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VIDDING AS A GENDERED REMIX PRACTICE

I think a vid works mostly as a mirror: viewers get back what they put in1.

This essay aims to explore fan vidding, or more briefly vidding, as a gendered remix practice.

Vidding is, nowadays, one of the many grassroots creative practices made possible by our contemporary digital and technological media environment: a form of audiovisual remix that consists in re-editing clips from movies and TV-shows and set them to music, usually to pop songs. Nonetheless, vidding has a long-standing analogic past, which traces back to the 1970s.

Vidding is a conspicuous part of the activities in which engages the so-called active media fandom, activities that include other forms of fanworks, such as fanfilms, fanarts and fanfictions. As many of these activities, vidding is practiced by an almost exclusively female community of remixers, called vidders.

Given our ubiquitous mediascape environment, what was once a somehow hidden fan activity, reserved for initiates, is now a much more exposed audiovisual remix form, which shares with other types of remix the same distribution channels, such as video-sharing platforms like YouTube. Therefore, what remixer and activist Elisa Kreisinger points out in regards to queer remix practices can also be extended to vidding:

As [...] remixes find more mainstream audiences, this dynamic often alters their reception and interpretation, making them increasingly vulnerable to misuse or misreadings, unformed by the discursive community from which they originally arose2.

Although sometimes easily confused with other remix practices (we will return later to this topic), such as spoof or political remix videos, vidding does have some peculiar and unique features. But what characterizes it most is its specific reference community.

In the first part of the essay, we will briefly describe the vidding practice and its positioning inside the contemporary media environment. Secondly, we will discuss the composition and the history of the community and, in the third part, the possibilities of feminist critiques and readings engendered by this remix practice.

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When asked to describe vidding and what she loved about it, Laura Shapiro, one of the most prominent member in the vidding community, gave this vibrant answer that can easily introduce the many facets of vidding and vids:

(to tell) deeper, using a song to illuminate the source text, subverting the dominant paradigm, manipulating things I love like an evil mastermind, […] [to express my] passion for characters and ideas, for complicating the simple, for thinking hard, and for sharing it all3.

The remix practice can be defined as the act of appropriating one or more media elements from their original context, de-contextualizing them, re-semanticizing them and reassembling them into a new object, usually called derivative or transformative work. As Eduardo Navas recalls:

Remix, itself, has no form, but is quick to take on any shape and medium. It needs cultural value to be at play; in this sense Remix is parasitical. Remix is meta – always unoriginal. At the same time, when implemented effectively, it can become a tool of autonomy4.

Remixes functioning depends on their use of images, sounds, forms, stories and characters usually taken from the mainstream media, that is of elements that a potential viewer will in some measure recognize. Therefore, both the remixer and the viewer need to be considered in the first place as spectators and consumers of media products.

When remix is practiced inside a specific community, as in the case of fandom, this ‘general’ recognition of the sources, and the viewership experience, become a shared experience of fruition, critique, commenting, debating and enjoyment of the source. Vidding, as other forms of fanworks, can be fully understood only as an amalgam of criticism and pleasure, originated from a collective experience. As Cathy Cupitt points out:

a songvid can be a feminist discourse in addition to an ode to male beauty, or an expression of joy as well as a snapshot of a subculture’s politics; that a story can be critique, erotica, and/or history; and that one person can simultaneously be an author, academic, filmmaker, and fan5.

This tension between critique and pleasure, between relaxed and casual viewership and informed and analytical fruition in vidders’ consumption, appropriation and production of media can easily recall the long-standing debate inside feminist film theory between film as “a political tool and film as entertainment”, as notoriously asserted by Claire Johnston6. In the case of vidding, we are facing an audiovisual practice that takes into account this duplicity both from the production and from the consumption point of view. A practice in which, paraphrasing Johnston, women can work through their desire, re-

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leasing their collective fantasies in order to counter the hegemonically imposed narrations provided by mainstream media.

Francesca Coppa, one of the main scholars in the field, defines the fanvid as “a visual essay that stages an argument” where “music is used as an interpretive lens to help the viewer to see the source text differently”. Vidding is “a form of in-kind media criticism: a visual essay on a visual source”.

Using editing strategies, vidders stage analytical readings of the original media texts they choose to appropriate, in order to comment upon the sources, criticize them, or praise them. Vidding has its own language and meta-language, its own narrative codes, its own interpretive logics.

What we may call the vidding experience is the outcome of a mutual exchange between vidders and vidwatchers who constantly share info, opinions, technical advice and interpretive readings of both the original texts and the remixed ones.

As Tisha Turk and Joshua Johnson argue in their essay dedicated to the ‘ecology’ of vidding, the vidding community is an important part of the whole vidding process, because it works as a dynamic and resilient system that informs the practice both on the production and on the fruition side.

The ecology metaphor helps us to think of fandom as a system (or series of systems) within which all fans participate in various ways: as readers, writers, vidders, vidwatchers, posters, commenters, lurkers, essayists, artists, icon makers, recommenders, coders, compilers of images and links, users and maintainers of archives and other fannish infrastructures, and so on. An ecological model thus offers an alternative to the theoretical models of fandom that, as Matt Hills has shown, define fans solely as producers and so “attempt to extend ‘production’ to all fans”.

In order to appreciate vidding positioning and functioning inside the contemporary media environment and inside remix culture, we propose to read it as a ‘minor’ audiovisual practice. Alison Butler in Women’s Cinema. The Contested Screen proposes a new definition of women’s cinema – in an attempt to go beyond the oppositional and often alienating role advocated for women’s cinema in regard to mainstream cinema by feminist theorists of the past decades. She defines women’s cinema as a minor cinema, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari’s definition of minor literature. Women’s cinema, thus, would be the cinema of a minority or marginalized group, made using not a minor but a major language. Adopting this definition meant, in Butler’s intentions, to escape the marginalization of women’s art expressions and “to free it from the binarisms (popular/elitist, avant-garde/mainstream, positive/negative) which result from imagining it as a parallel or oppositional cinema”.

We can easily adapt this reasoning to the vidding practice as a gendered remix practice: we are facing a form of expression that is using the majority language, its grammar, its syntactic, its vocabulary, and “incorporating, reworking and contesting the conventions of established traditions”. As we have stated before, vidders are first and foremost consumers and spectators of media products: they assimilate images, stories

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10 Ibid., 22.
and characters, formats and styles of television and cinema, they talk about them extensively in their online and offline spaces, and these elements became the vocabulary of a sort of ‘communal language’, a collective imagination within the community that is, inevitably, that of the ‘majority’. It’s the shared space provided by the communal language that allows its inhabitants to identify, and appreciate, the changes and variations created through the act of remix.

Moreover, thinking of vidders cultural production as ‘minor’ will place vidding in “a mediated and contestatory relationship” with mainstream media, allowing vidders to inhabit the blurred boundaries that separate criticism and pleasure, without having to take a stand against or for one of the two. On the contrary, vidders frequently claim their right to enjoy the images they love and, at the same time, harshly criticize them, as an act of empowerment against their supposedly passive attitude towards media images. Finally, considering vidding a minor audiovisual practice allows us to stress its function of “conjuring up collectivity”: vidding has been “involved in the projection of a community” for a group of “determinatized women” that were scattered around the world, for more than four decades. Their communal passion for movies and TV shows, and for audiovisual editing, expressed through the practice of vidding, is what brings this community of women together.

2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VIDDING COMMUNITY

We can outline the history of vidding as the history of a fan practice that is almost exclusively female, a history of a long-standing community – mostly US centric – that traces back to the late 1970s.

The history of vidding is also a tale about women’s active media consumption and about the relationship between women and technology and women and audiovisual editing.

It is no secret that editing has always been a female profession since the early days of cinema. Based on sewing machines, the first instruments for cutting and pasting portions of film were operated mainly by women, who had the skills necessary to accomplish these tasks proficiently. While struggling to find a place for themselves within the audiovisual industry, women have often chosen the editing room as the room of their own, both as editors for male directors and as authors in their own right. It is not a coincidence that many women in experimental cinema chose montage as their favorite artistic tool. Many women filmmakers dedicated their artistic life to found footage films, films made with pre-existing material and created only through editing, which can be considered in many ways precursors to our contemporary audiovisual remix practice. This portion of the history of women’s cinema can be a quite powerful model for another story centered around editing, which is the history of women inside media fandom. In the vast realm of active media fandom, the aforementioned pattern seems to be reproduced: in a mostly male-dominated field, especially in the 1970s when vidding began, women chose editing as their expressive tool.

The first proto-form of vids, slideshows, were created around 1975 in the Star Trek fandom by trekker Kandy Fong, using a polaroid projector and a musicassette player: the

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11 Ibid., 20-21.
combination of synced images and music were screened during fan conventions. Fong was the first to use a combination of images projected on a wall synced with music: she linked the lyrics with a precise selection of images in order to tell an original story about a given text. Moreover, she frequently chose popular *filk songs* – that is songs created by fans about their object of affection – to make her slideshows projections during fan conventions more engaging for fellow fans.13

Later, in the first years of 1980s, VCR technology became widespread in the United States. We have many accounts and academic studies about the way this form of home spectatorship changed the way women experienced media.14 Although vidders used VCR in a very creative and inventive manner from a prosumer point of view: they tweaked these machines to their needs, with the spirit of a bricoleur, and started to create a more sophisticated kind of slideshow, which they called *songtape* or *songvideo*.15

Due to the costs of equipment and the complexity of the expertise required, vidders usually grouped in small collectives of people that lived in the same area. These women collectives practiced and created videos together, sharing machines, tapes and other technical devices, increasing their technical and aesthetic prowess, and, more importantly, sharing the passion for a TV Show they watched together and vidded together.16

This phase of tutoring and mentorship marked the structure of the community and the quality of the strong relationships between vidders that we can still observe on the web today.

The third phase in the history of vidding, which is digital vidding, should be divided in two separate stages. Firstly, there was the shift from offline to online fandom activities, which happened in the early 1990s. Fans interactions ‘in real life’ at conventions and fan production of printed material such as zines were replaced by virtual communications and online archive of fanworks. Blogs, social media platforms, social networks and video-sharing platforms progressively but relentlessly changed the way fans, and vidders, experienced and practiced fandom.17

The second stage of the shift to digital vidding was the advent of digital non-linear


editing tools. Digital editing started to be a concrete possibility for vidders in the late Nineties when software such as iMovie or Windows Movie Maker emerged. Later, increasingly sophisticated semi-professional software as Adobe Premiere, and Final Cut became available to a broader prosumer public. Right now, everyone has the technical devices and tools necessary to potentially create a vid. The ease with which vidders can now practice audiovisual editing allows them to experiment more with styles and techniques and led the practice of vidding to focus more onto the narrative construction of vids and on the personal and communal readings of the texts vidders appropriate.18

As Francesca Coppa says, vidders “not only taught each other how to vid, also taught each other how to see”. The vidding practice helps these women engage freely with their gaze and desires on mass produced images, and the safe space vidders created for themselves in close-knit communities, both online and offline, is a context where these desires – political, critical, analytical but also sexual and romantic – can be expressed spontaneously.

Vidders know that in these spaces they can express their fannish personae, and their love and engagement with media without external judgement or shaming.

The shift from offline to online marked a very critical moment for the community because the ‘safeness’ of the spaces was jeopardized by the forced visibility given by the web. Invisibility protected the vidders from outside ‘attacks’ from non-fans and a general fangirl bias typical of some areas of fandom.20 Moreover, it protected them from the dangers of copyright infringement laws, as vidding – like any other remix practice - is still threatened by legal issues.

Lynn Zubernis and Katherine Larsen, in their recent book about the TV series Supernatural (Eric Kripke, 2005-) fandom, talk extensively about the values of anonymity for fans and the perceived safeness of fandom spaces that, in a therapeutic manner, allows for open discussion and exploring of identity, also granted by the validation of a community of peers.21

The initial attitude of closure and secrecy held by the community to respond to these threats brought along another risk: that the story of women in vidding – as often happens in women’s history – could become another story of invisibility and silencing.

As remix and fandom became topics broadly discussed in magazines and newspapers, vidding and vidders were almost ignored. Some vids, as for example, Closer by Killa and TJonesy made in 2004 (a slash vid about the relationship between Kirk and Spock in the Star Trek: The Original Series TV Show, which aired from 1966 to 1969) and Vogue by Luminosity in 2007 (made using images from Zack Snyder’s 2006 movie 300), casually became viral on YouTube, but were deeply misinterpreted as funny and

19 Coppa, “An Editing Room of One’s Own”, 124.
22 About the misinterpretation of Closer on YouTube, see S.F. Winters, “Vidding and the Perversity of Critical Pleasure: Sex, Violence, and Voyeurism in ‘Closer’ and “On the Prowl’”, Transformative Works and Cultures, 9 (2012). DOI: 10.3983/twc.2012.0292. Luminosity’s fame outside fandom, mostly due to the unprecedented success of Vogue on YouTube, was sanctioned by an official profile on the New York Magazine:
playful remixes from an audience uninformed about vidding language conventions and critical readings of sources.

Nowadays vidders have become much more vocal about their practice. They have also successfully lobbied together with academics, copyright advocates and activists in order to obtain an exemption from DMCA legislation in terms of copyright infractions for transformative video remix, in 2009 and 2012. Moreover, through projects such as the Archive of Our Own and the Fanlore Wiki, they are actively taking the preservation of their history and their productions in their own hands.

3. “VIDDING AS MY OWN FLAVOR OF FEMINISM”

If we explore the discussions held by the vidding community members on their online spaces, such as community pages, tutorial blogs, critique and review blogs, personal blogs, online events and festivals, and conventions; and if we take into account the myriads of fanvideos produced every year, we can see a clear pattern emerging of specific gender related interests among the vidders. Vidders are particularly passionate about the representation of women in media and they are notably focused on ‘strong’ female characters. ‘Character vids’ centered around heroines such as Buffy, Scully, Sarah Connor, Ripley and, more recently, the queens and female characters from Game of Thrones (David Benioff, D.B. Weiss, 2011-) are a very popular type of vids.

Through vidding, vidders find a way to express their concerns about the representation of gender and race, the quality of female characters in terms of narrative development and full-depth characterization, the persistence of stereotypes like the damsel in distress, the angry black woman, or the badass heroine.


24 The Archive of Our Own website can be found at http://archiveofourown.org/, while the Fanlore Wiki can be found at http://fanlore.org/wiki/Main_Page.

25 As Stéphanie Genz suggests in her study of post-feminist female figures in popular culture, the ‘superwoman’, the action heroine, is not to be uncritically considered a symbol of women empowerment, and rather has to be recognized as a “compromised and even conservative figure” (S. Genz, Postfeminities in Popular Culture, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 152-153). As this excerpt of a vidder reflection about her tendency to vid mostly ‘strong female characters’ demonstrates, vidders are broadly aware of the nuances and deceptiveness of media representations: “Female characters that are integral to and interact directly with the plot are not in abundance. With that comes the perception of an added layer that makes all female characters representative of every female in the world. There are intense expectations placed on female characters because there [sic] so few that are deemed as important. A lot of female viewers insist that character has to be outstanding and upstanding at all times because that female character is representing them. When female characters are shown to be flawed, they instantly become unlikeable and not worthy of love because they are the projection of all women” (kiki miserychic, “Vidding as My Own Flavor of Feminism”, blog post, kiki miserychic Livejournal Personal Blog, June 29, 2012, http://kiki-miserychic.livejournal.com/212221.html).
and Nikita from *La femme Nikita* (Joel Surnow, 1997-2001), using the homonym song by David Gilmour. All these characters have a monopolizing mission in their life – which was in many cases imposed on them by external forces –, a mission that ends up consuming their energies, their affects, their time and frequently puts their life in danger. Accordingly, the vidder tells their story as if they were secretly hoping and dreaming of a ‘way out’ from their intense lives. This vid provides a compelling and unusual reading of these well known and beloved characters, choosing similar images, situations and shots in all three TV Shows and juxtaposing them with a frequent use of fade-outs, accompanying the song’s repetitive words “There’s no way out of here, when you come in you’re in for good/ There was no promise made, the part you’ve played, the chance you took”. The heavyhearted words of the song cast a new light on the three women – who are usually depicted as strong minded, tireless and fearless – and make the viewer aware of the downsides of their lonely and dangerous lives.

Borrowing a vidder taxonomy of the ways in which vidding practice could be feminist, we will give now some examples of possibilities of self-expression and empowerment given by remix as a gendered tool.

In a blog post titled “We, too, could be Glorious: a Feminist Vid Sampler”, vidder harriet_spy proposes four modalities in which vids can be feminist: critique of the source and of social attitudes reflected in the source; reclaiming the narrative, reclaiming the gaze and *fangirling* as a feminist act. To these points, we would also add the celebration of the source that can be found in the aforementioned ‘character vids’.

*Women’s Work*, a vid made by vidders Sisabet and Luminosity in 2007 is a clear example of a vid that engages in a feminist critique of the source. Created using images taken from the first season of horror TV Show *Supernatural*, the vid manages to epitomize the unsympathetic treatment of female characters on the show. While the protagonists are a couple of brothers, the true heroes of the story, whose job is to hunt evil creatures, the only women’s work in the show – as the vidders succeed to disclose through the vid – is to perform the role of the damsel in distress, the victim or the monster. Even the – few – women that are granted longer and more complex storylines are usually murdered within a few episodes. Edited using the angry words of “Violet” a song by the band Hole, the vid piles up – following the fast-paced rhythm of the song – scenes of terrified women chased by monsters, of women’s bodies violently brutalized, of female vampires and demons that mercilessly kill and dismember innocent victims, accompanied by eye-opening lines such as “You should learn when to go/ You should learn how to say no”, “Well they get what they want, and they never want it again”, and “Go on, take everything, take everything, I want you to”. The message is clear: women’s bodies on *Supernatural* are objectified and violated, and their suffering is used as plot devices to get the male heroes of the story to pursue their fight against evil.

This vid, as many other similar vids, works through repetition: we see an endless

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26 This vid was a technical breakthrough in 1998, being the first vid to use fade-outs, a very complicated effect to obtain on VCR machines. The use of fade-outs inspired the vidder to build a much more intertwined visual structure than the fixed treble structure that was common at the time for similar vids. For an account of the vid and of the technical and historical aspects of its production, see gwyneth, “No way out”, blog post, gwyneth Livejournal Personal Blog, October 3, 2005, http://gwyn-r.livejournal.com/143510.html.


number of scenes where different terrified women are tortured and murdered in gruesome ways. The repetition of the cliché forces the viewer to recognize its existence.

“Critique vids always play with the dangers of reproduction (the danger being unintentionally reasserting the subject of ire by not effectively communicating the critique)”. As a vidder sums up in this comment, the risk in fanvids – and on a more general level in all forms of remix – is to bolster up the hegemonic discourse and images the remixers are working with a given amount of images has multiple and layered effects on the practice. For instance, in the case of vids that pertain in the reclaiming the gaze and reclaiming the narrative categories, the vidder is usually compelled to work not with a profusion of images – as in the Supernatural case – but with their lack.

While it’s seems straightforward, or at least more immediate, to create a counter-narrative or an oppositional reading of a media text with words, through an essay or a fanfiction, it’s unquestionably more complicated to create something with essentially unalterable images. In order to criticize a source, a vidder will have to work with that same source and find a way to transform those images completely in order to narrate a story that is not there.

The whole problem with the text was that we never saw the true “stories” of various characters; that meant there was a severe lack of footage. So these two weaknesses were essentially what governed the vid generally: the story had to be told with limited footage, and even within that limited set of footage, some scenes could not be used within the structure of the story.

In this passage vidder Giandujakiss, the co-author with vidder thuvia ptarth of 2008 vid Origin Stories, explains the difficulties of working with a small amount of footage.

Inspired by Donna Haraway account of the racist western origin stories in A Cyborg Manifesto, the vidders decided to dedicate a vid to an untold origin story in the cult TV Show Buffy the Vampire Slayer (Joss Whedon, 1997-2003). Giandujakiss describes the vid as “a political argument – about the treatment of characters of color, and of women – through a particular device, namely, by telling Robin’s story”. Buffy – and the so-called extended narrative universe Buffysverse – is still one of the most beloved sources for vidders, even after a decade from its conclusion. Therefore, any Buffy vid created within the community can easily relate to a profound and vivid knowledge of the context among the vidwatchers. Vidders are usually quite aware of the kind of audience they are likely to expect for their videos, and they make informed editing choices based on the potential audience of their vids. Therefore, Buffy vids tend to be more complicated both narratively and aesthetically. This is also the case of Origin Stories, a truly polymorphic and elaborate vid – of which we can only give a brief account of the first

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33 On the subject, see T. Turk “‘Your Own Imagination’: Vidding and Vidwatching as Collaborative Interpretation”, Film & Film Culture, 5 (2010): 88-110.
part. The vid is built on a treble narrative structure that follows the similar structure of the music used by its authors, “Coffee (Clean)” by Aesop Rock, that alternates fast rap verses performed by a male voice (in the first two parts) and melodic verses performed by a female voice (in the closing section of the music).

Infamously, Buffy the Vampire Slayer tells the story of a young teenage girl, Buffy Summers, who is destined to hunt and slay vampires. As every episode title sequence says, “In every generation, there is a chosen one”: Buffy is, in fact, the last one of a genealogy of slayers, created by a group of shamans in order to protect the world from the forces of darkness. Therefore, slayers are always young girls, destined by a group of old men to be the saviors of the earth, and hence cursed to probably die at a young age. Among those who preceded Buffy there was Nikki, a woman of color, active in the 1980s; Nikki was killed by Spike – the reformed vampire who eventually falls in love with Buffy. In the last season we get to know Nikki’s son, Robin, who becomes Buffy’s ally and who’s on a quest to avenge his mother. We also find out that Spike’s distinctive black leather coat is actually Nikki’s: Spike stripped it from her after murdering her. While the story of Spike’s atonement for his previous sins gets lots of screentime in the show, and his character is probably one of the most beloved by fans, the victims he left behind are mostly ignored. “Pay attention to whose stories don’t get told”: this was thuviaparth motto while creating the structure of the vid. Despite being one of the most critically acclaimed show on television for its empowering gender representations, Buffy’s treatment of characters of color has always been quite controversial, as, for example, the decision to portray the First Slayer as a colored cave woman.

In the first part of the vid, the vidders minutely make use of the very few scenes in which Nikki and the First Slayer appear, mixing them with a scene where Robin and Spike fight – in which the vampire obviously wins. They repeatedly and wisely use scenes in which Nikki’s coat is evident in order to make a clear argument about how Spike took his own physical identifier through her murder.

Because it was Nikki’s coat first, and it was also the symbol of her murder, of Spike’s power and coolness being appropriated from this black woman, and you have to forget that to cheer Spike on. I wanted people to watch this vid and not be able to forget that.

Moreover, Buffy is always portrayed using scenes where she clearly chooses Spike over Robin, in order to remark that her love story with Spike has always gained momentum for writers and viewers over the black slayers’ stories.

The vidders end up not only telling the origin story that doesn’t get told in the show – Nikki’s story, which is Buffy’s origin story, but also the First Slayer’s story, which is every slayer’s origin story – but they also manage to make the viewer aware of the lack of diversity in the show and of the unbalanced power among characters: in the end it’s only Spike’s – and Buffy’s – stories that counts.

Far from being focused just on the disturbing, shaming, disempowering elements of media culture, fanvids are often used to celebrate the special affective relationship between vidders and the media texts they appropriate. As an example for the last category in vidder harriet_spy categorization – the celebration of fangirling as a feminist act in itself – we can cite Space Girl, a multifandom vid, made by vidder Charmax in 2011.

35 Ibid.
In this vid, we can see a double celebration: a celebration of the female protagonists of classic and contemporary sci-fi TV Shows and movies and of the fans that love them. The lyrics of the song chosen by the vidder remind us that these women “shouldn’t have gone into space – as their mother told them” but they were courageous, adventurous and reckless and “they did, indeed” pursued their dream. The vidder also selected many sequences that feature scenes of female friendship and companionship. These space girls’ actions and adventures mirror the vidders’ own adventure: they have been told to not enjoy media this much, they have been disciplined and silenced, but they continue to collectively engage with the things they love anyway. As vidder kiki_mysrcharic argues, vidding is “their own flavor of feminism”.

SUMMARY

Vidding is an, almost exclusively, female audiovisual form of fandom activity that consists in appropriating clips from movies or TV shows, re-editing them and setting them to music, usually to pop songs. Vidders, through editing, stage analytical readings of the original media texts they appropriate, in order to comment upon the sources, criticize them, or praise them. This essay aims to explore the vidding practice as a gendered remix practice: we will discuss the history of the vidding community and, using different examples of fan-videos, its specific features and the possibilities of feminist critiques and readings engendered by this remix practice as a creative tool.

36 kiki_mysrcharic, “Vidding as My Own Flavor of Feminism”.