Avengers, Algorithm, and Bhangra: MCU vids in India and Abroad

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This paper studies a unique (transformative) media form born out of fannish engagements, commonly known as fan-made videos or vids. Vids are fan-produced short edits of existing popular films with additional background music. There are thousands or more of these on Youtube and Vimeo. The practice of vid making is called vidding. Vidding is a major part of fandom and fandom studies. It contributes to a great mass of user-generated content that expands a work of art beyond the canon to make it a popular culture phenomenon. Vids are indispensable to the study of popular culture because they make up a big chunk of fan-made transformative works available online. Apart from being illustrations of fan-consumers' engagement with media texts, they are our gateway to the vast possibilities of transformative iterations within participatory online culture. My observation is based on interviews and conversations with some of the most watched vidders involved in MCU Fandom. All of these vidders are primarily active on YouTube. Some channels have been dedicated to this form for years, hosting more than a hundred videos.

What is Vidding?

Vidding is a fan activity- mostly considered a hobby or vocation- of creating remix or music videos using footage from a popular media text/source i.e. the fan object such as movies or TV shows. As summarised by Francesca Coppa,

> Vidding is a form of grassroots filmmaking in which clips from television shows and movies are set to music. The result is called a vid or a songvid...(2008).

To outline a basic idea of what a vid is and what it looks like, the form can be said to be similar to a music video or a trailer. It is created by a juxtaposition of footage from a media source (usually films, TV shows and trailers) and music hitherto unrelated to the visuals to form a montage that makes some narrative sense. The music, as chosen by the vidder or vid-maker, brings a new affective layer into the piece which the edited clips match. For example, "Iron man - Believer" by HypeX Edits begins with a few shots of a scene from *Iron Man* (2008) where Tony is hammering to forge his mask/ face cover, he sinks it hot in water and puts it on the table while "Believer" by *Imagine Dragons* plays as a background music. Within 30 seconds, it cuts to Iron Man firing a missile from his arm towards a tank at a distance running on a road full of debris, surrounded by grey dilapidated buildings. He walks away and gets shot at. After three shots of this action scene in eight seconds, the vid cuts to tiny missiles getting fired at Thanos from the back of the suite from *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018). This fight scene from *Infinity War* (Thanos vs Iron- Man on Titan planet) is reedited, like all other scenes in the vid, to make its duration smaller. It goes on for some 25 seconds and before Thanos could kill Iron Man, it cuts to the scene from *The Avengers* (2012) where Loki throws Tony out of the window, his suit/armour follows to rescue and he comes back to fire at Loki. Similarly, another fight sequence from *Iron Man 2* (2010) follows. The vid ends with the final scene from *The Avengers* where Iron

Man guides a nuclear missile into a wormhole. The song continues through the vid and the visuals are cut to match its beats and intensity. This is an example of a character vid. The character of Iron Man is explored in a different way than the movies by collecting and reediting the footage. It does not change or challenge the basic MCU narrative but tells it with a unique and personal (to the vidder) perspective and the music provides it with the desired affect.

Historical Note: Women made vids

Origin of Vidding

In 1975 Kandy Fong, the first ever acknowledged vidder, synced *Star Trek* stills on a slide projector with music from a cassette player at the Equicon/ Filmcon event. She performed live at fan conventions and did necessary development in her later performances, for example, using two slide projectors at once. When personal videocassette tape recorders were widely available in the mid-1970s, fans began creating live-action vids that could be played at fan conventions and distributed to fans. They would record TV Shows with a VCR and edit them later. The equipment costs back then were exorbitant and the process required substantial artistic and technical skills. Editing on a VCR required mathematical precision for a smooth cut. The technical craftsmanship required would change with every new model of VCR that came equipped with novel features and technology. Some distributors took precautionary measures with their cassettes to make them piracy-proof which made it even more challenging for the fans to vid (Dawn, Year unknown). Vidding has continued to stay at the centre of media fandom since then. During the 1980s and 1990s, people from many fandoms began to videotape using VCRs and cassettes.

Origin of vidding is closely associated with women of science and technology, women taking control of their sexuality and narrative, and challenging gender roles (Coppa, 2008). The earliest vids, including Kendy Fong's "Slideshow", created a queer reading of the Star Trek text pointing to some serious problematics with respect to the representation of women in the original. This led to reading the character of Spock as bisexual and his relationship (or shipping) with Kirk[1] (ibid). This queer reading of the otherwise heteronormative source is the result of a feminine interpretation of the source (Lothian, 2009). A characteristic of viding, pointed out by Luminosity, Coppa and others is that it is primarily women's work resulting in a female gaze with primarily female labour involved in it (Luminosity, 2007). Supporting this is the fact that most early vidders were women. Vidding can also be other than shipping two subjects. It can look at a fandom or a group as a whole, and even sometimes connect it back to the real world. Usually, it explores a character from a fannish perspective.

Transforming to the Digital

Before the emergence of digital platforms of distribution, vidding was a fairly closed affair within events organised by fan communities. The vids were either screened privately or in fan conventions. Uploading a vid for public viewing would expose the vulnerable community of vidders. With the arrival of web 2.0, vidders were confronted with an anxiety about the response of the studios that owned the source material of their vids. Their works could not all be published online or shared openly like the MCU ones on YouTube in the 2010s (Jenkins, 2008). Due to the combined efforts of vidding communities, organisations and scholars, it has been established that vidding is in fact completely legal as long as the creator does not earn from the videos (ibid). Now vidders can come out openly and flaunt their creations on the internet. By the late 2000s, YouTube and a variety of video editing software became available and vids started to appear on fan websites and streaming platforms. As time went on, one could notice a snowballing effect, with more and more individuals becoming interested in this medium. They had no idea that they were watching or creating vids – in short they were vidding without being aware of the term or its history.

Meanwhile, the practice of vidding has changed over the years, as is apparent from the recorded observations. Acquiring footage, editing, sharing, and building an audience are all done on comput-

ers. The process has become easier but equally demanding in terms of finesse, owing to non-linear editing softwares. The picture quality looks as good as the source while editing has become smoother and snappier. The source is no longer the sole concern of a vidder, view count emerged as the new paradigm for measuring success and the attention shifted to concerns around attracting and maintaining audience following. The transition to the digital is comprehensively explained by Simone Tosoni and Mariana Ciancia (2017). They note that P2P file sharing, non-linear editing softwares, and YouTube as some of the facilitators, among others, for the changing shape of the vidding scene.

MCU Vids

TV Shows have been the format of choice (over films) for vidders, because they endure long enough for fans to get emotionally invested in them. The character development arcs in television shows often take years, and fans grow and evolve with them (Chin, 2007). For movies, the most often vidded ones tend to be series and franchises, again based on a long duree engagement with characters over sequels and prequels (Turk, 2007). TV shows produce a library worth of footage but the quality of the available footage can often be inferior since it is designed to stream or broadcast on small screens. The case of MCU is somewhat similar to TV in terms of character development over years and the emotional investment of fans. It took more than a decade and 23 films to finish the *Infinity Saga*. Although vidding has historically been women's work, most of the MCU vidders are male. This may be a reflection of the gender composition of MCU consumers. With a large number of men coming into the vidding scene, it is evident that MCU vids are more focused on editing style, finesse, spectacular action visuals and individual character studies whereas women's vids more often tend to be about relationship of two or more characters, queer interpretation of a non-queer source and sometimes a critique of the source with a female gaze. It is evident from the ethnographic fieldwork that MCU has given a boost to the YouTube vidding scene. Some MCU fans from around the globe, including India, started vidding because of their love for a certain marvel character. Some of the most watched vids on YouTube are catering to this fandom. It produced new vidders, increased small-time vidders' reach and motivated them to continue.

Indian Vidders

Ratin Mohan is a 20-year-old vidder from Kanpur, UP. He has been fascinated by the MCU since the first *Iron Man* (2008) (Hindi dubbed) film he saw on pirated DVDs as a child. He has been following the MCU ever since. It led him to watch all the MCU films and to read a few downloaded copies of Marvel comics. He is not much of a reader and a screen is not particularly good for reading comics, so effectively his relationship with Marvel is more or less limited to the MCU.

In 2017, Ratin participated in an inter-school video editing competition and won it. The task on which participants were judged was similar to making a vid but with limited resources and time. They were given video games trailer clips and required to create something humorous out of it which must have continuity and coherence. Winning this competition strengthened his relationship with editing. Shortly after that he watched a video uploaded on *IndiaMarvel* official YouTube channel "The Guardians Song - Hindi - Jhoom Jhoom Jhoom Baba | Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol.2". The video itself was an effort to localise the MCU in India. It inspired Ratin to create more like it, basically to give vidding a shot. He knew that YouTubing needs consistency. So he decided to have at least five to six videos ready before the first upload to maintain a consistent uploading schedule. By 2018, he managed to create two vids and he saved them in a pen drive. Schoolwork was too much and whatever he managed to create, did not reach his expectations. On one fine evening, a friend of his borrowed the pen drive for school assignments and discovered the two vids saved in it. He was impressed by Ratin's work and motivated him to start a YouTube channel.

So the idea was to edit clips from famous Hollywood franchises such as MCU, Harry Potter and Transformers and to match them to Bollywood music and thus the channel was named *HollyBolly*.

In the beginning it was difficult to get good quality footage because of slow internet speed which improved over time. His method was to match the lyrics with action portrayed in the images in each shot. For example, in one of his vids "‖ Starlord Ke Ghungroo Toot Gaye + RDJ DANCE ‖ AVENGERS ENDGAME ‖ GHUNGROO HINDI MUSIC VIDEO", when the lyrics reaches "Ghungroo toot gaye" a shot from *Guardians of Galaxy 2* appears in which Gamora kicks Starlord in his crotch. Similarly, Punjabi songs are also used in some vids for which Ratin had to get word-by-word translations of the songs. When the lyrics go like "Gucci Armani, Piche Roldi Jawani, Check Kardi Brandan Wale Tag ni", watch drawer close ups from *Doctor Strange* (2016) appear, the hero chooses his Armani watch for the day and walks off. In this way, similar things happen in the video that the song describes at any point of time or in other words, the images enact the lyrics. The two are likewise creatively matched in each vid.

In its first year i.e. 2018, *HollyBolly* had only some 200 subscribers. In 2019, when Iron Man dies in *Avengers: Endgame*, Ratin uploaded a vid dedicated to Iron Man, "Tera Yaar Hoon Main ‖ Tony Stark ‖ Ironman‖ Steve Rogers | Captain America | Marvel Hindi Mashup". The vid went viral and *HollyBolly* subscriber count reached around 100K. This gave him an intense sense of gratification and inspired him to create more MCU vids. As of October 2020, his channel has 85 videos and 111k subscribers.

HollyBolly uploads can be roughly classified into two categories. First are the vids that have "deep meaning" and the second are those which are made for "entertainment purpose". The deep meaning ones are with serious and emotional Hindi songs such as "Kar Har Maidan Fateh", "Tere Jaisa Yar Kahan" and "Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To". These vids are in line with the official MCU narrative in a melodramatic tone. They tend to be more dramatic than the films themselves. Generally, such vids are either upbeat and motivational or melodramatic with sad songs or something in between. In another vid, the iconic "Papa Kehte Hain" song is used to convey the relationship between Iron Man and Spider Man. "Teri Mitti Mein Mil Jaawan" song is used alongside the images of heroes converting to dust after the Thanos Snap in the climax of *Avengers: Infinity War*.

The second category (Entertainment Purpose) vids hold no obligation to the official MCU narrative. This content has a unique and humorous perspective to regionalising MCU content. For example, one of his Doctor Strange vids is cut to the song "Jalebi Bai" because the yellow rings on his hands that appears when in action, resembles the colour and shape of a Jalebi. In one of his vids In "‖ Oh Ho Ho Ho (Remix) ‖ Marvel Avengers | Taare Gin Gin Avengers ‖ Hindi Medium ‖ Sukhbir", the avengers are basically dancing to the song. Not only the avengers but also DC's Joker (Joaquin Phoenix), Sam Raimi's Spider-Man (Tobey Maguire), Tom Hiddleston in an MCU promotional event coverage, Chris Hemsworth on a film set and Mr Bean (Live action) are all dancing in random separate shots compiled together in this vid. The vid transcends any and all narrative expectations and dives into a sort of celebration of popular comics films. The clips used in the vid are dissociated from any context or meaning thereof in the MCU. These clips (images) have no obligation to the Marvel narrative anymore. By bringing in the promotional event coverage, Ratin breaks the fourth wall and expands the scope of the vid and consequently of the MCU beyond the films to include the public relation events and by extension, fans. The vid thus claims fans and their activities as integral parts of the MCU. It has become a part of a global popular culture not limited by the boundaries of region and ethnicity, rather enriched by multiple local/cultural specificities.

There is no slash vid on the channel. However, sometimes it is really hard to tell whether a vid is intentionally homoerotic or not, especially when a Hindi romantic song is used. In one of his vids, Ratin uses the "Bekhayali" song from *Kabir Singh* (2019) to portray the relationship between Peter Parker and Tony Stark that made his viewers curious. Many of them took it as a slash vid which he did not intend to. He started this channel as an expressive outlet of his editing skills and creativity. His editing skills enabled him to make vids and at the same time making vids taught him to edit. He does not earn from this channel in any way, in any case money was never his motivation, rather it is the satisfaction he gets from making a good vid and from the reactions he gets from his viewers. He loves what he does

even if it is a tedious job to find MCU visuals that can match with the lyrics of a Hindi song but the viewer's positive responses to his content gives him joy and encourages him to keep making awesome vids. There is a double satisfaction of finishing a vid and to garner more and more hits.

Indian fandom, although inspired by English Language fandom, is distinct from it in many ways. For instance, Indian fandom's treatment of the source material is different. It interprets the media text with a different cultural perspective. The fourth wall is repeatedly broken. The images are put in a new cultural context by putting the visuals with Hindi and Punjabi songs. Another difference is that as MCU is imported out of its English language habitat, it loses its sacredness when it enters into a new culture context i.e. the vids do not defer to the sanctity of the MCU narrative and have fun with dancing avengers and stars that play them.

Global Fandom?

Now, whether that makes it a global fandom/fan community is a difficult question to answer. There is definitely a cross-cultural exchange and mutation going on. Piotr Siuda rejects the possibility of a global fan community and argues that a global/transnational fandom of a pop culture phenomenon is not enough for the constitution of a community (Siuda, 2014). Opposing fandoms' perception of imagined communities, he points out that communities are based on the similarity of conditions in which people happen to exist and live on a daily basis which is not equivalent to only communication that the fans do (2014:298). As Bourdieu put it, the field of destination dictates the meaning and function of a work of art/media text as much as the field of origin does because the original meaning and function are often completely ignored in the context of a new destination (Bourdieu 1990 in Palumbo-Liu 1997:9). This implies that the migration of a media text results in a new and distinct interpretation/meaning which problematises the idea of one global/transnational/transcultural fandom/fan community out of the local context as for the new audience the text is not the same under the new interpretation.

This approach is rejected by Matthew Hills in favor of the consideration of transcultural homologies. Citing the cultural marginalisation of Otaku (Japanese fan/fanatic of anime and manga) as similar to that of the western/english language fan in the western setting, he emphasises the possibility of similarly organising meaning and function of the text in its source and destination habitats for relative homologies if one is open to see them. He finds the similarity of experience/ transcultural homology of a fandom based on the media text/object of fandom across national and cultural borders as important as the differences thereof to the study of the global flow of media text (Hills, 2002). So, the question of a global transcultural fandom/fan community, in the light of the existing debates in transcultural studies, is even more difficult to answer. We can observe the similarities (e.g. the source, the platform of YouTube and affective relationship with the source) and differences (e.g. cultural context, language, viewers/audiences and accessibility) in the vids and the experience of the vidders.

Smartphone Vidding

Vidding has arrived in India fairly recently. *HollyBolly* is a leading name here, others are beginning to join in. Another Indian vidder goes by the name of *Indian Marvel Guy* (IMG henceforth). He passed out of school in 2020. On one COVID-19 lockdown day, he was trying to watch a Marvel film (Iron Man) while his brother was playing some Hindi songs in the room. In that moment, he felt that the music and the lyrics synched with the visuals. An idea popped up in his head that Indian songs can be mixed with MCU visuals and that the Indian audience would relate to it. He looked up on the internet for existing mashups and found (his now favourite) *HollyBolly*, the first to do this. So *HollyBolly* became his inspiration and he started creating his own vids. Sometimes he edits for his friends' YouTube channels as well. After a few vids, he started trying breakdown videos which generally explains the content for audiences who might have skipped some details and connections in the film as he does not want to stay restricted to vids only.

IMG belongs to the born-digital generation that had no interaction with CDs and DVDs. So, he watched MCU films in multiplexes, on television and downloaded files. Like other North Indian vidders, he watches MCU films in Hindi and uses the Hindi versions to make his vids. He is willing to make a transition to English in some time though. The channel is too young to have big statistics but the vidder is optimistic about the future. He has been consistent in uploading his vids. The process of making a vid is also no different than other vids, he looks for a song first. Then he decides on the character to star in the vid and collects scenes meant for that particular star character and makes a rough edit of around 15-20 minutes. Finally, this rough edit is to be trimmed and finessed according to the song. He has to memorise the song and the scenes at the back of his head to visualise the lyrics and the corresponding visuals together. The remarkable thing about this vidder is that, although he is the newest of all the studied artists in this research, he is still the fastest of all. 2-3 hours is the ideal time for him to complete a vid while others easily take a week. This speed is probably because of his editing machine, which is even more remarkable. He uses a Redmi Note 5 Pro (a cheap February 2018 Chinese smartphone) along with Kinemaster Editing Software premium version. He has never tried using a PC. He is using the cheapest possible editing machine and still he is the fastest to produce vids. In mobile editing systems the touch interface makes the input more immediate but there are lesser options to tweak. So, there is less play around the details and finesse. That is why he has to memorise the song and imagine the vid, using human sensibility more than machinic precision. Video quality is inferior to that of others which can be improved with better source clips. Flashy images and energetic music are put together as if they belong together. Perhaps this is where the future is headed. Eventually, the craft becomes easier and ubiquitous and everyone can make their own copies/iterations. What happens when vidding becomes increasingly accessible? Yes, we get Avengers dancing to Bollywood songs. One does not require expensive editing machines to make fanvids anymore. From a pair of expensive VCRs to PCs to cheap Redmi phones, it has been quite a journey.

Moreover, the technical expertise and intricate skillset/labour is also required less and less with advancing editing technology. VCR editing required the most complex and cumbersome processes to make an edit. The PCs offered non-linear editing so one could now go back and tweak the edited shot. In mobile phones the timeline is literally on your fingertips. The intricate/ cumbersome labour of time-stamping and rolling through the whole cassette to find a shot etc are not required anymore and it has become easier for vidders to edit. Editing equipment is also becoming cheaper, allowing new vidders to enter the game. Some of them who have access to comparatively better equipment, are concerned about editing style, finesse and video quality and so on while others are more particular about the fun, affect and ideological/meaning production through juxtapositions. Other than the love of the source there is the love for vidding itself that is the primary motivation for vidders now. The task of vidding includes here- video editing and running a YouTube channel, gathering subscribers and likes and engaging with followers/fans, and communicating feelings about the source – it is a whole ecosystem of YouTube and social media that amounts to the experience of vidding, not just video editing.

The Labour of Vidding

The internet, in Barbrook's opinion, is a place where people can collaborate (Barbrook,1998). Because knowledge work, such as academic work that cites previous works, is fundamentally collaborative in nature. He claims that knowledge work on the internet is a kind of high-tech gift economy in which people collaborate and share without regard for capital relations. He describes the internet's mixed economy as anarcho-communism, citing the open source movement as an example (1998). This theory was devised before the advent of participatory internet. In the age of social media, it does not hold much validity in the context of transformative works. Terranova argues that the open source movement is overly reliant on "free labour" (2000). She takes further the

case of exploitation of labour of participation. In truth, the internet is based on volunteer labour, or labour that is "not financially compensated" but "willingly supplied". She concludes that this reliance on free labour is "part of bigger mechanisms of capitalist extraction of value that are essential to late capitalism as a whole," rather than anarcho-communism. Free labour is defined as "the activity of developing websites, reading and participating in mailing lists, and creating virtual environments," in addition to collaborative coding for open source projects (ibid). By extension, any unpaid engagement/ participation that may contribute to the "buzz" (or in other words create value). In the larger scheme of things, this intricate labour such as transformative works/vidding adds value to an artwork or a commodity but since this work is optional (neither imposed on the consumer/fan/creator nor critically essential for the producer) therefore it is not paid for. In simple terms, if vidders are doing it for free anyway, Disney/Marvel see no reason to pay for this free publicity.

Mario Lazzarato sees the internet as yet another platform for labour exploitation. Immaterial labour is the labour that generates the ideological and cultural context for consuming, as well as the labour that produces social and capital relations (1996). In the aesthetic model of author, reproduction and reception, the vidder or fan falls into the labour of reception category. Reception here is an active and creative act that integrates the ideological product (the source) into social communication (ibid). That being said, the concept of immaterial labour undertakes all kinds of ideological production such as fashion, advertisement, softwares and so on but does not speak specifically for a vidder/fan's labour which is distinct from the waged work. The labour done by fans or transformative artists is voluntarily given and it is not monetarily compensated. Here, the vidders' case is similar to that of America Online volunteers and other unwaged workers that built/inhabited the internet in its early days.

Vidders' labour is similar to other forms of (online) labour of participation in many ways. It is abundant, voluntary, free and considered as leisure. Its specificities arise from the point that it is generally a fans' business. The fan's demarcation as an anti-social psychopath is remarkable (Jenkins, 1992). As Abigail De Kosnik pointed out, "When a group is categorised as deviant or subnormal, it typically strives for no more than the right to exist and to operate without interference" (2012). The vidders for example are content with not having copyright strikes (not having their vids blocked). Another issue in this matter is the usual moral position that fan communities assume. "Fans' perception that what they do is explicitly anti-commercial prevents them from considering what they do as warranting pay" (ibid). It cannot be anti-commercial and paid for at the same time. Since cultural and technical work such as transformative works is a feature of and immanent to late capitalism, it seems logical to demand for appropriate wages/ compensation rather than working the same for free (Terranova, 2000). Vidders would be glad to have a paycheque for their work. As per Merwan, a vidder from France, it was not his intention to make money out of vidding but it would be nice if his vocation could earn money. It costs a lot of time and effort as compared to the little money vidders collect via donations. A number of factors influence a vidder's work, as Maria, a vidder from Russia, says,

> My free time and stress levels also have a lot of influence on my vidding. You can't really escape into it when you have obligations and have to pay bills (Maria, 2020).

Life gets in the way and sometimes Maria disappears from the vidding scene for months but her passion for vidding always brings her back online. Her vidding labour is in a sense compensated by other than monetary means. She gets to learn a lot about editing through it. She gets to contact and sometimes meet other like-minded people. Through different phases of life, vidding has been with her for a decade. She means to continue as long as she can, and she has no plans to terminate her vidding channel *SecretlytoDream* even though she is employed otherwise. She would like to make films someday, preferably documentaries. Similarly, Merwan's plan is to keep up with the channel as long as he can, as long as life does not kill his vocation. Vidding is a way to express feelings for him and he aims to make his viewers feel what he feels by watching a film or a character. This YouTube channel for him is a pleasure and a lesson in editing.

Conclusion

In participatory internet culture any media text such as music, films, TV shows etc. can be transformed in any number of ways. As the consumer acquires the means to create, manipulate and distribute media, nothing is spared, be it music, cinema, photographs or paintings, the consumer can and does copy and transform everything staking her claim on any and all media texts. Access is granted to all who can afford the gadgets, the leisure, and desire to participate. Consumption is synonymous with participation and to participate is to create, or at least, to reiterate. Such is the cultural consumption experience of our times. As opposed to otherwise passive consumption, it is an active one where the consumer actively participates hence the term participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006:18).

According to Walter Benjamin, the mechanically reproduced (by print media) copy reached the consumer and effectively put to an end the sanctity/cult value of the original (1936:25). This democratisation of sorts engendered by such reproducibility is the possibility that anyone can have their copy now. Digital copying goes even a step further than mechanical copying. In the digital age, anyone can have not just the copies but also the means to make copies. Thus, now not only can everyone have a copy, they can make their own personal copies and even manipulate and transform them. Such transformative works are symptomatic of the fan-consumer's participation in cultural production through a deep engagement with the media text. Through participation, online culture elevates or desecrates, depending upon one's perspective, an artefact beyond the ways in which the original may have been envisaged. The aura in the digital resides precisely in its receptions and repetitions (or copies that an artwork inspires) (Davis, 1995:386). Every copy matters, the copy of a copy matters, every copy amounts to more and more engagement with the phenomenon of the "original" artwork. The more the consumer-fans engage with the media text, and participate in its cultural production, the bigger the phenomenon becomes. Fans are ideal participants because they have an emotional connection with the text, aspiring to a deeper involvement with it which leads them to imagine or reinterpret the text in their own personal ways.

Vidders externalise their internal fannish and editor's affection through their art (Hills, 2017). A vidder's psyche is not limited to a fan psyche; it also homes profound editorial sensibilities, since editing is the language with which vidders express their emotions and affection towards a certain character or source. Without these editorial sensibilities, the "feels culture" would not be complete. In the act of rhetorically retelling the existing narrative of the film, vidders basically deny narrative expectations and transcend to a visual domain where they can celebrate a freedom towards interpreting images, characters, and icons. It is not the source that builds a long-time audience for a channel; it is a personal flavour of editing, a particular style of cinematic language which is capable of conveying emotions. The importance of editing being equal to that of the source is explicit in their mesmerising edits, in multi-fandom vids and in the appreciations they get in the comments section for their editing skills. Vidding is a practice ground for editing for them as well as an outlet for their artistic expression and a show of their remarkable skills. Combined with the YouTubing aspect of it, i.e. to run a channel, maintain an audience, make contacts, take donations and other editing assignments, it becomes an entrepreneurial exercise. Skills acquired from this vocation are beneficial for the creators in the long run, should they choose to become professional artists.

The vidders, through their work, assert their editor-vidder identities along with their fannish identities. Being a vidder is a meaningful identity for these creators (Coppa, Turk and Lothian, 2017). It is through the act of editing that the language of cinema is practised in these works. We can equate vidding with academic writing, but the specificity of the medium cannot be ignored. The medium that is accessed neither with a pen, nor with a camera, but with a computer. The form is constructed, manipulated, and developed in the most immediate sense, through an editing software, by able editing minds.

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Notes

[1] "Ship" or "Shipping" refers to the pairing or grouping of characters or persons who one may enjoy watching together, whether romantically, sexually, platonically, or otherwise. The term ship is derived from "relationship," thus whatever kind of relationship you support or want to see may be found in these fanvids. Generally, shipping refers to a pairing of two or more characters that is unintended in the original media text. The "slash" or "/"vids portray a homoerotic fannish imagination of the source content i.e. shiping same sex characters that are not intended so in the media source.

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