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Was Foucault a plagiarist? Hip-hop sampling and academic citation

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Abstract

This article argues that comparing academic citation and hip-hop sampling can help students become better users of sourcework. I contend that sampling and academic writing share a goal of building new work in response to existing sources and that this goal is obscured by lawsuits that reduce sampling to theft by applying to sound a copyright regulation system designed for print. Both sampling and citing seek to build new compositions by working from sources, yet academic citation systems preserve textual ownership through attribution while sampling often guards or disguises its sources. These different stances in regard to authorship and ownership belie the values shared by the two systems.



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Keywords

Sampling; Hip-hop; Intellectual property; Citation; Plagiarism

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Mickey Hess is assistant professor of English at Rider University and the editor of Greenwood Press's *Icons of Hip-Hop*. His writing has appeared in *Composition Studies*, *Popular Music and Society*, and *Computers & Composition*. His short story "A Cookout in Ketchum, Idaho," which uses sampling to juxtapose Ernest Hemingway's Nobel Banquet speech and a *Vibe Magazine* interview with the R&B group TLC, was published in the March/April 2006 issue of *Punk Planet*.

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