

2018

## #cut/paste+bleed: Entangling Feminist Affect, Action and Production On and Offline

Alexandra Juhasz  
*CUNY Brooklyn College*

### How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Follow this and additional works at: [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/bc\\_pubs](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/bc_pubs)

 Part of the [Digital Humanities Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#),  
and the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

"#cut/paste+bleed: Entangling Feminist Affect, Action and Production On and Offline," in Jentery Sayers, ed. *Routledge Companion to Media Studies and Digital Humanities* (Routledge: 2018): 18-32.

This Book Chapter or Section is brought to you for free and open access by the Brooklyn College at CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications and Research by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact [AcademicWorks@cuny.edu](mailto:AcademicWorks@cuny.edu).

## 2

# #CUT/PASTE+BLEED

## Entangling Feminist Affect, Action, and Production On and Offline

*Alexandra Juhasz*

### The Set-Up

I have been engaged in an integrated “media praxis” that holistically links media production, theory, and criticism around social issues of value to myself and my communities for over 25 years. I have produced several large bodies of work, about a range of issues, but all share my commitment to making and theorizing media within communities and toward self- and world-changing. My media praxis—making alternative community and culture while critiquing participatory networks or hegemonic culture through an active participation within them—has moved across media forms and their related scholarly fields as technologies and their academic homes have transformed: from activist video to online spaces, from cinema to media studies to digital humanities (DH). The issues I work on have also changed over the years—AIDS, feminism, black lesbian identity and community, antiwar activism, queer families, feminist pedagogy, and digital community—but my commitment to doing this work within and about media technologies has stayed consistent. Why?

Perhaps not surprisingly, I have already answered this question online—why work *on* technologies *in* those systems?—writing there about my work on YouTube (this repeating, recycling, and returning to online expression is the particular focus [and form!] of the project I will soon be describing here: Ev-ent-angement). “My Orientation (Toward YouTube and ThirdTube)” is one “texteo” from my born-digital, online video-book, *Learning from YouTube* (2011b: 243). There, like here, I detail my position up front because it is perhaps unusually subjective, committed, and connected, and I do not want that obscured. Self-aware, self-reflexive process is central to my media praxis:

I am a committed media scholar and maker whose work has focused on individual and community empowerment and, by design, projects to which I am personally related. The wholistic integration of teaching, writing, media-making and politics—what I call *media praxis*—is central to my life’s work, which I hope will contribute to change. I like to work within the forms I am analyzing and hoping to (use for) change. My reflexive process grounds the questions I ask of YouTube and where I

try to push it. The project is both personal and political (i.e., feminist), as well as formal and structural in nature. Thus, a critical pedagogy aiming toward digital literacy and a civic engagement in the hopes of creative democracy are also central to my praxis. I believe that under the right conditions, citizens and students (Web 2.0's much-celebrated "users") can make expressive, critical, and beautiful media that makes relevant contributions to our culture. Thinking through (and in) these conditions is a defining orientation of my project.

In the mid-2000s, I repositioned the places and technologies undergirding my ongoing interest in user-made media for self and community empowerment, and began asking questions about the use of YouTube (and social networks, more generally) toward these potentially revolutionary ends. *Learning from YouTube* (which I "published" online with MIT Press in 2011) holds the analysis my students and I generated while attempting to theorize and produce personal, political, creative, or expressive work within one of the central, repressive corporate digital platforms that we have been given for free.

After the rather lengthy and painful process of inhabiting and critiquing this corporate platform from within, all the while learning through practice how such political and aesthetic interventions are performed, enacted, and curbed by new media networks, I wanted to be more productive and less reactive. So, in 2010, I began to teach a course called "Feminist Online Spaces" that asks my students to both find and analyze the possibilities for democratic, safe, and principled interaction online. This course inspired me to want to build more networked and generative communities, which initiated my collaboration with Anne Balsamo, with whom I co-facilitated FemTechNet (a global network of feminist scholars and artists) in 2013 as well as FemTechNet's signature course, "Feminist Dialogues on Technology," an experimental, technology-enhanced DOCC (Distributed Open Collaborative Course) in its third year-long cycle at the time of this writing. I consider all of these media-critical and -situated projects to be lab-like encounters where doing and thinking in community (often the classroom and its linked spaces) and within the sites or technologies under consideration *are* the scholarship. That is to say, the doing and the process are the product, and what is built toward those ends can also be shared and/or evaluated (Juhasz 2011a). This allocating and re-allocating of process in and as the product are what I model now, albeit within yet another technology: the paper-bound scholarly anthology. Here, I describe my most recent project, *Ev-ent-angement*, one that again engages critically with social media networks from inside them; share some of my lessons learned about critical digital production and research practice; and conclude with why I think these methods (as much as my findings) matter.

*Ev-ent-angement* begins with a simple enough mandate: If the internet is an unorchestrated archive of fragments of all our selves being mined to sell us more things that we never needed, then we might want to take on the empowering feminist role of editor and curate ourselves, together, into collections that matter, at least for a minute and only for us. Like any experiment, things got more complicated as theories, practitioners, places, and objects were edited in: *Our Bodies, Ourselves Redux*. Lopped. Looped. Lined. Linked. Re-aligned. Show the seams. Justice to our fragments! Like many experiments, much of the project "failed": (some) things were not built or they broke; (some) people did not participate; (some) energy waned. In what follows, I reflect on how it feels, and what I learned and can share by doing my scholarly work in this way. I explain the thinking and doing as well as the practices and theories that motivated this critical internet experiment where our object was our self and ourselves and then these objects got out of hand.

Ev-ent-anglement was a year-long, multi-sited project where participants engaged in a process of cutting/pasting+bleeding ourselves together—as we are and have been; as we have made ourselves online and off, in community, history, and action with others. The ev-ent-anglement is at once a digital platform and record that allows audience members in a room at a conference attending an event live and in person, as well as our fellow travelers on the internet and/or with a book in hand (those we can reach; those who are so inclined), to cut/paste evidence of their entangled, cooperative, and interactive role in the event so as to be part of something new. The evidence of users’ presence and action takes the form of a carefully hashtagged fragment of their choice or an even more carefully penned comment. (You can entangle at will using #eventanglement or go to ev-ent-anglement.com and engage.)

### The Project: Ev-ent-anglement

Ev-ent-anglement (Juhasz 2014–15) cuts and pastes an event to an entanglement, making use of hyphens for its two very visible stitches: *ev-ent-anglement*. It is currently two online entities built primarily from five events that began as scholarly talks: the first held in the Netherlands in August 2014 at the European Summer School in Women’s Studies at Utrecht University; the second in Dehli at the Visible Evidence Documentary Conference in December 2014 (see Figure 2.1); the third at the Console-ing Passions Feminist Media Conference in Dublin in June 2015; the fourth in Montreal at Affective Encounters, an August 2015 gathering for feminist scholars and artists where we worked together on media and affect theory; and the fifth and final at an artist’s performance space, PAM, in Highland Park, Los Angeles in November 2015, where I co-produced a culminating event with scholar and artist, VJ Um Amel (Laila Shereen Sakr) (see Figure 2.7). I call these talks “events” because their participatory and performative nature differentiates them from the more circumscribed set of routines and protocols of typical conference presentations where a professor speaks with authority and clarity



Figure 2.1 “#eventanglement on Mohamed Mahmoud St. in Cairo #mediawhore.”

Source: Tweeted by Laila Shereen Sakr (@vj\_um\_amel) to Ev-ent-anglement 2: Dehli.

and her audience respectfully and passively listens. Here, I am indebted to Slavoj Žižek, who defines an event as: “something shocking, out of joint, that appears all of a sudden and interrupts the usual flow of things” (2014: 4). Similarly, Alain Badiou calls *an event* “a rupture in the normal order of bodies and languages as it exists for any particular situation” (2010: 242). While these theorists’ interpretations of history and possible futures differ, their words, like many others to which I refer, are useful for my research praxis in that they provide mental systems, and their lovely verbal schemes, that can help to indicate the intellectual place and possibilities of my worldly (or at least digital) efforts. In this way, making theory (as do most scholars) and making art and/or practice (as do some) are linked, aligned, and differentiated: from map to territory, or territories, and back again as the work is brought into being through new boundaries for thought and production.

What I hoped would serve as event-like—shocking, or out of joint, or even something akin to a rupture—in this series of “talks” was that I asked the audience, in the room but always also online, to act with me rather than sit back and listen (or read)—to *cut* and also to *paste*—and in so doing entangle fragments of themselves into the digital record of the ever-growing and always-changing event, which itself is housed and becomes anew online as the Ev-ent-angement. “Cuts are part of the phenomena they help to produce,” writes Karen Barad (2007: 145). At the lectern, I offered intellectual, historical, and material evidence about the role of cutting and pasting in a variety of traditions and particularly for feminists (from filmmaking, to photography, self-cutting, physics, and new materialism, as evidenced in the complex Barad fragment quoted above and at all my events). The audience was invited to do the thing and verb under consideration: to cut and paste in real time by using a hashtag to deliver to me fragments of themselves and our shared event, cut from their lives and its digital record, as photos, tweets, URLs, comments, and other repurposed digital detritus.

These materials are the shared residue and building blocks of the Ev-ent-angement: a digital place that archives, grows, and changes via the acts, interests, and values of its diverse, feminist community. Participants cut/paste into the Ev-ent-angement, engaging in cutting one thing from and then to another, moving something from one place that was to another that will be. Cutting is a special kind of action, a “causal procedure and act of decision” that Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylińska understand as ethical (2012: 82). They explain that cutting, in the making of a photograph where something still and framed is edited from the flow of daily life, demands a choice. My project suggests that in day-to-day internet practice, this choice-making is obscured by ease and distraction. My event and its digital rendering, the Ev-ent-angement, helps us to see obscured practices by asking my participants to do (again) something quite common, but to do so within a framework where the action becomes visible by giving it a context, a community, and a politics: a possible ethics.

While many of the fragments gifted to me during talks, or after in the asynchronous iteration of the project always online, were “about” and also made by cutting and pasting, they also pointed to and manifested the many linked and always growing sets of interests of the project and its participants. This caring and careful cutting/pasting by willing participants (and they were not all willing, by the way, one of the project’s many “failures” about which I theorize later in this chapter) was initiated by a provocative invitation or script that was place-based—Utrecht, Delhi, Dublin, LA, Montreal (see Figure 2.2)—while being simultaneously online. As I moved across time and place, the digital Ev-ent-angement grew and changed. For instance, when I was in Utrecht, new media scholar and trans theorist, KJ Surkan, entangling from afar in the US, added a poem about cutting off body parts:

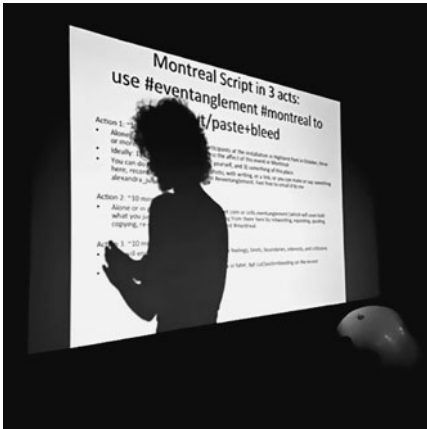


Figure 2.2 “Feminist Collectives as Shadow Archive of feminism in contemporary university. #AffectiveEncounters #eventanglement.”

Source: Tweeted by T.L. Cowan (@AgingSuperModel) at Ev-ent-anglement 4: Montreal.

I have recently made a rather large cut  
to myself  
or rather a surgeon made it for me  
out of great necessity

(It was a kind of a “do or die” situation)

This edit to my physical body invites interpretations,  
many times by strangers  
People whom I don’t know  
and who don’t know me.

I don’t mean to be mysterious  
but  
it’s complicated.

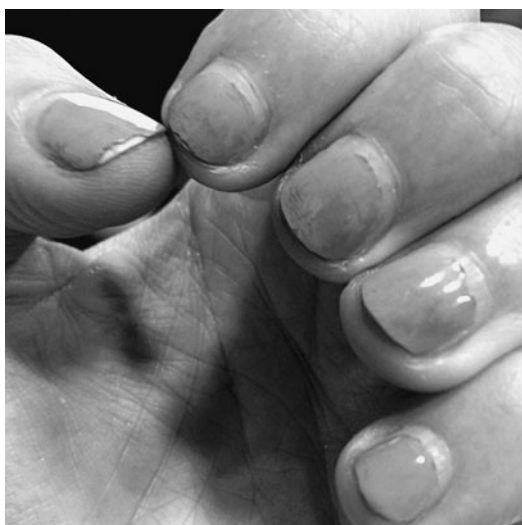
Online I am a composite of many identities  
gendered this way or that  
and strangely  
I find myself entangled in fragments of former selves  
which are constantly colliding  
shattering the illusion of the seamless narratives  
about gender identity  
about cancer  
often required for the comfort of others.  
#eventanglement

(Surkan 2014)

When I wrote about Alisa Lebow's keynote address at the Visible Evidence Documentary Conference as one of my own cut/pastes to the Ev-ent-angement, other fragments from and about the Middle East, such as the Media Whore image shared above (see Figure 2.1), became part of the entanglement. It grew in this and other directions accordingly. In Dublin, Rena Bivens tweeted in a video of "Menstruation Machine" by Japanese artist, Sputniko. And so new participants (Surkan, Lebow, and Bivens), places (Middle East, Japan, and Dublin), and concepts (reconstructive and corrective bodily surgery, Arab digital activism, and menstruation) enter the complex but rooted Ev-ent-angement. These are just three examples of the many ideas, movies, poems, pictures, links, and people that thus became objects in my archive; the Ev-ent-angement opened out to encompass many linked lines of inquiry and activism yielding further audience attachments at later events.

Entanglements (the second fragment roughly cut with just two little dashes into the neologism, *ev-ent-angement*) are about "joins and disjoins—cutting together/apart—not separate consecutive activities, but a single event that is not one," according to Barad (2013: 18). The word that I invented through cutting and pasting is itself about *montage*: the process of making not one from many, of "cutting together/apart." And this event (you reading me now), like any, is not one: it is my words; my stance; your thoughts; your attitudes; the words on the page; the technological infrastructure that put those words into a book and moves it to you; the behind-the-scenes labor of two programmers, Risa Goodman and Laila Shereen Sakr, who built the two WordPress sites where Ev-ent-angement takes place; the words and viewpoints of the people I have quoted and will quote (Badiou, Žižek, Surkan, Lebow, Barad, Kember, Zylinska, and soon enough, Gregg and Seigworth); and sometimes, if participants are willing, some of our associated *feelings*, although cutting/pasting these remains the hardest part of the experiment, worthy of much more thinking, practicing, and building in its near impossibility and utter magnetism. Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth have a name for this—affect—all that falls outside of things and makes events: "Affect arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*: in the capacities of a momentary or sometimes more sustained set of relations *as well as* the passage (and the duration of the passage) of forces or intensities" (2010: 1). As part of the Ev-ent-angement, @AgingSuperModel, the queer performance artist and scholar, T.L. Cowan, shared an image (see Figure 2.3) to express some affect: an idea, feeling, and their connection to her/our experience and place.

In this event here and now, and better yet in the Ev-ent-angement that holds it and others, you can read how I have cut/pasted editing theory and practice by way of media studies and production with fragments of what is often called "new materialism" and "affect theory" and then used this patchwork theory monster to create theoretical and practical boundaries to help enact a DH project of feminist collective, critical digital practice. Once engaged, users become objects in our archive, as do their fragments, as do the people, places, and things thereby summoned up, cut in, and linked to. This is confusing, or at least complicated, because I am often asking participants to share *affect*, which is by definition fleeting, embodied, personal, and not exactly linguistic. Obviously, in my project, and everywhere else online, people and things become objects because they are rendered as words in a database that are then ruled by algorithmic relations. If you participate, your name becomes an object, as do the things you cut/paste as digital versions of themselves; and if you describe what you think or how you felt, then that, too, once rendered as words or images or any other 0 and 1, becomes an object. In this way, the site manifests one of the central ideas of new materialism: "ideas are material in that they become rituals and then sedimented at a corporeal level" (Coole & Frost 2010: 34). Although each object becomes a thing unto itself once it is cut/pasted in, the Ev-ent-angement also strives to keep our sights on the processes that put it and others



*Figure 2.3* “2 Weeks. 2 feminist Workshops. 1 manicure. #What Sticks #What Chips.”

Source: Tweeted by T.L. Cowan (@AgingSuperModel) during Ev-ent-angement 4: Montreal.

into movement and connection. In this case, these connections are feminist, theoretical, anti-corporate, and collaborative, attempting to experiment with—in the doing—the changing of our conception of the digital archive from a repository of things to a process of shared feminist knowledge production: nouns and verbs; things and their processes; feminist cuts and connections that bind. With Barad in our minds, we might act knowing that matter is an actor. “[M]atter is neither fixed and given nor the mere end result of different processes. Matter is produced and productive, generated and generative. Matter is agentive, not a fixed essence or property of things” (Barad 2007: 137).

Certainly, to entangle a digital fragment of oneself, with a cut/paste via a simple hashtag, while attending what one thought was a talk, or while one is reading from a book, is neither required nor easy. Acting, doing, cutting, and making are ethical procedures that, in this case, are also public. I learned from my experiment that neither scholars nor students much like to do or make when they think they have signed up to listen or read, particularly when this doing or making will be public and lasting. (It remained a mystery to me across the project why these same people so gladly do this work for Facebook! More on this below.) The ev-ent-angement requires audience members’ “intra-action,” another of Barad’s terms that marks where “there is no ‘between’ as such[;] human and nonhuman organisms and machines emerge only through their mutual co-constitution” (2007: 151). Intra-actions are easy to render, but hard to do well. Unlike with corporate social networks, the stakes of participation in the ev-ent-angement are made clear (in this writing for instance); the cost of action is rendered visible. For the Ev-ent-angement, every cut/paste of a fragment of participants’ digital selves, or that of others, is generously and knowingly gifted to me and the Ev-ent-angement, rather than to the man or corporation. Yes, your fragments move through Twitter (see Figure 2.4), YouTube, WordPress, Instagram, or Pinterest to get to me: objects first to be sold before they can be gifted and hopefully lost within a more complex co-constitution. But, unlike for the corporations listed above, the Ev-ent-angement acknowledges that there is something





Figure 2.4 Tweeted by @OtterDiscourse at Ev-ent-angement 4: Montreal.

that exceeds the movement of the mimetic copy of some part of oneself or others so casually given away or passed on with the internet's effortless cut/pastes.

We call this the *bleed*: the actions, affects, and activities that will never be caught and saved as objects in a database. "Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects," explains Sara Ahmed (2010: 30). An ev-ent-angement cuts and pastes participants' fragments into the digital record of an event and also takes account of the bleed: that which was not first an object but co-constituted the event, its people, its place. How do we do this? We begin by thinking about cutting and pasting in gendered terms, and in relation to power. Film/video editing, like the contemporary act of self-cutting, can be understood as a violent act of power-seeking performed in some of the many private places allocated to women in patriarchy: the editing room rather than the world itself, the bedroom and home also distinguished from the public. Yes, some kinds of cutting do not bring with them an associated paste. What *this* cut can bring with it, what it wants—its dyadic relation—is a *bleed*.

While all human bodies (and those of other animals) bleed, a particular kind of hemorrhaging will help focus the bleed's role in our feminist project of Ev-ent-angement—one where our directives are to #cut/paste+bleed—because the menses are one of many in-between bodily acts that are uniquely and distinctly female. Julia Kristeva asks us to consider many bodily acts, menstruation being just one, at the border between clean and dirty, live and dead, inside and out: "Repelling, rejecting; repelling itself, rejecting itself. Ab-jecting" (1980: 13). The seeping and connecting quality of blood allows it to be a metaphoric glue, like affect, that marks the many pulls, movements, and actions of any entanglement—from in to out and on to off, from me to you to us, from digital matter to living body. Of course all people—men, those in-between or indeterminate, and females who do not menstruate—can bleed with us, too! Cyborgs all, we use technology and place to flow through distinctive binaries: let us cut/paste+bleed through these binaries! There is no in-between.

To date, there are about 100 photographs that people have cut/pasted+bled into the ev-ent-angement, and as many tweets, often with photos in them (see Figure 2.5). There are links to websites and hours of video. People have entangled poems and their favorite authors. Many theorists have arrived after the fact, lovingly quoted by their fans, or writing new theory themselves into the project. But unlike much on the internet, our community is limited; our database is small (and yet, counter-intuitively, *enormous*) because the ideas and objects gathered

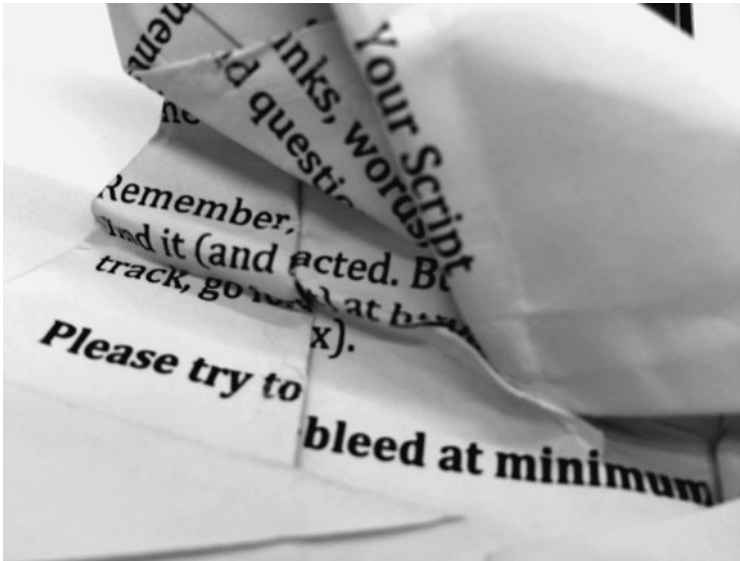


Figure 2.5 Created by Alanna Thain at Ev-ent-anglement 1: Utrecht.

are complex and deep—to know what is there demands time, and your presence is generative. In the Ev-ent-anglement, every gift is an object—whether people, places, things, or an attempt at affect—and every object can be entangled with others, initiating a bleed because it comes from a rip or a tear. When you participate, you become an object, too. And that should not be easy, or really even “fun.”

In the end, the Ev-ent-anglement’s form is not so different from, say, a mashup of Facebook and Pinterest, except in the highly focused set of questions it ponders (discussed above and at all the talks that initiate it); the deeply architected pathways for connection from which it is born (sure, its sits in the wilds of the internet, but you have to get there via this explanation and from committed communities that invite me to speak about it and there invite participation); the closely knit nature of the community it calls upon; our planned uses for the fragments it collects; and our willingness to honor, see, and make use of the bleeding that ensues. I discuss these differences in detail in my blog post about the Ev-ent-anglement included, below, as the third section of this chapter. I end that post, where I yet again reflect upon the successes and blindspots of this experiment, by suggesting that “the corporate Internet is the place we are, it is not the place we want or need, we can do better.” This is no small thing, in that it is small! This project, one example of critical internet-based making as theorizing and activism, does not need to make popular, massive, slick, or perfect things to help us make better ideas about and practices in our lives and experiences online. Our database of objects holds only hundreds of things, not the millions that make up the great corporate bastions of Web 2.0. The interactions that inspire them are intimate, committed, and complicated (like this one between me and you). The ease of the internet and your actions in and for it are made visible through this project’s complexity, technological and social rough patches, and rocky affect (in counter-distinction to the corporate *smooth*), as are the ethics of the two related, linked projects: the internet and the Ev-ent-anglement that sits within and speaks to it (see Figure 2.6).



Figure 2.6 Catching me catching and losing affect at Ev-ent-anglement 4: Montreal.

Source: From Facebook by feminist media scholar Selmin Kara.

**Some Lessons Learned:  
“Ev-ent-anglement 3: One Current Shape for Internet  
Feminism and Its Many Discontents, July 3, 2015”**

Here, I share with you an unedited blog post, part of the (process of) Ev-ent-anglement, written after the event, and then cut/paste+bled in. I see my blogging, like my site-making, talk-giving, and chapter-writing, as another form of engaged and situated social media production and critique. I have many times experimented (as I do here) with re-purposing blog posts into more “scholarly” settings like paper-bound books (Juhasz 2012; 2013).

No longer exactly where it started (it has had two websites and three discreet performances to date), this process- and interaction-rich project morphs yet continues as something akin to this: a living experiment that demonstrates in the doing the affordances of contemporary corporate (feminist) Internet culture and its potential alternatives. The ev-ent-anglement (perhaps poorly) enacts a feminist collective critical digital practice thereby telling us more about the corporate Internet and digital feminism.

Let me explain. I built the ev-ent-anglement to consider how we might do better with the uncountable fragments of ourselves that we willingly, massively and generatively give to the man with every tweet, click, and photo. I cobbled together a theoretical armature suited to scaffold my unique intellectual and practical pursuit: how to cut/paste our fragments together making use of feminist principles toward anti-corporate ends. Collaboration; blended live and digital space; co-production of time/space/knowledge (events); the linked value of the situated and the mobile; the entangled nature of things, people, and ideas; a hunger for experiences and communities outside the corporate; an openness to complex and radical political and theoretical

critique; a commitment to learning in the doing: these are some of the many feminist and activist principles underlying the project. From them, I concocted a strange place-based practice and performance (an event) where I presented the ideas of the project—montage, new materialism, affect theory, critical Internet studies, feminist and queer theory—while simultaneously asking the audience in the room (and always also online) to entangle fragments of themselves onto the event’s online record thereby marking and saving their part within the event while growing and changing its form within the ev-ent-angement.

Because VJ Um Amel first donated some fragments online, then got more invested, and ultimately began to collaborate with me, she led the production of a new website to hold the ever-morphing collection of ev-ent-anglements fragments: [cells.ev-ent-angement.com](http://cells.ev-ent-angement.com). The new site has structuring principles related to ideas of shared-ownership, community, multiauthorship, fragmentation, bodies and their affects, collectivity, and feminism that reflect the larger project. As of now, the second website looks and even acts a lot like a hybrid (cut/paste+bleed) of two (feminist?) Internet stalwarts, Facebook and Pinterest (thanks to Natalie Bookchin for this comparison, and to the presenters on the Pinterest panel at Console-ing Passions): it automatically generates a seam-filled mosaic produced first from an author, and then from some algorithms that arrange her community’s fragments that have been crowd-sourced, willfully gifted, carefully curated, and linked. And yet . . .

Here’s where the differences bleed in, allowing us to see and perhaps name the current shape of Internet feminism and its many many discontents:

- Pinterest, Facebook (and other social media platforms) are corporate spaces that are free to use at great cost to users’ privacy and autonomy; I pay for ev-ent-angement with surprisingly limited personal and institutional resources.
- Corporate spaces market in and mobilize corporate goods and user-generated content (often itself about corporate goods) arranged and calibrated with some very careful measure; while there is almost no outside to the market economy, a rather significant portion of the fragments on the ev-ent-angement are not (fully) entangled with corporate culture.
- Facebook, Pinterest (and other social media platforms) only work if things and people are bought and sold to each other; ev-ent-angement buys and sells nothing other than platform space, the infrastructures on which it runs, and its users’ time and expertise (mostly given “for free,” as is so much on the Internet).
- Facebook, Pinterest (and other social media platforms) are fun and easy to use; ev-ent-angement is intense, difficult, and convoluted in comparison. Interestingly, off-the-shelf platforms bake in more and more ease-of-use but the corporations are always simplicity-steps ahead. The role of ease cannot be overstated (see my work on slogans on YouTube; Juhasz 2011b: composite = 120).
- YouTube, Vine, Snapchat and their ilk produce a sense of community organized around the self; ev-ent-angement organizes its community primarily through my invitation (and then that of others) to a dispersed but highly limited group of people linked by ideas, commitments, and proximity.



Figure 2.7 Laila Shereen Sakr (VJ Um Amel) @PAM, #eventanglement 5: Highland Park, LA.

Source: Tweeted by Alexandra Juhasz.

- Corporate spaces are built and prosper within the growth and scale logics of neo-liberalism: things are best when they get larger and hold unimaginable quantities of data; the ev-ent-anglement treasures and relies upon the close-knit, intimate, specialist interests, and commitments of its tiny community and limited data pool. There is depth and connection in the focused, but corporate spaces have other kinds of magnetism.
- Users' compulsion to engage and stay within Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and the like is high, a result of many of the features listed above: their ease of use, abundance of content, sense of community, and refined admixture of corporate and user-generated content; very few people want to engage with the ev-ent-anglement in any sustained way (or at all) mostly because it retains my signature (even as it expands), and because it is complicated and demanding of time and intellectual attention. Also, "scholars" have a hesitation to make publicly (although not on Facebook!).
- The collections of fragments that are any individual's Facebook or YouTube feed are at once satisfyingly tailored around the self, while also being fleeting, abundant, diverse, and easy; the ev-ent-anglement is co-authored and multiply-focused; it is time and space bound.

- Twitter, Facebook, and the like are founded upon flow, speed, quantity, and brevity; much of the ev-ent-angement sticks, taking time and space to enjoy its complexity and depth.
- Scholars and users of corporate Internet culture perform the obligatory work of jamming “feminist” intention, activity, community, and values into spaces and practices organized primarily toward neoliberal, hegemonic and sometimes even anti-feminist aims; the ev-ent-angement, like other “alternative,” “counter-cultural,” or antihegemonic spaces asks its scholars and users to name and refine the feminist values and practices that feed us and structure the space; we often disagree, which is useful when done respectfully. Of course, no space is pure, so our movement between and among and within them informs all we might know and do.

The ev-ent-angement is produced in relation to, conversation with, and defiance against corporate ownership and neoliberal aims within the Internet and every other place we go. It values feminist complexity, community, and collaboration outside the logic of capital, when possible. It tells us that the corporate Internet is expensive, commodity-driven, fun, easy, self-centered, addictive yet feeding, and malleable within these constraints. This tells me something I’ve known for quite awhile: the corporate Internet is the place we are, it is not the place we want or need, we can do better.

(Juhasz 2015)

### Why It Matters

Why do interventions like the Ev-ent-angement matter? What kind of scholarship, art, or activism is this? As I have suggested throughout this chapter, my media praxis is most sustaining and ethical *in its process*, in its doing, in the living of it in a classroom, conference, festival, event, or chapter; a critical doing with others. In these moments of thought-out, goal-oriented critical making, I am engaged with others in kinds of living and acting that model the theoretical ideals and political aspirations that sustain me, especially when held in relief against the empty, frantic abundance of so much contemporary corporate media culture.

And here is where the principled making comes in: lived events of productive political culture can be documented, archived, or made into art or analysis. In this way, we first get the living of it, and then its sharing, and even sometimes its lasting. By making our process into matter, we mark that some people of a particular time and place lived and knew in ways other than those that dominant culture will ever represent or remember. So this kind of principled, scholarly, community-based making matters not just to our sense of purpose and connection as workers, artists, intellectuals, and citizens, but also to history—to those who follow and who are sustained by records of our efforts (see Figures 2.8 and 2.9).

For those of us trained (or training) in academia, such work and the words and images I use here to describe it do not sound or feel exactly like the “theoretical” or “analytical” traditions in which we have mostly (or entirely) been schooled. These more traditional ways of knowing and sharing our knowledge demand a distance, formality, and engagement in the realm of ideas and texts that has never been exactly or solely my project, given as I have been to actively contributing to world-, self-, and community-based change. I have



*Figure 2.8* Feminist media scholars on a hike at Console-ing Passions, Dublin.

Source: Tweeted into Ev-ent-anglement 4: Dublin by Alexandra Juhasz.



*Figure 2.9*  
“#montreal #affect #eventanglement.”

Source: Shared by Ingrid Ryberg at Ev-ent-anglement 4: Montreal.

colleagues, whom I admire, whose main scholarly project is to engage with the writing of other thinkers and carefully stretch these ideas to describe the shape of other texts. What results are generative texts of their own. My work becomes part of this conversation and community when I attempt to stretch these respected colleagues' ideas (theory) onto new materials and media-objects (film, video, digital, and internet projects) that I make with others, thereby testing the worth of inspiring ideas by living by and with the actions such ideas might engender, and at the same time making anew: together producing, or at least experimenting with, the culture and community we need and value.

---

## Further Reading

---

- Barad, K. (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Coole, D. and S. Frost (eds.) (2010) *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Gregg, M. and G. Seigworth (eds.) (2010) *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Kember, S. and J. Zylinska (2012) *Life after New Media*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Žižek, S. (2014) *Event: A Philosophical Journey through a Concept*, London: Penguin Books.

---

## References

---

- Ahmed, S. (2010) "Happy Objects," in M. Gregg and G. Seigworth (eds.) *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Badiou, A. (2010) *The Communist Hypothesis*, London: Verso.
- Barad, K. (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Barad, K. (2013) "Mar(k)ing Time: Material Entanglements and Re-memberings: Cutting Together–Apart," in R. Paul, P. Carlile, D. Nicolini, A. Langley, and H. Tsoukas (eds.) *How Matter Matters: Objects, Artifacts, and Materiality in Organization Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 16–31.
- Coole, D. and S. Frost (eds.) (2010) *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- FemTechNet (2013), retrieved from [femtechnet.org/](http://femtechnet.org/).
- Gregg, M. and G. Seigworth (eds.) (2010) *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Juhasz, A. (2011a) "A Process Archive," in *Art of the Woman's Building*, Los Angeles, CA: Otis College of Art, pp. 97–123.
- Juhasz, A. (2011b) *Learning from YouTube*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, retrieved from [mitpress.mit.edu/books/learning-youtube-0](http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/learning-youtube-0).
- Juhasz, A. (2011–13) "Feminist Online Spaces," retrieved from [feministonlinespaces.com/](http://feministonlinespaces.com/).
- Juhasz, A. (2012) "Video Art on YouTube," in M. Ma and E. Suderburg (eds.) *Resolutions 3*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 309–24.
- Juhasz, A. (2013) "YouTube Stylo: Writing and Teaching with Digital Video," in V. Mayer (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of Media Studies, Volume 2, Media Production*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Press, pp. 420–42.
- Juhasz, A. (2014–15) *Ev-ent-angement*, retrieved from [ev-ent-angement.com/](http://ev-ent-angement.com/) and [cells.ev-ent-angement.com/](http://cells.ev-ent-angement.com/).
- Juhasz, A. (2015) "Ev-ent-anglment 3: One Current Shape for Internet Feminism and Its Many Discontents," *Ev-ent-angement*, retrieved from [ev-ent-angement.com/ev-ent-angement-3-one-current-shape-for-internet-feminism-and-its-many-discontents/](http://ev-ent-angement.com/ev-ent-angement-3-one-current-shape-for-internet-feminism-and-its-many-discontents/).
- Kember, S. and J. Zylinska (2012) *Life after New Media*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1980) *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Surkan, KJ (2014), untitled poem, retrieved from [facebook.com/ksurkan/posts/10100251064401780](https://www.facebook.com/ksurkan/posts/10100251064401780).
- Žižek, S. (2014) *Event: A Philosophical Journey through a Concept*, London: Penguin Books.