

Academic Writing Otherwise: Possibilities and Praxis

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Abstract

This article opens a space of possibility for thinking-doing-making-creating Academic Writing Otherwise. Based on a series of activity-activations we explore what academic writing might become when loosed from conventional prescriptions to explain, exemplify, demonstrate, justify, argue, and account for. What happens if we decide to write otherwise? How can we enable writing's perturbations to proliferate? How can writing otherwise be a mode of political praxis to imagine and co-compose collectivities? How can it be an ethical response to contest the authority, power, and rigidity of traditional modes of writing? Written in a mode of post-authorship, this article offers creative and experimental writing practices for Academic Writing Otherwise to write productively against (while recognizing that we are caught within) the performative prescriptions and normative rules of the academic-writing-machine.

Keywords

Academic Writing Otherwise, activity-activations, writing's perturbations, academic writing as political praxis, post-authorship

Possibilities and Praxis for Academic Writing Otherwise

In a Dream Team workshop at the 2024 European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ECQI), Helsinki, Finland, authors of this paper and conference participants worked together on a series of experiments that focused on possibilities for thinking-doing-making-creating Academic Writing Otherwise. This article explores the creative writing practices that emerged from that workshop and broadens this into a consideration of possibilities for what academic writing might become when loosed from conventional prescriptions to explain, exemplify, demonstrate, justify, argue and account for. This is an important move as there are greater, increasingly performative requirements from academic institutions for authors to demonstrate their renown by being published in international journals with high impact factors, and to be positioned in the prestige place as first author. We are encouraged to write articles with the criteria of originality, significance, and rigor at the forefront of our minds (thus ensuring the article may be considered as an entrant for the Research Excellence Framework in the United Kingdom). These expectations and metrics are now increasingly important to secure a job and tenure, to keep hold of a job, and to apply for academic promotions. We sit and work within these tensions,

a contradictory space where we learn to “play the game,” but try to do so without selling out our integrity. The collective and creative nature of our work is a mode we have adopted to help us push back against academic performativity and to devise new ways of enacting originality, significance, and rigor. Like Carlson et al. (2023, p. 8), we explored “what it would be like if researchers tried to match or align their mode of writing to the onto-epistemologies of their work.” From within these tensions, our article addresses the questions: How might Academic Writing Otherwise materialize as a mode of resistance to academia's dominant writing norms? How might we as authors write creatively to push back against the competitive nature of academia to contest the performative metrics and valorisation of first author in high-impact journals? How can writing creatively become academic writing?

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Scan QR code or click this link (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IWF1jx0kXc>) for Pecha Kucha.

What might happen if we decide to write otherwise? This initial prompt serves as an incentive to scrutinize the fabrication and fabulation of academic texts to which the Academic-Review-Machine contributes—to rigidify manuscripts into predetermined forms and contents. Learned moves toward, and reviewer requests for, clarity, relevance, and specificity bring to the surface (in)visible criteria that can trap us in the quagmire of performative conventional writing. In contrast, Academic Writing Otherwise imagines into being creative modes of care as we co-compose writing collectives, spaces and praxes to contest, resist, refuse.

Writing-with-the-body;

Writing with the heart;

Writing with tongue, teeth, blood, guts, liver;

Writing as a lover;

Writing with music;

Writing with beauty;

Writing with passion, with joy, animated, creative, free;

Writing with care, with kindness, with kin;

Writing for fun;

Writing with things, with string, with objects, bodies and spaces, with air and angels and atmospheres;

Writing with words that live and breathe and fly and flirt;

Writing that takes lines of flight to an academic elsewhere.

Creative Academic Writing Otherwise endeavors to nourish the “what else” and the “what more” that hovers around, blurs the edges of, and plays enticingly with the

forms of academic-writing-as-usual but which are usually banished and excised during the writing development, editing, polishing and publishing processes. In enabling these hovering, blurring and playful forces to take hold, infuse and open our academic writing, in refusing to edit, expunge and expedite, our work resonates with previous inventive, creative and playful engagements with doing academic writing differently (Lather & Smithies, 1997; Löytönen et al., 2015; Pullen & Rhodes, 2008). Such writing troubles academic writing as a representational practice in favor of writing’s disruptions, disturbances and discomfitures. Taking inspiration from post/authorship (Benozzo et al., 2016; Taylor & Benozzo, 2023), creative (Fairchild et al., 2022, 2024) and post-qualitative experimental writing practices (Carlson, 2022; Carlson et al., 2023; Fairchild et al., 2024; Löytönen et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2019), this article proposes Academic Writing Otherwise as an imaginative, joyful and affirmative academic practice—a way of thinking-doing-writing ethically and productively against (while recognizing that we are caught within) the performative prescriptions and normative rules of the academic-writing-machine (Henderson et al., 2016). Academic Writing Otherwise pushes against anodyne, anemic and anesthetizing academic traditions that squeeze, deform and deflect writing’s inventive possibilities, potentialities and powers. We ask: How can we enable writing’s perturbations to proliferate? How can writing otherwise allow us to imagine alternative now’s and other/better academic futures?

Writings Discoverings

Writing as fugitivity

Writing as wonder

Writing as dreaming

Writing as gift

Writing as generosity

Writing’s unknowns

Writing’s haptics

Writing’s sensorialities

Writing’s sensuousness

Writing’s pathos

Writing’s magma flows

Writing’s loose ends

Writing's unfinishableness
 Writing's rejections and dismissals
 Writing's wrestlings
 Writing's rustlings
 Writing's caresses
 Writing's stains
 Writing's scratches
 Writing's russet-lovely apple-mouthed tastiness-on-the-tongue
 Writing's tong's that pluck, hurt, tear
 Writing's heartfelt heartfulness
 Writing's fleshy foldings
 Writing's unfurlings

Academic writing is imbued with power, inequality, histories, constraints, institutional, and systemic expectations that favors certain modes of expression. At the same time all writing, and, in particular, writing otherwise “engages with transformative potentials already present in the environment at hand” (Paper Boat Collective, 2017, p. 18). To amplify these potentials, our Helsinki workshop engaged a number of creative writing experiments, including free writing, writing in a place, storyboarding, online journalling, image-text relations, collaborative collaging with academic texts and other writings, writing with things and objects, writing with/without words, writing that happens in the moment, and writing practices as yet unknown with/from our participants. These experiments played with form, content and process to enact academic writings as a co-creative, inventive, improvisational and processual “collective unfolding event” (Massumi, 2015, p. 97).

As a collective assemblage of co-compositions, Academic Writing Otherwise, as we envisage and enacted it in the workshop, is a political praxis. For Deleuze (2004) praxis “is a network of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory relays one praxis to another.” (p. 206). Our Academic Writing Otherwise as theory-praxis is a form micropolitics that acknowledges the emplaced, embodied, somatic, and affective power flows that define the ways in which we live (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and the ways we write: the micropolitics of writing otherwise can challenge the authority held by experts and reviewers, who are granted

the power to determine the fate of a text (publish or perish). Not only that, it is also a theory-praxis (Taylor & Fairchild, 2025) that re-situates co-creative joy at the heart of academic writing. Co-creation is important: it is an enablement of collaborative movements toward unknown, and potentially affirmative elsewhere, a movement beyond and outside the rigidities of normative academic writing's performative regimes (Benozzo et al., 2019). Co-creation's potentialities encourage a joyful dispersal of individuating “I's” enabling a multiplicitous “we” to become in our myriad differencings and relationalities (Hogarth et al., 2023; Taylor et al., 2024) to hail into being new knowledge-ings (Taylor, 2021).

Writings Doings

We ventured into collaborative Academic Writing Otherwise in our ECQI Dream Team workshop, bringing along with us and moving on and in-the-moment with our shared interest and curiosity in experimenting with what else academic writing knowledge-making otherwise might be (Benozzo et al., 2022; Fairchild et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2023). To enable conditions for co-composing emergent, inventive Academic Writing Otherwise, we re-arranged the setup of the conventional academic seminar room we had been assigned, un-organizing tables and chairs, creating five “stations” and spreading craft materials, paints, papers, pens, tags and pegs, strings and ribbons, envelopes and notes onto them. We devised these activity-activations to provoke curious explorations of how writing-with objects, bodies, spaces, affects, materialities can enable academic writing to become otherwise. From an ethical perspective, participants were invited to engage with the creative writing activations and to share their thoughts, writings, artworks, and makings with us and each other. If they wanted, they could leave items they produced on the tables or in the room or take them with them. As part of our collaborative ethical protocol, we discussed with participants that we might write research articles about the workshop and that items they left could be used for research and their contents might appear in a journal article.

Each station invited participants to engage in and experiment with creative, embodied, affective activity-activations and theoretical thinking-making companions as follows:

Do line drawing, write with/out words, draw a line with bodies, affects, histories, experiences past/present/futures of what academic writing (otherwise) feels, looks, does

Explore writings hauntings with two provocations: 1) What splinters tug in the now (and possibly in the future?) 2) How might returning to these splinters enable you to develop a different perspective of the event? Write responses on tags or paper, put them in an envelope and peg/tie them on a string line.

Write collaboratively simultaneously together on the same page/piece of paper, so emergent writing is shaped by stories shared, generating conceptualizations together through choice of words phrases, text positioning, shape and size—expanding/deleting/adding/renewing as you go.

Write/think/knot string-ly narratives with ribbons and tags of vivid colors and textures. As the string-story-chronicles moments, events and encounters by the station prompted the sharing of stories illuminating tangles intersections/connections.

Experiment with André Breton's *exquisite corpse* in unexpected collaborative stories assembling assigned word categories (such as a noun or adjective).

Paint on the rich, bumpy texture of khadi paper and write 100-word nano-fictions or drabbles, about creative academic writing/ Academic Writing Otherwise.

What is a line(-drawing)?

Criss-crossing vectors, coming and going, folding in and unfolding, cutting and reconfiguring. Line-ings draw a speculative middle (Springgay et al., 2020) of interlaced trails of academic imaginaries in becoming – “[a] feed-forward mechanism. . . creative process, under continuing variation” (Massumi, 2016, p. 7).

How can the past be materialised in the present and what can this do for/to futures. The past can be written placed in envelopes, tied to a line, becoming “data.” Pasts act “like splinters, wedge into the flesh; they bless us; they provoke pain; but at the same time we continually return to them.” (Benozzo et al., 2013, p.311). Re-turning to these splinters allows for new responses, affective resonances of how these often buried and neglected splinters still impact bodies, becoming “difficult and playful . . . joyful and aching mediations of caring affection (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 88).

Collaborative writing requires time, trust and thinking with un-known and un-certain embodied affects (Cranham et al., 2024). Post-authorship experimentation cultivates new shared knowledges, understandings, awarenesses. Challenging accelerated scholarship (Mountz et al., 2015), and questioning the authority in authorship (Fairchild et al., 2022) when multiple bodies co-create text simultaneously.

Thoughts, knots, descriptions, ties, (Haraway, 2016), string figuring holds the stories that matter in twine, threads and bows. String figuring produces knowledge differently (Fairchild et al., 2022), illuminating modes of arts-based practice for saying, and amplifying narratives (Leavy, 2020) silenced in academic spaces.

The exquisite corpses deny the individuality of the author. They become multi-handed compositions written without the participants knowing what the others have written. They create an encounter in the dark, in blindness, in ignorance. The “exquisite corpse” literally challenges the Romantic notion of authorship, the myth of the solitary genius, to suggest the possibility of authorship as multiple and distributed (Stillinger, 1991/2000).

The text does not anchor the image; the image does not represent the text (Tseliou & Benozzo, 2022).

There is no tying up or tying down.

Image-text encounterings loosen lines, thoughts, bodes, relations.

Meaning flies, folds, forms, slips and slides.

Words and colours: shapings, swirlings, patternings.

Aesthetics of jouissance: freedom, bliss, movement—materializing a presencing (Barthes, 1977). “The best kind of encounter with thinking’s outside is the kind that deeply listens to what writing is trying to do, almost thinking beyond what the author is capable of thinking, then returning that thinking, almost beyond what the reader can think, to the author. In this gesture of encounter, no one is to convince anyone: thought is thinking collectively at its limit” (Manning, 2016: preface).

And so, more than an hour and a half, in a crowded room, around 45 participants engaged with the activity-activations, which served as the event’s enabling constraints (Manning & Massumi, 2014). Participants could move freely from one station to another, while a pre-prepared Pecha Kucha slide show with collaged pictures of Academic Writing Otherwise changing every 20 seconds played in the room—another visual provocation (see Pecha Kucha link

and QR code above). Participants could linger on one station, return and rewrite academic writing with word categories, swirly and rigid lines, watercolors, words, stories, knots, hauntings, desires. Joyful chatter of one station shifted into concentrated silence in another. A swarming of stories. A swarming of bodies. Murmurings and movements. Soft, slow, loud, laughter. Affects shiftingly entangled with art-fully-informed material experiments with



Academic Writing Otherwise charging the room with emergent and curious matterings.

Toward the end of the session, we asked participants to gather together and think-feel-share the doing and becomings of the activity-activations. We carefully collected the butcher's paper, khadi paper paintings and nano-fictions, knotty strings, tiny envelopes attached to strings, little notes left in our note-boxes and baggies. We carefully collected these thinking-makings as gifts, glimpses and glimmers into the potentiality of Academic Writing Otherwise, sensing that we might not yet know where they lead or how they would yet unfold.

Later, we five returned to the doings of the workshop for a space-time of dwelling-with what the workshop with its activity-activations did in terms of potentialities for Academic Writing Otherwise. These (our) numerous returns (Barad, 2014)—multiplicitious turnings over and over—invite the event to continue unfolding and enfold-ing with ever-new stories, trailing and hailing ghosts and im/possibilities. In these re-turns, Academic Writing Otherwise keeps unfolding in ever-new becomings and potentialities as we collaboratively craft(ed) this article. What follows are co-creations that emerged during the workshops as infused by our re-turns, offering a co-composing of images, stories, fictions, drawings, photographs, and artifacts.

Unfoldings and Enfoldings

Lines (of Flight)

The provocation was this: Take a pen, press it to the paper, close your eyes and start drawing a line without lifting the pen. Write-draw what academic writing feels like, what does a/the flow of writing feel like. It's knots and tangles. Write in lines. Lines writing. Drawing-writing affects and effects of Academic Writing Otherwise.

The event unfolded. Butchers paper spread over tables. On the floor. Arms extending. Bodies settling. Standing. Sitting. Swaying. Eyes closing. Line-ing.

Writing with/out words, with lines and with words slipped into a gift baggie left for worded musings holds the hauntings and ghosts of the embodied “sticky” (van der Tuin & Verhoeff, 2022) a/effects of academic writing. The trouble.

Dot dot dot

I do not know

Frustration

Insecurity

Constant questioning

Sitting/moving/thinking/writing-with lines slows thinking-making down. Speculative middles (Springgay et al., 2020) gently open for Academic Writing Otherwise; a creative invitation “to value the intricate processes of making and sensing—their capacity to open even the stiffest of materials and figures beyond their seeming stillness” (Kontturi, 2018, p. 10). To open beyond seeming stillness into a multiplicity. As a minor gesture (Manning, 2016).

Messy

Sensing-feeling of territorial lines that bind, as they write themselves in the surface of the paper, as they have been written in habits of writing, in bodies and patterns of thinking-doing-writing. Sticky histories carried along, marks in bodies, “the traces of the enfolded processes of materialization” (Barad, 2007, p. 472).

And following (Kontturi, 2018). Following the rhythm of lines of writing escaping, fleeing, leaking, breaking out. Becoming momentary disruptions, refusals, resistance and an alternative to the strict form of words, letters, writings.

Playful

Energetic

Curling

Swirling

Free

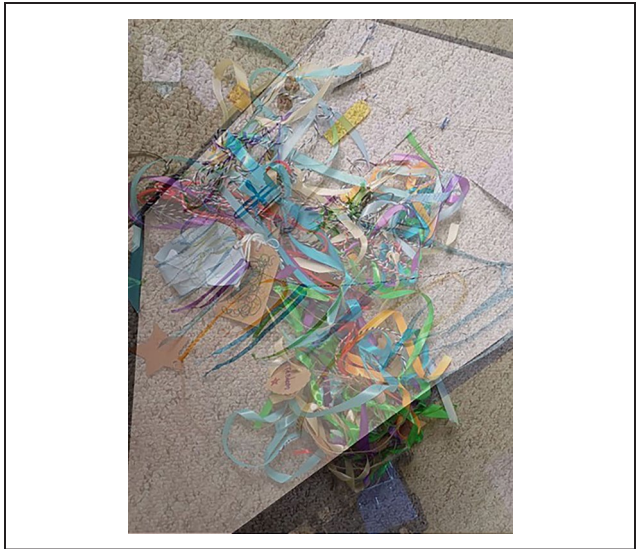
The event unfolds. Rough surface scratches. A hard-pressed line. A *swoooooosh* of graphite crayon running free along the surface. An escape. A line of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), drawing-writing, a “memory not of what was, but of what will be” (Manning, 2016, p. 47) in rhythms of becoming.

As lines become drawn-written, academic writing is not what it is anticipated and expected to be, look, feel like. Instead, a space emerges where academic writing speculates with its im/possibilities, showing how the excess, the in-articulatable, might be/come written in/beyond canonical modes of expression, how writing can “escape or overflow ready-made channelings into the dominant value system” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 87), how Academic Writing Otherwise works beyond privileged representationalism, beyond the privilege of language/s (Hohti & Truman, 2021). As we write with/out words we transform imaginaries of what academic writing can look like, escaping the academic writing machine, and drawing-writing Academic Writing Otherwise into being.

Hauntological Writings

Participants wrote notes on colored index cards, some used their own pens, others used pens/pencils that were on other stations. Participants chose whether the use an envelope for their message or to add this to the string lines naked for all to see. Ribbons and parcel tags were added, tied on or stuck with tape. Notes were composed retelling experiences of past, present and absent-presents, affective and non-representational, notes becoming contact zones where “circulations, events, conditions, technologies and flows of power literally take place” (Stewart, 2007, p. 3). These seemingly ordinary materials transformed by the power of past/present/future hauntings and untethered from ontic and linear time become a mode of bearing witness to the lively materiality of more-than-human life (Fairchild, 2024). After the sessions these items were carefully taken down and stored in a canvas bag, carried around the conference and flown back to a new destination to reside on a shelf, waiting to be unwrapped. . .

Some months later, and as we discuss plans to write this article, the cloth bag was opened to reveal its treasures. Each piece was photographed and carefully archived (Massumi, 2016), a process which “does not focus on what media mean or signify but wants to come to grips with what they do, how they inflect life” (Pape, 2019, p. 76). Envelopes opened, ribbons untangled, messages read. There was one



piece left until last—this had been wrapped up like a gift. . . I stopped, hearing my heart beating loudly I wondered if I should open it. . . It was left for us, a gift of a past-present happening “a collection of trajectories and circuits. . . it seeks out scenes and little worlds to nudge it into being.” (Stewart, 2007, p. 59). The present was opened, the messages read and bought into being. All this material was then curated carefully, each envelope and knot were a materialization of care as both “a doing and an ethico-political commitment that affects the way we produce knowledge about things” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 66). The work of opening and documenting was care-ful and took time, aligned with an ethical imperative to read each card, to think about the words and the affects they produced. There was also a consideration of the care taken to tie the ribbons and to add notes onto the strings.

Derrida (1994) originally theorized the concept of hauntology to highlight the indeterminacy and relationality between the then (past), the now (present) and the absent (not present). He was interested in how hauntings can both replicate and refocus systems of power and oppression and its impact on everyday lives. Bozalek et al. (2021) exemplify this when they argue hauntings “appear not to be present while actually being integrally present and continuing to impact the world around them in a dynamic way” (p. 3). Hauntings can be productive, thoughtful, and generative. As we worked with the notes and knots, we thought of their hauntings as points for re-conceptualization, re-thinking and, re-envisioning, for finding hopeful possibilities and for telling unspoken (and unspeakable) frustrations. Reading the cards, eyes lingering on phases and lines, the tug of affect was palpable. Like data splinters (Benozzo et al., 2013, p. 311) parts of some messages viscerally produced

“a pain that comes with our life, and can make sense—indeed, be sensed—only during life.”

In our re-turns, the poem below was created from some of the written fragments. It is an articulation of how Academic Writing Otherwise gestures to a blurring of bodies’ boundaries of those who wrote their hauntology’s, those of us which tried to enact a care-ful and ethical curation, and those of you our readers to whom we now entrust these painful data splinters. Disruptions, disturbances and discomfitures are never in the past but always working on our minds and bodies in the now and futures to come.

This splinter has lodged in my heart for many years—shamed, humiliated—DEFIANT!

“Learn to live with the wound” they said.

Certainty is my ghost.

Sharing vulnerability with a ghost.

I’ll lose many gloves again, see many birds. But never with my dog Leia.

Lost property. . .

Jumping UNSTEADY from one slippery stone to the other DISCOMFORT-ABLE!

“Do you have confidence in me?”—20 years later—learned from it, and moved on → but still an itch.

“Re-turn to the wound” they said.

This moment is when I decided it would be OK for the to-be-post academic-author-me;

Now—this is pink methodology. . .

How can it be so hard to ask for help?

The lure of rescue. A fear of missing out on “good points.” A chance for redemption.

Finishing—I need to finish—complete—more on that time I could not finish is haunting me.

How can we truly know?

Oh! Bollocks!

Haunting folds time and space but keeps connections, layers -

“Learn to live with the wound” they said.

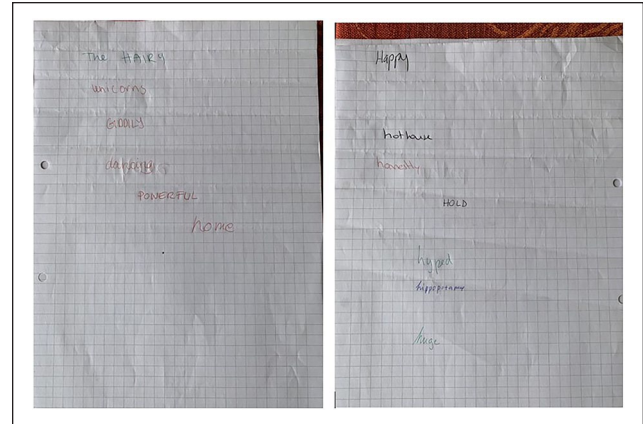


Multiple Authors/Bodies One Text

Collaborative writing simultaneously (CWS), is a form of post-authorship which embodies “transdisciplinary approaches to academic writing” (Cranham et al., 2024 p. 259). Enacting CWS multiple bodies generate texts simultaneously on the same document, thereby resisting traditional assumptions that academic writing must only emanate from a single human mind and hand. Within the workshop, CWS was reimagined along rebellious lines. How to reimagine Academic Writing Otherwise via CWS? Why write with traditional mark making practices, when it is possible to defy conventions and produce scripts and symbols otherwise? What emerges when we dare to write without rules. What might unruly writing be? Hold writing tools in unfamiliar ways; make marks with our non-dominant hand! Breathing seemed momentarily suspended because the concentration required for bodies fixated on writing backwards or engaged with using non-dominant hands. The engrossing focus occasionally interrupted by a fit of laughter, a collaborative reflection, an exhalation of air only for the body to then return to crafting written prose in a manner that demanded absolute attention. Simple acts of rebellion can have liberating affects. Each symbol, curve, straight line, cross and dot ceased to be automatic; instead, they were considered and exacting, slightly wonky and defiantly legible. Such modes of writing otherwise are slower, and provoke embodied effects of risk, uncertainty, trust and joy (Cranham et al., 2024), requiring commitment (Hogarth et al., 2023), concentration and effort.

Narrative Writings with String

Stringing, knotting, threading—twine holds the narratives and experiences being recalled. These stories are not merely written; they are written with string, held by knots, ribbons,



tags and ties. String figuring narratives are not fixed, string permits changes and shifts (Haraway, 1994) thereby enabling the narrative to vary and is not fixed. Whereby the “performance can be replaced by another story, and the story line can be analysed in different ways” (Orlander & Ståhl, 2018, p. 142). In so doing, reading string stories takes time. Doing Academic Writing Otherwise with string refuses normative acts of interpretation. These narratives depend on the author to read the string; interpret the data, and to articulate the meaning held within the assemblage of tangles. The knowledge produced is held safely by the string with/for the owner-creator-author who may or may not articulate the knotty story. String-figuring cannot be easily read by others, resisting the dominant academic writing traditions of authoritative blind reviewers critiquing scripts from God-like positions (Taylor et al., 2023). Producing speculative provocations—can these string figure narratives only be read by the body that produced them? Who but the creator has the authority to read, interpret and translate (Gasparyan, 2021), these knotty string-formed narratives?

Exquisite corpse

“The imaginary is what tends to become real.”

— André Breton

“Words make love with one another.”

— André Breton

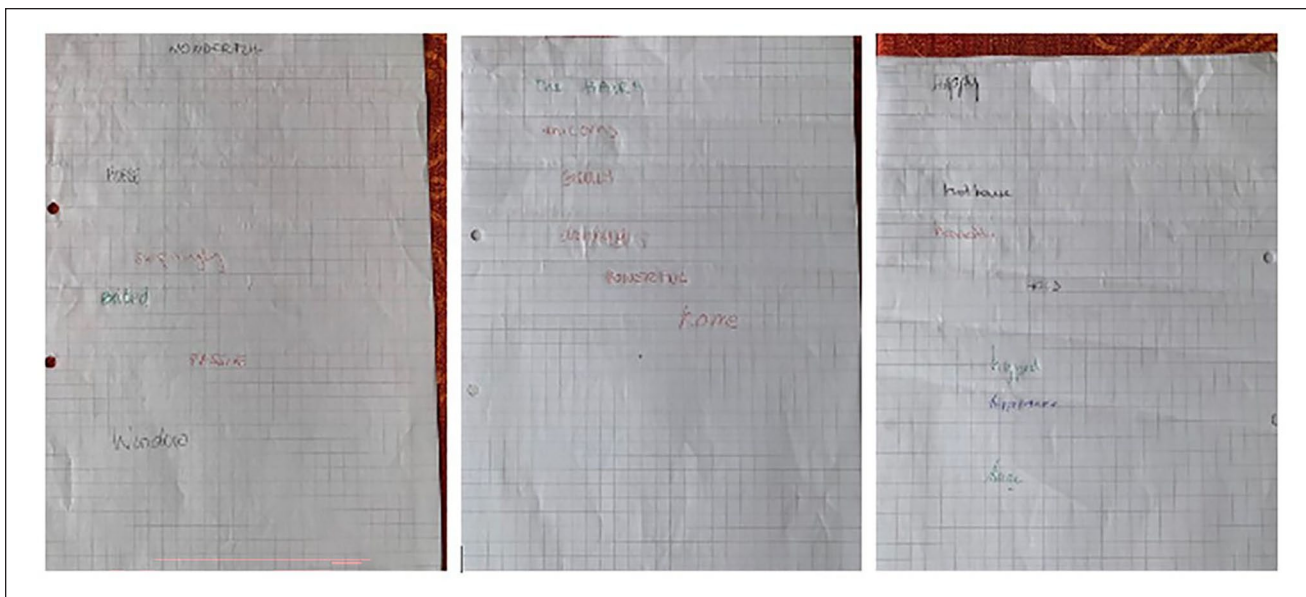
“Everything tends to make us believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived as contradictions.”

— André Breton

The term exquisite corpse is the English translation of the original French “cadaver exquis,” literally exquisite cadaver. This activity falls within the realm of surrealist automatism and the random association of elements, in which, however, a communication among participants seems to appear. It was invented by surrealists, and it is an activity by which some words (or images) are assembled. André Breton (1924) claimed that it started for fun but became playful and enriching. The name is derived from the phrase that resulted when Surrealists first played the game that is: “The exquisite corpse shall drink the new wine” (in French “Le cadavre exquis boira le vin nouveau”). Marcel Duhamel, André Breton, Henry Miller and others used this activity and contributed to spread this technique. Frida Kahlo and Lucienne Bloch created their near-nude exquisite corpse (see <https://www.pinterest.it/pin/516999232196768423/>).

During our Dream Team workshop, the activity took place with six persons at a time. Each person was assigned a category to which they had to belong, and the category had to be in the following order: an adjective, a noun, an adverb, a verb, an adjective and a noun. The first person wrote an adjective on the sheet, then folded the sheet so that the person next to them, who wrote a noun, did not see the adjective that was written by the first person, and so on. One person suggested that each word could begin with the same letter, and we chose “h.”

This writing method subverts organized rationality. In creating these collective compositions, we challenged the authority of the individual author (Benozzo et al., 2016), as the texts were created by multiple people who were unaware of each other’s contributions. The game of exquisite corpse as a semi-serious or semi-playful practice aimed to reduce the author’s control over the work, promoted a collective and unpredictable creation. Often, academic writing is seen as an exclusively solitary activity. Surrounding this action is the sanctity of the individual creative act, based on the



presumption that the produced text will/should have an exclusive bond with its author. Yet, the text could also be open to the interventions of different authors, not only literally but also virtually (Taylor et al., 2023). Different authors already inhabit the page before the text appears.

Exquisite corpse writing allowed the circulation of affect among participants. Something (un)thought and casual was expressed without the interference of rational control. It facilitated the construction of connection among participants and the emergence of an unmediated flow of affect (Massumi, 2015). It was an activity that allowed for the experience of bursts of fantasy (as opposed to “the logic”) which also have a political force because they affect the moments we were/are living in.

The words met

The words approached

The words fought, hated, and loved each other

We were their instrument

We were used by words

Words made us academics

The words dueled and we, instruments in their hands, produced chains of words that met by chance. Inspired by Comte Lautréamont famous surrealist sentence, the beauty of the words was like the fortuitous meeting on a dissecting table of an umbrella and a sewing machine (Laplénie,

2008). Even more, those words, juxtaposed in an unusual way, produced the systematic displacement hoped for by Max Ernst to stimulate/cultivate the imagination (Drost et al., 2008). What would happen if our academic writing became a random juxtaposition of words written by different authors, who do not know each other and have no common references? What would happen if, in our search for writing otherwise, our papers become collections of fragments of thoughts, each written without knowledge of what others have written, so that we leave the reader the freedom to create their own paper?

Image-Text Compounds of Created Sensations

Between image and text:

A turbulence

A nonidentity

Un/utterable relations

Confluence of forms and forces

A here-and-now

A there-and-then

Gaps, spaces, fissures

Conglomerations, confederations, congeries

Wheeling wildly

Watery words always moving

Widening

Wandering

Winding



Words

Images

Shimmer, shove, spill, spool, simmer

Patterns reeling and pulling

Grasp and

Let go.

“Art thinks no less than philosophy, but it thinks through affects and percepts” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 66).

What happened?

What was produced?

What did you feel?

What did you know?

What did you say?

What did you feel you couldn't say?
What has to remain unsaid?

Made it onto the page?

And why that?

So many (too many) questions.

that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 163).

“We paint, sculpt, compose, and write with sensations. We paint, sculpt, compose, and write sensations. As percepts, sensations are not perceptions referring to an object (reference): if they resemble something it is with a resemblance produced with their own methods; and the smile on the canvas is made solely with colors, lines, shadow, and light” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 166).

The nano-fictions co-compose a poem: words jumping off the page and jiving together in a found space of resonance.

A small idea is there

When the waves of sunlight imploded

Bleeding

Are reviewers my collaborators too?

Unimaginable before—now IT IS IT IS IT IS

This way up, or that way up, does it matter?

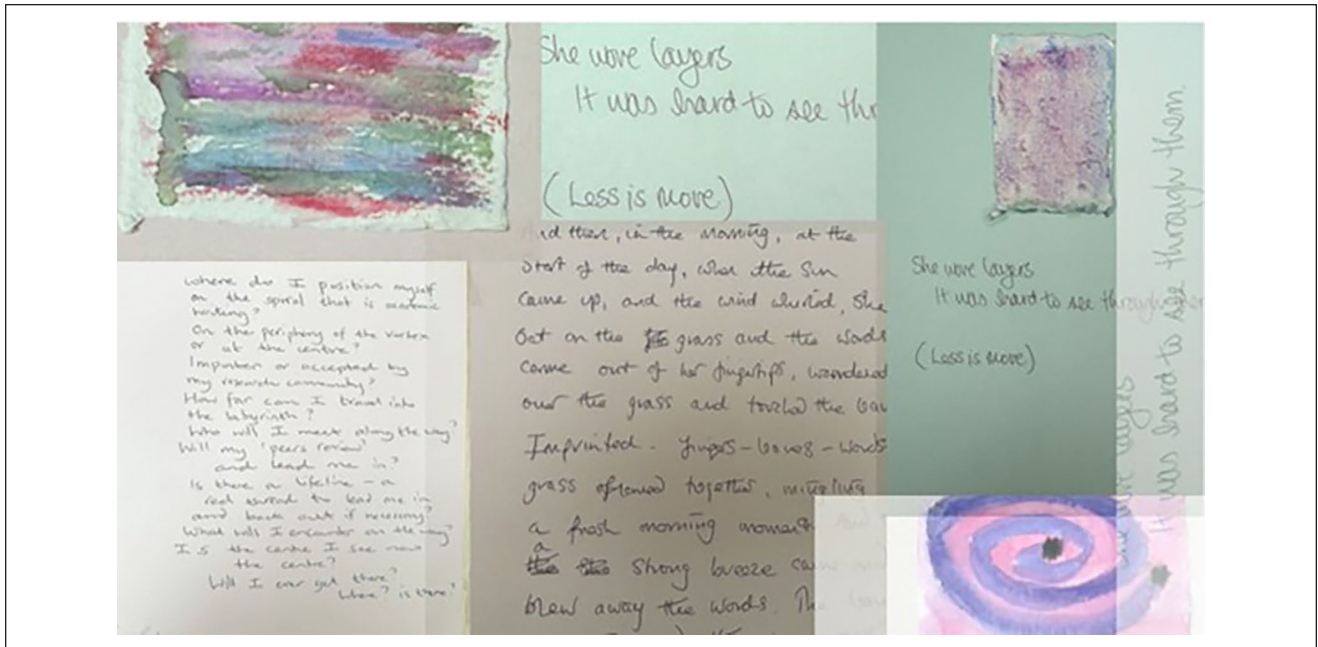
Writing as swimming in the deep, blue sea, fresh, free alive

With movements, and sometimes with stillness. I can also ramble

Who resides?

Jewels and 100 points. You go girl!

“[Art] is independent of the creator through the self-positing of the created, which is preserved in itself. What is preserved—the thing or the work of art—is a *bloc of sensations*,



A bloom space

[Enter]

She wore layers: it was hard to see through them

The words came out of her fingertips, wandered over the grass, and touched the leaves.

How far can I travel into the labyrinth?

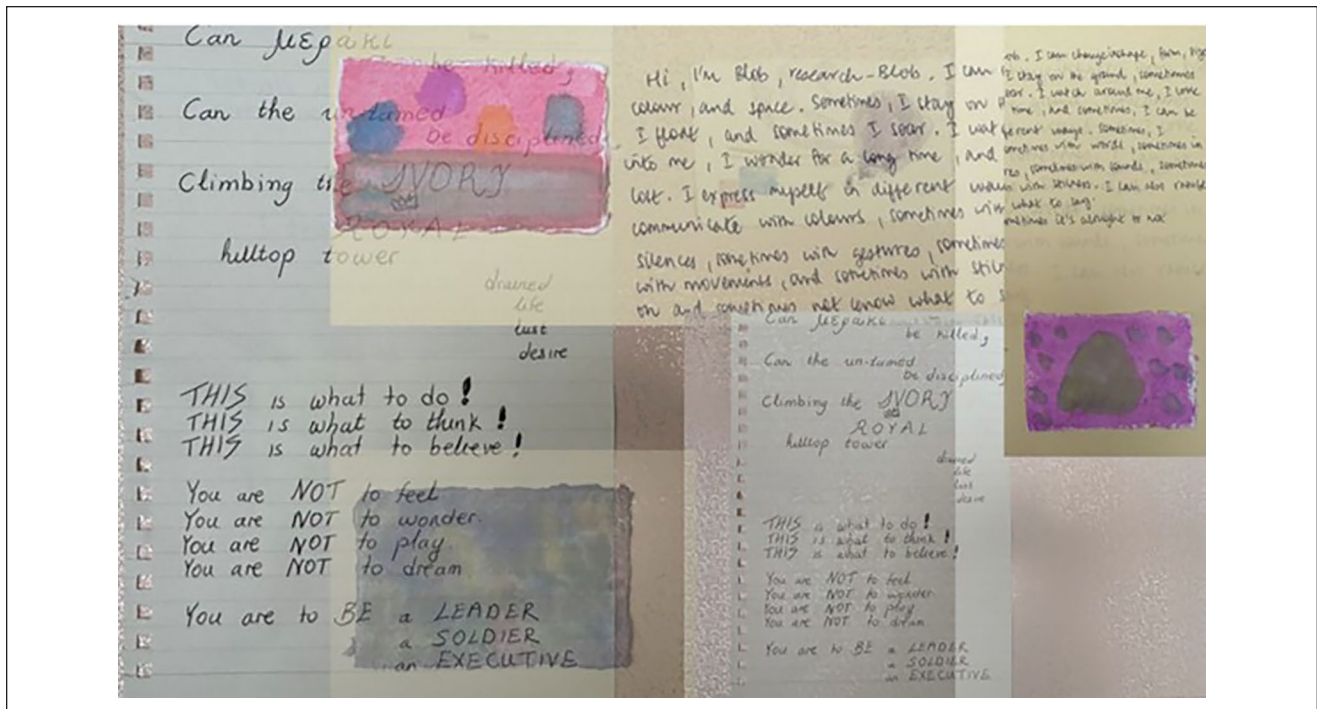
The workshop Khadi paper art-ings and nano-fictions materialize a practice of image-text intermezzo (Taylor & Fairchild, 2025) as a “mode of bodily, sensory and speculative becoming [that] hails us; its welcomes and dis/comforts link and sync us in a together-ing endeavor. To compose, dis/compose, play ourselves and our writings anew.” They animate Academic Writing Otherwise as a sort of post-authorship found poetry (Butler-Kisber, 2021), as a mode of inquiry that re-calibrates “research findings” beyond the bounded “I” and beyond the individual voice. The choreographies of resonating lines from image-text productions temporally spools back to the moment of production and instantiates affective flows anew, enacting Academic Writing Otherwise in the now of the now.

These image-texts continue their destabilizing disruptivities, such that “the air still has the turbulence, the gust of wind, and the light that it had that day last year, and it no longer depends on whoever was breathing it that morning” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 163). Because art’s

durability in duration, Deleuze and Guattari (1994), doesn’t depend on its model, or its moment of creation, or its creator, or its audience, we can unbind the restraints of interpretation and release ourselves from the endless questions of ‘what does this mean’? If we think that what comes to matter is that “art preserves . . . It preserves and is preserved in itself (quid juris?), although actually it lasts no longer than its support and materials—stone, canvas, chemical color, and so on” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 162), the image-text productions—and all the productions in the workshop too—effect a durable transience, a cutting-together-apart of our doings in the now and the nows to come, all of which are enfolded with pasts and futures, hailing into becoming a theory-praxis of Academic Writing Otherwise ongoingly.

The Privileging of Languages

With the focus on internationally performative requirements from academic institutions, authors are “encouraged” (in some cases, required) to write articles in English. What impact might this have for those who are not native speakers? Carlson (2023, p. 89) argued “Walking into a language, as into a door, one embodies its possibilities and limitations, its secure feelings and most intimate secrets, its pathways, and its uprootedness.” The urgency to ensure we keep originality, significance, and rigor at the forefront of our minds, however, complicates things further: What happens when words become lost in translation, or the right words slip away as there is no corresponding English word that carries



the same idea or meaning? English language policing adds to the perspectives that academia can appear a bit like a cult 🤪, there are gatekeepers that either allow you in or 🚫. There are expectations for the ways you 🎵 🌟 🤔 and write 📝 and research. If you don't do this, your opportunities for gaining esteem and promotion are limited. Hierarchies of "properness" are set up 📊. English monolingualism acts as a gatekeeper of and for linguistic privilege for English native speakers or for those with English as their first language.

In this context, are ChatGPT, Google translator, DeepL Translate devices for equality? For non-native English speakers, they can be seen to reduce the privilege, fortune and cost in a world in which English is the dominant language. However, they also function as powerful harvesting devices of authors' outputs, turning them from academic knowledge into capitalist commodities. It is truer now than ever that the more "properly" academics perform 🏆 🏅 🏆 in English the more successful they will be 🏆 🏅 🏆. This is the dominant 📌 narrative which feeds the restrictiveness of standardized practices. Conventions aren't neutral and English monolingualism is a linguistic privilege where English is the predominant language in academic settings worldwide. Language matters—in today's political context, proficiency in English—writing it, speaking it, understanding it, and maintaining conversations—is often considered essential to becoming a global 🌐 citizen. In fact, citizenship

tests sometimes include absurd questions about English history.

Write in non-English

Translate into English

Get somebody to check over and pay for it

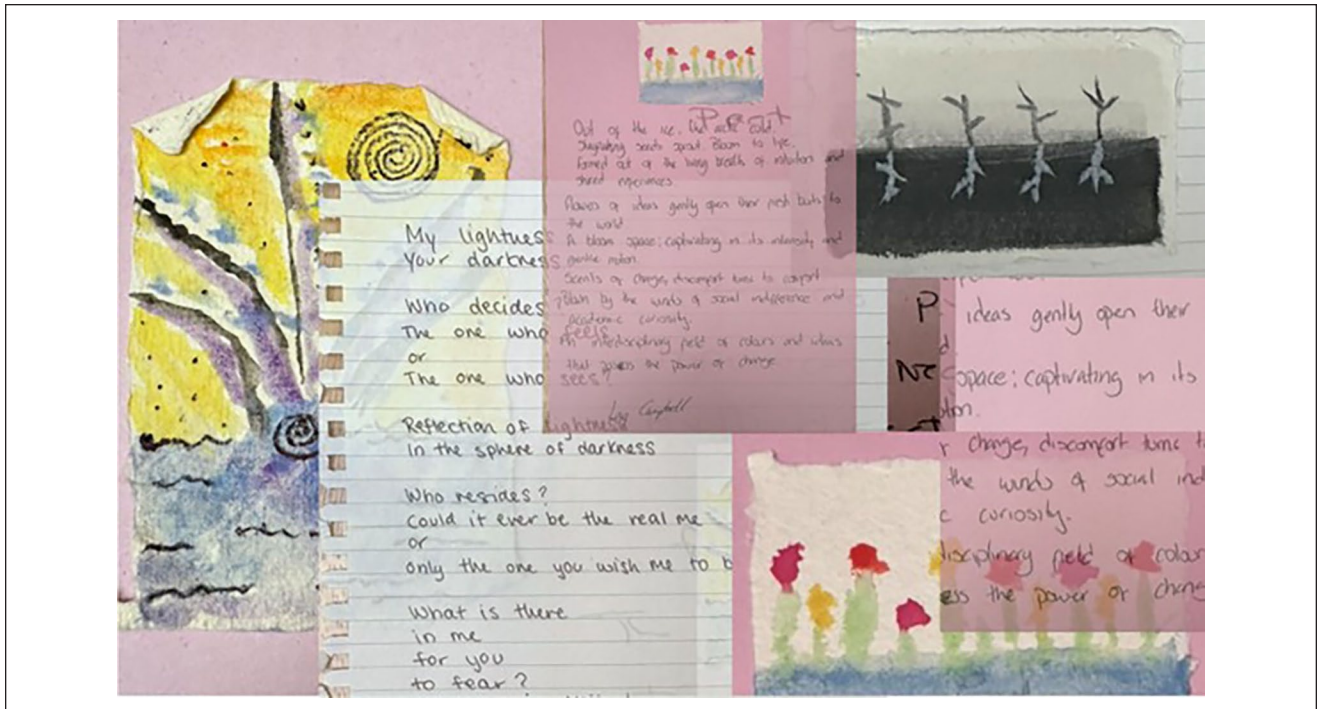
Feel envy regarding people who do not need this process and who can never feel this.

Anxiety that somebody doesn't feel this English is "correct" or "adequate."

English as part of the global academic game of power and privilege.

Kirjoittaminen sanoilla, joita en kannan kehossani kadottaa tunnut ja ajatukset mahdollisten sanojen varjoihin. Törmään seiniin, kompuroin kynnyksillä, kahlaan sanojen soissa. Mutta silti jatkan ja joskus, ehkä vain hetkeksi, kielen ja ilmaisun kaanoneihin tulee särö, jonka värähtely tuntuu läpi kirjoittamisen totutun.

Sento di funzionare meglio in italiano. Mi sembra di esprimermi meglio, essere più veloce, riuscire a trovare un modo elegante di dire ciò che penso.



Re-Turnings, Concludings and Continuing Perturbations: Academic Writing Otherwise as Co-Created Collective Companionable Productions

The ECQI Dream Team workshop prompted multiplicities of thinking-playing-pondering-wondering with image-text matterings, bodymind and spacetime specificities, and their ongoing affect and percept productivities. This article's returning to the collective productions are post-enactments and post-ponderings that have produced further wonderings, wanderings, and provocations for the five of us writing this, and are co-composed with threads, lines, and comments that came up in the plenary discussion at the workshop. The names that appear at the top of this article means that the article is only nominally "ours." This dilemma is familiar to many authors writing in the "posts" in the current AcademicPublishingMachine—our tendencies toward an un/possessing and dis/owning are constrained, if not stymied, by the authorial possibilities that technology and publishing systems place on us—there is a weight we feel when listing authors, placing names in order make cuts and doings the a/effects of which are ethically-bodily felt and which we can't control or escape. Other ways of doing Academic Writing Otherwise are possible and with our co-conspirators from the workshop and other vagabonds who

join us along the way, we continue to explore these. Watch this space!

Academic Writing Otherwise demands a keen and ongoing attentiveness to ethics. During the workshops the participants were open, honest, and heartfelt in what-how they wrote, drew, collaged, and shared, and we (as article authors) want and need to continue to be care-ful and kind with the treasures they gave us. We want to be ethical and response-able (Barad, 2010) in using their productions in this (only nominally "our") article, and our participants were aware at the beginning of the workshop we might include their creative work, doings and thinkings in producing an article. In our ongoing discussions and writings of this article we mused on how to remain focussed on, and faithful to, the immanent and creative productions from the workshop, but also to produce something that would tell an otherwise story. We did adhere to usual ethical writing conventions, such as anonymity for the workshop participants, and gaining permission to use the artifacts from the original workshop. However, the article is not intended to be a direct rendering of the event, it morphed and shape-shifted using the memories and data from the event to take us in new directions. Braidotti's (2019) affirmative ethics guided us to develop this article as an anarchive releasing the movement and potential of our collective writings, images, and productions in ways that remain open to what happened "then" and to the possibilities and challenges this kind of writing brings "now," as we move from the only ostensible "past"

of the workshop into the present time-space of the “now” (and potential futures) of this article. We hope we have done justice to the process and the participants as we work (and sometimes struggle) within the multiple lines of their-our work, and as we continue to be affected, infected, and shaped by the ongoingness of the productions and their continuing generativities. This is what it feels like/entails to be response-able within and to a collectivity and what that collectivity makes possible.

The expectation of the standard form of academic writing is still so strong. The expectation still holds that there is a “particular way” that articles need to look, be structured, proceed with their arguments, use “data” and “evidence,” and come to “conclusions,” to be seen as “rigorous” and “valid.” As Academic Writing Otherwise vagabonds, we contest this. Our activity-activations aimed to provide an opening for playfulness, lines, images, and affects crisscrossing the page, with meanings created as we write and experiment and talk. Such Academic Writing Otherwise treats making meaning with care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) and acknowledges that meaning is entailed within collective spaces that create conditions to escape the constraints and limitations of individual authorship. While such escapes may be momentary, they are deeply felt and durable: they are a making-writing with collective affects and experiences.

We have been taught, and continue to be told, that “good” academic writing needs to be clear, concise and about clever things—and we rarely question these assumed and arrogant logics (apparent logics!). But why must this be so? Can academic writing not be provocative and beautiful? Can it not be poetry? Why can it not be a limerick? Why so many words and no images, except those that illustrate or explain a wordy argument or claim? We ask (as an urgent question): Instead of the “classic” criteria of black lines and symbols on white page why not produce otherwise? What happens when we write aesthetic pages, beautiful, colorful, provoking and attractive pages, which combine thought and visual engagement in a different way? We know, of course, that visual and affective writing occurs in other places and even within the AcademicPublishingMachine—in journals devoted to art, visuality, narrative, for example, and in journals where writing in and with the “posts” is prevalent—but in our disciplines (Education, Social Science, Organizational Psychology, Childhood) there remains a core allegiance to the production of “standard-type” papers.

Those of us committed to Academic Writing Otherwise love and flourish within the spaces where Academic Writing Otherwise is possible. BUT, although such spaces are growing and multiplying, these remain “small spaces” and we continue to bear the burden of knowing-feeling we are working in the margins. We are still carrying the weight of how it used to be/ how it “should” be. Even as we are hailed, energized and invigorated by possibilities for writing otherwise,

we are feeling the intentionality, the acute awareness of rule breaking—rather than just writing. There is a long history of maintaining academic credibility in qualitative research writing in the face of science and we are living and writing with (against) the weight of this history. AND there is also a long history of doing academic writing differently we mentioned at the beginning of this article (Derrida, 1998; Lather & Smithies, 1997). Burrell et al. (2022), though, refer to these spaces as “shadow” spaces. While we take heart and courage from our Academic Writing Otherwise companions who precede and accompany us in, questions continue their hauntings: How to write otherwise and find academic recognition, given that carving out a space to become “recognizable” is entangled with who you are working with, who/ what you encounter, and the conditions of “recognisability” in your own institution and in the broader field? Oh, those metrics, citations, and performativities that you can never fully escape from? And what if you are a PhD student, a junior scholar, or a scholar in a precarious institutional position? Such positionings require extra bravery while being subject also to the heavier weight of raced, classed and gendered presumptions, and not always having the needed support from supervisors and senior scholars, themselves too often constrained by the AcademicPublishingMachine and career promotions criteria. So, while we may be tempted to say (what the f**k is “proper” academic writing anyway!!!!) or invite others to abjure the “proper” we are aware of the risks this entails. Nevertheless, we ask:

Why is Academic Writing Otherwise not taught in higher education? What might happen if it were? Would its recognition within the academy confer too much of a normalizing influence on otherwise—reducing it to just a form of expression? How could Academic Writing Otherwise build potential for enhancing research-pedagogy-inquiry? In what ways might Academic Writing Otherwise enhance possibilities for joy, happiness, even love of learning, knowing and doing? How might Academic Writing Otherwise contribute to un/doing normative “styles” of academic writing? How might it unsettle the judgementarians and potential gatekeepers of the “proper,” such as supervisors, colleagues, peer reviewers, disciplinary norms?

Academic Writing Otherwise

A praxis of keeping open

Welcoming the potential of the unruliness of images, and a wealth of languages

Glimpses of otherwise-doings already there—even if small

Allowing to proliferate

Welcoming what’s-not-yet-there

Loving unfinishedness, the unruly and un-standardized

The generative power of “otherwise” in all its plurality and
multiplicitious doings

Helping us find our own ways to subvert the expectations of
where to publish, and whose name is placed as first author.

Keeps open to an and. . . and. . . and. . . and. . . and. . .

Affects and ghostly companions, and all that it brings along:
anxieties, sweaty desires (Petersen, 2008), neurosis and
impostor syndromes that are imprinted in “us.”

In keeping open, Academic Writing Otherwise carves
out of a sheltering space within the conventional spaces of
academia to be/write otherwise, to disrupt, to resist stan-
dardized approaches—because sometimes disruption is the
ONLY way. It opens a space for conversations, for being
bold, and for sharing-telling-relaying stories that really
matter.

A gift given:

Kindness,

Care,

Heartfeltness,

Thoughtfulness.

Courage flowing onto pages.

It is about opening a space for the resonances of touching,
to linger, be/come-with/in touch with the Other and all the
othered others. A collective, collaborative, co-creative
“breathing life” so as to enable something otherwise to step
into being.

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