and American Life Project's December 2007 findings show that 64% of teens (12-17) participate in one or more "content-creation" activities (cf. 95% use the Internet), while 26% can do complex remixing.[9] Even older users have learned basic related features of the environment such as "cut & paste" text or file operations.

Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* was published as a linear book, and it wasn't long before he felt the need to communicate his theories as a "graphic translation." *The Medium is the Massage* (with Quentin Fiore) was the result—but it was much more than simplified theories for a popular audience. The environment of the book remixed McLuhan's topics with disconcerting photography and re-arranged typography: one page requires a mirror to read a

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[7] "Biography: Imogen Heap"

[8] Jamie O'Neil, "Mix/Remix as Epistemology: The Implications of the Metamedium, Digital Media" (unpublished, 2007), 2, http://www.mcluhanremix.com/papers.html.

[9] Lenhart et al., *Teens and Social Media*.

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quote by John Dewey.[10] The book prefigured McLuhan's ideas as much as the medium of print and photography would allow.

Professor of digital media arts Jamie O'Neil introduces cultural remix to his undergraduate courses by sampling, looping, and remixing video clips of McLuhan in the late 1960s in a television interview, juxtaposing his own updated theories for digital culture. Remix is defined as creating something new by appropriating something old. Digital agents—for their relationship to media is inter-active—mix in three modes, O'Neil writes.[11] Mixed media is a *convergence* of multiple forms—web displays juxtapose static and mobile text, image, video, audio in parallel and interactive structures.[12] Secondly, the *playlist* is a mode of mixing within one major medium, such as the iconic iTunes library. Computer scientist Alan Kay's concept of the *metamedium* labels the third and most unique mode to digital culture—mixing media to create a new medium. This new medium can be understood not as the mixed media themselves, but as the natural *process* of remix as an environment and therefore epistemology. Thus O'Neil can update McLuhan's famous aphorism "the medium is the message" to "The medium is the mix—and the mix is the message."

Remix problematizes the author and questions textual-critical words such as "source" or aesthetic adjectives such as "originality." But O'Neil, while allowing for other forms of digital mashup, insists that remixes *retain the identity of their sampled sources*. That is to say, "old" sources that are sampled, looped, or arranged to make something new do so in such a way that

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[10] Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (New York: Random House, 1967). Fittingly, McLuhan doesn't provide page numbers.

[11] O'Neil, "Mix/Remix as Epistemology," 14.

[12] "mixed media" is to be preferred to the nearly obsolete term "multimedia" from the 1990s.

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both the new and the old are visible—one recognizes what was remixed.[13] "It transforms the 'original' like a demi-mask when layered over a familiar face."[14]

Further we suggest that remixes are often in critical dialogue with each other.[15] Remixes, by appropriating sources and re-contextualizing them, add rhetorical content by way of narrative, praise, satire, or the classic modes of persuasion: ethos, logos, and pathos. Remixes that import previous mixes can be a simple reply to the previous mix, or aware of the entire history of mixes (such as appropriation of cultural memes[16]). Electronic artist Moby's 1999 album *Play* incorporated elements of African-American spirituals with electronic beats, challenging socio-cultural progress, while cultural novelist Douglas Coupland reproduced the format of eBay listings in his innovative 2006 *J-Pod*, suggesting the commodification of human-resources in a digital age.

As a bridge to our discussion of scripture in remix, we consider Old Testament biblical scholar Eep Talstra's taxonomy of meaning-maker roles in the production of texts. Generally, Talstra identifies The Scribe (who produces or copies), the Librarian (who stores or distributes), the Scholar (who analyzes), and the Reader (who understands and acts). Talstra understands the advances of digital culture as improvements of the Scribe and Librarian, but deficiencies or absence of the Scholar or Reader. Compare this with O'Neil's definition of remix; he writes, "With mixing/remixing, there is a simultaneous activity in the acts of databasing/editing, arranging/composing, performing/recording, and a co-joining of temporal/spatial montage."

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[13] Given the postmodern despair (or apathy) toward original thought, this definition of remix is the only realistic distinguishing marker between 'new' and 'remixed' content. 'New' content is not new—there is no new thought under the sun— it is simply mixed in such a way that originating sources are no longer distinguishable.

[14] Jamie O'Neil, "Remix Identity: Cultural Mash-Ups and Aesthetic Violence in Digital Media" (unpublished, 2008), 2, http://www.mcluhanremix.com/papers.html.

[15] I am tempted to suggest that remixes are always inherently in critical dialogue, but I remain reserved because it's I imagine its possible for a remix to have the receiving horizon in much sharper focus.

[16] A great current example is "Get Down" meme that begun in Japan and has made its way to the US in 2009. The tongue-in-cheek but insightful "Rocketboom Institute for Internet Studies" documents the Japanese viral video that has spanned thousands of remixes. See "Get Down (ゲッダン)," *Know Your Meme (Rocketboom Institute for Internet Studies)*, February 2009, http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/get-down-%E3%82%B2%E3%83%83%E3%83%80%E3%83%B3.

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With remix, the roles are no longer distinguishable. In reality, as with our example of artist Imogen Heap, digital culture collapses the roles of production and eliminates the audience.

Digital remix, then, has the following characteristics:

1. New arrangement.
2. Old content sources.
3. Visible identity of both new (remixed) source and (original) sources
4. Collapse of author/reader distinction.
5. In dialectic relationship with other remixes.

Experience of Scripture in Remix

Before reflecting theologically on the theological implications of scripture in a remix environment, we first can follow some historical probes on the experience of scripture remixed. Digital culture while unique in its appropriation of remix as a cultural environment (*metamedium*), doesn't preclude earlier examples.

Traditioning—Hosea and Ruth.

Elsewhere we've briefly mentioned the canonical formation of the scriptures, a topic that requires thought on orality to literacy and likely has much more fruitful comparison with digital culture. However, the because scholarly conversation in this area is unsettled and brisk, our touches here can only be brief suggestions. Still, the question is, can the traditioning process of Old Testament scripture be seen as "remix"?

Biblical studies speaks of canon in two ways. A canonical form of a book is the "final form" of a single book of scripture, the form that is currently accepted by the church as complete and authoritative. A final form, of course, presumes previous arrangements of the same book, the basic assumption of redaction criticism. So Brevard Childs can speak of the book of Hosea in its multiple stages, beginning as a warning of judgment for the northern kingdom, but later adapted to the southern kingdom as a warning to recall judgment, and the salvation of God. J.

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Gordon McConville writes that the final—remixed—form becomes "in the end, a mature reflection on the relation of judgment and salvation, valid for many situations."[17] A document that repurposed old material; a new identity stands with the old shining through. Further, the newer arrangements can stand in dialectical relationship the previous. "The growth of books, then, is not haphazard, but comes out of careful theological reflection… there is an important connection between the process of growth and the interpretation of the book in its final form." The remix is intentional.

Canon also speaks of placement—a book's relationship to others in the scriptural collection. Today we have the two accepted arrangements of the Old Testament canon. The Christian arrangement—Genesis through Malachi—generally follows the Latin Vulgate order, while the Jewish canon traditionally is divided to three sections, the Law (the Pentateuch), the Prophets, and the Writings. But earlier arrangements of the canon exist, and unlike the assumptions of print culture, which assume books are arranged by a classification or indexing system (e.g. alphabetic, Dewey decimal), arrangers of the canon can be making theological statements. J. Andrew Dearman illustrates this with the canonical book of Ruth, which he says is re-placed more than any other book in the OT canon.[18] Among variations in pre-modern, medieval orderings, Ruth is associated with Torah, with the prophets, or event in a category of "holy women" (Syriac Christianity groups her with Susanna, Esther, and Judith). The reasons for the moves are both theological and historical, but Dearman and Pussman importantly show that:

> The variety of Ruth's placement in canonical orders reflects, at least on occasion, interests similar to those currently expressed in such methods as reader response theory, canonical criticism, and intertextuality.[19]

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[17] J. Gordon McConville, *A Guide to the Prophets*, vol. 4, Exploring the Old Testament (InterVarsity Press, 2003), 149.

[18] Dearman, personal conversation, 26 Sept 09

[19] Dearman, J. Andrew and Sabelyn A. Pussman, "Putting Ruth in Her Place," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 27, no. 1 (June 2005): 60.

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We might say it this way: the Jewish Scribes or Librarians of Old Testament scripture were remixing the canon for their times.

The Revised Common Lectionary

A modern-print example of scripture in remix is the Revised Common Lectionary. Published in its current form in 1992, the table of biblical texts (or full-text published versions which reprint the entire text) juxtaposes scriptures from across the canon arranged for church calendar events arranged on Gregorian calendar time. Each week relates Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament and Gospel readings in parallel, and the ecumenical body that formed the collection describes the work as "arranged and intended for proclamation"—a remix. [20] Both the original text and the new meanings visible in the juxtaposition of the text are visible.

Glo-Bible

So if we take remix as we've defined it: a new arrangement or appropriation of old sources that engages both a new identity and visibly retains the previous, we can demonstrate analog examples of scripture in remix. Both examples even contribute with limited power to the function of identity formation, a characteristic we will address presently, and that is hype-realized in digital culture. But digital technology uniquely allows for infinite repeatability and universal access.[21] The bridge between oral-chriographic remix (traditional/canonical process) or gatekeeping-print remix (lectionary formation) to digital remix is analogous to the transition from craft literacy—reading and writing limited the culturally influential few—to mass literacy—reading (and only somewhat writing) expanded to all. Digital technologies collapse the author-reader distinction, and often are produced in dialectic with other remixes.

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[20] "About the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)," *Consultation on Common Texts (CCT)*, 2008, http://www.commontexts.org/rcl/index.html.

[21] Collapse of space and time (See Chapter 5) although universal in the understanding it is mediated by the filtering community (See Chapter 6)

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Which is why our final example of a Bible in "remix," Zondervan's Glo Bible (www.globible.com) is not the truly the "digital alternative to the paper Bible," failing to meet two essential criteria of digital remix. Instead at best, it is a step in that process, at worst, a misleading digitally re-surfaced Bible (The NIV Study Bible, exactly) that retains nascent characteristics of gatekeeping and control that mark the print era. The Glo Bible is an interactive software collection aimed at a popular audience. Unlike academic Bible collections like Logos or Bibleworks, Glo emphasizes immersive video-visual experiences.[22] Additional content from Bible dictionaries and study resources are arranged in parallel to the text, accessed with a stylized user interface that mimics design principles found on the iPhone (natural object movement and so on). While the mixed-media presentation isn't new, the most unique feature of the software is what it calls lenses, which sorts and filters small "data points"—glowing white dots—into canonical, diachronic ("timeline"), geographic, or topical arrangements.[23] This is an example of digital recontextualization.

But Glo does not qualify as a digital remix of scripture—its content is controlled by gatekeepers and cannot be appropriated by digital meaning makers. While it claims unprecedented interactivity, it instead limits users to re-arrangement rather than re-creation. The author and reader distinctions are maintained, and therefore cannot figure into the *metamedium* of digital culture.[24]

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[22] *Glo Video Walkthrough*, Digital Video, 2009, http://www.pressvillage.com/glo/walkthroughvideo.html. Claims over 2,000 photos and hours of HD quality video.

[23] Including nicely done transitions between each lens. For instance, the demonstration video shows a user selecting the first chapter of Revelations and transferring them to a geographical ordering, which places the chapters geographically over satellite photos of Asia Minor, according to the ancient city each section addresses.

[24] Also of note are print Bibles that have attempted imitations of digital culture in print media by including heavy visual elements and segmented content, but in published book form. *Revolve: The Complete New Testament* by Thomas Nelson arranges the text like a Teen magazine with pull-quotes and quizzes. For thoughtful analysis, see Hauna Ondrey, "Evaluating the Aesthetic Value of Visual Additions to the Biblical Text," in (presented at the Garrett-Evangelical's Second Annual Student Theological Conference, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2009). Another title worth mentioning is a version of Eugene Peterson's *The Message: Remix*, which ironically adds versification (the original editions removed traditional chapter and verse markers).

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As a mode of co-creation.

It doesn't seem that many conservative evangelical theologians would be comfortable with *creativity* in the same sentence with scripture—the creativity of the text is the purview of the literary critics.[25] Invoking creativity allows for connotations of fluid instability—there goes authority—and muddied abstractions—there goes perspicuity. Yet, the Creator God we encounter in Genesis 1-3 is not only The One Who Creates but The One Who Creates Creators. God's command to Adam "to till the earth" (Gen 2.15) presumes that Adam carries out his task in the same manner God himself carried out the task of planting. The *imago dei* texts in Gen 1.26-27 implicitly set foundations that the human creations of male and female are to act as their Creator does—creating. But while creating things from the dirt is allowable, creating things from revelation may be dangerous territory—that is, seeking to be like God. The images of God are to reflect, not replace.

Artist-theologian Frederick Buechner perhaps gives us a way forward:

> "To *make* suggests making something out of something else the way a carpenter makes wooden boxes out of wood. To *create* suggests making something out of nothing the way an artist makes paintings or poems. It is true that artists, like carpenters, have to use something else—paint, words—but the beauty or meaning they make is different from the material they make out of it. To create is to make something essentially new."[26]

His distinction between make (Heb: *asah*) and create (Heb: *bara*) is not entirely new, and both words appear in the creation account. While some have drawn some significance between the distinction in the text between the two words, biblical scholars will insist that the text does not stick steadfastly to separate definitions.[27] Nevertheless, there may be a helpful practical

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[25] Robert Alter acknowledged only with suspicion, I'd think.

[26] Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC*, Rev Exp. (HarperOne, 1993), 20.

[27] The Dictionary Biblical Languages for instance, does list as its first definition "to make something that has not been in existence before," (and emphasizes uniqueness in its third definition), but in its second listing, includes "make, form or fashion something out of elements that exist" citing Gen 6.7, Isa 65.18, and Jer 31.22).

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theological definition here. To make, not *ex nihilo*, is to use materials that have been previously given—a definition of dependant Creation—humans who make must first depend on the Creator to supply their materials. The Creator alone can create from nothing, spinning both raw materials and raw ideas from his hand.

This distinction perhaps help us think of the human creature as co-creator, one who creates in a way that imitates but never replicates her Creator. She makes, but she does not create. She remixes, but she does not source.

Now we return to scripture as revelation. Even if we place scripture as Revelation in the "economy of salvation" the source of salvation-history retains the characteristics of Creator, and the human creatures, though in under sin, retain the *imago dei*.[28] Earlier we have argued that revelation is the action of God with communicative intent in the medium of Creation. Here we add that revelation is the *creative* action of God with communicative intent in the medium of Creation. As part of the creation, the medium of revelation has some mandate to be "tilled and kept" by Adam. In this framework, the remixer is the one who appropriates the source (created by God) and makes something new from it *while retaining the original character of the source.* A remix of scripture retains authority and clarity of scripture while establishing the human remixer as a co-creator.

As a mode of knowing.

Jamie O'Neil writes:

> Remixing is an act of "processualizing" media. It transforms the passive-distribution media into an active-creative media. A. N. Whitehead, who is often cited by McLuhan when he confronts epistemological issues, promoted a model of knowledge that allowed for dynamic processes, the growth and development of systems and the constant movement of thought in the act of discovery. … as an interface of imagination and knowledge.[29]

[28] The placement in the "economy of salvation" is Work, *Living and Active*.

[29] O'Neil, "Mix/Remix as Epistemology," 7.

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His essay on "Mix/Remix as Epistemology" proposes remix as a model of engagement with content as the "interface of knowledge." To remix scripture is *to create in order to know*. But it is more than that: it is *to know by creating*. To engage scripture as revelation is not only to "be attentive" (Prov 4.1) *in order to* "get wisdom," but to "be attentive" *by* "getting wisdom."

Returning to Talstra's fourfold text-maker model—the Scribe, the Librarian, the Scholar, and the Reader—we recall the claim that remix collapses these four roles. When we think of the acquisition of knowledge we think of epistemology and we think of the role of the Scholar—charged with analyzing in order to know. But in a sea of information how is the scholar to know *what* to analyze? One must first read (Reader), but in order to read, one must first find patterns (Librarian), and in fact one must engage or arrange those patterns (Scribe). To read *is* to analyze *is* to index *is* to arrange. O'Neil describes Whitehead's "dynamic process" of knowledge as the interface between "knowledge"—the scriptures—and imagination—of one who engages scripture in remix. In hermeneutics, this is text and context.

As a mode of practice.

Vanhoozer, speaks of a similar mode of appropriating the text in practice. For Vanzhooer, the text is the dramatic script and doctrine becomes "direction for fitting participation in the drama of redemption."[30]

> Doctrine, in speeding faith toward understanding, prepares us to appropriate the theo-drama, to become communicants, and thus *contribute* to the action[31]

This engagement is the way into the text, not to simply read, nor to discard, but to engage in a "creative repetition" of the text.[32]

Vanhoozer does not have digital remix in mind, but the practice of Spirit-led church practice. But if we listen, we hear the same concerns of remix—that to retain the original

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[30] Vanhoozer, *The Drama Of Doctrine*, 102.
[31] Ibid., 107.
[32] Ibid., 106.

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content while adding something new; to encourage a *performance* of scripture that makes the church today as much as the actors as the readers. But we gain the insight of moral theology that shows us if scripture is indeed God's script, our moral obligations are defined by its trajectory—to be faithful to the scripture. Similarly, a remix of scripture has a moral obligation to abstain from aesthetic violence (subverting the text) or obscuring the text (mixing so the source can no longer be recognized—originality is so we are no longer practicing the text but instead departing from it).

To remix scripture is to practice it.

As a mode of subversion

Steve Taylor is an emerging church scholar and pastor in New Zealand and writes in *Out of Bounds Church* of his idea of "spiritual DJs" that model the relationship of gospel and culture not as oppositional, but in remix. But his aim is not to baptize culture. In one local liturgy, Taylors church remixed a local ESPN-like show that featuring a "male sports presenter sitting in a spa pool, flanked by two, silent bikini-clad women."[33] Their re-presentation featured a woman reading relevant scripture passages from a spa, flanked by two silent men. The images were a critique of the culture—a remix in dialogue.

Taylor's approach might work as well in subversion of consumerism, a topic the non-theological O'Neil nevertheless takes up. O'Neil speaks of the brand images in a capitalistic society, and sees remix as "a way of subverting mass media's hegemonic dominance over the meaning of cultural symbols by turning them against themselves for the purpose of discourse, dissent or criticism."[34]

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[33] Taylor, *The Out of Bounds Church?*, 139.
[34] O'Neil, "Remix Identity," 9.

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As a mode of identity-making.

Imogen Heap's first self-recorded and self-produced album was entitled *iMegaphone*. It staked an image of amplified self—loud communication. But more cleverly "iMegaphone" was an perfect anagram of "Imogen Heap." Heap was indicating that her album was a remix of herself.

In the digital world, remix becomes a mode of identity-creation. In an information culture, we become confident that nothing truly original exists, but instead, we are distinguished by the way we arrange content, or the paths we take through it. Digital natives are really quite familiar with this: iTunes playlists have a become a icon of who someone is, as Apple's colorful iPod commercials project, dancing silhouettes that represent the projected self as defined by music. This type of remix is the literal example of "O'Neil's *playlist* remix.

A similar identity construction is identified in *convergence* remix, and the example here is the Facebook profile page, which allows someone to used mixed media to construct or represent their identity. If we add scripture here, it is included in our identity matrix in arrangement or juxtaposition, yet the source is first our identity—scripture is only added content. This style of assumption of scripture is a sidelining of the text and does not seek to retain its identity, but our own. It can become a form of idolatry of the self with scripture as window-dressing.

Instead, Scripture itself is the foundational identity forming agent for the Christian. Telford Work notes the role of scripture in liturgy as formational, "scripture is the vocabulary of Christian worship," and when we engage scripture there, it can both comfort or challenge us.[35] As the story of the people of God, it gives sociological definition. As the revelation of the Father, it gives us relational definition. As the economy of salvation-history, it designates us as sinner and saint; and in the eschatological sense, it defines who we will be. When we remix ourselves into scripture, we move towards our identity as co-creators, as students, as

[35] Work, *Living and Active*, 302.

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practitioners, and as digital prophets. Scripture in remix becomes the *metamedium* of an Christian in purposeful engagement with text and content.

A side-note on the identity thesis.

Just a final note regarding the history of Christian thought on the doctrine of scripture. Hodge and Warfield's commitment on scripture was lynch-pinned on the identity thesis—the assertion that the Bible *is* exactly equivalent to the Word of God. O'Neil's perspective on remix as identity has something to say toward this. He speaks of the ability for identity remixes—perhaps a Facebook page—to seek such exacting detail that the remix itself constrains the identity of the original.

> The previous paradigm of representation, which concerned resemblance primarily, honored the inherent identity of the thing captured in the image. Aesthetic violence results from this over-adherence to an identity grid either in the image or the imagined "reality" of the thing captured, in such a way that one's fixation on "real" material becomes too rigid. The backlash occurs when a social networker's profile page begins to serve as a limitation, rather than a possible expansion for identity.[36]

O'Neil is using philosopher Jean Baudrillard's example of simulation, in which he speaks of a map becoming more real than the terrain it is intended to represent. In the same way, O'Neil sees the possibility for digital identity to constrain the one who is creating the identity. Can we see this in the failure of the identity thesis in the inerrancy debate? The concern for exacting equivalence between the Bible and God's Word began to serve as a limitation, forcing God's Word to become a constraint on God himself.

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[36] O'Neil, "Remix Identity," 8.

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