



Photo by Pietro Jeng on Unsplash

Digital Remixing Online: Entangled Feelings

Crystal L. Beach, University of Georgia, Athens, U.S.A.

Donna E. Alvermann, University of Georgia, Athens, U.S.A.

Stephanie Loomis, Independent Researcher, Roswell, U.S.A.

William Wright, University of Georgia, Athens, U.S.A.

LaTasha Hutcherson Price, Central Georgia Technical College, Macon, U.S.A.

Online Publication Date: 6 May 2023

To cite this Article: Beach, C. L., Alvermann, D. E., Loomis, S., Wright, W., & Price, L. H. (2023) 'Digital Remixing Online: Entangled Feelings'. *Digital Culture & Education*, 14(4), 92 –108

URL: <https://www.digitalcultureandeducation.com/volume-14-4>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

DIGITAL REMIXING ONLINE: ENTANGLED FEELINGS

Crystal L. Beach¹, Donna E. Alvermann², Stephanie Loomis³, William Wright⁴, & LaTasha Hutcherson Price⁵

¹University of Georgia, Athens, U.S.A.

² University of Georgia, Athens, U.S.A.

³Independent Researcher, Roswell, U.S.A.

⁴ University of Georgia, Athens, U.S.A.

⁵ Central Georgia Technical College, Macon, U.S.A.

Abstract: *Our purpose for researching self-sponsored creative composing online was to explore ways in which the cultural practice of digital remix might mediate connections among participants in a study conducted on a Creative Commons website. Specifically, we asked to what degree, if any, might digital remixes inspire or arouse feelings of connection with and through the creator and the created? A conceptual framework that took into account a case study design, the cultural practice of digital remix, and people's reported feelings associated with that practice fell well within the realm of a post-intentional approach to studying the phenomenon of digital remix. A total of 82 remixes, 51 fragments, and 56 blogs were available for analysis. Using a five-step analytic procedure developed by the authors, we conducted 26 individual semi-structured interviews. Implications based on the data from those interviews, along with separate content analyses of the digital remixes, are discussed.*

Keywords: *Remix, Creative Composing Online, Integrating Technology, Digital Culture, Post-Intentional Phenomenology*

Introduction

In subject-matter classes, teacher educators seek to engage their students with content and its related skills in ways that are relevant and connected to the world in which they live. For instance, English language arts, social studies, science, and math teacher educators make curricular choices that motivate and encourage both pre-service and in-service teachers to engage with practices such as remixing. In these classes, students are investigating the connections among media, culture, and technology as they push the boundaries of what “counts” as a text (Lammers, Magnifico, & Wang, 2022; O’Byrne, 2014). They are also exploring how culture(s) influence language choices that directly impact texts through remixing within a participatory culture. Some enthusiasts of remixing in a digital age, such as Ferguson (2010), argue that everything is a remix. Indeed, historically there is evidence to suggest that centuries before the invention of the internet or the Gutenberg printing press, people sampled, remixed, and freely appropriated others’ work.

Preferring a less sweeping statement about remix than Ferguson’s (2010), we elected to use literacy scholars Knobel and Lankshear’s (2008) definition: “remix means to take cultural artifacts and combine and manipulate them into new kinds of creative blends.” To operationalize how this definition fit within our interactive online study of digital remix, we added a short explanation on our Creative Commons website (Alvermann et al., 2022) of how people might choose to participate: namely, to think of remix (verb or noun) as simply ‘our work plus your work’ or ‘your work plus others’ work.’ Focusing on cultural practices into which digital remixing embeds itself is also useful for thinking about a multiliteracies pedagogy in an era where technological advances in software make it possible for anyone with a computer and sufficient internet speed to curate, create, and distribute their remixes (Cope, Kalantzis, & Abrams, 2017). According to the National Council of Teachers of English (2019), participating in this kind of remix is consistent with expressive composing, which in turn is of significance for the continued evolution of curriculum, assessment, and literacy teaching practices in a digital age.

Purpose and Research Question

Our purpose for researching digital remix was to explore ways in which this cultural practice might mediate felt connections with and through human and nonhuman participants on a Creative Commons website (Alvermann et al., 2022) that we designed. Specifically, we asked to what degree, if any, might digital remixing evoke feelings of connection with and through the creator (human) and the created (nonhuman remix) as participants creatively composed online. Through a conceptual lens known as post-intentional phenomenology, we hoped to examine ways in which educators might use these feelings of connection to engage students and build a sense of online community among members in ways that transcend time, physical location, or current and past relationships.

Conceptual Framework

As researchers and literacy teacher educators of online courses aimed at integrating technology in education, we chose Vagle’s (2014a) post-intentional approach to study the phenomenon of digital remix. When applying his approach, it is important to remember that the word *intentional* is not a synonym for being planful; instead, it references the act of connecting with a phenomenon (human or nonhuman) in ways that also consider a person’s subjective feelings. For Vagle and Hofsess (2016) these interconnections, or *entangled connections*—preserve the best of earlier philosophical approaches to phenomenology (particularly those of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty). From a

methodological point of view, Vagle (2014a) is unwavering in his stance toward analyzing entangled connections. In his words: “individual humans might help the phenomenologist gain important access to all sorts of important manifestations and appearances of a phenomenon, but the ‘unit of analysis’... is the phenomenon, not the individual.” Crafting post-intentional phenomenological research requires patience and an openness to a phenomenon’s *becoming*. It also requires practicing self-reflexivity (Dahlberg, 2006) in order to account for one’s subjectivities as part of the data.

Review of Literature

Vagle (2014a) requests that researchers using his approach to phenomenology ask this question of the literature review: “how much is enough and how much is too much?” While he recognizes the importance of previous research for determining how a phenomenon is to be studied, he cautioned against bringing too much prior knowledge to bear because it restricts the degree to which a phenomenon can be opened and explored on its own. Keeping his cautionary note in mind, we limited our review to research on creating content in digital spaces, distinguishing between feelings and emotions, and analyzing potential connections between a phenomenon and its creator.

Creating Content in Digital Spaces

The internet has changed how people use, access, and create content. In a print-centric world, most people are considered content consumers; that is, they view the importing of information as a heavily weighted one-way transaction. However, digital spaces offer users multi-directional transactions: consuming content, interacting with content and content-creators, and becoming content creators themselves (O’Byrne, 2014). For this to happen in our study, we needed to generate a Creative Commons website (Alvermann et al., 2022) that invited the public to become co-participants in producing content for the site: namely, the fragments (or smaller parts of a remix) that sometimes related to the researchers’ blogs and later became remixes in their own right. In other words, remixes of earlier remixes.

Remix is an immersive practice, one that includes existing content and a remixer's knowledge and experience (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; 12]. Remix draws from multiple modes and affords multiple ways of expression, leading to new creations that reflect alternative interpretations and responses to the original text (Jenkins, Ito, & boyd, 2015). As a social experience, remixing is viewed as the ultimate in collaborations (Jolls, 2015). Engaging in a remix also offers an opportunity to bypass the analog limits of time and space, thereby allowing for feelings of social connection with others in digital spaces (Beach, 2017). As a form of literacy, the social practice of remixing is a reminder that literacy is discursive and that texts evoke multiple interpretations, some of which may not be in traditional verbal forms (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008). The power of remix lies in its multimodal variability, and in turn, the ability to evoke feelings with and through the creator and the created.

Distinguishing Between Feelings and Emotions

To define the concept of feeling, we drew from the research of neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (Damasio, 2005) who found emotion and feeling, while related, are not synonymous. Damasio

contended feelings result as the brain interprets external stimuli in somatosensory centers as, what he called "snapshots of our physical state." Pontin (2014) explained Damasio's separation of feelings and emotions by describing how the brain interprets emotion: "I am threatened, experience fear [emotion], and feel horror." In drawing from Damasio's work, we defined feelings as neuro-biological responses. This enabled us to view feelings as units of analysis alongside the remixes produced by the study's participants. Using Vagle's (2014a) post-intentional approach to phenomenology allowed us to consider both product and producer simultaneously.

Analyzing Potential Connections Between a Phenomenon and Its Creator

Remix is co-productive in the sense that it necessarily moves with and through boundaries by forming in relation to others. When remixers transact with texts and other objects, a reference to the original is always included (e.g., as in practices that involve "dialogic games" [Campanelli, 2018]). Yet despite an abundance of richly detailed studies about original source materials and the roles they play in new artifacts created by humans collaborating in varied social settings (e.g., Strong & Ossei-Owusu, 2014), researchers have yet to focus on the potential feelings of connectedness with and through digital remixes and their remixers. To date, the remixes themselves have not been considered sources of inquiry into potential connections of feeling between a created object and its creator. Moreover, while multimodal expressions of remix typically reinforce notions of semiotics, audience reach, and symbolism (Cercone, 2017), they do not extend textual meaning-making beyond traditional print (Gee & Hayes, 2011). A notable exception to this critique, is research on artifactual literacies (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010) wherein a researcher traces back a remixer's interest in an artifact to give it agency to motivate future remixers. Put another way, it could be argued that the extant literature on remixing is largely silent on the potential feelings generated with and through the remixer and the remixed.

Methodology

As noted earlier, for purposes of this case study, we designed a Creative Commons website (Alvermann et al., 2022) that included an Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0) license. As such, it allowed all participants proper attribution. The website housed participants' and participant researchers' contributions: fragments and remixes that included muse-like images, videos, texts, sounds, and performances (www.becoming3lectric.com). The website was shared with graduate-level students in literacy courses as one example of digital remix that they could engage with in their studies. It was also shared via social media to a wider audience by the researchers. The study ran for four years, but the website is still "live" and viewable today.

Participant Researchers' Backgrounds and Subjectivities

As participant researchers, we five co-authors brought varying backgrounds to the project. We represented different regions in the United States, different races and ethnicities, different generations with different family structures, different gender practices, and different career paths. These differences surfaced during team meetings either in person or virtually (via phones, videoconferences, and emails). Through these meetings, we became acutely aware of how our subjectivities manifested and added to the already entangled connections between remixers and their remixed objects. In bridling our subjectivities through reflexions (Dahlberg, 2006), we relied on Vagle's (2014a) four strategies for recognizing the following occurrences: a) the context in which participants or their

creations first caught our attention; b) our own assumptions and their inherent blind spots; c) the beliefs, perspectives, and opinions that we refused to reject; and d) moments in which we were surprised by what we encountered while analyzing and writing up the final research report.

As researchers, we had initially contemplated remaining apart from digital remixing. However, it took little time to convince us that isolating ourselves would send the wrong message to our participants. After the study had launched and people began showing an interest in joining us, we found common ground by blogging about our own feelings, which often connected to those of our participants' fragments and remixes.

Wright and Hutcherson Price were added as authors of the study due to Wright's thoughts on digital remix and Hutcherson Price's remixed work on the website, which was the most remixed piece on the website. The original three authors felt that their additional voices amplified the study's work.

Recruitment of Participants

Recruitment of the participants began by sharing a link to the study's website with social media friends and listservs of colleges of education that we knew offered courses on, or related to, digital literacies. The website attracted 93 people. Each completed a participation form approved by our university's internal review board and available on the website. Eighty-five people gave permission to include their digital creations in our analyses. Among the 85 who consented, 36 (roughly 42%) agreed to be interviewed. Anonymity requirements for the review board meant we did not collect demographic data, other than to ensure that all participants were 18 or older.

It is important to note that some participants were from the university classes, but there were many who were connected to the researchers through their personal social media, and they also participated. These participants, then, came from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures with varying degrees of knowledge and experiences with digital remix. Their fragments and remixes also supported this observation. For instance, a close inspection of the website reveals a diversity in geographic locations, sociocultural contexts, and political commentaries.

The IRB consent form located on the website outlined the directions for participation. In addition, participants were able to see the clear definitions for fragments and remixes which allowed them to decide what they wanted to create within the Creative Commons website. Some participants were considered lurkers, or participants who viewed but did not submit an artifact to the website. Lurking, though, was a form of participation as participants engaged with the website in their chosen way. Because of the Attribution-NonCommercial- ShareAlike 3.0 Unported (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0) license that was used, participants understood that their work could be remixed at any time.

Data Sources

Primary data sources for this study included: a) the blogs, fragments, and remixes noted earlier; b) excerpts from partially transcribed notes taken during semi-structured phone interviews with a cross-section of participants; c) participant researchers' post-reflexions (Dahlberg, 2006); d) occasional

emails provided by participants in lieu of phone interviews due to scheduling difficulties; and e) spreadsheets that participant researchers designed and completed as part of a five-step procedure for analyzing interview data. Secondary data sources included notes from the participant researchers' synchronous video conferences, and a tally of the number of participants enrolled in the project for purposes of our institutional review board's accounting practices.

Analytic Procedures

A total of 189 submissions were available for analyzing along with 26 semi-structured interview protocols. Criteria for selecting and analyzing a smaller sub-group of fragments, remixes, and blogs took the following into account: the extent to which each selection was deemed representative of the larger participant pool. We adhered to Vagle's (2014a) whole-part-whole process with the understanding that we were "crafting a text—not merely coding, categorizing, making assertions and reporting" (p. 98-99). We also practiced researcher reflexivity by examining our own backgrounds, perspectives, and positionings in relation to that of our participants. It did not entail setting aside our own assumptions about digital remix; instead, it involved examining how those assumptions figured into our interpretations of participants' and our own creations. This process arguably corrected to some degree for researcher bias (Vagle & Hofsess, 2016). Although the whole-part-whole process worked well in terms of recursively analyzing the connections between the creator and the creation, it didn't support an in-depth analysis of the interview data. Nor did it suffice for analyzing data from discussions of our post-reflexions. For these reasons, we developed our own five-step procedure that consisted of the following rounds and their corresponding spreadsheet entries.

Five-Step Procedure

Round one included individually interviewing participants who created digital objects (blogs, fragments, remixes) for the purpose of answering our research question: that is, to what degree if any, might digital remixes evoke feelings of connection between the creator and the created? Rounds two through four focused on regularly scheduled virtual video data workshops. During these conferences, we compared and contrasted the participants' and participant researchers' statements about the feelings their digital creations had evoked. We also individually analyzed data to inductively arrive at sub-themes that represented the degree to which digital remixes suggested a presence of connected feelings between the creator and the created. Round five culminated in a videoconference in which interviewers accounted for their positionalities in one or more of the sub-themes derived in round four. By the end of round 5's discussion, we reached a consensus on three themes: histories, hearts, and homes.

Analysis of Entanglements

It is worth emphasizing that post-intentional relationships with a phenomenon are "not simply in the researcher, in the participants, or in the text, but in the dynamic intentional relationships that tie participants, the researcher, the produced text, and their positionalities together" (Vagle, 2014a, p.30). Also, worth noting is how Vagle's post-intentional approach supported the participant researchers in

crafting a report that did not rely on static coding processes. For instance, if a particular remix evoked a feeling of nostalgia, did it belong in Histories because the idea came from the past? Or did it fit better in Hearts because the recalled feelings were warm and evocative? Or was it a part of Homes, those places of feeling safe? We posit that a post-intentional approach to phenomenology endorses analyzing entangled connections so that nostalgic remixes of train whistles or family suppers can become part of Histories AND Hearts AND Homes.

Discussion of Findings

Worth mentioning is that the names of all participants are pseudonyms except for the five co-authors. The photographer's name in the entanglements section of this manuscript is not blinded per her request.

Histories

Drawing from the study's conceptual framework, Alvermann kept one of Vagle's major analytic tenets foremost in mind: namely the need to consider the unit of analysis as the phenomenon itself (digital remix) and not the individual who created it. This nugget of advice kept her focused on participants' remixes and not on their reported feelings per se. Granted, as defined in this study, material objects (remixes) are not separate from the feelings people attribute to their remixes. In the following snippets of evoked connections to past lives (histories), it was participants' remixes that were analyzed. For instance, during individual interviews in which participants reported what their remixes called to mind, she focused on the remixes as she listened and took notes. Of course, the word 'mind' needs troubling a bit inasmuch as it depended on whose mind the interviewer was referencing: the participant's mind or the researcher/interviewer's mind. Here again, entangled connections were present even in something that might seem on the surface to be an ordinary kind of interviewing process. Fortunately, in Vagle's post-intentional framework, self-reflexivity was a required practice.

In interviewing participants, we learned that asking them to describe feelings they experienced in relation to digital remix often elicited connections they made to their past lives. For some, a digital remix signaled a nostalgic response, while for others it was an invitation to recall earlier frustrations that still needed addressing. In this instance, Chanel met with an old friend and noticed things that had seemed trivial when first experiencing them. Amelia's yearnings to return home evoked feelings of loneliness. In contrast to Chanel and Amelia, Liam frequently returned to a local Saturday flea market that was only minutes from his home. His fragment consisted of a short video of a duck's discomfort on a road leading to the market. Ian's fragment, also a video, captured feelings he experienced after moving from New York to a small granite-producing village in the South. Though different in origin, Pearl's digital fragment depicted online dating when that technology was in its infancy and evoked feelings of deception. For others, remixing was mostly a joyous occasion that produced a sense of nostalgia, as when Eun-Ji remixed Asa's collage of art and history. Or when Melissa's remix evoked memories that enabled her to see with new eyes "how the past and present are always connecting just as I am always becoming." Xandra's remix depicted her as someone obsessed with technology, which surprised her because she had not gravitated toward technology of any kind in the past. Finally, Jillian's remix suggested that "juxtaposing present everyday life with unconventional past events had something in common with accepting nature's willful ways."

Hearts

In this study, connections of feelings related to texts are represented by the metaphor of the heart. Historically and linguistically, the heart has been conceptualized as the repository of emotions by most Western cultures (Gutiérrez Pérez, 2008). Heart, as used here, represents feelings revealed through remixing. Entangled connections of remix and feeling in a poetic fragment reflected an interaction between two women: one who identified as cisgender and the other who was transitioning to a woman. Julie Ann composed her piece after meeting someone in a coffee shop who touched her heart. Maiya sat in a coffee shop noting blurred lines between real-time connection and virtual connection. In the virtual world, face-to-face connection is reduced to the perfect pose, filter, and caption for a social media post. The question then becomes, how are people connected in this digital age? Or, as Maiya speculated, "The human connections may not be that strong." Her remix illustrated the intricacy of connectivity and how connections between people are often mediated by the devices in their hands rather than in the faces of one another. Several remixes revealed ponderings of virtual relationships and the changing ways in which people connect. A remix of Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem "We Wear the Mask" inspired Pearl to consider the role of digital versus personal identity and the feelings of uncertainty that accompany virtual connections. Adding to these inconsistencies is the remix itself—a digital product covered in digital personae that are put on and taken off with the click of a mouse. However, when more than one remix of the same fragment or blog provoked different feelings and responses, the potential of remix to reach the heart of a person as well as to identify the social apparatus that surrounds dynamic entanglements becomes evident (Jones & Vagle, 2013). As participant researchers, we noticed the heart sometimes represented a longing for a balance with humanity's intersection with both nature and art. One such remix juxtaposed "beach people" (a fragment) with "mountain people" (the remix). Yet another fragment (an art installation on perspective) was balanced by a remix showing the same art piece from a different point of view. Differing points of view between professional and personal lives also played a role in remixes: lonely fathers in offices, the stifling nature of academia, and a sense of alienation were juxtaposed with the peace found in nature, the whimsy of fairy lights, and the power of multimodal images.

We also recognized within some remixes a longing for balance reflected by human intersection with nature (place) and art (response). One such remix created an entanglement of a "beach person" (the fragment) with a "mountain person" (the remix). Both the fragment and remix communicated feelings about connections to nature and how those connections served to realign these two participants to their human temporality compared to nature's seeming permanence. The fragment initiated a post-reflexive action, reaction, and creation in the person who made the remix. The remix served as an embodied experience with the fragment, one wherein lived experiences affected feelings toward the natural world. In each, nature is a call to disconnect from the chaos of the urgent and contemplate matters of the heart which are enduring. One found the beach a place to breathe; the remixer dreamed of scales of time (and slowing down to reflect) in the mountains. Remixes may have been inspired by the form of the original (e.g., Thinglink) or by the content (e.g., a photo inspired by a poem.)

Homes

Amelia's fragment of home resonated with several participants and was closely linked to both histories and hearts. It included a shrine housing items such as pictures, sculptures, and pieces of the earth that reminded her of her home back in Montana. Dee's blogs connected to homes with countryside,

mountains, and a simple life. She mentioned the late-night radio of WSM 650, which was her favorite. In a different context, KOOL BREEZE's remix included sights and sounds of the Richmond area that he called home. He expressed feelings evoked by sights such as “Lots of big spinners and hydraulic rides—they're beautiful. You watch them go up and down the street with the top back just glistening. They catch everyone's eye—rich or poor, it doesn't matter. Everyone wants to feel what it's like to ride with the top let back.” Unlike KOOL BREEZE, Terry's video remix pictured purple flowers whose fragrance beckoned her home. In her words, “There's nothing like slowing down—for me being country is in my roots and why i chose images we don't often see in the hustle of day-to day suburban life.” Bobby's remix also considered a place to slow down and appreciate the little things in life—a mountain sanctuary relatively free from the constraints of technology, work, and social media. In his words, “Time changes with the way it is viewed—the slowness of nature's seasons versus the immediacy of technology.” Similarly, Ranier's fragment of Norway's rugged coast captured his love of the changing sea's rich colors and time spent at his family's summer “home”—a cottage just off the seaside cliff. As participant researchers, we felt connected to our students' reflections on home. They were entangled across time, place, and people's feelings. We acknowledge that place is more than a geographical location marked by seasonal changes and nature's changing scenery. In fact, it seems probable that any place can be turned into a home once it's connected to feelings typically associated with histories and hearts. In short, home is a place where the past (history) and one's feelings (heart) cannot be separated. As our cross-analyses suggest, a complete disconnect among histories, hearts, and homes would be a rarity given that each was so intricately entangled throughout our participants' and participant researchers' blogs, fragments, and remixes.

Two Close-Ups of Entangled Feelings

From the start of our analyses, Beach, Alvermann, and Loomis noted complex entanglements involving participants, participant researchers, and the fragments, remixes and blogs they created. This led to adding Wright and Hutcherson Price. The two close-ups illustrate just how complex the entanglements became over time. The first took the form of a researcher participant's fragment, while the second became a critical dialogue via multiple remixes. By supporting asynchronous conversations, our Creative Commons website became a space for demonstrating criticality and agency (Muhammad, 2020).

Fairies Visit the Lighthouse

In the first example of entanglements, one participant posted a fragment titled *Fairies Visit the Lighthouse* (see Figure 1). She requested her real name, Taffy Raphael (2014), be used and gave permission for publishing her fragment—a whimsical interpretation of a photo she took during a fireworks show in a community steeped in Irish traditions. Although Taffy preferred structure, form, and design over feelings and other embodied subjectivities, Loomis' artistic proclivities overlaid imagination. In an interview with Loomis, Taffy noted the remix turned the lighting and lighthouse from focal point to context, adding that it was “a perfect result from the collaboration [with Loomis].”



Figure 1. Raphael's Fairies Visit the Lighthouse

Specifically, Loomis added elements from her home library of images and Irish poetry (see Figure 2). In remixing a participant's fragment, Loomis became a participant researcher. The distinction between participant and participant researcher created further entanglements when Alvermann subsequently interviewed Loomis about the feelings Taffy's fragment evoked in her. When similarly configured entanglements occurred among other participants and participant researchers, we noted and included them in our analyses. Recalling that Vagle (2014b) emphasized *crafting* as opposed to coding phenomenological data, Loomis considered connections with her feeling that art opened avenues (the heart connection) for creating a new text from things in one's community (the home connection). The possibility existed, of course, that this entanglement would not have occurred had the fireworks show taken place somewhere other than the Irish community in which Taffy lived (the history connection).



Figure 2. Author 3's Fairies Remix

Working 8-5

The second example of entangled feelings was Hutcherson Price's fragment "Working 8-5" (Figure 3). This fragment was her assertion of agency over her value at work when she felt stifled and a remix of Maya Angelou's poem "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" came to mind. This was the most remixed piece in our study, and her insights into how texts and feelings become entangled became keys to understanding the phenomenon being studied. Hutcherson Price reflected, "Posting a digital fragment allowed space to create and channel my artistic energy; breathe."



WORKING 8-5
My voice is **STRONG AND LOUD**
yet muted.
My Light is **RESILIENT and BRIGHT**
Yet dimmed.
My Mind is **INNOVATIVE and SHARP**
Yet dulled.
I too know why the caged
bird sings.

Figure 3. Author 5's Working 8-5 Fragment

Remixes of Hutcherson Price's fragment took several forms, including the use of parallel text structures and vibrant imagery. What made this group of remixes unique was the array of feelings they evoked in the author. Her strongest feelings were those of indignation and desolate anguish, toward one remix: "Stung. Slapped. Misunderstood. Chastised. Gaslit. That's how I felt after reading the critique of my heart-pouring cry for intellectual and creative freedom at work." The intensity of Hutcherson Price's hurt feelings was balanced by another remix that provoked a flood of happy emotions. In that remix, a simple word with flowers around it, made her immediately cry when she saw it. "I experienced comradeship and felt relieved and safe."

Feelings about other's remixes are indeed feelings of connection with and through the creator (human) and the created (non-human remix) because the connectedness was with the thing created and not necessarily the creator of the remix. Certainly, there could be a feeling of connection with both. Hutcherson Price wondered for a moment who could have created such a response and what set of beliefs might prompt them to respond as they did. However, the creator is more abstract and less concrete than the created remix. The remix itself evoked a response, as opposed to evaluating a person within a personal context that might have contributed to an overall feeling. In the Creative Commons setting, the remix (artifact/object/thing) stood powerfully alone and prominent and representative of the thought or feeling that evoked a response. There was no face, body, or set of beliefs to personally

respond or connect to, only the representative statement(s) which were represented in a variety of multimodal forms on the Creative Commons website.

Implications

In researching the phenomenon of digital remix, we found support for Knobel and Lankshear's (2008) claim that "Digital remix provides an educationally useful lens on culture and cultural production as well as on literacy and literacy education" (p. 22) It is these two domains that provide structure for discussing the implications of our study.

Culture and Cultural Production

As we continually bridled our subjectivities and worked through the related themes of histories, hearts, and homes, we honored our belief in Vagle's (2018) assertion that phenomenological research is a "creative act that cannot be mapped out in any once-and-for-all sort of way" (p. xiii). This understanding, that "the phenomenologist is continuously honing her craft, not simply learning steps to a methodological process and then carrying them out" (p. xii-xiii), helped us envision ourselves as moving through a dialogue between people and the muses of their feelings. We wondered not only how remixes might reflect the feelings of the contributors as they brought personal experiences, world views, and points of view to the fragments, remixes, and blogs they chose to remix, but also how feelings might be manifested through the form of remix itself. Remix, as both a process and a product, proved an opportunity for participants to explore their feelings and create with others in an interconnected space that was indeed greater than the sum of its parts. Collaborating with each other, our data, and Vagle's (2014a) post-intentional approach helped us effectuate a polyvocal analytical experience that we first acknowledged in shared interactions on the site and carried forth into this writing. We believe open analytical procedure, a way into our collective sense-making, may have something to offer literacy scholars working to move and think together across subjective boundaries, especially amid recent affective and material turns in qualitative inquiry more generally.

Our own interconnections as members of the study's research team, plus our roles as participant researchers in the very project we had designed, added significantly to the entanglements we documented in connecting to a particular remix. Deciding to embrace the ways in which we each became implicated in the project, we elected to undertake a constant (re)interrogation of our understandings of the phenomenon in question, permitting a degree of sincerity toward the data and ourselves that proved integral to the course of our study. In returning to our original research question, we took issue with our expressed attempt to describe "the degree" to which digital remixes inspired feelings of connection between the creators and the created. The binary, for one, became more ambiguous. And we began to conceive the experience of connection itself as a kind of creation forged in the encounter with and through human and nonhuman elements. The feelings of connection we and our participants experienced resonated with an excess of intensity that was difficult to map; they were folded deep within us, embedded in the parts we are quick to point to when we think about what makes us human in the first place—our memories (histories), yearnings (hearts), and sanctuaries (homes). In our original question we asked, "to what degree?" Now we reply: vividly, viscerally, and intimately.

As we sought to study these feelings of entanglement that digital remix afforded rather than the individuals who experienced them, we also wondered how a switch in thinking about nonhuman/human dialectics in the era of posthumanism was evident in our findings. Though Vagle (2014a) noted that intentional relations already exist between people and the world, Western philosophy has nevertheless influenced individuals within Western societies to view themselves as agents of an order higher than mere objects. Still, while studies of “mere” objects or other people are typical, we began, more and more, to focus on how digital remix (object) functioned as an impetus for participants and participant researchers to experience tugs of feeling. As a result, we recognized that a certain degree of our own sense of agency had to be ceded to the phenomenon itself. The medium of digital remix often took hold of us, led us, connected us, inspired us; perhaps our intentions were not so much our own as they were brought forth—or provoked—by the possibilities the digital remix afforded.

In the end, a post-intentional approach will not assuage the tension between subjects and objects that philosophers have debated for millennia. It does, however, we assert, permit space for such tension to be conceived of generatively. Future researchers working with a post-intentional approach will want to remain aware of this heightened latitude, as those seeking tried and true forms of methodological analysis will not find ready-made prescriptions to anchor them here. Instead, those thinking of adopting a post-intentional approach will want to follow Vagle’s (2018) advice in working to become “honest-yet-gentle, serious-yet-playful, and contemplative-yet-decisive” (p. 180) in myriad ways as they approach their data, themselves, and their research design.

Literacies and Literacy Education

Currently, while society at large seems poised to afford both digital and non-digital literacies their equal due, schools continue to privilege non-digital forms. There is a need, then, to expand students’ experiences with digital literacies in order to prepare them to be creators in their out-of-school futures (Hicks & Turner, 2013; Knobel, 2017). Aligned with the claim that digital remixing is part and parcel of an educated person’s array of contemporary communicative competencies is the notion that when people are inspired by other people’s digital creations, they experience feeling-related connections to those objects. In other words, we insert ourselves into a learning mode that Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) argue is equivalent to learning through feeling.

Here we return to our original research question in full: what degree, if any, might digital remixes inspire or arouse feelings of connection with and through the creator and the created? Indeed, through our analyses, we found that participants did have a sense of dialogue across the digital media that were remixed. While this can be intuitively sensed across many online cultural practices youth partake in (e.g., meme-ing, fan art, et cetera), it is rare for such distributed forms of expression to be explored in traditional school(ing) contexts, if at all. With this in mind, we suggest that digital remix, as a form of multimodal writing, offers students opportunities to improve communicative and overall literacy skills, such as engaging with authentic audiences and communicating in or across mediums that connect to aspects of the world around them through rich literacy practices. We argue, then, that teachers and teacher educators should remain open to remix. That is, rather than assuming traditional ELA classrooms will forever remain “traditional,” we suggest educators look to open up opportunities for learners in their classrooms to use remixing in novel ways. This does not necessarily mean starting a Creative Commons website, as we did, nor even engaging digitally, per se. A remix may be composed

in--or across--any medium (print, aural, visual, etc.) and might therefore be operationalized in any number of ways across virtually any context. In the end, it is the spirit of remix that carries promise, not a particular project or technological capacity.

With this point in mind, digital remix as a form of multimodal writing offers students engaging, authentic, and meaningful (literacy) learning opportunities, especially when teachers value those forms of expression in their classrooms and center explorations of the (inter)connectedness of the world around them and their students. Such (re)thinking resonates with current research that acknowledges the interconnections of materials, nature, and humans (Kuby, Spector, & Thiel, 2018; Leander & Ehret, 2019), as well as the blurred boundaries between of digital expression and human “being” more generally, which are inevitable and require our serious ethical attention. Hutcherson Price’s feelings about other remixers (mis)representing her work, for example, has implications for a discussion around authorship and ownership in remixing projects. That is, her eventual sense that the composition had taken on a life of its own, “abstracted” from her original authorial intentions, implies a move toward thinking of composition in less bounded, individualistic terms. Claiming that literacy exists, most acutely, in these “rhizomal” connections, Leander and Boldt (2012), for example, asked their readers what they might make of the invitation to consider literacy in “and . . . and . . . and” relations?” (p. 41). To our minds, such a move suggests possibilities for a more empathetic, playful—in some ways agentive, and in other ways entirely contingent—approach to meaning-making processes. Over the course of our research project, we were constantly reminded that literacies are fluid depending on purpose, context, and experiences. Similarly, teachers interested in exploring self-sponsored creative composing online will find different media (such as those remixed in our study) useful in promoting multimodal explorations of identity, expression, and connection.

Knobel (2017) suggests that it may well be “the *principles* of digital remix and creativity that find useful leverage for learning” (p. 47) and that teachers who attend closely to the layers of meaning and collaboration in digital remix may be reminded “that creativity is the province of everyday people and that they, too, can be creative in their teaching—and, importantly, open up spaces in which students can be creative as well” (p. 48). We advocate that educators reckon with the unpredictable and seemingly tangential energies that readers, texts, and creators produce as they encounter one another through digital remix. Though educators may at times find these energies difficult to direct or assess in standardized ways, we contend that a recognition of the messy, sometimes cathartic, often beautiful, forever unaccountable traces indeed affect us, take us up, and fundamentally alter our being. In short, we assert that our (inter)connected becoming in the world is something to embrace.

References

- Alvermann, D.E., Beach, C.L., Loomis, S., Wright, W., & Hutcherson Price, L. (2022). *Becoming 3lectric*. <https://www.becoming3lectric.com>
- Beach, C.L. (2017). Making sense of authors and texts in a remixed, participatory culture. In D.J. Loveless, P. Sullivan, K. Dredger, & J. Burns (Eds.), *Deconstructing the education-industrial complex in the digital age* (pp. 287-302). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- Bezemer, J., & Kress, G. (2008). Writing in multimodal texts: A social semiotic account of designs. *Written Communication, 25*(166), 166-195.
- Campanelli, V. (2018). Toward a remix culture: An existential perspective. In E. Navas, O. Gallagher, & x. burrough (Eds.), *Keywords in remix studies* (pp. 54-68). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cercone, J. (2017). "Standing at the crossroads": Content creation in the 21st-century English classroom. *English Journal, 106*(3), 25–31.
- Cope, B., Kalantzis, M., & Abrams S. S. (2017). Multiliteracies: Meaning-making and learning in the era of digital text. In F. Serafini and E. Gee (Eds.). *Remixing multiliteracies: Theory and practice from New London to new times*. Columbia University: Teachers College Press.
- Dahlberg, K. (2006). The essence of essences—the search for meaning structures in phenomenological analysis of lifeworld phenomena. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being, 1*, 11-19.
- Damasio, A. (2005). Feeling our emotions. In an interview by M. Lenzen in *Scientific American Mind*. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/feeling-our-emotions/>
- Ferguson, K. (2010). Everything is a remix. [video] <https://www.everythingsaremix.info/watch-the-series>
- Garcia, A., & O'Donnell-Allen, C. (2015). *Pose, wobble, flow: A culturally proactive approach to literacy instruction*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gee, J. P., & Hayes, E. R. (2011). *Language and learning in the digital age*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gutiérrez Pérez, R. (2008). A cross-cultural analysis of heart metaphors. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses, 21*, 25-56.
- Hicks, T., & Turner, K. H. (2013). No longer a luxury: Digital literacy can't wait. *English Journal*,

Beach, C. L., Alvermann, D. E., Loomis, S., Wright, W., & Price, L. H.

102(6), 58-65.

Immordino-Yang, M. & Damasio, A. (2007). We feel, therefore we learn: The relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education. *Journal of Mind*, 1(1), 3-10.

Jenkins, H., Ito, M., & boyd, D. (2015). *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era*. Boston, MA: Polity.

Jolls, T. (2015). The New Curricula: How media literacy education transforms teaching and learning. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 7(1), 65-71.

Jones, S., & Vagle, M. D. (2013). Living contradictions and working for change: Toward a theory of social class-sensitive pedagogy. *Educational Researcher*, 42(3), 129-141.

Knobel, M. (2017). Remix, literacy and creativity: An analytic review of the research literature. *Estonian Journal of Education*. 5(2), 31-53.

Knobel, M., & Lankshear, C. (2008). Remix: The art and craft of endless hybridization: Digital remix provides an educationally useful lens on culture and cultural production as well as on literacy and literacy education. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(1), 22-33.

Kuby, C.R., Spector, K., & Thiel, J. J. (Eds.). (2018). *Posthumanism and literacy education: Knowing/ becoming/ doing literacies*. New York: Routledge.

Lammers, J.C., Magnifico, A.M., & Wang, A. (2022). "Playful multiliteracies: Fan-based literacies' role in English Language Arts pedagogy." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. [early online]. pp1-11. <https://doi-org.ezp.lib.rochester.edu/10.1002/jaal.1253>

Leander, K. M., & Ehret, C. (Eds.). (2019). *Affect in literacy learning and teaching: Pedagogies, politics and coming to know*. New York: Routledge.

Leander, K., & Boldt, G. (2013). Rereading "A pedagogy of multiliteracies" bodies, texts, and emergence. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 45(1), 22-46.

Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy*. Scholastic Inc.

NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English). (2019). *Definition of literacy in a digital age*. <https://ncte.org/statement/nctes-definition-literacy-digital-age/print/>

O'Byrne, W. I. (2014). *Online content creation: Empowering students as readers and writers of online information*. <http://wiobyne.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/OByrne-2013-Online-Content-Construction-Empowering-Students-as-Readers-and-Writers-of-Online->

Information.pdf

Pahl, K., & Rowsell, J. (2010). *Artifactual literacies: Every object tells a story*. Teachers College Press.

Pontin, J. (2014, June 17). The importance of feelings. *MIT Technology Review*.

<https://www.technologyreview.com/s/528151/the-importance-of-feelings/>

Raphael, T. (2014). Fairies visit the lighthouse [Photography]. Used with written permission by

<http://www.taffyraphaelphotography.com>

Strong, K., & Ossei-Owusu, S. (2014). Naija boy remix: Afroexploitation and the new media creative economies of cosmopolitan African youth. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 26(2), 189-205.

Vagle, M. D. (2018). *Crafting phenomenological research* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Vagle, M. D. (2014a). *Crafting phenomenological research*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Vagle, M. D. (2014b). Resisting over-coding in post-intentional phenomenology. Paper presented at the 10th International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Champaign-Urbana, IL.

Vagle, M. D., & Hofsess, B. A. (2016). Entangling a post-reflexivity through post-intentional phenomenology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(5), 334-344.