

# Chapter 10: Sampling Sound, Text, and Praxis: Student and Teacher as Producer in a (Somewhat) Open-Source Course

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## 2. “Me and My Girls”—Sample Assignment Three: Analysis Essay by Anonymous

Selena Gomez released an empowering song by the name of “Me and My Girls” in the year of 2015. One year later, a girl named Lyra decided to take this song and twist it into her own take by combining the song with contradicting sexist movie scenes and posting it on YouTube. She borrowed many movie scenes in which she showed how women were degraded, used, and sexualized throughout the ages. I will go through some of the main points of the video and discuss how I view this piece of a work as a feminist. Then I will explain why this particular product of remix matters, how it has contributed to our society today, and why remix in general is important in today’s world.

“Why do you wear sexy things if you don’t want men to notice?” That was one of the first phrases spoken by a man in the beginning of the video. “For how I feel in them; I dress for myself,” the women answered. My first reaction was to laugh at this scene. Not because the scene itself was humorous, but because the man in it clearly thought that anything that was ever created, performed, or done, first revolved around the male sex. He reminded me of a toddler in the way that his selfish, egocentric views were blinding him from reality. From the reality that the opposite sex was also human, had needs, wants, and goals. This specific kind of mentality, portrayed by the man in the short clip, leads to so many problems in our current society. Rape victims, both male and female, are blamed because they didn’t wear “appropriate” clothing, which “caused” the rapist to do what he/she did. High schools have unnecessary dress code rules that “protect” students and staff from “uncomfortable” situations “brought” on by students simply wearing what they want. So, in other words, from this sexist point of view, women should think very carefully before wearing something, acting somehow, or saying something, because what they do influences the way men act towards them. The thief wasn’t the problem, the mansion full of riches was. The killer wasn’t the problem, the person standing in front of him/her was. The liar wasn’t the problem, the situation he/she was put in was. This is the logic used by people like the man in the video. Maybe, if only for a second, these people saw other human beings as equal to them, having the same feelings and wants, the world could be a better place.

“Women act like men and then complain men don’t want them.” This was the second phrase spoken by a man in the video. This is an example of a person who believes he, in all his beauty, is the perfect contributor to the planet earth. Human beings have been to the moon, robots can be citizens in Saudi Arabia, people have found cures for so many diseases previously thought of as incurable, but it’s still hard for some people to grasp the idea that you don’t have to act or dress in a certain way to be respected as a woman or man. Remove the standard societal stereotypes of males and females and it becomes obvious that men and women are more alike than different. We both have bodies, brains, emotions, thoughts, and feelings. We all experience depression, physical illnesses, and tragedies. One is not greater than the other and one is not less than the other. We are one species on one planet. So then why is it that one sex can tell the other what to wear, how to act, and what to do? Why, all of a sudden, did one become superior to the other? Why is that one sex assigns a set of behaviors to the other sex?

“You know, if you were my girl, I wouldn’t let you out of my sight: I’d handcuff you to the bed and all.” This is another phrase that stuck out to me in the video. He must be talking about an animal. It must be a dog or something. Wait, no, he is talking about the girl. So, apparently, women are objects here. You can purchase them, own them, do whatever you want with them. Women need to be watched over because they might run away. Women are very irrational and delusional, so make sure you control what they say and how they act. I don’t even know if I need to explain why this is wrong, but I will, just in case someone out there does not understand. Women are not objects of any sort. Women are beautiful

creations just like men are. Women don't need to be watched over. Women are not children: don't treat them like they are. So many movies, tv shows, and magazines portray women as an object that can be sexualized and owned. This is why the media can be such a toxic place for many young girls growing up. If a child is brought up seeing a body, similar to theirs, being treated unfairly and disrespectfully, it is more likely that they will mature accepting it as the way it is supposed to be. Young girls become accustomed to these ways and learn that to question the norm does not always seem like a good option. Negative effects following these kind of shows, movies, and books can be low self-esteem, depression, self-doubt, and so much more. The movie and music industry make pieces that sell, and without change, women as sexual objects will continue to sell. Using women's bodies to sell, promote, and attract the attention of men. If people stood up for what was right, our world would begin to change, slowly but surely. Elisa Kreisinger, a feminist remix artist, offered some great advice to her fellow feminists. It's a short quote but I believe that if people took it to heart, there would be a big change. She said this: "Don't blame the media, become the media." We can sit and do nothing, or we can get to work and create our own art, ideas, speeches, movies, books, stories, and rules. People can stop purchasing songs and movies that portray minors as less of a human, People can speak up online through videos, comments, and pictures. Women and men can stand up and become the media that they would be proud to experience with their children, grandchildren, and future generations.

This specific remix example is important to me because it is proof that anyone and everyone can help with bettering the planet we live on. It is important because it brings awareness to the sexist issues of multimedia, the music industry, the movie industry, and more. If Lyra, an amateur video editor, can contribute to creating awareness through simply being creative, then so can anyone else. By combining numerous sexist scenes from today's media and playing a feminist song in the background, she showed how important feminism can be today. I recently read an article written by Renee Slajda where she talks about the importance of the feminist remix community. She expresses her opinion on how important it is for everyone to view themselves as an artist. One of her sentences stood out to me especially, "By encouraging everyone to view themselves as artists, remix allows its participants to create, make mistakes, and try again in their efforts to reshape the media—and the world—as they would like to see it." Reading this made me even more aware of how important the work of this remix was. Lyra not only presented her take on the sexist aspect of media and its flaws, but she also encouraged other people through her own actions. I'm sure that like me, other people were inspired by her video into creating something of their own. This specific remix, is important to me because I believe it not only encourages many other people to stand up, but also, for people that understand and relate to her to take action and do something that makes a difference.

This leads me to my final point. Why does remix matter anyway? Let me start by saying this. We, as a people, would never be where we are today without remix. The advanced technology, web designs, and architecture would not be the same as it is currently. Everything we have, everything, is an altered version of the same item previously presented. There is originality but nothing is original. Your favorite TV shows and movies used other shows and movies to create their story plot. Your favorite smartphone used ideas of other companies to better their own. Your favorite clothing brand used ideas of other designers to make their clothes. Why is this important? Because, once you realize that everything is constantly being remixed, you can learn how it becomes useful in life, work, and school. Remix is also used in greater things like in society and politics. Feminism itself went from women's right to vote in 1920 to men's birth control in 2017. Ideas and values change and evolve over time, and this is the work of remix. Ideas, concepts, and standards are ever changing and if they didn't, we might not have had even the simple things we have today, the very things we take for granted. In one article, "Remix in Visual Art," there was a sentence that I believed was a very big part of remix as a whole. This is what it claims: "Ones' physical surroundings are a constant source of inspiration for many artists, whether various scenes, or repeated looks at the same scene in different kinds of weather." In other words, everything and anything around us can be an inspiration to someone. Anything can be bettered, altered, and recreated using the artist's own preference and creativity. Remix is important because without it, many voices

would not be heard amongst the overpowering voices of the government, the rich, and the privileged. With remix, individuals can create unique pieces of work that others can see and be inspired to do the same. With remix our world can change for the better. With remix, we can give a voice to those who, overshadowed by the majority, have shut down their own ideas and creativity. This is why remix is, and always will be, important to me.

I discussed the three main ideas I chose from the feminist remix video by Lyra. The first being the selfish outlook on life and humanity that many people have. This outlook creates many problems in our modern society including sexism, homophobia, racism and more. People sometimes do more harm than good on this earth, and it comes from selfishness. The second example was the standards and expectations set for a certain group by another group. I discussed how this was not logical considering the fact that we all had the same body, planet, and emotions. It was not fair for another group to order another around as if it was the superior. If people focused on what made them sincerely happy inside instead of what they were told should make them happy, we would all be happier. No one should be told that if they want to be desirable, they have to act a certain way only. My third point was that humans, or in this case women, are not objects. They are not something that can be bought, used, and thrown away. The fact that I even had to say that makes me upset because thinking about how far we came as a nation gets completely wiped out when I realize that people don't understand even the most basic facts about humans. Treat others like you would like to be treated. Love people, take care of people, support people. We're all stuck on this place, called earth, for a long time. This specific feminist remix showed me that you can be anyone, no matter how small or big, and still inspire others to change. You can use the media, different art, and your own self-expression to get other people thinking about possible change that is inevitable to living in peace among other humans. Lastly the biggest role falls to remix itself. The process in which ideas are transformed into another artist's look on the particular subject or passion. The process that brought us to the very place we are in today. Without remix there would be no creativity, no inspiration, no change. Without remix, there would be no feminism. Without remix, we simply would not exist.

## **References**

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