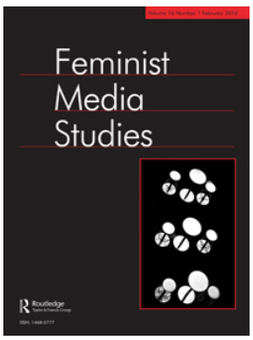

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From #aufschrei to *hatr.org*: digital–material entanglements in the context of German digital feminist activisms

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ABSTRACT

This article delivers a snapshot of what digital feminisms can mean today. It argues that a commonality of current digital feminisms is a stance against digital dualism and that it is digital–material assemblages that shape certain forms of digital feminisms. In particular, two relatively recent examples of digital feminist activisms are analyzed, and I suggest ways of understanding the interplay of materialities within them: Germany's Twitter campaign #aufschrei and the German anti-trolling website *hatr.org*. Finally, I suggest a typology of digital feminisms with varying degrees of digital–material entanglements.

KEYWORDS

Online activism; online feminisms; popfeminism; digitality; materiality; online harassment

Introduction: dismissing digital dichotomies

Radhika Gajjala and Yeon Ju Oh opened their edited volume *Cyberfeminism 2.0* with the question: "Where have all the cyberfeminists gone?" (2012). Their collection explores "what it means to be a cyberfeminist now, more than a decade after feminists burst forth on the Internet scene to demand material access and social intervention both online and offline" (Gajjala and Oh 2012, 1). The essays in the volume offer insights into what cyberfeminism might mean today: engagements with feminist narratives of empowerment in health 2.0 discourses (Marina Levina 2012); explorations of girls' and women's experiences in (male-dominated) gaming cultures and online communities (Jessica L. Beyer 2012; Genesis Downey 2012; Erica Kubik 2012); or a feminist presence in the blogosphere (Lauren Angelone 2012). Elsewhere, Nicole Shephard takes up Oh and Gajjala's opening question and summarizes:

> [The cyberfeminists, H.S.] haven't gone at all. In an environment where a comfortable online/offline dichotomy becomes increasingly difficult to maintain, feminisms are plenty and being a feminist online can take as many forms as offline. From this perspective, cyberfeminism has diversified beyond being traceable and cyberfeminists have gone everywhere and nowhere in particular. (2013a)

Even though contemporary brands of cyberfeminism are untraceable in their complexity, it can be said that a strong feminist participatory culture was made possible in the different kinds of new media that evolved in the past two decades (Ricarda Drüeke and Elke Zobl 2012). However, cyberfeminism[1] as an umbrella term for feminist engagements with and

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through digital media has become a rather seldom used label, just like the prefix cyber and the term cyberspace in general are less frequently used. Today, a variety of labels are used for feminist engagements online: whereas Gajjala and Oh suggested the upgrade to 2.0 in the title of their book, others speak of popfeminism, DIY feminism (Drüeke and Zobl 2012), and networked feminism, or even "fourth wave" feminism (Henrike Knappe and Sabine Lang 2014, 364). All of these terminologies highlight different aspects of these online feminisms: digitality, the ability to encourage networking, a focus on technologies and web-based mobilization, DIY aesthetics, the embedding in popular culture or a perceived progression (in reference to waves or in relation to cyberfeminism). The aspect I emphasize in this article, which will lead to a categorization of digital–material entanglements in the conclusion, is the observation that an online/offline dichotomy becomes "increasingly difficult to maintain" (Nicole Shephard 2013b), that it has become "artificial and hardly descriptive of the experiences of Internet usage" (Susanna Paasonen 2011a, 348), or in other words, that it seems to have become common practice for many to simply not discriminate between on- and offline feminisms (Knappe and Lang 2014). Statements like these are increasingly more common in the discussion of digital feminisms and activisms. Consider, for example, German activist and writer Teresa Bücker's portrayal of her digital activities:

> As a person who has grown up with an Internet connection, the distinction between online and offline does not exist anymore. There is no "real life" and no purely virtual life. Everybody only has one life. For activists, that firstly means that social engagement in the Internet is real: it means effort and endeavor. They secondly experience reactions to their engagements immediately, and those cause emotions. May it be sense of achievement, missing appreciation, or violent trespasses—all of what activists experience in the course of their engagement in the net is real and affects them. (2014, 118)[2]

In her dismissal of an on/offline dichotomy, Bücker mentions two ways in which that dichotomy is transgressed: that the activist work is real work and that it has real affects and influences on physical and emotional resources. While this insight might be a given to many, there is still a tendency to downplay online activities as "not real," online insults as not real insults, online activism as not real activism, and so on. This digital dualism, as Nathan Jurgenson coined the term (2011), is a fallacy that assumes a somehow disembodied, "second self" (Sherry Turkle 2005) online. He argues that:

> social media has everything to do with the physical world and our offline lives are increasingly influenced by social media, even when logged off. We need to shed the digital dualist bias because our Facebook pages are indeed "real life" and our offline existence is increasingly virtual. (Jurgenson 2011)

According to him, the danger of keeping the digital worlds separate from politics, structures, and inequalities of the physical world is that it encourages the idea of the Internet as an objective space that transcends social structures. Another example is manifested in the hidden power structures of *Wikipedia*, when seen as a supposedly neutral, democratic space—a notion highly contested today, particularly from gender perspectives (see Tanja Carstensen 2013; Ruediger Glott and Rishab Ghosh 2010; Astrid Herbold 2011). "Computational objectivity," as Jurgenson also calls it, is thus a mechanism to obscure structured inequalities (2011). In this article I deliver a snapshot of what digital feminisms can mean today and what role the interplay of materiality and the digital plays within them. In this vein, I am following Marianne van den Boomen, Sybille Lammens, Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Joost Raessens, and Mirko T. Schäfer in understanding "digital cultures as material practices of

appropriation, and new media objects as material assemblages of hardware, software, and wetware" (2009, 9). While there are differing understandings of what materiality means in digitalized contexts, and how these materialities play out, I hope to show how material dimensions in the examples to come undermine digital dualist assumptions. On the basis of an analysis of Germany's Twitter campaign *#aufschrei,* which aimed to make everyday sexism public, and the anti-trolling/anti-online harassment homepage *hatr.org*, I argue that contemporary digital feminisms are defined and strengthened by the interplay of digitality and materiality. As a first step, I contextualize those online initiatives by embedding them into wider discussions of contemporary German feminist activism and pointing out their particularities. I trace how feminist issues became a topic of public interest in Germany in 2006 after a long period of absence, how these movements changed in the course of digitalization, and identify current debates.

In my analysis of the #aufschrei campaign I discuss particular tweets from the first two weeks. These were archived in a timeline by a blogger who saw a historical necessity to preserve them, since Twitter hashtags are only searchable for approximately nine days.[3] This initial phase marks a point in which #aufschrei was not yet in the headlines, so it can be assumed that the tweeters were initiating the feminist digital action, while later tweets from both supporters and opponents were increasingly motivated by news coverage. It has been argued that the Twitter campaign's big impact on the public discourse is grounded in the fact that it showed societal patterns (Hester Baer 2014) that could not be ignored anymore in their quantity. Whereas the tweets of #aufschrei managed to build collectives and stimulate a debate about everyday sexism, *hatr.org* is a lesser known, small Internet initiative of a rather reactive nature and can be understood as an experimental answer to the question of how to handle online harassment. It is a platform that collects hateful comments that were posted by trolls and hate speakers in the comment sections of participating socially-critical blogs, mainly feminist, anti-sexist and/or anti-racist ones. Hateful comments are displaced from their initial location and re-posted, out-of-context, on *hatr.org*. The idea is that those comments remain visible but do not disrupt the discussion climate of the particular blog. In contrast to #aufschrei, *hatr.org* thus seeks displacement and division rather than collectivity. However, collecting the comments in one central place also allows for an analysis of what patterns can be found in the insulting communication culture. I discuss *hatr.org* by analyzing the mechanism of displacement in relation to the affectivity of hate speech (Judith Butler 1997). In this article, I look at particular digital media genres and their use. The article thus aims to build a theoretical development based on strategic examples rather than an extensive empirical study.

From popfeminism to the digital feminisms—the German context

To understand the rise of digital feminisms in Germany it might be useful to consider the preceding developments of feminist activisms, initiatives and campaigns of recent years, in particular those that became objects of public interest (in the sense that they were discussed in the media). After not having been a topic in the mainstream media for decades, feminism came back to the agenda in 2006 in the aftermath of the so-called demography debate (Christina Scharff 2011),[4] which was concerned with the demographic consequences of an aging society and a parallel decline of birth rates. In the introduction to her analysis of the debate, German sociologist Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim mentions exemplary headlines of that time, one from the political news magazine *Der Spiegel*: "Everybody on

their own. How the lack of children creates a society of egoists" (*Der Spiegel* 2006, quoted in Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim 2006, 7).[5] While the discussion was not always as pessimistic as here, Beck-Gernsheim points out how debates on family politics almost always inevitably lead to discussions of women's issues in relation to family planning, career development and so on. In this fashion, the demography debate partially turned very emotional and nationalistic, and at times included blaming women for not bearing enough children (Beck-Gernsheim 2006). The need for a response from the generation of women implied by the debates became evident. This response came in the form of German popfeminism, a form of feminism begun by a handful of publications written by a group of journalists, freelance writers, and media personalities who all advocated for a rejuvenated feminism for Germany. The "new German girls" (Emily Spiers 2014) included, for example, Sonja Eismann with the book *Hot Topic. Popfeminismus heute* (Hot Topic. Popfeminism Today, 2008), the alphagirls of the volume *Wir Alphamädchen* (We Alphagirls; Meredith Haaf, Susanne Klingner, and Barbara Streidl 2009) or the immensely successful sex-and-disgust novelist Charlotte Roche with her book *Feuchtgebiete* (*Wetlands*, 2008). The impulse for the new German girls can be seen as interrelated with the developments oftentimes subsumed under the term third wave in Anglo-American contexts: predominantly, its focus on post-structural notions of identity and subjectivity, on a playful handling of sexuality and pleasure, and on an understanding of popular culture as a possible site of resistance (Jessalynn Keller 2012, 137). Another intent was to oppose feminist icon Alice Schwarzer's omnipresent, institutionalized, second-wave feminism, which characterized the public, mass-mediated understanding of feminism in Germany since the 1970s (Spiers 2014). The pop in popfeminism underlines the understanding of popular culture as a possible site for resistance, which includes such areas as film, television, music, fashion, advertising or the Internet (while the latter oftentimes can be seen as converging with the others; Annette N. Markham and Nancy K. Baym 2009). As Sonja Eismann, Chris Köver, and Stefanie Lohaus, editors of the popfeminist *Missy Magazine,* explain:

> The deliberately open term popfeminism, which in Germany often is talked about in relation to a "newer" or third wave feminism […], stands for the approach to include feminist strategies and instruments in the field of pop culture. As representatives of a generation that has been substantially socialized with pop culture, we are of the opinion that the fights for equality on a political level are still relevant, but that at the same time not all fights can be won on the juridical level, and that the struggle for meanings in pop music, fashion and advertisement are at least equally important. (2012, 44–45)[6]

While appreciating the legal and political campaigns of Schwarzer and others,[7] the authors take a counter position that acknowledges popular culture to be relevant for feminist critique as well. Some of the German popfeminist approaches have been criticized as white, middle-class, heteronormative projects, which too uncritically celebrate neoliberal notions of individualism and consumerism (Christina Scharff 2012, 117; Spiers 2014, 71) and show a particular reluctance towards collective politics (Scharff 2012, 108). Even though this can be read as "a capitulation of radical feminist politics […]" that "discourages both politicization and collective action" (Spiers 2014, 88), the new German girls nevertheless managed to raise awareness for feminist topics in the mainstream and to make them interesting for younger Germans. The development of popfeminism occurred in tandem with the progress of Internet feminisms: Many of the writers of popfeminist texts were involved in the development of online feminist blogs and networks (Spiers 2014, 70). One such example is the blog *mädchenmannschaft.net*, which consists of an alternating team of bloggers who process and

comment on up-to-date news through a feminist and intersectional lens. The blog founded by the writers of the 2009 publication *Wir Alphamädchen* (Haaf, Klingner, and Streidl 2009)[8] became well known and received a prestigious media award in 2008.

New Yorker critic Emily Nussbaum describes the relationship of feminism, popular culture, and the blogosphere for the US context in a way that might be applicable also to the German context:

> Instead of viewing pop culture as toxic propaganda, bloggers embraced it as a shared language, a complex code to be solved together, and not coincidentally, something fun. In an age of search engines, it was a powerful magnet: again and again, bloggers described pop-culture posts to me as a "gateway drug" for young women—an isolated teenager in rural Mississippi would Google "Beyoncé" or "Real Housewives," then get drawn into threads about abortion. (2011)

The feminist blogosphere, as Nussbaum argues, has transformed feminist conversations and, at the same time, revived older styles and topics of feminist activisms, and it was the embracing of popculture that contributed to this development. Engaging with feminist topics became easy, mundane, and fun, and could easily be integrated into everyday life. Another factor contributing to this transformation and revival of feminist activism in online spheres is the generally increasing digitalization of everyday lives, for example the omnipresence of digital social media and the mobility of technological digital devices. In the case of digital feminisms or other activisms this also encouraged a move away from stationary computers onto the streets. Nussbaum describes her experiences with the *Slutwalks* in New York:

> Even as we march, it is being tweeted and filmed and Tumblr'd, a way of alerting the press and a way of bypassing the press. I am surrounded by the same bloggers I've been reading for weeks. (2011)

Here the online and the on-street activism become parallel and equally important. Or as Maria Stehle puts it, "large-scale feminist activism today depends on popular culture in the form of digital culture, becoming as much a consumer-based participatory event as a political action" (2014). Activists raise awareness, connect with each other, and organize events online to mobilize for on-street activism, performances, and art projects that are predominantly acted out in "real life," but at the same time accompanied and documented by digital media and thus intimately entangled with them. Events like the Slutwalks or *Pussy Riot* solidarity events (as for example in Berlin in 2012, that was spontaneously called for over Facebook [Stehle 2014]) have a "bodies on the street" approach, with body-politics and DIY aesthetics at their heart, but the viral spreading of their messages through social media has become an indispensable part of their activism. Without this support, their outreach to classic mainstream media seems questionable: as Nussbaum mentions in the quote above, social digital media like Tumblr or Twitter were used to strategically bypass or alert the press, therefore exercising some degree of control over the news coverage of these events. While in these examples the interrelation of materialities and the digital is relatively obvious (on-street activism meets online activism), the material dimensions of the Twitter campaign #aufschrei are more complex.

The #aufschrei campaign in the light of inscription and incorporation practices

Aside from the blogosphere and Internet-supported activism mentioned above, some of the best-known examples of recent feminist engagements online are diverse Twitter campaigns.

#YesAllWomen (originating in the USA), the #EverydaySexismProject (originating in the UK) and the German #aufschrei, work with a similar structure, enabled by the microblogging network's hashtag functionality: users share glimpses of their lives (in 140 characters or less), to declare solidarity with another and to spark thoughtful and critical conversations about inequality and social change. The German version of this digitalized form of consciousness raising, the 2013 #aufschrei campaign, has been described as causing a "Diskurswandel," a change in the discourse in Germany (Bücker 2014). It had been the first time in years that a feminist topic caused such waves in mainstream media.[9] This effect was enabled by Twitter's ability to unite similar experiences under one hashtag, thereby bundling them and eventually showing off patterns that touch thousands of people's (mainly women's) lives. The hashtag was used more than fifty-eighty thousand times in the first two weeks (Margarete Stokowski 2014), mostly telling of discrimination in the workplace, catcalling on the street, and sexual abuse or objectification in an abundance, which could not be ignored by the public. Questions of whether the country has a sexism problem, where harassment starts and what to do about it became part of the public agenda. As Stokowski points out, hashtags usually stay where they come from—on the Internet. But this time, an #aufschrei hashtag and its social baggage managed to transverse the on/offline boundary, illustrating that there is no rigid line between "real life" and the Internet, but that there are real stories of real women on and offline (2014). A difference of this kind of feminist activism from the previously discussed popfeminist accounts is that the latter has been criticized for a tendency to adopt neoliberal notions of individualism and consumerism rather than working towards collectivity (Scharff 2012; Spiers 2014). The #aufschrei campaign, however, counteracted this trend. Baer has shown that "[w]ith one hashtag collective experience, these protests have begun to reestablish the ground for a collective feminist politics beyond the realm of the self-styled individual of neoliberalism" (2014). To understand how this was achieved, I take a closer look at the contents of some tweets that answer the implied question after the "Aufschrei," that is what caused the users to express their outrage. Most of the initial tweets talk of sexual harassment ("The guy who grabbed my breasts while passing by"), sexist comments at the workplace and in education ("The math teacher who told me that I don't need to understand, since I would only become a mum with a degree anyway"), and catcalling ("Those guys who yell after you if you don't want to f*** a bit on your way home"). Another set of tweets, in which bodies are regimented, can be placed into a different category. "Every completely unknown guy who ever thought, without being asked, that he needs to comment on my body," one user posted. Another one mentioned "This conditioned feeling that gets to you with every guy that passes you on the street at night." These tweets can be fruitfully understood in terms of N. Katherine Hayles' (1999) nexus of inscription/incorporation and body/embodiment, which offers a framework in which to talk about the "body responsive to its construction as discourse/information and yet not trapped within it" (193). The framework oscillates between two dynamically interacting polarities. The first is the tension of body and embodiment, body understood as a cultural construct, or the "universal, normative, discursive body" (196), and embodiment describing the experiences that individual people feel and articulate within a cultural context. Embodiment is "contextual, enmeshed with the specifics of place, time, physiology and culture," and builds an "other and elsewhere" (196) to the universal body. Hayles combines this polarity of body/embodiment with the polarity of inscription and incorporation. Inscription here is as a system of signs operating independent of any particular manifestation. As an example, she mentions texts

that can be reprinted in different fonts; the change in font does not make a difference to the text's concepts, the message stays the same. Thus, inscriptions are perceived as "conceptual abstractions, rather than as an instantiated materiality" (198). In this sense it resembles the universal body, since an inscription is normalized and abstract. An incorporated practice on the other hand—she mentions a good-bye wave as an illustration—cannot be split from its embodied medium (199). Leaning on Judith Butler's work on performativity (1990, 1993), Hayles illustrates how the coupling of incorporation/embodiment and body/inscription can take place in the context of gender. Gestures and motion sequences are culturally specific, and how they are performed is, for example, transferred to children in a gendered manner. They are usually conveyed non-verbally. They are incorporated ranges of motion that are difficult to learn through words alone. Inscribing practices, on the other hand, can be spoken: "Boys don't walk like this" or "Girls don't sit with legs open" are two examples Hayles mentions. In sum, "[i]ncorporating practices perform the bodily content; inscribing practices correct and modulate the performance" (199).

In the first tweet quoted above ("Every completely unknown guy who ever thought, without being asked, that he needs to comment on my body"), the user who posted the text unmasks inscription practices of a gendered nature, that is, the idea that women have to look a particular way (and that it is some "guy's" right to comment on women's appearances). It can be assumed that many, if not most, women experience this in our society, may it be from individuals or through the media. This topic has been addressed frequently under the *aufschrei* hashtag. Therefore, the particular experience described in this tweet is an embodied one, since it makes the addressee feel uncomfortable and maybe insecure in her body—since it can be seen as an attempt to correct and modulate her performance—but it also points to a generalizable, discursive body due to the frequency of tweets of this kind. The second tweet ("This conditioned feeling that gets to you with every guy that passes you on the street at night") reflects an incorporated/embodied practice. Just like particular gendered ways of moving or sitting have been learned subconsciously (the tweet uses the word "conditioned" to describe the experience), many women meeting men on the street in the dark affectively and automatically freeze, are placed in a state of alert, and may change their pace or switch the side of the street, even though this might not be a rational reaction. As Hayles puts it, gender "is produced and maintained not only by gendered languages, but also by gendered body practices that serve to discipline and incorporate bodies into the complex significations and performances that constitute gender within a given culture" (200). In this example, the Twitter user is annoyed to have been "conditioned" to behave and feel this way. The impact of and controversy around the #aufschrei campaign—the increased media coverage, the heated debates and the change in discourse, as Bücker calls it (2014)—can be attributed to the fact that here, hidden or formerly not discussed mechanisms are disclosed. Hayles has argued that "[i]ncorporating practices perform the bodily content; inscribing practices correct and modulate the performance," and concludes that "incorporating and inscribing practices work together to create cultural constructs." In the examples mentioned above, in which each exemplary tweet stands in for a pattern that can often be found in the stream of #aufschrei tweets, it can be seen how inscribing and incorporating practices work together to build this gendered cultural construct, which is how women should behave when meeting a stranger in the night on the street (they have been told and they embodied it) or how they should look or how they should posture their bodies based on that gendered, cultural construct. The novelty of this public demonstration of how these practices work on women

via Twitter is that the frequency and regularity with which these things are experienced show off the uncomfortable truth of everyday sexism. This is enabled both through digitality and materiality of the body, since the body and the inscribing and incorporating practices working on it are transferred through digital means.

From online harassment to monetizing the hate

> To claim that language injures or […] that "words wound" is to combine linguistic and physical vocabularies. The use of a term such as "wound" suggests that language can act in ways that parallel the infliction of physical pain and injury. "(Butler 1997, 4)

Another facet of digital feminist activism in contemporary Germany is the engagement with and discussion of online harassment. Net activists, digital feminists, and female writers have recently begun to speak out about the (oftentimes sexualized) insults and threats they are confronted with in their daily digital lives (Laura Bates 2013; Bücker 2014; Jennifer Eickelmann 2014; Francesca Schmidt 2011). Particularly in the comment function of weblogs, anti-feminist trolls try to provoke with sexist, racist, homophobic, or transphobic comments, to suppress feminist and other critical opinions—comments that even utilize threats of violence and murder to intimidate the writers and activists (Carstensen 2013, 122). Also, initiators and supporters of hashtag campaigns such as #aufschrei and #EverydaySexism reported that they received violent hate messages via Twitter or email (Bates 2013; Bücker 2014). In 2014, the awareness for this problem increased internationally (Amanda Marcotte 2014), and several initiatives to tackle problems of online harassment now exist. For example, the non-profit organization *Women, Action & the Media* is in negotiations with Twitter to implement new reporting processes to reduce gender-based harassment (Jaclyn Friedman 2014), and the digital activist and writers of the *Fembot Collective* are setting up a *Fembot toolbox* in which "strategies for coping and resistance" will be shared (Fembot Collective 2014). In Germany, the Green Party's *Heinrich-Böll-Foundation* held a podium discussion about whether there is a need for new laws in relation to online harassment (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung 2015). The debate ran under the title "Gewalt im Internet" ("Violence on the Internet"), a choice of terms that suggests a conscious decision to underline a material/physical dimension of the experienced threats. Online threats and insults are real threats and insults, and often have inestimable psychological consequences for the victims. But while in this podium discussion, legal experts discussed legal measures, digital feminists often seek more creative ways to point out and counteract trolling and online harassment,[10] for example *hatr.org*. Developed by queerfeminist bloggers, the site's concept is adopted from so-called "mommy blogger" Heather B. Armstrong, whose famous US blog received large amounts of hatemail and comments. As a resistance strategy, she started the "monetizing the hate"[11] webpage on which she collects hateful comments that she does not want on her blog. Advertising on this outlet monetizes the nasty comments (Armstrong does not specify how she uses the money). The initiative *hatr.org* has adopted this idea. With an extension for the weblog software Wordpress, trolling and hateful comments can be re-distributed to *hatr.org* where they are re-published out of context. That means the comments posted under the blog entries of these participating blogs are redirected to *hatr.org* where they are first checked for trolling or abusive language (Alexandra Reinsberg 2013). The filtering of the comments and the re-distributing is done by *hatr.org* helpers/volunteers, so the writer of the blog entry at whom the hateful comment is aimed is not confronted with it. The service is in closed beta version

but currently around sixty mainly queerfeminist and anti-racist blogs use the service. Also here, the idea is to have advertising banners on the page to "make money with shit," as the site says. The money will be donated to charity projects the participating websites support, but in the current state, this is only an idea—the monetizing has not yet been realized.[12] In this way, *hatr.org* is raising awareness for the amount of hate feminist and other progressive net activists are confronted with. It is hard to read the comments re-posted there. Strong language, insults, and threats are common. One comment says "Stupid and ugly, this is an unfortunate combination. No wonder it becomes tight for you in this competitive society. I can almost understand your call for a quota."[13] A reader on *hatr.org* does not know where this message comes from, and who sent it to whom in what context. We can only assume that it was a response to a woman's discussion of the institution of quotas,[14] and we know that the commentator wanted to hurt the blogger by calling them stupid and ugly.

Judith Butler argued that it is difficult to systematically define hate speech because of its context-dependency. This is the case because hate speech is related to a specific embodied context (Butler 1997). She says:

> The speech situation is thus not a simple sort of context, one that might be defined easily by spatial and temporal boundaries. To be injured by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is, not to know where you are. Indeed, it may be that what is unanticipated about the injurious speech act is what constitutes its injury, the sense of putting its addressee out of control. The capacity to circumscribe the situation of the speech act is jeopardized at the moment of injurious address. To be addressed injuriously is not only to be open to an unknown future, but not to know the time and place of injury, and to suffer the disorientation of one's situation as the effect of such speech. Exposed at the moment of such a shattering is precisely the volatility of one's "place" within the community of speakers; one can be "put in one's place" by such speech, but such a place may be no place. (Butler 1997, 4)

Butler's description of the consequences of hate speech is a very affective one. Here hate speech is described as a bodily experience for the addressee. She finds herself without context and control, her body is in a place of no place and spatial and temporal boundaries become blurry. So what happens if we take Butler''s writing on hate speech online, where the sender of the hate speech usually remains anonymous? I suggest that in this case the experience of disorientation and loss of control is amplified; out of a perceived nowhere, the addressee suddenly finds herself in a volatile position that is even more dislocated because the sender of the message usually cannot be located and remains invisible.

The strategy of *hatr.org* is to disrupt and to twist this mechanism of hate speech. The hateful lines work on and are damaging to the body; they become attached to it and they dislocate it to a place of no place. When they are filtered through *hatr.org*, while the messages become dislocated, the affected body is not moved along at the same time. The hate message is not connected to the real body anymore. By displacing the message, *hatr.org* does exactly the same back to the hate message as hate speech, according to Butler, tries to do to the addressee—robbing its context and putting it out of control. As a next step, the now dislocated hateful message is in turn "open to an unknown future" (4), in the sense that it is displayed on *hatr.org*. Here, it has lost its addressee and cannot injure her. However, it becomes vulnerable itself by being open to scrutinization by users who visit the anti-trolling platform. Out of context, the messages oftentimes appear even more absurd, unsubstantiated, and furious. Additionally, a documentation of what the climate of current online discussions can look like takes place, which might be a useful tool to start a discussion on online harassment, cyberbullying, and hate speech online. Instead of deleting the messages

that would be a simple form of censorship, they remain visible and in the critical framework of *hatr.org*.

One of the presuppositions of this article was that, in the experience of digital feminists, material–digital boundaries and online–offline boundaries are fading, and this factor accounts for what digital feminism is today. Paralleled with Butler''s observation that "words wound," and "language can act in ways that parallel the infliction of physical pain and injury" (1997, 4) the digital dualist idea that words transmitted digitally necessarily wound less or do not affect bodies becomes unsustainable. This insight is picked up by the team behind *hatr.org*. Their strategy of displacing, re-posting, and un-attaching the injurious message from the body is a way to acknowledge both the digital and material dimensions of the digital activism. Further, *hatr.org* seeks to (albeit not yet successfully) literally materialize the hate, that is into the quasi-materiality of cash. This could be seen as another way to underline the concreteness of something as abstract as anonymous hate messages on the Internet. It becomes something more graspable. In this context it is useful to consider Saskia Sassen's discussion of digital–material imbrications and the embeddedness of digital technologies in actual societal structures and power dynamics (2002). She argues that de-materialization, which is often seen as a feature of new technologies, is actually only one side of the coin, since this de-materialization depends on re-introducing non-digital variables. De-materialized money transfers, for instance, require "enormous amounts of material, not to mention human talent" (369). To sum up, "much of what is liquefied and circulates in digital networks and is marked by hypermobility, remains physical in some of its components" (369). Tongue in cheek, it can be said that the "monetizing the hate" approach is showing how hate speech is not remaining de-materialized but is instead being re-materialized—in this case, into the hard currency of cash.

Conclusion: digital feminisms and varying degrees of digital–material entanglements

In this article, I argued that contemporary digital feminisms are influenced by an increasing questioning of on- and offline boundaries. Digital dualist assumptions, like the idea that online activism is less real or not relevant because it happens online, are increasingly negated by activists and observers (Bücker 2014; Shephard 2013a; Stokowski 2014). They describe that in their digital activism "there is 'no real life' and no purely virtual life. Everybody only has one life" (Bücker 2014, 118), that "being a feminist online can take as many forms as offline" (Shephard 2013a), and that there is an intimate relationship between on-street activism and digital activism ("I am surrounded by the same bloggers I've been reading for weeks," as Nussbaum observed during a Slutwalk [2011]). I also traced how a feminist embracing of popculture (in Germany in the form of popfeminism, and in an Anglo-American context and elsewhere in the form of third-wave feminisms with their understanding of pop culture as a possible site for resistance) built the backdrop for an increased participatory culture within digital feminisms: participating in feminist discussions more frequently became something easy, mundane, and fun in a popcultural context. However, having suggested that it is the entanglement of the material and digital that defines current digital feminist activisms, I argue that we must pay attention to the varying degrees of these entanglements of digital/material imbrications, as Sassen called them (2002, 368). In the case of #aufschrei, the entanglement of

the digital and the material lies in the fact that the body and modes of embodiment are re-written into the online sphere and the inscribing and incorporating practices working on the body are disclosed, enabled through specific features of digital technologies (in this case Twitter's hashtag functionality, which allows for bundling of thousands of people''s similar experiences). The *hatr.org* project reminds us how words also wound physically and how they can put the addressee affectively into a place of no place (Butler 1997, 4). But *hatr.org* is a unique attempt to make the insults and the aggressors more tangible; their words can be grabbed, displaced, and in an ironic twist (theoretically) be monetized. In this way, they become detached from the bodies they were aiming at, and become dislocated. Both examples point back to the materiality of bodies and thereby undermine digital dualist assumptions of the Internet as a more objective and disembodied space that transcends social structures. In my introduction, I outlined several attempts to define contemporary digital feminisms, focusing on networking and developments in relation to the formerly popular term cyberfeminism or DIY aesthetics, amongst others. In conclusion, I suggest a different typology of contemporary digital feminisms with varying degrees of digital–material entanglements: Internet-supported feminist activism, Internet-born movements, and activisms that tackle Internet-based problems. Internet-supported feminist activisms are those I referred to in relation to on-street activism, for example *Pussy Riot* solidarity events or Slutwalks. The entanglement between digital and material here is relatively straight-forward: digital media are used to plan, discuss, and organize the events. They are also used to draw attention to them, to alert the press, and to promote their messages. As Internet-born movements, I count groups or campaigns such as #aufschrei, #yesallwomen, #everydaysexismproject, #solidarityisforwhitewomen, or feminist groups in social networks such as Facebook. The relationship of these kinds of activism to digitality is that they are enabled by particular technicalities of social media, as sharing, uploading, commenting, etc. While it is more obvious how materiality plays out in Internet-supported activism, it is less clear how this is the case in Internet-born movements. I elaborated on how the #aufschrei campaign can be seen as disclosing how "incorporating and inscribing practices work together to create cultural constructs" (Hayles 1999, 200). The materiality there is thus a materiality of the body, which becomes a site for the inscription of information systems. Lastly, I want to suggest an understanding of a branch of digital feminisms as activisms that tackle Internet-born or digitally born problems. One side of this could be feminist initiatives to "take back the tech" aimed at encouraging women to engage in male-dominated technocultures and arenas of knowledge production, like reclaim *Wikipedia* projects.[15] I also count feminist blogs that discuss particular forms of Internet inequalities and hostilities in this category. *Hatr.org* falls into this category. The materialized aspect here is the insight that, in the sense of defying digital dualism, a digital insult is a real insult, which has real effects on real people and does not take place in an objective space that transcends social structures.

Notes

1. Susanna Paasonen has usefully provided a rough categorization of different meanings for cyberfeminism (2011b). It can stand broadly for feminist analysis of human–machine relations, as prevalent, for example, in the work of Rosi Braidotti (2003), Donna J. Haraway (1990), and Sadie Plant (1997). A second branch is concerned with the application of feminist thought to

cyberculture, and its specific technologies and practices, which often still have a sci-fi aura around them: cybernetics (Hayles 1999), artificial life (Sarah Kember 2003) and the relationship of nature and culture as inseparable natureculture (Donna J. Haraway 1991). As a third thread Paasonen identifies cyberfeminisms that are more engaged with digital media and its forms of communications. Academically, it is probably this one that most often is subsumed with feminist cultural studies of new media that investigate interconnections of gender, embodiment, and technology (or sometimes also called feminist Internet research [Paasonen 2011a, 341]).

2. „Als Mensch, der mit Zugang zum Internet aufgewachsen ist, gibt es für mich die Trennung zwischen online und offline nicht mehr. Es gibt nicht das 'echte Leben,' kein Real Lifeund kein rein virtuelles. Jeder Mensch hat nur ein einziges davon. Für Aktivist_innen ergibt sich daraus erstens, dass gesellschaftliches Engagement im Internet real ist: Es bedeutet Aufwand und Anstrengung. Zweitens erleben sie Reaktionen auf ihr Engagement unmittelbar, sie bewirken Gefühle. Seien es nun Erfolgserlebnisse, vermisste Wertschätzung oder gewaltsame Übergriffe—all das, was Aktivist_innen im Zuge ihres Engagements im Netz erfahren, ist echt und wirkt auf sie ein." This translation from German to English, and the subsequent ones, are made by me.
3. http://aufschrei.konvergenzfehler.de/, last accessed April 18, 2015. Here it says: "The collected tweets are from the timespan Friday, 25th January 2013 00:26:01 +0100 until Friday, 8th February 2013 20:41:06 +0100, which means from the very first tweet with #aufschrei over approximately the first two weeks. There are 93,667 tweets, of which 35,660 are retweets, which means there are 58,007 unique tweets. In the database, there are 25,888 users who wrote a tweet, or made a retweet. There are also 13,992 links to external sites; 783 of those are pictures." („Die gesammelten Tweets stammen aus dem Zeitraum vom Freitag, 25. Januar 2013 00:26:01 +0100 bis Freitag, 8. Februar 2013 20:41:06 +0100, also vom allerersten Tweet mit #aufschrei über etwa die ersten beiden Wochen. Das sind 93,667 Tweets, davon 35,660 Retweets, was 58,007 unique Tweets macht. In der Datenbank sind 25,888 Benutzer_innen, die einen Tweet geschrieben haben oder einen Retweet absetzten. Außerdem befinden sich13,992 Links zu externen Seiten in der Datenbank; davon sind 783 Bilder.")
4. I am adopting Imke Schmincke's pragmatic approach to public feminisms by focusing on traditional mass media as a producer of the public through newspapers and TV (2013, 145), because these media still influence public opinions more than, for example, a discussion on a blog would. Therefore, I focus on digital phenomena that made the transition to public discourse in the form of mass mediated news, instead of, for example, focusing on digital feminist activism only known to insider circles.
5. „Jeder für sich. Wie der Kindermangel eine Gesellschaft von Egoisten schafft."
6. „Der bewusst offen gehaltene Terminus Popfeminismus, von dem in Deutschland im Zusammenhang mit einem 'neueren' Feminismus bzw. Der Dritten Welle oft gesprochen wird […] greift diesen Ansatz auf und steht får den Versuch, feministische Strategien und instrumentarien in das Feld der Popkultur hineinzutragen. Denn als Vertreterinnnen einer maßgeblich mit Popkultur sozialisierten Generation sind wir der Ansicht, dass die Kämpfe um Gleichberechtigung auf plitischer Ebene zwar nach wie vor notwendig sind, dass sich aber gleichyeitig nicht alle Kämpfe auf Gesetzesebene gewinnen lassen und das Ringen um Bedeutungen in der Popmusik, der Mode, in Fernsehserien und Werbung mindestens ebenso wichtig ist."
7. After her involvement with a French campaign against rigid abortion laws, Schwarzer started a similar campaign in Germany against §218 (which made abortions illegal). The campaign was successful; in 1974 abortion was legalized and through her substantial involvement Schwarzer was connected with feminism in Germany's collective imaginary ever since.
8. Of course, there are uncountable feminist blogs and networks, "nowhere and everywhere" that have sprung up since the developments of web 2.0. However, I am focusing on the bigger, well-known example that seem(ed) to have an impact on mass media and was not only known to people who are familiar with the feminist blogosphere anyway.
9. The campaign and subsequent debate also met a lot of critique and anti-feminist backlashes that were consequently also part of the debate (Bücker 2014).

10. While (feminist) legal experts and politicians elaborate on potential expansions of laws, the bloggers and (feminist) digital activists criticized legal actions and worried about data security and who would benefit from legal changes.
11. http://dooce.com/hate/, last accessed April 19, 2015. Apparently much of the hate mail relates to Armstrong's split with the religious community she grew up in.
12. On *hatr.org* it says in the FAQ: "On hatr.org, advertisement shall be placed. After all, we do not only want to put the trolls on the spot, but monetize them cold-bloodedly. We want to donate the earned money to cool projects. When the time has come, we will turn to the hatr.org community and ask for suggestions." („Auf hatr.org soll Werbung geschaltet werden. Wir wollen die Trolle schließlich nicht einfach nur vorführen, sondern eiskalt monetarisieren. Das eingenommene Geld wollen wir coolen Projekten zur Verfügung stellen bzw. an sie Spenden. Wir werden uns, wenn es soweit ist, an die hatr.org Community wenden und um Vorschläge bitten.") http://hatr.org/about#was-passiert-mit-dem-geld, last accessed June 24, 2015.
13. I chose a relatively harmless example here, because I do not wish to reproduce the more violent examples.
14. The discussion on a women's quota of 30 percent for the supervisory boards of bigger companies based on the model of other European countries such as Norway has been going on for several years and was held vigorously. A law for the implementation of such a quota was passed in March 2015.
15. For example, the Fembot Collective regularly invites for "Edit-a-thons," meet-ups in which participants are asked to "[c]ontribute to the digital legacy of women, trans, and/or gender non-conforming scientists, writers, scholars, filmmakers, artists, activists, politicians and others by writing them into Wikipedia." http://fembotcollective.org/blog/2014/11/14/ms-fembotannouncement/, last accessed December 27, 2014.

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