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GENDER, WORK & ORGANIZATION

Writing resistance together

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Manuscripts

Writing resistance together

Abstract

This piece of writing is a joint initiative by participants in the Gender, Work and Organization writing workshop organized in Helsinki, Finland, in June 2019. An exercise in writing differently, engage in collective writing and embody what it means to write resistance to established academic practices and conventions. This is an emancipatory process where we care for each other as writers and as human beings. There are many author voices and we aim to keep the text open and dialogical. As such, this piece of writing is about suppressed thoughts and feelings that our collective picket line allows us to express. To maintain the open-ended nature of the text, and perhaps also to retain some ‘dirtiness’ that is essential to writing, the paper has not been language checked throughout by a native speaker of English.

Key words: writing, co-writing, resistance, feminism, academia

Where to begin?

‘Writing is a form of collective resistance for Gender, Work and Organization.’ This sentence was given to us, a group of junior, mid-career and senior academics, as an inspiration for developing a collective piece to reflect on our writing practices as academics. Sitting in a room at Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki in a ‘Writing differently’ workshop, we use

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2
3 our round-table discussions and subsequent work to rethink academic writing as a form of
4 collective resistance (cf. Grey & Sinclair, 2006; Gilmore, Harding, Helin & Pullen, 2019;
5 Pullen, Helin & Harding, 2020). We intend to challenge patriarchal standards – academic
6 jargon, rigid paper formats, narrow fields, quant focus, formulaic research, gendered review
7 processes, publishing cartels and so on – that shape academia and constrain our ability to
8 write meaningfully. After short round-table discussions, the point was clear: we desperately
9 need a space to breathe and to move beyond the boundaries imposed on us by the
10 disembodied metrics that evaluate our ‘intellectual’ abilities as academics. These favor
11 quantity devoid of meaning in our academic production as opposed to meaningful
12 knowledge.

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28 The approach to writing we take is experimental, collective, and emerging. The idea for the
29 piece came from Alison, Joint Editor of GWO, during our two-day workshop. The text was to
30 emerge from the bottom up, bringing together our voices as authors in a large group of
31 scholars of different nationalities and in different career stages. First, we divided our group of
32 22 participants into four groups where we discussed our broad theme ‘Writing as a form of
33 resistance.’ Each group identified their own themes (silence, blindness, the five senses and so
34 on), which they then developed further. We returned to the small groups the next day when
35 each participant had had a chance to think through and experiment with the theme of the
36 group, and to pen down a sample of writing. We continued the discussion and shared our
37 writings within each group. The groups then shared their ideas with everyone. Before ending
38 the workshop, we decided that all participants would write more texts of their own. Each
39 group chose a person responsible for gathering the texts, and one person volunteered to create
40 a structure in Google Docs for all the groups where we could all see the collective work that
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3 became a quilt of different ideas and styles. Who are we as critical scholars ‘resisting’ and
4
5 how does our collective thinking and writing reflect it? This is what we wished to discover.
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10 By writing this piece collectively, we embody our individual struggles and blockages, and
11
12 convert them into words. We, the 22 authors, put our women’s and men’s bodies in our texts,
13
14 hairy, raw, stinky and leaky as they are (Pullen, 2018), to create a common language and
15
16 through this engage in collective action. We use our individual ‘I’s and subjectivities with all
17
18 the peculiarities, emotions, messiness, fragility and vulnerability that they carry to construct a
19
20 sense of *weness* and togetherness. We do not only write *for* each other but also *with* each
21
22 other. We experience our ontologies processually and come together (Ettinger, 2006; Kenny
23
24 & Fotaki, 2015). We relate, we care, we take care, we make space for our differences, we
25
26 connect...we engage in dialogue. We agree and disagree.
27
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33 As Hélène Cixous said, we just need to write. And write about writing, we add... we just
34
35 need to write from our women’s and men’s bodies and for them. We are women and men but
36
37 allow our feminine sides to emerge. By feminine we denote not the materiality of our bodies
38
39 but our ability to shake the symbolic order by crying and laughing where silence ‘has to be’
40
41 respected, as Cixous calls for in the ‘Laugh of the Medusa.’ We are ‘bi-sexual’ and we write
42
43 as such: bi-sexually to find a common voice and raise it (Cixous, 1976; Phillips, Pullen &
44
45 Rhodes 2014).
46
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51 We join academic work that calls for the need to rethink writing as a creative process, and
52
53 that account for the embodied, affective, and reflexive experiences of the author/s (Pullen &
54
55 Rhodes, 2008; Helin, 2019; Pullen, 2018; Kiriakos & Tienari, 2018). This is a process that is
56
57 about what we feel, not only about what we know or think (Rhodes, 2015; Amrouche,
58
59
60

1
2
3 Breckenridge, Brewis, Burchiellaro, Breiding Hansen, Hee Pedersen, Plotnikof & Pullen,
4
5 2018). It is not a 'gap' in the literature that our text intends to fill but rather an intention to
6
7 challenge prevailing conceptions of academic writing and to call for change in the way we
8
9 think of and relate to it. In this creative process, we open our bodies to make space for an
10
11 ethical connection with our readers and the subjects that we write about (Fotaki et al., 2014).
12
13 We use our writing to speak, to connect, to challenge, and to resist. Together. We use our
14
15 writing to overturn the higher order pedagogies that suppress our 'un-disciplined' bodies in
16
17 the context of academic practices, writing amongst them (Bell & King, 2010; Thanem &
18
19 Knights, 2019).
20
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26 We know that challenging academic practices and conventions of writing will be a long
27
28 process, a long journey, a battle that may be lost. But we do not stop. We continue... We take
29
30 the freedom to do it differently, without asking permission. We just do it... *differently!* And
31
32 we do it for the 'I', for the 'you,' and for the 'us.'
33
34
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37

38 For your benefit, Dear Reader, here is a guide for navigating our text. In what follows, we
39
40 first reflect on silence in academia and extend our reflection to the tensions surrounding
41
42 'giving voice' and keeping silent. We explore the importance of recognizing and valuing
43
44 moments of silence and offer discuss silent subjectivities and silence as resistance. Second,
45
46 we move onto blindness in academia, and discuss its different causes, forms, and sometimes
47
48 unnerving consequences. Third, we raise the question of writing as a form of collective
49
50 resistance. We share some of our anxieties and use them to question prevailing forms of
51
52 academic writing. We talk about love in writing and think about writing as an invitation to a
53
54 dance. Fourth, we pause to reflect. We take stock of our own experiences in the writing
55
56 workshop, and share our thoughts on why these experiences matter from the point of view of
57
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1
2
3 solidarity and sensitivity. Fifth, we gather on our academic picket line and elucidate what it
4 means to resist 'Authorship' through collective writing. Finally, we offer our joint text a
5
6 coda, which is a response to the generous and constructive comments we received from
7
8 reviewers in GWO, reflecting on resistance, and resistance to resistance.
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14 **Silence and silencing**

15 *Beginning*

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19
20
21 The group assignment starts. We sit at a round table. Six of us. In silence. People waiting for
22 someone to express their thoughts. Silence. The conversation begins slowly. It is about
23 silence. It is about trust, equality and care that slowly builds around us. It is about writing,
24 listening and agency. Passive and active voices. About personal and collective struggles.
25
26 About vulnerability. Being exposed, available, open. A rupture. The space that breaking apart
27 creates for building a community, and for writing that enables us to challenge the status quo
28 of the standards of academic writing. But we keep returning to silence. Our own silence and
29 the silence of others. Through our writing. How can silence be resistance? Written in the
30 unspoken spirit of love, here is our joint endeavor to understand the power(s) of silence
31 through embodied writing.
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47 *Incomplete*

48
49 Words through my body.

50
51 Text without pre-reflection, against everything I've been taught in academia.

52
53 Can I resist the urge to modify?

54
55 To add?

56
57 To make it complete?
58
59
60

1
2
3 Rational, neat and nicely structured.
4

5 Complete for who? Reviewers? Editors?
6

7 For an audience.
8

9 Complete in format or in message?
10

11 The audience will notice that the text is incomplete.
12

13 They will notice I am incomplete.
14
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19 *Exploring the power of silence* 20

21
22 As academics, we enjoy the privilege of empowering others by ‘giving voice to the
23 marginalized.’ Yet, what we rarely talk about is the moments when we either choose to or
24 feel compelled to keep silent. In the workshop, when we began to discuss this notion of
25 silence, relating to our identity as women in a male dominated industry, to being non-native
26 English speakers but feeling the pressure of publishing in English... we decided to dig deeper
27 into the notion of silence and to explore the power of silence.
28
29
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36 Buddhist philosophy gives a lot of insight about silence. In Buddhism, the goal of life is the
37 act of living it. On the one hand, silence is regarded as the expression of knowing and the
38 inaudible manifestation of frailty of words. On the other hand, the language of silence is
39 capable of dispelling one’s inner darkness, anxiety and void. Hence, silence, in Buddhism, is
40 an inherently powerful action for pursuing the Truth. It is itself the Truth. Truth cannot be
41 defined or explicitly described but can only be experienced. Truth cannot be communicated
42 with words, but only be shared with people who are willing and capable to embrace it into
43 their own beings.
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55 Recognition of moments of silence is central to our collective project. By deliberately
56 elaborating the emotional and embodied experience hidden behind these moments of silence,
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3 through fleshing out the unspoken words interwoven in silence, we want to connect, relate
4 and affect each other. In this writing, we give silent moments voice. The inaudible voices
5 shall pass on important messages which many times we would like to cry out, but there is fear
6 to be heard. I believe that we can forge a collective resistance to this highly masculinized
7 culture in academia where control, competitiveness, aggression, power and success are over-
8 rated, and any sign of vulnerability is strictly repressed.
9

10 The silence that is known to most of us is its exterior absence of words. Although in such
11 moments, words are not used yet, our minds are unquiet. They are filled with emotions, ideas,
12 frustrations, desires, creativities and doubts. We choose or are compelled to keep silent when
13 we realize we are the only woman in 'men's space,' and being foreign in a country where we
14 are always identified as a member of different others, when we are put up as a token of the
15 marginalized group, when we feel overwhelmed by senses of insecurity:
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17

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31
32 *I sometimes choose to keep silent in academic conferences when I am not*
33 *sure about the climate in which the discussions are taken. I guess I am unsure*
34 *of whether it is a space in which my thoughts and arguments will be*
35 *appreciated, understood and how others will react. Maybe it is personal*
36 *insecurities. As said, sometimes I fear others' reactions, because, in my*
37 *experience, they are not always friendly. I might feel frustrated as I already*
38 *know that I do not have anything to contribute to a discussion if it takes a*
39 *certain track and tone. I might feel an urge to voice my thoughts, even if I*
40 *know the risks of how it might be received, depending on my own state of*
41 *mind and strength, a question arises: do I open my mouth? What do I think*
42 *about? The things that should be said. The things that should be challenged.*
43 *The things that have not changed. But what do people think of me saying*
44 *those things out loud? Who I am to say so?*
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3 *I am a person with a lot of words. I enjoy expressing myself, my feelings, and*
4 *opinions. But I have learnt to keep silent. I choose silence when I realize I*
5 *am fighting a hopeless war where important decisions are made for me and*
6 *others. I have learnt that silence is my safeguard. I think when I do not*
7 *speak...*

8
9
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11
12
13
14
15 *I'm not sure I ever really choose to keep silent, but rather feel compelled to*
16 *by outside forces. Lots of times I am thinking about so many other things that*
17 *I can't fully participate in the conversation. Sometimes I am silent because I*
18 *have nothing to contribute, because I am opposed to the topic or the line of*
19 *inquiry or the analytical frame, but I don't have the position or status to*
20 *challenge those who lead the discourse. What do I think about when I am*
21 *silent? Everything else. My body, the air, escaping. I imagine other people,*
22 *other places, the dead. Things that smell nice. Food. I often think of eating*
23 *and drinking. How I feel when I am silent? Private, and attending to my own*
24 *self. When I speak, I feel as if I am floating and often that my voice is coming*
25 *from another body. In silence I connect to that voice, and I can hear it in*
26 *various ways.*

45 ***Relating in silence***

46 Academia is full of useless noise and meaningless words.

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59
60
Everyday it's getting harder to breathe.

Silence is a scream for pause.

Silence is harmony.

Silence is respect.

1
2
3 Silence is beauty and wisdom.
4
5
6

7
8 In silence, we open up and become more sensitive to others' vulnerabilities.
9

10 In silence, we relate.
11
12
13

14 *Sounds of silence*

15
16 The music flows around you, echoing between the stone walls of the church. The voices of
17 the singers of the excellent choir following the gentle instructions given by the aging
18 conductor. The singers individually performing the ancient texts, their bodies breathing
19 together, and sounds intertwined. Listening tentatively, ready to be moved, touched, to
20 engage in the music. Then the music suddenly, unexpectedly stops. The conductor suspends
21 her hands mid-air. The silence happens. A rupture in the flow of music. And we wait,
22 listening to the silence. And just when we cannot bare the silence any longer, the hands of the
23 conductor shift and the sounds of the human voices return. This indefinite rest in the music is
24 called a general pause or a grand pause. This silence in the middle of the flow of music is a
25 powerful tool to mark a change, a shift in the temporality of the music. It is, in particular, its
26 unexpected nature and the non-defined length of this suspension that makes the experience so
27 powerful. Sometime the musicians hold the pause 'too long' and someone in the audience
28 will think that the piece has ended and starts to applaud. Perhaps we would need to think
29 more carefully about the person who applauds, breaking the silence. What is it in the
30 prolonged silence that forces us to take action?
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51
52
53 Or in the words of Paul Simon:
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56
57

58 'Fools,' said I, 'You do not know
59
60

1
2
3 Silence, like a cancer, grows
4
5 Hear my words that I might teach you
6
7 Take my arms that I might reach you'
8
9
10 But my words, like silent raindrops fell
11
12 And echoed in the wells, of silence
13
14
15
16

17 *Subjectivities*

18
19 Please excuse my silence, which is not meant to be a slight. And I fear you will interpret it as
20
21 laziness, flightiness, artlessness. But really, I was just existing as my other self, the one who
22
23 attends constantly to the needs of my children, husband, family, friends, home, dirt, dust,
24
25 items, empty tummies. Last week, when I met you, I was the self who thinks deeply about
26
27 what's wrong with the world and why. That self who has time to ponder big questions, and
28
29 can't shut up once the mouth gets going, with ideas overlapping, feeding each other, getting
30
31 tangled and complex and so very interesting. The self with capacity to collaborate. But, too
32
33 much time being that one has consequences - coming home to a messy house, everything and
34
35 everyone needing attention, straightening up, making proper food, helping with homework,
36
37 driving them around. Just the routine stuff, but there is so much of it, and it takes time. And
38
39 hence the silence from my academic self - no time to sit down and let the words flow - until
40
41 it's so late that I am half asleep. Then, my eyes droop and I can hardly even move my fingers
42
43 over the computer keys.
44
45
46
47
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49

50
51 So, although my academic self, far away from home, can acknowledge the strength of:
52
53
54

55
56 Silence in words, resistance for agency

57
58 Amongst dominant forces, withholding secrets, subject to misinterpretation
59
60

1
2
3 Absent presences
4

5 What is unsaid still permeates the air, it is
6

7 something that haunts and it connects us to histories of being oppressed
8
9

10
11
12 What comes out when I am at home is this notion of being silenced by the second shift, being
13
14 silenced by my expectations for myself as a mother, a partner, a domestic laborer and by their
15
16 reliance on my having those expectations so they can exist in an orderly and pleasant home.
17
18

19
20
21 Together, in Helsinki, we talked about the power in silence, opting out, not participating. My
22
23 silence today is not voluntary, it is done to me and holds me back. But, as someone who loves
24
25 me says to me: 'you chose this.' At the time, it did feel like a choice – to get married, to have
26
27 babies... but everything that comes with it is a requirement. Then, tracing back to the original
28
29 'choice's: every time my child self, pictured my adult self, I saw a nice house, a nice kitchen,
30
31 nice garden, nice children, me waiting for him to come home from work. I saw my self, in
32
33 what I saw, every woman around me doing, when I saw the right way to be woman.
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 'Why do you want to be a scientist? How about a nice little kindergarten teacher?'

41
42 'You are such a cute little scientist. Do you want to go out on a date? Do you want to get
43
44 married and help me with my science?'

45
46
47
48
49 (STOP writing, look up)
50

51
52
53 'Mom can you help my friend with a math problem?' And again, I am silenced, listening to
54
55 the voices in my head that I can't find the time or place to let out. Please excuse my silence, I
56
57 think (I was listening) to myself.
58
59
60

1
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3
4
5
6 *Silence/voice*
7

8 Who do we silence in the current academic writing practices?
9

10 Our embodied voices through review processes, self-censorship and the strict conventions
11 that we follow while constructing ourselves as ‘scientific’.
12

13 Our struggles as academic scholars, as neatly functioning parts of the publishing machine.
14

15 (Be careful, do not let anything leak out!)
16

17 What about other experiences?
18

19 The ones we do not often write about?
20

21 The ones who’s texts we do not read.
22

23 The ones who do not write.
24

25 The ones who are not taking part in these conversations, as in this room on June 7th in
26 Helsinki.
27

28 Writing as a form of collective resistance. Silence as a form of collective resistance. Politics
29 of representation and the question of who speaks for whom. Play of voices and silence in the
30 classroom.
31

32 Silence can be used strategically as resistance.
33

34 But you need to have possessed a voice before you can use silence as resistance?
35

36 If you are absent and silent in a conversation, are you there to resist?
37

38 Questions of voice and silence.
39

40 Questions of production and consumption.
41

42 Of knowledge.
43

44 Of representations.
45
46
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1
2
3 I consume and produce. Consume and produce. Consume and produce..
4

5 Where does my responsibility lie?
6
7
8
9

10 In my production. In my consumption.
11

12 Of I and the Other.
13

14 Quite obviously.
15

16 In the text.
17
18

19 In the silences of the text.
20
21
22
23

24 But how to enact it? How to be responsible?
25

26 How can I write and listen in a form that emphasizes the agency of others?
27
28
29
30

31 Staying attuned to multiple struggles, flows across, shows the different faces of silence.
32

33 Coming from yourself – empowering, comforting, joyful, sacred.
34

35 Coming from others – unjust, oppressive, disabling, lonely.
36
37
38
39

40 Strength and vulnerability of embodied silence.
41

42 Consumed and produced. Consumed and produced.
43

44 Unequally.
45
46
47
48

49 How do we come together, and from multiple local struggles, form a collective resistance?
50

51 Has also the collective solution become silenced? No. Yesterday we started a process of
52 dialogue and exchange as a foundation for this, based on our individual voices and the
53 physical act of writing. Midst of the voices in the classroom, I sense, it is the fleeting moment
54 of picking up a pen or starting to type – in awareness of our interconnection with others –
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 from where the moment of ethical action rises and we can see how some struggles might be
4
5 silent, but others are loud, if we only know how to write them.
6
7
8
9

10 ***Silence, again***
11

12
13 Years spent mute.
14

15
16 Grounded to the chair, only fear.
17

18
19 Fear of what may surface, if I speak.
20

21
22 Contained in thought and body,
23

24
25 It is the way for women.
26

27
28
29
30
31 Years passed, words appeared one-at-a-time.
32

33
34 Observing the silent cast adrift, and often drowning, in a sea of dominant male voices,
35

36
37 My voice, trembling and embodied, became more articulate,
38

39
40 But, how, can I stop? I fear that if I stop, I may never speak again.
41

42
43 These lips of mine, in their plurality, have stories to tell.
44

45
46
47
48
49 Now others listen, cite and act on my words,
50

51
52 Fear of being quoted, reduced to a part of my being.
53

54
55 Controlled and contained, again.
56

57
58 Can women ever speak freely?
59
60

1
2
3 Lips enable connection, care and relationships – and resistance.
4
5
6
7

8
9 Silence ruptures male spaces.
10

11
12 Listening as a politics of care, of resistance.
13

14
15 Academia privileges those articulate subjects.
16

17
18 Time to hear the silence, hearing through the skin.
19

20
21 If we listen, what collective resistance is possible?
22
23
24
25
26

27 Every so often, silent bodies connect, words whisper, resonate with others, and I become
28 me... this is the power of the masses. Sometimes these whispers connect, subversive, and the
29 rage becomes her.
30
31
32
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35
36

37 **Blindness**

38
39
40
41
42

43 Love is blind, or so they say. Violence is often blind, too, and that is what's so scary about it.

44
45 The system of academic writing is based on blindness. Its review processes are a
46
47 smokescreen for politicking, an illusion, a lie. From the shadows, the chosen few are elevated
48
49 into the light and the rest of us are left behind and forgotten.
50

51
52 Let's have some names then! After each review process, accept or reject, let's have some
53
54 names! Let those wonderful and generous people who help and support others come forward,
55
56 into the light. And let the violent ones be named, too.
57
58
59
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1
2
3 ***Blindness around us***
4

5 Part I – Attack
6

7 Sometimes *I* just shut up
8

9
10
11 Not talk, not write, but I always think...
12

13
14 It was a vertical moment
15

16
17 Blindness around us
18

19
20 A silently brutal stab
21

22
23 towards our work, us
24

25
26 – dangers of researching differently
27

28
29 Stupidity of
30

31
32 simple-minded thinking
33

34
35 kind of blindness, too
36

37
38 feminists, childbirth,
39

40
41 *profit* of researching certain topics
42

43
44 HAHA!
45

46
47 Could you *please* shut up?
48

49
50 Sometimes
51

52
53 silence is sophisticated wisdom
54

55
56 Hiljaisuus
57

58
59 ...miten kaunis sana ja tila!
60

1
2
3 Feeling empowered

4
5
6 by the pathetic attack

7
8
9 This is who I am

10
11
12 our writing is us

13
14
15 Vulnerability

16
17
18 and sensitivity towards life around me

19
20
21 are my strengths

22
23
24 my inspiration

25
26
27 and my sources of

28
29
30 researching differently

31
32
33
34
35 Part II – Aftermath

36
37
38
39 Tears,

40
41
42 keep coming. Let them flow, flow, flow

43
44
45 I've created a scene

46
47
48 anyway

49
50
51 Exposing my vulnerable

52
53
54 leaky

55
56
57 *crying-like-a-little-child-kind-of* body

58
59
60 to others

1
2
3 But crying is healing
4

5
6 *écriture féminine*
7

8
9 remains a tricky project
10

11
12 blind academia
13

14
15 with its 'neutrality' and narrow frameworks
16

17
18 dislikes disruptive, destabilizing
19

20
21 transgressive
22

23
24 *écriture féminine*
25

26
27 as a way to
28

29
30 confuse boundaries
31

32
33 or liberate our work from the standard research practices
34

35
36 Kind eyes, warm hugs
37

38
39 mobilize collective affects
40

41
42 *Action! #snaptivism*
43

44
45 Solidarity. Care.
46

47
48 We're in this space, together
49

50
51 Strength to keep writing
52

53
54 While academia continues
55

56
57 to limit my research
58

59
60 as well as 'free' it

1
2
3 and the ways in which the gendered body writes
4
5
6
7

8 Coda – Healing by *writing together*
9

10 Tilltufsad fjäderskrud
11

12
13 Hetkellinen siipirikko, lamaantuminen
14

15
16 *Vai sittenkin jotain muuta?*
17

18
19 Sara Ahmed, Hélène Cixous, Veena Das, Elspeth Probyn,
20

21
22 *Tack skall ni ha!*
23

24
25 Injurious norms, interrupted
26

27
28 Kvinnor som lyfter andra kvinnor
29

30
31 acknowledging our male allies, too
32

33
34 Freedom, flexibility, provocativity
35

36
37 without hurting
38

39
40 *Rakastan akateemista työtä*
41

42
43 Kindness
44

45
46 Generosity
47

48
49 Care
50

51
52 Nei momenti complicati
53

54
55 è bello guardare dentro un armadio
56

57
58 pieno di sogni.
59
60

1
2
3 Ga je mee?
4

5
6 Affective suffering as
7

8
9 a pivotal moment
10

11
12 for *transformation*
13

14
15 Siamo insieme
16

17
18 tässä hetkessä
19

20
21 Vis-à-vis, allons-y!
22

23
24
25
26 What if our *writing*
27

28
29 makes the contribution (*sic*), that disrupts the
30

31
32 twisted, dull, gloomy
33

34
35 thinking and writing
36

37
38 in academia
39

40
41 reaching beyond seemingly narrow topics
42

43
44 carefully scratching the polished surfaces
45

46
47 getting our feet dirty
48

49
50 appreciating the mundane rhythms
51

52
53 experiencing our sensory,
54

55
56 more-than-human life worlds
57

58
59 which, in fact, touch e v e r y t h i n g around us?
60

1
2
3 We keep writing together.
4
5

6 We rise by lifting each other.
7
8
9

10
11 Writing
12

13 as a beautiful form of
14

15
16 collaborative resistance
17

18
19 towards mental violence
20

21
22 and disembodied
23

24
25 detached
26

27
28 rigid
29

30
31 research
32

33
34 in academia
35
36
37
38

39 ***Epilogue***
40
41
42

43 The two of us have written together for some eight years. It was an instant ‘click’ between us,
44 a sense of meeting another researcher and woman who *feels* you, understands you and
45 respects you. Sisters in academia. Support. Genuine goodwill. Our collaboration builds on
46 both mental and kinaesthetic empathy. For us, writing together works as a collaborative
47 resistance against blindness in academia. Blindness which, for us, materializes in cynical
48 thinking and denigrating attitudes towards ‘marginal’ research topics, complicated and
49 sometimes irrational review processes, and the inability to see worth in other than cleaned-up
50
51
52
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60

1
2
3 writing that so firmly believes in objectivity, rationality and abstraction. We resist this
4
5 blindness by keeping our writing simple, direct and vulnerably alive.
6
7
8
9

10
11
12 [INSERT PICTURE 1 HERE: A POST-IT NOTE THAT MATTERS]
13
14
15
16
17

18 A picture of a post-it note from the whiteboard at the workshop, captured by one of us. None
19
20 of us wrote it and its writer remains a mystery to us, but we can thoroughly relate to it. These
21
22 words resonate with the various sensations that writing evokes in our bodies, and foregrounds
23
24 the aspects of ‘wanting to communicate, to talk, to share, to interact’ at the very focus, as we
25
26 do in our academic work.
27
28
29
30
31

32 We are using writing as a collective means to resist the illusion of blindness in academia.

33
34 With the concept of blindness we refer to a variety of academic practices aiming at
35
36 anonymity and impersonality. They exist for good reasons: first, to emphasize that what is
37
38 being argued is more important than who is making the claims and second, to assure fair and
39
40 equal treatment of scholars and their texts. Despite good intentions, the blindness is an
41
42 illusion, even a lie.
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 This blindness of practices means that the authority, expertise, gender or position of the
50
51 author should not influence the assessment of the manuscript and the related decisions.

52
53 However, in reality everybody, who has worked in academia for some time, has experiences
54
55 that make one doubt the objectivity or anonymity of the processes. Humans as we are, we
56
57 continuously search for cues of who the ‘anonymous’ are and make interpretations of the
58
59
60

1
2
3 people we are dealing with. Many of us play on a rather small sand box, which makes it
4
5 difficult *not* to know, who the other players are and what they do. In many cases, the
6
7 processes are not blind; they only narrow down the number of potential people. Whether that
8
9 is a problem or something to sustain is hard to say, but if the idea of ‘blind review’ indicates
10
11 that anonymity is necessary for us academics to make fair and ethical assessments and
12
13 decisions, is it credible to claim we are fair and ethical behind the curtain of anonymity?
14
15 Rather, the blindness of academic practices acts as a script that makes the political games less
16
17 obvious and difficult to trace down.
18
19
20
21
22
23

24 In academic writing, the tradition of neutrality and impersonality has led to writing becoming
25
26 a non-contextual, impersonal and universal practice, in which the author has to hide
27
28 him/herself and his/her personality, mother tongue, context, history and body. We are
29
30 expected to write as a universal academic – supposedly a white male from an Anglo-Saxon
31
32 country. Thus, writing as a blind practice not only causes all academic texts to be alike and
33
34 restricts freedom of expression, but also disconnects the readers from the actual process of
35
36 producing texts and the person doing it. It enforces the appearance of objectivity, expertise
37
38 and truthfulness, while making academic texts clinical, often formulaic and empty of any
39
40 deeper meaning.
41
42
43
44
45
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47
48

49 ***Unblinding an aspiring scholar***

50
51 In case you are expecting to join the Temple of Knowledge: *wake up!* If you yearn to meet
52
53 Wisdom in people who would sell their soul to devil to know-it-all and to find a miracle in a
54
55 falling apple: *unblind yourself!* You are likely to become a basic unit of production in a
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 sloppily managed factory that will turn your natural inclination for curiosity and
4
5 experimentation into process waste.
6
7
8
9

10
11 On the factory floor, people who tend to think, act and write alike establish rank and
12
13 superiority by competing to see who can piss the farthest. The great task is to determine who
14
15 publishes the most in places some obscure parties with power and vested interests have
16
17 defined as 'best' and others have accepted as 'mandatory.' For sure, one can win because one
18
19 is hardworking and talented but also because one is skilled at all sorts of misbehavior or eager
20
21 to massage the fragile egos of the members of the ruling party.
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

29 This is a ruthless hunger game that is dominated by a conservative establishment against
30
31 which the other groups, including the self-proclaimed critical ones, timidly position
32
33 themselves. Dissidents say 'the system,' 'patriarchy,' 'neoliberal university,' or 'western
34
35 hegemony' *makes them* and nothing can be done. Slowly, you may start believing in this,
36
37 citing Foucault or something else sophisticated to exempt you from personal responsibility.
38
39
40
41
42
43

44 Becoming a PhD-student means low levels of autonomy. The precarious employment
45
46 conditions would cause an uprising anywhere else. Whether you receive a position or a grant
47
48 or support of *any* kind, depends almost entirely on the whims and competence of your
49
50 supervisor– or any other patron you may find who happens to like you. Many fall into
51
52 oblivion or predatory, abusive relations. Some are left spinning alone, some drift away
53
54 fighting severe depression.
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 With time the imagined Temple inevitably crumbles down – and may become a labyrinth you
4 cannot exit as your mind is trapped inside. You will find some genuinely intellectual
5
6 individuals, and that is when light shines onto the factory floor. However, they may not take
7
8 interest in your magnificent drafts, philosophical insights and brilliant ideas – they have their
9
10 own battles to fight and demons to face. Your likely destiny is either exit or becoming a unit
11
12 of production like most other technician-researchers on the factory floor.
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20

21 I am still here because despite all this, academia can be an addictive, fascinating place if one
22
23 can develop a somewhat functional existence in it. Many won't. I must have some
24
25 undiagnosed obsessive-compulsive disorder and want to be part of *something* that is
26
27 important to me that I want to defend and that I cannot define with words.
28
29
30
31
32

33 **Writing is a form of collective resistance**

34
35
36
37

38 *I knew that I was not for this. I didn't just want to choose for myself a spacious*
39 *cell in a comfortable prison. I preferred a slam in the open air, feeling the sun*
40 *and the rain nourishing my skin and then writing about it. To let my body breath*
41 *more fully, to take the air down to feel my belly moving, to fill my lungs with the*
42 *oxygen that I need to be able to continue living... and thus writing...or is it the*
43 *other way around?*
44
45
46
47
48
49
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51
52
53

54 Writing is personal. It begins with a person and it ends with a person. You can call one a
55
56 writer and the other a reader, but it may not be so.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Writing is collective. It begins as a relationship between people and it ends as a relationship
4 between people. You may call one a text and the other understanding, but it may not be so.
5
6
7

8
9
10 Writing is political; it produces knowledge. Writing is political; it challenges knowledge.
11

12 Writing as resistance is personal; you object, refuse, insist. Writing as resistance is collective;
13 you examine, influence, organize.
14
15
16

17
18
19 Sometimes it is important to resist writing, when the politics of writing are such that the text
20 is no longer the purpose of writing, when writing has become divorced from the text and only
21 the mere existence of the text is its purpose.
22
23
24
25

26
27
28 Writing is a form of collective resistance. Writing as a form of collective resistance is writing
29 that examines, also, itself, is suspicious of itself, examine its own assumptions without
30 turning on itself and without turning in on itself. Writing as a form of collective resistance
31 cannot be about itself.
32
33
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39
40 Academia is no longer what it used to be. We are operating during a time where the ability to
41 predict consequences and possible results of research projects are decisive for managing the
42 academic everyday, including the possibility of attaining research funding. To make sure we
43 are not hit by surprise we can never lose control of our direction, or force forwards. To that
44 aim we have to write from that which we already know, turning writing into a machinery
45 practice as we write in under publication pressure. Writing becomes fragmented, flat,
46 disembodied, and it is lacking depth just as the horizontal arrow that symbolizes this view on
47 time.
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3 At its worst this work hurts me, this work makes me cynical and angry. It makes me not want
4 to write anymore. It makes me want to resist it.
5
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10 11 **Questioning** 12

13
14
15
16 What is the power that writing resists? Is it more writing, other writing, competing
17 knowledges? How does writing resist? What is the principle with which it resists? With new
18 words, with new voices, with new forms, with new languages. Can those be heard?
19
20
21
22
23
24

25 *Ok. At least writing does not kill, does it?*
26
27

28
29
30 I get distracted by a message from Facebook and start surfing. There has been another
31 unfounded arrest of an investigative journalist in Moscow. A picture of protesters catches my
32 eyes. People are standing in line in order to hold a single picket. One by one. Unsanctioned
33 collective political rallies are forbidden in Russia, and concerning this case, there is no
34 chance a permit would be issued. A single picket is the only legal way to resist. Therefore, all
35 these persons are waiting for their turn to hold the poster with a call to free the journalist.
36
37 They are together, but, at the same time, each one adds her or his own voice to the common
38 cause.
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
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48
49

50
51 The pen is heavy.

52
53 The screen is blank.

54
55 Is there space for me here?
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Am I experienced enough? Am I legitimate enough? Am I powerful enough? Do I need
4 permission for this? From whom? For what? Where am I (hidden)? Where is my body?
5
6 Where is my sensuality, my affect, my rigidity, my fragility, the messiness that I carry? Why
7
8 do I do this and for whom?
9
10
11
12

13
14 Should I first learn to publish more traditionally before beginning to resist it? I'd rather still
15 write differently, because it's more fun, more lively, more something I want to do, but will I
16
17 succeed to publish by doing so?
18
19
20
21

22 23 24 ***Resisting prevailing forms of academic writing and resisting that resistance***

25
26 I am joining the line of those who are determined to write differently, 'acknowledging the
27 risk of embarrassment, of not being understood, of being dismissed or ridiculed, of being
28 considered self-indulgent, or of being rejected' (Kiriakos & Tienari, 2018: 266). While
29
30 staying in the line, I am summing up what seems important to me in writing and formulating
31
32 it as a manifesto, as suggested by Jenny Helin at the GWO workshop.
33
34
35
36
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40
41

42 *I intend*

43
44 *to be honest to myself in writing;*

45
46 *to lean on, but not to hide behind stronger others and to be supportive myself;*

47
48 *to allow myself to write slowly, but to keep on moving, stretching higher and deeper;*

49
50
51 *I will try to find the strength to write through being weak, shamefully imperfect and*
52
53 *vulnerable, but to save and protect the vulnerability*

54
55
56 *Just because there,*

57
58 *on the other side of a journal,*
59
60

1
2
3 *probably, there is Someone.*

4
5 *A One who waits for my text,*

6
7 *needs it the way I needed*

8
9
10 *Academic Writing as Love*

11
12 *by Carol and Janne.*

13
14
15
16
17 *No, no, I will not. I will not participate in this collective resistance thing. I am*
18 *not yet there; I have not yet learned to fill the gaps properly. Besides, they all are*
19 *so cool, and experienced, and 'vertical' in writing, and so poetic.*

20
21
22
23
24
25
26 I keep staring at Carol Kiriakos and Janne Tienari's article 'Academic Writing as Love'. I see
27 writing as a long-term relationship, in contrast to writing as passion and competition. I do not
28 like the idea of participating in the race. It does not inspire me, this race, which suggests no
29 space and time for dealing with being weak and vulnerable, being attentive and protective to
30 others.
31
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38
39

40 *"You see. Love has been conceptualized for you personally. Have you not been*
41 *looking for it? Just take it".*

42
43
44
45
46 *I find it difficult to find the balance between peaceful me and collective*
47 *resistance. As I see it, the 'battle, fight, protest, resistance' -rhetoric is about*
48 *looking for courage in myself to oppose dominating power. However, opposing*
49 *is not the aim in itself.*
50
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1
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3 *All these are questions that have been circulating in my head since the early years*
4 *of my PhD, unsettling my few hours of rest, the endless nights that I spent alone*
5 *after long days of developing rigorous argumentations and deductions of*
6 *'counter-intuitive' (but otherwise soulless) hypotheses for my academic texts.*
7
8 *What a word! Counter-intuitive! it has to be so to 'sell' ... just doing the intuitive*
9 *is not enough.*

10
11
12
13
14
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17
18
19 *Just writing is not enough! ... for what really matters!*

20
21
22
23
24 *For years, I kept my body constrained; limiting it from its potential to express*
25 *what inherently inhabited it... ideas, dreams, sensations, pleasure, pain, worries,*
26 *confidence or lack of it...I held back from writing a language that touches, to*
27 *write about a topic that touches, to write about writing itself. I kept all of this for*
28 *my personal scripts, which I had very little time to care about. And I was afraid*
29 *of sharing these concerns with my supervisors or colleagues, in fears of being*
30 *seen as the crazy one.*

31
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41 *Vulnerability in academic criticism... In fear of being rejected...Yet another time!*

42
43
44
45
46 *I wish I could be brave enough.*

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49
50
51 I suppose people hurt people in academia. In purpose or accidentally. During the workshop, I
52 heard about the power game that is ongoing in academia. This game makes even the most
53 experienced and highly respected professors to be afraid to speak out so that they would not
54 sound stupid! I did not want to sound stupid or ignorant. I did not want to be 'revealed' as a
55 person, who really does not have a right to be here with such a short history in the academic
56
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1
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3 world. I noticed the vulnerability there, where I expected to see stable self-confidence. This
4 was a relief to me because it made the academic world look more human to me. Is showing
5 our vulnerability through experimenting different styles of academic writing a threat to us?
6
7
8
9

10
11
12 According to my observations during my short experience in the academic world, there is
13 something hurtful in the appreciation of criticism. Although critical thinking is, in my
14 opinion, a necessary practice to produce any new understandings and therefore new
15 knowledge through research, it can be used in very harmful ways in the academic world
16 between people. After listening to more experienced colleagues, it seems to me that criticality
17 is too often used as a form of oppression or to support the individuals' place in the hierarchy.
18 That is the opposite thing to what critical thinking tradition, in theory, was supposed to do
19 (Duncum, 2008). The critical theory aims to break free from the prevailing and 'taken for
20 granted truths,' but it is itself taken for granted in education literature (Duncum, 2008) and in
21 academic practices in general.
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38 *'We honor others by challenging them when we think they are wrong, and by*
39 *thoughtfully taking their criticisms of us. To do so is to take them seriously; to do any*
40 *less is to dismiss them as unworthy of serious consideration, which is to say, to treat*
41 *them with disrespect. Respect means the willingness to listen, openness to the*
42 *possibility of learning from, responsiveness, criticizing when necessary. ---Respect*
43 *does not mean that everything they do is "fine for them" or beyond the pale of critical*
44 *judgment. Emphasis on the acceptance of difference is meant to express and*
45 *encourage tolerance. Sometimes it succeeds in this. But sometimes it can have the*
46 *opposite effect. Valorized differences can harden into Difference.'* (Fay, 1996, 239)
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3 ‘Critical theory tends to operate from within the binary terms of dominance and a liberating
4 counterpoint in which a singular truth is opposed by a singular alternative’ (Duncum, 2008,
5 253). I think that this kind of confrontation as an accepted truth in academia does its silent
6 work in us. It puts us to the position of self defence, and makes us to focus on fighting for our
7 existence in academia instead of creating a fruitful conversation. ‘One truth colliding with
8 another does not necessarily lead to enlightenment but to retreat, not to synthesis or
9 compromise but to an endgame’ (Duncum, 2008, 250). So how to criticize without hurting?
10 How to take critic and avoid cutting vulnerability out of it?
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23 *Resistance as a fight or invitation to a dance?*

24
25 Gilmore et al. (2019) are calling us to arms towards the positivist and normalized
26 understandings of the only right way to do research. But is the war as a form of collective
27 resistance that can really make space for difference and multiplicity in writing that Gilmore et
28 al. (2019) want to achieve? I agree that fighting and defending oneself is sometimes
29 necessary, but are there some other ways to create space for different forms of academic
30 writing?
31
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42 I might be naive and childish by saying this, but cannot we just do it? Write differently and
43 by doing so, be the examples of how many kinds of forms of expressions in academic texts
44 can create more understanding of the complex world we are living in? And with those texts
45 invite the others, that might not accept this kind of writing as academic, to the dialogue? Are
46 we, who want to defend the ‘polyphony’ of different ways of expressing research (Bakhtin,
47 1981 according to Duncum, 2008), able to understand or at least give space to the others that
48 do not want to allow this plurality?
49
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3 Could we somehow go beyond that attack-defence practice that is apparently experienced as
4 hurtful in the academic world? Could we somehow just ask or persuade the partner, who
5 thinks differently than us to join the common dance with us, get in the dialogue (Duncum,
6 2008) with us? Can we give space for the other who might want to stay still and not to dance
7 with us? After all, we are all in the same ‘academic ballroom’ and any kind of expressions of
8 movements in that space should be allowed.
9
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19 I know your rules. I tried to play by your rules. Let's just try to play by different (my) rules.
20 And then we will discuss it and agree on common rules. And I promise I will respect your
21 choice.
22
23
24
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26
27

28 This text is *y-ours*.
29
30
31

32 Being at this workshop in Helsinki, among colleagues who persist to ask the difficult
33 questions even though there are no immediate answers, who understand and embody the need
34 for safe inquiry spaces to emerge, and who create the moment where we can have
35 conversations “for real”, offers resistance in solidarity. It is pockets like this that give hope
36 for another future in academia.
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38
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46 And thus share, and thus resist...
47

48 And finally here I am, with all of you...not alone anymore...
49
50
51

52
53 I now feel that I know the answer:
54

55 I write to relate. I write to share. I write to live and to continue to live...
56
57

58 I write for me and for you ... with you...
59
60

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3 Just add your voice. Free yourself. You are not alone. There are others to support you.
4
5
6

7 **Reflecting**

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10

11
12 During the GWO workshop I noticed more clearly, how those who have been in academia for
13 long have a kind of hard message for me who is just starting in this field: ‘This work hurts
14 me, this work makes me cynical and angry. It makes me not want to write anymore. It makes
15 me want to resist it.’ I did not have enough time to ask the questions: ‘Why this work makes
16 you angry? What things in academia make you cynical?’ I guess that writing academic papers
17 is sometimes so hard that it makes you want to quit, but I don’t think that it is the reason that
18 makes people cynical, angry and raises resistance against their work.
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31 I noticed that on the first day it was not easy for me to talk about my thoughts among the
32 more experienced colleagues. I think this happened, because of the respect that I felt for the
33 experienced colleagues. I did not want to be ‘revealed’ as a person, who really does not have
34 a right to be here with so short history in the academic world. At the time this happened, I did
35 not really know why I felt this way. That’s how I got caught in the practice that values highly
36 the appreciation of the experience and some sort of hierarchy that is embedded in academic
37 culture.
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51 ***Experiment survivor***

52
53

54 I decided to participate in a writing workshop organized by GWO and hosted by the
55 GODESS Institute (Gender, organization, diversity, equality and social sustainability in
56 transnational times) at Hanken in Helsinki. I entered the workshop with the ‘standard’
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2
3 expectation of improving my writing, and in particular, writing of academic journal articles. I
4
5 left the workshop realizing that I have started a new journey during the process of battling
6
7 with the uncertainty and my own inertia through writing. We were quickly grouped with
8
9 participants who haven't met before. My group is quite diverse in terms of academic
10
11 background. It wasn't easy to produce a coherent idea for a small piece of writing given that
12
13 we all have just met.
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19 We discussed in our small group what we were resisting collectively in writing. Resistance
20
21 against the dominant publishing regime, against Authorship with the capital A? Towards the
22
23 end of the workshop, I came to realize that I was resisting my "old" self! No one has forced
24
25 me to write for a particular journal, with a particular group of scholars, or even just to
26
27 continue with the same way of writing. It has always been me who is not receiving all the
28
29 other possibilities of writing. It's not easy to move out of the comfort zone that one has built.
30
31 And this is just me in my 4th year of academic job. What a terrifying thought to think what if I
32
33 am just going on like a publishing machine.
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40 I also learnt how to write through vulnerability. As an Asian female, I have always tried to
41
42 keep my head down. I blame Confucius for the bad influence of the 中庸philosophy (The
43
44 Doctrine of the Golden Mean). I have learnt to just take on whatever comes to me and try not
45
46 to talk about the negative, the challenging and most importantly the painful experiences.
47
48

49 What a liberating moment for me to know that one can seek to heal by writing about these
50
51 vulnerabilities in academia too. Reflecting on my research journey on the topic of gender, it
52
53 suddenly became clear to me that I am strong enough now to face this issue straight on
54
55 finally. I have been hiding behind the excuse that it would be too painful for me to research
56
57 gender particularly in my country of origin. My academic father, a gender sociologist, has
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2
3 been so awfully gentle and kind to me when I continuously discarded gender by listing it as
4 limitations in my PhD thesis, my articles (written mostly for job with as much of me in them
5 as possible), and in my book (written for my interviewees who I didn't think would know
6 how to care for gender). At this stage of my career, I am truly glad that I came to the
7 realization that researching gender won't cause me more pain than the gendered phenomena
8 around me have already caused it themselves. Instead it will be a way for me to heal my long
9 term wound regarding gender since probably birth.
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21 I heartfully thank the workshop organizers for their unconditioned authentic love in educating
22 junior academics. As much as I felt like an animal being experimented on during the 1,5 day
23 workshop, I have rediscovered so many important things not just for work, but also for life. I
24 can now also joyfully claim that I understand the power and meaning of education.
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33 ***Solidarity***

34
35 Joining in and contributing to a workshop on collective writing left me with a sense of
36 academic solidarity which still exists in today's academia dressed in a plethora of
37 competition and pressure for productivity. Like Jenny Helin proposed in her presentation
38 about the valuation, and recognition, of vertical time, so was the workshop a pause in the
39 seemingly chronological timeline of academic work where junior researchers aim to one day
40 become recognized senior researchers, perhaps professors, that are cited more, more and
41 MORE, in order to be someone, to EXIST. The workshop embodied scarcity and
42 unfinishedness, in its beauty – showing its participants how we are not alone in our struggles
43 in the neoliberal academia.
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3 Not only did it leave us with a sense of solidarity, it made us act: Alison's suggestion of
4 becoming involved in a collective act of resistance through writing made us to activate our
5 hands, our minds, mouths, pens, laptop buttons – for a joint effort. While we started to work
6 collaboratively to achieve a goal of sorts (an outcome submitted to GWO), I dare to argue
7 that it was more about being HERE and NOW. It was vertical time that we experienced –
8 and, I suggest – we keep on experiencing, as we open our joint writing documents of our own
9 group, carrying on writing. Carrying on, carrying on, pausing, pausing. To work as a
10 collective cannot stand infinite carrying on *without* a time to pause, even it would manifest
11 through our very own comprehension of it, and that is one of the reasons why collective
12 writing is so powerful. It invites, perhaps forces, us to solidarity.
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28 *Sensitivity*

29 Working on sensitive issues together is, well, sensitive. I believe in letting everyone speak,
30 even if they speak against the grain. Then I see some others being offended and hurt.
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33 Sometimes I do not even see this, but I am reminded about it later. I know I should know
34 better, and see, but time and again I am caught in this dilemma. When someone pours their
35 heart out and there may be collateral damage, I am blind and clueless... because who am I to
36 police others?
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47 Perhaps time is again the great healer. Perhaps we need time. Writing, and writing together, is
48 one way to heal; to bring multiple voices into the open, to converse, perhaps. We do not have
49 to agree, but let's listen to each other and care. Even if we sometimes end up hurting each
50 other. Because those who hurt have themselves been hurt.
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58 **The academic picket line – or resisting 'Authorship' through collective writing**

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5 Two interrelated themes emerged when exploring ‘collective writing as a form of resistance.’
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8 First, we see collective writing as a resistance strategy against the prevalence of hierarchical
9 articulations of academic Authorship and certain institutionalized discourses and interests.
10

11
12 This resistance takes the form of collective writing as a form of *picketing*, a demonstration of
13 solidarity through which writing becomes an embodied practice, and our writing-together
14 marks an assemblage of bodies in solidarity. Second, by drawing upon tensions, power
15 struggles and ambivalence within collective resistance, we suggest that collective writing
16 may be considered a form of ‘unionizing’ that could help scholars better advocate
17 marginalized issues, challenge dominant norms, rules and customs and promote care, respect
18 and community within academia.
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31 The following paragraphs are a collection of reflections and responses grounded in our
32 experiences as early-career scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds, coming together
33 in a workshop on writing, assembled to speak to and with each other. By mixing our voices,
34 we explore possible strategies for a collective resistance against hierarchical articulations of
35 individualized academic Authorship and knowledge production. Our focus is placed on
36 discussing the challenges and possibilities in the collective construction of resistance against
37 an Authorship, that is, the contemporary competitive logic of scholarly work, which has
38 turned academic publishing into an individualized production line.
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51 ***One Authorship, One Academia?***

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53 What is the soul of the text? Maybe a discussion around Authorship and the redistribution of
54 academic capital – is that playing into and reproducing a capitalistic logic? There is
55 something about a paradox; the horizontal and vertical that actually each serve purposes; we
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3 do not need to choose one. But by engaging with one, at a certain point in time (!), there is
4
5 also a need for full, honest, true commitment to the cause; that is why we draw on the
6
7 metaphor of picketing and the picket line that one collectively ensures is not crossed. Not by
8
9 people who are, who belong to, who oppose, or just randomly walks by. It works to disrupt
10
11 very concretely, but also takes up space, calls to it attention to spread, in the minds and in the
12
13 practices of organizations that share similarities.
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19 Already in this writing process, our voices start to mix. I read you, you read me, who are you,
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21 who am I? What remains a topic of uncertainty is the actual error in the current scene of
22
23 academic publishing. What is so wrong about it that we want to stand in the picket line? It is
24
25 a crucial question, as we probably all have been publishing and been excited to see our own
26
27 names as authors of a particular piece of research and writing. It is a piece that embodies so
28
29 much more effort that can be guessed from reading the typed words from a, usually
30
31 electronic, paper. But when ready, who cares to protest or rebel? Can we not just adjust? Our
32
33 answer is no, not really. To write collectively also speaks against the drawback of who
34
35 actually benefits from an academic outcome. To write alone, or with two, three, or four
36
37 colleagues – especially if you are not a big name in your ‘field’ and thus you are most
38
39 assumedly insecure of whether your work will actually be read and, yes, cited – requires an
40
41 effort that does not equal to the ‘price’ one gets when the work is eventually published.
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49 We do not get direct compensation for our efforts. Our work is fueled by long temporalities
50
51 and a wish that our work is recognized sometime in the future by our ‘colleagues,’ or
52
53 strangers, who might be able to find our work from the jungle of academic publications (all
54
55 of which nobody ever has the chance to go through in peace as we, at least many of us, are
56
57 obliged to produce, produce, produce). Our work is fueled by a third-party benefit as well, as
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1
2
3 we feed the journals that feed us indirectly, and get their compensation for doing that. Yet,
4
5 there is more complexity: our universities might form a block to this author → editor(s) of
6
7 journal → reviewers → editor(s) → author → journal (x 1,2,3,4) → money to the
8
9 journal through subscribers → possible reputation through citations to the author /
10
11 significant merit in the CV to get an academic position, by not allowing (cannot afford?)
12
13 access to journals in which our work is published, thus blocking the distribution of our efforts
14
15 to our own communities. So, the question “can we not just adjust?” is crucial: we simply
16
17 cannot, even though we have to be part of the system to be alive as academics.
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24 We need to be bold and brave. This means that we need to be ready to face the criticism
25
26 regarding our statements as well. This is far easier to do when we write together – when we
27
28 stand together – when we write as a collective. This does not mean hegemony. This means
29
30 diversity and its embracement. This means multidisciplinary in its fundamental sense. Why?
31
32 Why to write as a collective? What are our motivations to stand in the picket line? In a
33
34 neoliberal world of academia, academic publishing counts as a quest and competition of
35
36 individual academic capital. This is the enforcement and feeding of An Authorship. The big
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38 A.
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45 Our first suggestion is to give away authorship by signing it over to anonymity. But that is
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47 nothing, it is not generative of academic capital, it does not resist the dominant discourse
48
49 around Authorship, it just rejects it and take the conversation to a different space. One where
50
51 authorship does not exist. A similar idea, that insists staying with, resisting or challenging
52
53 dominant discourses on authorship, is one that does not turn over authorship to anonymity,
54
55 but which turns it over to a collective, defined by individuals who turn over authorship. That
56
57 is the union. Would it be possible to unionize; have one writing union that publishes, but still
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1
2
3 keeps track of authors. Allow the union to negotiate terms of publications, but also to
4
5 redistribute capital among the members. By, for example, publishing member lists which
6
7 shows the number of publications each member has published; or contributed through,
8
9 through reviews, proofing or otherwise. Maybe citations are shared; maybe a reviewer is
10
11 allowed a share in citations in terms of h-index; impact and so on.
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16

17 In the case of writing in academia, we can form different fortresses by choosing with whom
18
19 we write, to which journals we write, and advocate for the meaning in the texts that we
20
21 produce as opposed to those produced by the 'other'. However, there is just one academia. It
22
23 is a paradoxical Yin-Yang relationship because all the different kinds of writings co-exist
24
25 together. With a white dot in the black half and a black dot in the white half, the collective
26
27 whole of writings in academia are balanced.
28
29
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31
32

33 While we pick our own picket line, we must also look beyond the line. As we march forward
34
35 in the line, we do not forget that there is a bigger world out there.
36
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39

40 ***We write. United.***
41

42 A picket line is a shared embodied space, where workers stake out common grounds to signal
43
44 their needs for change and working conditions. It is a safe and protected space for individuals
45
46 to advocate for things that matters to them. In a similar vein, academics need a safe haven to
47
48 feel that we can write authentically what we think about issues. And this applies especially to
49
50 academics who work on less dominant topics from marginalized perspectives. Collectively by
51
52 standing in the picket line, we can resist towards the powerful established discourse of
53
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56 Authorship.
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3 To stand in the picket line is not to try to destroy the system altogether at once – even though
4
5 it can be an effort towards such aim. It is more about disrupting what is problematically
6
7 normalized. It is about chewing one part of a bread and putting it back to the bag. Communal
8
9 chewing! To stand in the picket line evokes communality which encourages academics, be
10
11 they junior, senior, whatsoever, to take part in discussions possibly not one's 'specialty.' It
12
13 gives room for learning from each other meanwhile it forms a united voice. A united voice
14
15 that is multivocal at the same time. Paradoxical, yet necessary. A rainbow-colored, non-
16
17 hegemonic voice of the union, affectively engaging with writing as picketing.
18
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23

24 **Together**

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28 As bell hooks reminds us: 'feminist theory is complex ... it is less the individual practice that
29
30 we often think and usually emerges from engagement with collective sources' (1991, p. 3). In
31
32 this spirit, we are writing resistance together. Co-writing is a practice shared with others to
33
34 craft a message. Writing with others, with others in mind calls for negotiation, respect, and
35
36 care. At times, it is necessary to set aside individual aims to accomplish this for the sake of
37
38 clarity, to be coherent individuals have to conform, but within compromise and negotiation
39
40 there is possibility for building on each other's ideas. Collective writing, as a resistance,
41
42 enables us to produce something together, the 22 of us, to face these challenges, both
43
44 temporal, content-wise, and 'expertise'-bounded. It does not mean we would only write
45
46 whatever comes to our minds – no. This piece of writing we are now producing together may
47
48 not fulfil the requirements of a 'proper academic paper,' if you wish, entailing sections
49
50 considering empirical fieldwork (if existing), analysis, positioning to a particular field of
51
52 research, review of earlier work done, unfolding of the theoretical framework, discussion and
53
54 conclusion. Nevertheless, it is a piece of writing that has enabled us to learn from each other,
55
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3 to affect each other, and hopefully also to affect others. This piece of writing is about
4
5 suppressed thoughts and feelings that our collective picket line of many authors allows us to
6
7 express without revealing ourselves as individuals.
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9

10 11 12 **Coda** 13

14
15
16
17 The reviewers for this paper were wonderfully supportive of our initiative. They did,
18
19 however, encourage us to reflect more on what resistance means to us, and what resistances
20
21 to resistance came up when we engaged with the concept of the 'collective.' This last section
22
23 of the paper consists of ideas that many of the authors shared as a response to the reviewers'
24
25 comments. Importantly, this response whilst processual enabled 'resistance' to be
26
27 problematized to remind us of the diversity of resistance, and the potential epistemic and
28
29 material violence that may emerge from proposing a collective resistance that avoids
30
31 individual differences to the conceptualization and practice of resistance. Like the preceding
32
33 text, there is no one way to approach resistance, or resistance to resistance. In the text that
34
35 follows we intentionally avoid attributing the text to an individual, so that text and voice is
36
37 read in multiplicity through the connection with the reader, rather than an attribution of
38
39 identity politics. This method supports the openness desired before we engaged in collective
40
41 writing. In this way, the writing is suspended.
42
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49 It was almost as if we did not have to define resistance, neither what it meant or
50
51 what it could be. Perhaps, because we somehow assumed that we originated
52
53 from similar positions because we already were there together, envisioning this
54
55 form of collective work. I am still not sure whether this is an issue, or just a
56
57 reflection of contemporary diffusion of structures. What can become of
58
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3 resistance when what you are 'supposed to' oppose is everywhere and nowhere
4
5 at once? And when that something cannot be clearly represented but rather
6
7 function as a lingering sense or anxious trace.
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10
11
12 Resistance, in our view, materializes in an ability to allow for interconnected
13
14 and shared vulnerability, continuously question existing thinking patterns, and
15
16 still appreciate the various opinions and ways of living around us. We initially
17
18 felt that everyone in the workshop would be like-minded and that the workshop
19
20 would allow all of us participants to be and express our vulnerable selves.
21
22 However, this was an illusion. We experienced a surprising emotional attack on
23
24 our research and thoughts. We received warm encouragement from many
25
26 others. The collective existed and, in this way, the collectivity endured beyond
27
28 the confines of the workshop. Writing about the experience together worked as
29
30 a powerful way of processing what we had experienced. Writing together
31
32 worked as a way of allowing and not suppressing all kind of sensations,
33
34 exposing our vulnerable selves and 'letting go' of some of the pain and
35
36 insecurity.
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45 This is resistance that strives for freedom. Freedom to write. Freedom to engage
46
47 with the world through an embodied text, which is not contained by the author
48
49 or words it is formed by. It comes to life in its relationality. Voices in the
50
51 workshop were not unitary, nor were they meant to be. *This writing experiment*
52
53 *does not form a unitary voice, it forms a collective voice.* From the beginning of
54
55 the writing process, preserving and respecting different voices, I's, in the
56
57 classroom and text was important for us. Nevertheless, bursts of resistance
58
59
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1
2
3 (perhaps resistance to our collective resistance) were noted, some of them
4
5 unexpected. Sudden and personal, hurtful and disruptive as they were, they
6
7 brought up vulnerabilities, solidarity and care on which we could further build
8
9 as a collective. This text is part of what allows this collectivity to transcend the
10
11 confines of the workshop. Collectivity endures and is shared in this text and in
12
13 the relationships it creates.
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19 I resist the concept of the collective, but I also use the collective to hide my
20
21 silence. I resist being individualized in my struggle for time, space, and voice
22
23 because I know these struggles are not unique; that they are shared by many
24
25 others. To me resistance in this case means waking up. It requires me to stop
26
27 trying to fit in, as well as to stop waiting when others take responsibility and
28
29 solve problems for me. It means joining those people who are strong enough
30
31 together to act following their true beliefs.
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38 A strong joint force is definitely required and only a relatively large number of
39
40 people who shared the same conviction can make it. I do love to be part of and
41
42 contribute to the 'collective resistance' process, an approach that I consider can
43
44 work for change and challenge the ingrained patriarchal system for
45
46 'newcomers' in academia. But still, I have to reflect that there's probably
47
48 resistances to resistance that came up. I hesitate, even now, to have the
49
50 confidence and most importantly I think, power, to stand up against the
51
52 mainstream domination since the system seems to always work for the
53
54 privileged.
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3 It is clear that the understanding of resistance put forth in this paper may have
4
5 been very different for each one of us individually. However, it feels like we are
6
7 able to combine individual understandings to create a whole, which unveils a
8
9 shared approach to resistance that emerged inter-subjectively through our
10
11 collaboration and writing. This feels like it is going beyond the mere
12
13 combination of the sum of our different understandings of it, or a clearly
14
15 defined decision that we made upfront. It is not only about what is said but also
16
17 about what is not said but felt while writing, or what is often compromised. It is
18
19 enhanced in our conversations and through it, as our voices intermingle. This is
20
21 what we also want our readers to do while reading our text; to reflect and
22
23 challenge their 'decisions' or pre-conceptions about what academic writing has
24
25 to look like or about what resistance might be or how it can be manifested. The
26
27 idea is to be open to resistance as an idea, from wherever it comes because only
28
29 like this we can be open to different voices and work for meaningful change
30
31 together.
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40 Resistance to resistance may have been experienced in different fronts. To some
41
42 extent we all had to make do with the fact that our 'dear' texts may have been
43
44 touched, altered or even deleted from the final paper, and we may have wanted
45
46 to resist this. However, we realize that here it is not about what you or I wrote,
47
48 but about what we all wrote. This is an important realization for junior and
49
50 senior academics alike. Our individual 'narcissism' is lost in a creative
51
52 polyphony. We tried to include all voices in this text, but it was perhaps
53
54 inevitable that some specific resistant voices were lost. How wonderful that
55
56 none of us resisted by walking out on this exercise! Some of us can hide in a
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1
2
3 crowd, to be part of a collective of like-minded people who we trust even
4
5 though we do not know them... and be able to say safely and without the usual
6
7 fear of (much) expected retaliation something valuable about ONE of the many
8
9 things that makes us sad, angry and hurt in academia. Writing. Saying
10
11 something that matters.
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17 I think what is to be considered resistance towards resistance itself, and
18
19 resistance towards the collective formation (as a form of resistance) are very
20
21 different things here. There were definitely some initial tensions towards
22
23 coming together, perhaps because we are so used to be evaluated by, and form
24
25 our academic understanding of ourselves, around our possible contributions. As
26
27 if it was something individual, which of course is absurd, for are we not
28
29 supposed to build on the work of others?
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35 Something happens when one continuously is being molded into setting oneself
36
37 apart from others... There was a trace of this when we began to discuss this in
38
39 groups, as if we partially could reflect upon a perceived, harsh condition of
40
41 individualization (which we sought to resist) while at the same time negotiating
42
43 boundaries through differentiation among us. What could possibly be left of
44
45 'me' under the umbrella term of 'you'? Was this a resistance towards resistance
46
47 though? Not sure. Perhaps, rather a reflection of why this collective expression
48
49 felt so urgent at times: a response to communality becoming strange.
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56 There is a limit to how long we can stay silent or our resistance will turn on us
57
58 and our space will be diminished. Words matter. We matter. Meeting silence
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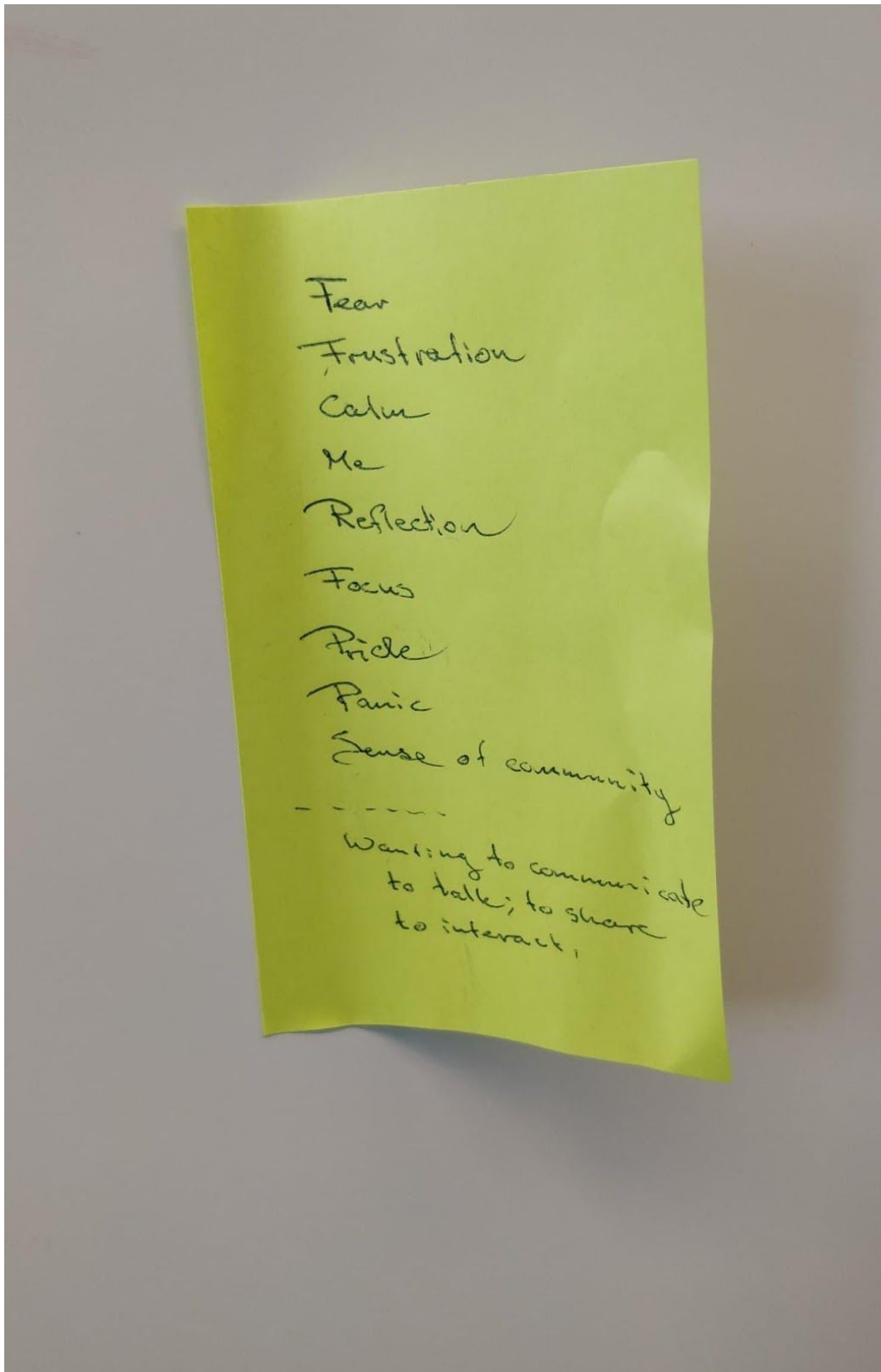
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3 with silence can make us all just feel unmoved, untouched, unnoticed. Perhaps
4
5 there is a rhythm to this game we need to embody.
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Picture 1: A post-it note that matters



Writing resistance together

Abstract

This piece of writing is a joint initiative by participants in the Gender, Work and Organization writing workshop organized at Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki, Finland, in June 2019. This is a particular form of writing differently. We engage in collective writing and embody what it means to write resistance to established academic practices and conventions together. This is a form of emancipatory initiative where we care for each other as writers and as human beings. There are many author voices and we aim to keep the text open and dialogical. As such, this piece of writing is about suppressed thoughts and feelings that our collective picket line allows us to express. In order to maintain the open-ended nature of the text, and perhaps also to retain some ‘dirtiness’ that is essential to writing, the paper has not been language checked throughout by a native speaker of English.

Key words: writing, co-writing, resistance, feminism

Where to begin?

‘Writing is a form of collective resistance for Gender, Work and Organization.’ This sentence was given to us, a group of junior, mid-career and senior academics, as an inspiration for developing a collective piece to reflect on our writing practices as academics. Sitting in a room in Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki in the frame of a ‘Writing differently’ workshop, we use the space of our round-table discussions and the materiality of it to rethink

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2
3 academic writing as a form of collective resistance (cf. Grey & Sinclair, 2006; Gilmore,
4
5 Harding, Helin & Pullen, 2019; Helin, Harding & Pullen, 2020). We intend to challenge
6
7 patriarchal standards – academic jargon, stiff paper formats, narrow fields, quant focus,
8
9 publishing cartels, formulaic research, gendered review processes and so on – that shape
10
11 academia and constrain our ability to write meaningfully as academics. After a short round-
12
13 table discussion, the point was clear: we desperately need a space to breathe, to move beyond
14
15 the boundaries imposed on us by the disembodied metrics that are put into place to evaluate
16
17 our ‘intellectual’ abilities as academics. These favor quantity devoid of meaning in our
18
19 academic production as opposed to impactful, meaningful knowledge.
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26
27 The approach to writing we took is experimental, collective and emerging. The idea for the
28
29 piece came from Alison, a Joint-Editor of GWO, during our two-day workshop: bottom up,
30
31 using our voices as authors in a large group of scholars of different nationalities in different
32
33 career stages. First, we divided our group of 22 participants into four smaller groups where
34
35 we discussed our broad theme ‘Writing as a form of resistance’ for about an hour. Each group
36
37 identified their own focal themes (silence, blindness, the five senses and so on) which they
38
39 then developed further. We returned to the small groups the next day when each participant
40
41 had had a chance to experiment with the theme, think and pen down a sample of writing, and
42
43 we continued the discussion that was more like brainstorming where we shared our writings.
44
45 Then, each group shared their ideas with the larger group. Before breaking up, we decided
46
47 that all participants would write a short text of their own. Each group chose a person
48
49 responsible for collecting the texts, and one person volunteered to create a structure in google
50
51 doc for all the groups where we could all see the collective work that is like a quilt of
52
53 different styles and musings. What are we as critical scholars ‘resisting’ and how does our
54
55 collective thinking and writing reflect it? This is what we are going to discover.
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5 By writing this piece collectively, we embody and convert our individual struggles and
6 blockages to words. We put our women's and men's bodies in our texts: hairy, raw, stinky
7 and leaky as they are (Pullen, 2018), to create a common language and through this engage in
8 collective action. We use our individual 'I's and subjectivities with all the peculiarities,
9 emotions, messiness, fragility and vulnerability that they carry to construct a sense of *weness*
10 and togetherness. We do not only write *for* each other but also *with* each other experiencing
11 our ontologies processually and becoming together in connection (Ettinger, 2006; Kenny &
12 Fotaki, 2015). We relate, we care, we take care, we make space for our differences, we
13 connect...we dialogue. We agree and disagree.
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28 As Helene Cixous said, we just need to write. And write about writing, we add... we just
29 need to write from our women's (and men's) bodies and for them... We are women and men
30 but allow our feminine sides to emerge. By feminine we denote not the materiality of our
31 bodies but our ability to shake the symbolic order by crying and laughing where silence 'has
32 to be' respected, as Cixous calls for in the 'Laugh of the Medusa.' We are 'bi-sexual' and we
33 write as such: *bi-sexually* to find a common voice and raise it (Cixous, 1976; see Phillips,
34 Pullen & Rhodes 2014).
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47 We join in academic accounts calling for the need to rethink writing as a creative process,
48 and accounting for the embodied, affective, and reflexive experiences of the author/s (Pullen
49 & Rhodes, 2008; Helin, 2019; Pullen, 2018; Kiriakos & Tienari, 2018). This is a process that
50 is about what we feel, not only about what we know or think (Rhodes, 2015; Amrouche,
51 Breckenridge, Brewis, Burchiellaro, Breiding Hansen, Hee Pedersen, Plotnikof & Pullen,
52 2018). It is not a literature gap that our text intends to fill but rather an intention to challenge
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1
2
3 prevailing conceptions of academic writing and call for changing the way we think of and
4 relate to it. In this creative process, we open up our bodies to make space for an ethical
5 connection with our readers and the subjects that we write about (Fotaki et al., 2014). We use
6 our writing to speak, to connect, to challenge, and to resist together. We use our writing to
7 overturn the higher order pedagogies that suppress our ‘un-disciplined’ bodies in the context
8 of academic practices (Bell & King, 2010; Thanem & Knights, 2019).
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19 We know that challenging academic practices and conventions of writing will be a long
20 process, a long journey, a battle that may be lost. But we do not stop. We continue... We take
21 the freedom to do it differently, without asking permission for this anymore. Just doing
22 it...*differently!* And we do it for the ‘I’, for the ‘you’ and the ‘us.’
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30 **Silence and silencing**

31 *Beginning*

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36
37 The group assignment starts. We sit at a round table. Six of us. In silence. People waiting for
38 someone to express their thoughts. Silence. The conversation begins slowly. It is about
39 silence. It is about trust, equality and care that slowly builds around us. It is about writing,
40 listening and agency. Passive and active voices. About personal and collective struggles.
41
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47 About vulnerability. Being exposed, available, open. A rupture. The space that breaking apart
48 creates for building a community, and for writing that enables us to challenge the status quo
49 of the standards of academic writing. But we keep returning to silence. Our own silence and
50 the silence of others through our writing. How can silence be resistance? Written in the
51 unspoken spirit of love, here is our joint endeavor to understand the power(s) of silence
52 through embodied writing.
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6 ***Incomplete***
7

8 Words through my body.
9

10 Text without pre-reflection, against everything I've been taught in academia.
11

12 Can I resist the urge to modify?
13

14 To add?
15

16 To make it complete?
17

18 Rational, neat and nicely structured.
19

20 Complete for who? Reviewers? Editors?
21

22 For an audience.
23

24 Complete in format or in message?
25

26 The audience will notice that the text is incomplete.
27

28 They will notice I am incomplete.
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35 ***Exploring the power of silence***
36

37
38 As academics, we enjoy the privilege of empowering others by 'giving voice to the
39 marginalized.' Yet, what we rarely talk about is the moments when we either choose to or
40 feel compelled to keep silent. In the workshop, when we began to discuss this notion of
41 silence, relating to our identity as women in a male dominated industry, to being non-native
42 English speakers but feeling the pressure of publishing in English... we decided to dig deeper
43 into the notion of silence and to explore the power of silence.
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52 Buddhist philosophy gives a lot of insight about silence. In Buddhism, the goal of life is the
53 act of living it. On the one hand, silence is regarded as the expression of knowing and the
54 inaudible manifestation of frailty of words. On the other hand, the language of silence is
55 capable of dispelling one's inner darkness, anxiety and void. Hence, silence, in Buddhism, is
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1
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3 an inherently powerful action for pursuing the Truth. It is itself the Truth. Truth cannot be
4 defined or explicitly described but can only be experienced. Truth cannot be communicated
5 with words, but only be shared with people who are willing and capable to embrace it into
6 their own beings.
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13 Recognition of moments of silence is central to our collective project. By deliberately
14 elaborating the emotional and embodied experience hidden behind these moments of silence,
15 through flashing out the unspoken words interwoven in silence, we want to connect, relate
16 and affect each other. In this writing, we give silent moments voice. The inaudible voices
17 shall pass on important messages which many times we would like to cry out, but there is fear
18 to be heard. I believe that we can forge a collective resistance to this highly masculinized
19 culture in academia where control, competitiveness, aggression, power and success are over-
20 rated, and any sign of vulnerability is strictly repressed.
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32 The silence that is known to most of us is its exterior absence of words. Although in such
33 moments, words are not used yet, our minds are unquiet. They are filled with emotions, ideas,
34 frustrations, desires, creativities and doubts. We choose or are compelled to keep silent when
35 we realize we are the only woman in 'men's space,' and being foreign in a country where we
36 are always identified as a member of different others, when we are put up as a token of the
37 marginalized group, when we feel overwhelmed by senses of insecurity:
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47 *I sometimes choose to keep silent in academic conferences when I am not*
48 *sure about the climate in which the discussions are taken. I guess I am unsure*
49 *of whether it is a space in which my thoughts and arguments will be*
50 *appreciated, understood and how others will react. Maybe it is personal*
51 *insecurities. As said, sometimes I fear others' reactions, because, in my*
52 *experience, they are not always friendly. I might feel frustrated as I already*
53
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3 *know that I do not have anything to contribute to a discussion if it takes a*
4 *certain track and tone. I might feel an urge to voice my thoughts, even if I*
5 *know the risks of how it might be received, depending on my own state of*
6 *mind and strength, a question arises: do I open my mouth? What do I think*
7 *about? The things that should be said. The things that should be challenged.*
8 *The things that have not changed. But what do people think of me saying*
9 *those things out loud? Who I am to say so?*

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19
20 *I am a person with a lot of words. I enjoy expressing myself, my feelings, and*
21 *opinions. But I have learnt to keep silent. I choose silence when I realize I*
22 *am fighting a hopeless war where important decisions are made for me and*
23 *others. I have learnt that silence is my safeguard. I think when I do not*
24 *speak...*

25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32 *I'm not sure I ever really choose to keep silent, but rather feel compelled to*
33 *by outside forces. Lots of times I am thinking about so many other things that*
34 *I can't fully participate in the conversation. Sometimes I am silent because I*
35 *have nothing to contribute, because I am opposed to the topic or the line of*
36 *inquiry or the analytical frame, but I don't have the position or status to*
37 *challenge those who lead the discourse. What do I think about when I am*
38 *silent? Everything else. My body, the air, escaping. I imagine other people,*
39 *other places, the dead. Things that smell nice. Food. I often think of eating*
40 *and drinking. How I feel when I am silent? Private, and attending to my own*
41 *self. When I speak, I feel as if I am floating and often that my voice is coming*
42 *from another body. In silence I connect to that voice, and I can hear it in*
43 *various ways.*
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6 ***Relating***
7

8 Academia is full of useless noise and meaningless words.
9

10 Everyday it's getting harder to breathe.
11

12 Silence is a scream for pause.
13
14
15

16
17 Silence is harmony.
18

19 Silence is respect.
20

21 Silence is beauty and wisdom.
22
23
24
25

26 In silence, we open up and become more sensitive to others' vulnerabilities.
27

28 In silence, we relate.
29
30
31
32

33 ***Sounds of silence***
34

35 The music flows around you, echoing between the stone walls of the church. The voices of
36 the singers of the excellent choir following the gentle instructions given by the aging
37 conductor. The singers individually performing the ancient texts, their bodies breathing
38 together, and sounds intertwined. Listening tentatively, ready to be moved, touched, to
39 engage in the music. Then the music suddenly, unexpectedly stops. The conductor suspends
40 her hands mid-air. The silence happens. A rupture in the flow of music. And we wait,
41 listening to the silence. And just when we cannot bare the silence any longer, the hands of the
42 conductor shift and the sounds of the human voices return. This indefinite rest in the music is
43 called a general pause or a grand pause. This silence in the middle of the flow of music is a
44 powerful tool to mark a change, a shift in the temporality of the music. It is, in particular, its
45 unexpected nature and the non-defined length of this suspension that makes the experience so
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3 powerful. Sometime the musicians hold the pause 'too long' and someone in the audience
4
5 will think that the piece has ended and starts to applaud. Perhaps we would need to think
6
7 more carefully about the person who applauds, breaking the silence. What is it in the
8
9 prolonged silence that forces us to take action?
10
11
12
13

14 Or in the words of Paul Simon:
15
16
17
18

19 'Fools,' said I, 'You do not know
20
21 Silence, like a cancer, grows
22
23 Hear my words that I might teach you
24
25 Take my arms that I might reach you'
26
27 But my words, like silent raindrops fell
28
29 And echoed in the wells, of silence
30
31
32
33
34

35 *Subjectivities* 36

37 Please excuse my silence, which is not meant to be a slight. And I fear you will interpret it as
38
39 laziness, flightiness, artlessness. But really, I was just existing as my other self, the one who
40
41 attends constantly to the needs of my children, husband, family, friends, home, dirt, dust,
42
43 items, empty tummies. Last week, when I met you, I was the self who thinks deeply about
44
45 what's wrong with the world and why. That self who has time to ponder big questions, and
46
47 can't shut up once the mouth gets going, with ideas overlapping, feeding each other, getting
48
49 tangled and complex and so very interesting. The self with capacity to collaborate. But, too
50
51 much time being that one has consequences - coming home to a messy house, everything and
52
53 everyone needing attention, straightening up, making proper food, helping with homework,
54
55 driving them around. Just the routine stuff, but there is so much of it, and it takes time. And
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1
2
3 hence the silence from my academic self - no time to sit down and let the words flow - until
4
5 it's so late that I am half asleep. Then, my eyes droop and I can hardly even move my fingers
6
7 over the computer keys.
8
9

10
11
12 So, although my academic self, far away from home, can acknowledge the strength of:
13
14

15
16
17 Silence in words, resistance for agency
18

19 Amongst dominant forces, withholding secrets, subject to misinterpretation
20

21 Absent presences
22

23
24 What is unsaid still permeates the air, it is
25

26 something that haunts and it connects us to histories of being oppressed
27
28

29
30
31 What comes out when I am at home is this notion of being silenced by the second shift, being
32
33 silenced by my expectations for myself as a mother, a partner, a domestic laborer and by their
34
35 reliance on my having those expectations so they can exist in an orderly and pleasant home.
36
37

38
39
40 Together, in Helsinki, we talked about the power in silence, opting out, not participating. My
41
42 silence today is not voluntary, it is done to me and holds me back. But, as someone who loves
43
44 me says to me: 'you chose this.' At the time, it did feel like a choice – to get married, to have
45
46 babies... but everything that comes with it is a requirement. Then, tracing back to the original
47
48 'choice's: every time my child self, pictured my adult self, I saw a nice house, a nice kitchen,
49
50 nice garden, nice children, me waiting for him to come home from work. I saw my self, in
51
52 what I saw, every woman around me doing, when I saw the right way to be woman.
53
54

55
56
57
58 'Why do you want to be a scientist? How about a nice little kindergarten teacher?'
59
60

1
2
3 'You are such a cute little scientist. Do you want to go out on a date? Do you want to get
4
5 married and help me with my science?'

6
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8
9
10 (STOP writing, look up)

11
12
13
14 'Mom can you help my friend with a math problem?' And again, I am silenced, listening to
15
16 the voices in my head that I can't find the time or place to let out. Please excuse my silence, I
17
18 think (I was listening) to myself.
19
20
21
22

23 *Silence/voice*

24
25
26 Who do we silence in the current academic writing practices?

27
28 Our embodied voices through review processes, self-censorship and the strict conventions
29
30 that we follow while constructing ourselves as 'scientific'.

31
32 Our struggles as academic scholars, as neatly functioning parts of the publishing machine.

33
34 (Be careful, do not let anything leak out!)

35
36
37 What about other experiences?

38
39 The ones we do not often write about?

40
41 The ones who's texts we do not read.

42
43 The ones who do not write.

44
45
46 The ones who are not taking part in these conversations, as in this room on June 7th in
47
48 Helsinki.
49
50

51
52
53 Writing as a form of collective resistance. Silence as a form of collective resistance. Politics
54
55 of representation and the question of who speaks for whom. Play of voices and silence in the
56
57 classroom.
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59
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4
5 Silence can be used strategically as resistance.
6

7
8 But you need to have possessed a voice before you can use silence as resistance?
9

10 If you are absent and silent in a conversation, are you there to resist?
11

12 Questions of voice and silence.
13

14 Questions of production and consumption.
15

16
17 Of knowledge.
18

19 Of representations.
20

21 I consume and produce. Consume and produce. Consume and produce..
22

23
24 Where does my responsibility lie?
25

26
27
28 In my production. In my consumption.
29

30 Of I and the Other.
31

32 Quite obviously.
33

34
35 In the text.
36

37 In the silences of the text.
38
39

40
41
42 But how to enact it? How to be responsible?
43

44 How can I write and listen in a form that emphasizes the agency of others?
45
46

47
48
49 Staying attuned to multiple struggles, flows across, shows the different faces of silence.
50

51 Coming from yourself – empowering, comforting, joyful, sacred.
52

53 Coming from others – unjust, oppressive, disabling, lonely.
54
55

56
57
58 Strength and vulnerability of embodied silence.
59
60

1
2
3 Consumed and produced. Consumed and produced.
4

5 Unequally.
6
7
8
9

10 How do we come together, and from multiple local struggles, form a collective resistance?
11

12 Has also the collective solution become silenced? No. Yesterday we started a process of
13 dialogue and exchange as a foundation for this, based on our individual voices and the
14 physical act of writing. Midst of the voices in the classroom, I sense, it is the fleeting moment
15 of picking up a pen or starting to type – in awareness of our interconnection with others –
16 from where the moment of ethical action rises and we can see how some struggles might be
17 silent, but others are loud, if we only know how to write them.
18
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27

28 *Silence, again*
29

30 Years spent mute.
31
32

33 Grounded to the chair, only fear.
34
35

36 Fear of what may surface, if I speak.
37
38

39 Contained in thought and body,
40
41

42 It is the way for women.
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 Years passed, words appeared one-at-a-time.
50
51

52 Observing the silent cast adrift, and often drowning, in a sea of dominant male voices,
53
54

55 My voice, trembling and embodied, became more articulate,
56
57

58 But, how, can I stop? I fear that if I stop, I may never speak again.
59
60

1
2
3 These lips of mine, in their plurality, have stories to tell.
4
5
6
7

8
9 Now others listen, cite and act on my words,
10

11
12 Fear of being quoted, reduced to a part of my being.
13

14
15 Controlled and contained, again.
16

17
18 Can women ever speak freely?
19

20
21 Lips enable connection, care and relationships – and resistance.
22
23
24
25
26

27 Silence ruptures male spaces.
28

29
30 Listening as a politics of care, of resistance.
31

32
33 Academia privileges those articulate subjects.
34

35
36 Time to hear the silence, hearing through the skin.
37

38
39 If we listen, what collective resistance is possible?
40
41
42
43
44

45 Every so often, silent bodies connect, words whisper, resonate with others, and I become
46 me... this is the power of the masses. Sometimes these whispers connect, subversive, and the
47 rage becomes her.
48
49

50
51
52
53
54 **Blindness**
55
56
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1
2
3 Love is blind, or so they say. Violence is often blind, too, and that is what's so scary about it.

4
5 The system of academic writing is based on blindness. Its review processes are a
6
7
8 smokescreen for politicking, an illusion, a lie. From the shadows, the chosen few are elevated
9
10 into the light and the rest of us are left behind and forgotten.

11
12
13 Let's have some names then! After each review process, accept or reject, let's have some
14
15 names! Let those wonderful and generous people who help and support others come forward,
16
17 into the light. And let the violent ones be named, too.

18
19
20
21
22
23 ***Blindness around us***

24
25 Part I – Attack

26
27 Sometimes *I* just shut up

28
29
30 Not talk, not write, but I always think...

31
32
33 It was a vertical moment

34
35
36 Blindness around us

37
38
39 A silently brutal stab

40
41
42 towards our work, us

43
44
45 – dangers of researching differently

46
47
48 Stupidity of

49
50
51 simple-minded thinking

52
53
54 kind of blindness, too

55
56
57 feminists, childbirth,

58
59
60 *profit* of researching certain topics

1
2
3 HAHA!
4
5

6 Could you *please* shut up?
7
8

9 Sometimes
10

11 silence is sophisticated wisdom
12
13

14
15 Hiljaisuus
16

17
18 ...miten kaunis sana ja tila!
19
20

21 Feeling empowered
22

23
24 by the pathetic attack
25
26

27 This is who I am
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29

30 our writing is us
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32

33 Vulnerability
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36 and sensitivity towards life around me
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38

39 are my strengths
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41

42 my inspiration
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45 and my sources of
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47

48 researching differently
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52

53 Part II – Aftermath
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55

56 Tears,
57
58

59 keep coming. Let them flow, flow, flow
60

1
2
3 I've created a scene

4
5
6 anyway

7
8
9 Exposing my vulnerable

10
11
12 leaky

13
14
15 *crying-like-a-little-child-kind-of* body

16
17
18 to others

19
20
21 But crying is healing

22
23
24 *écriture féminine*

25
26
27 remains a tricky project

28
29
30 blind academia

31
32
33 with its 'neutrality' and narrow frameworks

34
35
36 dislikes disruptive, destabilizing

37
38
39 transgressive

40
41
42 *écriture féminine*

43
44
45 as a way to

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47
48 confuse boundaries

49
50
51 or liberate our work from the standard research practices

52
53
54 Kind eyes, warm hugs

55
56
57 mobilize collective affects

58
59
60 *Action! #snaptivism*

1
2
3 Solidarity. Care.
4

5
6 We're in this space, together
7

8
9 Strength to keep writing
10

11
12 While academia continues
13

14
15 to limit my research
16

17
18 as well as 'free' it
19

20
21 and the ways in which the gendered body writes
22

23
24
25
26 Coda – Healing by *writing together*
27

28
29 Tilttuksad fjäderskrud
30

31
32 Hetkellinen siipirikko, lamaantuminen
33

34
35 *Vai sittenkin jotain muuta?*
36

37
38 Sara Ahmed, Hélène Cixous, Veena Das, Elspeth Probyn,
39

40
41 *Tack skall ni ha!*
42

43
44 Injurious norms, interrupted
45

46
47 Kvinnor som lyfter andra kvinnor
48

49
50 acknowledging our male allies, too
51

52
53 Freedom, flexibility, provocativity
54

55
56 without hurting
57

58
59 *Rakastan akateemista työtä*
60

1
2
3 Kindness
4

5
6 Generosity
7

8
9 Care
10

11
12 Nei momenti complicati
13

14
15 è bello guardare dentro un armadio
16

17
18 pieno di sogni.
19

20
21 Ga je mee?
22

23
24 Affective suffering as
25

26
27 a pivotal moment
28

29
30 for *transformation*
31

32
33 Siamo insieme
34

35
36 tässä hetkessä
37

38
39 Vis-à-vis, allons-y!
40

41
42
43
44 What if our *writing*
45

46
47 makes the contribution (*sic*), that disrupts the
48

49
50 twisted, dull, gloomy
51

52
53 thinking and writing
54

55
56 in academia
57

58
59 reaching beyond seemingly narrow topics
60

For Peer Review

1
2
3 carefully scratching the polished surfaces
4

5
6 getting our feet dirty
7

8
9 appreciating the mundane rhythms
10

11
12 experiencing our sensory,
13

14
15 more-than-human life worlds
16

17
18 which, in fact, touch e v e r y t h i n g around us?
19

20
21 We keep writing together.
22

23
24 We rise by lifting each other.
25

26
27
28
29 Writing

30
31 as a beautiful form of
32

33
34 collaborative resistance
35

36
37 towards mental violence
38

39
40 and disembodied
41

42
43 detached
44

45
46 rigid
47

48
49 research
50

51
52 in academia
53

54
55
56
57 *Epilogue*
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59
60

1
2
3 The two of us have written together for eight years. It was an instant ‘click’ between us, a
4 sense of meeting another researcher and woman who *feels* you, understands you and respects
5 you. Sisters in academia. Support. Genuine goodwill. Our collaboration builds on both mental
6 and kinaesthetic empathy. For us, writing together works as a collaborative resistance against
7 blindness in academia. Blindness which, for us, materializes in cynical thinking and
8 denigrating attitudes towards ‘marginal’ research topics, complicated and sometimes
9 irrational review processes, and the inability to see worth in other than cleaned-up writing
10 that so firmly believes in objectivity, rationality and abstraction. We resist this blindness by
11 keeping our writing simple, direct and vulnerably alive.
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28 [INSERT PICTURE 1 HERE: A POST-IT NOTE THAT MATTERS]
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33

34 A picture of a post-it note from the whiteboard at the workshop, captured by one of us. None
35 of us wrote it and its writer remains a mystery to us, but we can thoroughly relate to it. These
36 words resonate with the various sensations that writing evoke in our bodies, and foregrounds
37 the aspects of ‘wanting to communicate, to talk, to share, to interact’ at the very focus, as we
38 do in our academic work.
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49 We are using writing as a collective means to resist the illusion of blindness in academia.

50
51 With the concept of blindness we refer to a variety of academic practices aiming at
52 anonymity and impersonality. They exist for good reasons: first, to emphasize that what is
53 being argued is more important than who is making the claims and second, to assure fair and
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1
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3 equal treatment of scholars and their texts. Despite good intentions, the blindness is an
4
5 illusion, even a lie.
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10 This blindness of practices means that the authority, expertise, gender or position of the
11 author should not influence the assessment of the manuscript and the related decisions.
12

13 However, in reality everybody, who has worked in academia for some time, has experiences
14 that make one doubt the objectivity or anonymity of the processes. Humans as we are, we
15 continuously search for cues of who the ‘anonymous’ are and make interpretations of the
16 people we are dealing with. Many of us play on a rather small sand box, which makes it
17 difficult *not* to know, who the other players are and what they do. In many cases, the
18 processes are not blind; they only narrow down the number of potential people. Whether that
19 is a problem or something to sustain is hard to say, but if the idea of ‘blind review’ indicates
20 that anonymity is necessary for us academics to make fair and ethical assessments and
21 decisions, is it credible to claim we are fair and ethical behind the curtain of anonymity?
22 Rather, the blindness of academic practices acts as a script that makes the political games less
23 obvious and difficult to trace down.
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44 In academic writing, the tradition of neutrality and impersonality has led to writing becoming
45 a non-contextual, impersonal and universal practice, in which the author has to hide
46 him/herself and his/her personality, mother tongue, context, history and body. We are
47 expected to write as a universal academic – supposedly a white male from an Anglo-Saxon
48 country. Thus, writing as a blind practice not only causes all academic texts to be alike and
49 restricts freedom of expression, but also disconnects the readers from the actual process of
50 producing texts and the person doing it. It enforces the appearance of objectivity, expertise
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1
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3 and truthfulness, while making academic texts clinical, often formulaic and empty of any
4
5 deeper meaning.
6
7
8
9

10 11 ***Unblinding an aspiring scholar*** 12

13
14 In case you are expecting to join the Temple of Knowledge: *wake up!* If you yearn to meet
15
16 Wisdom in people who would sell their soul to devil to know-it-all and to find a miracle in a
17
18 falling apple: *unblind yourself!* You are likely to become a basic unit of production in a
19
20 sloppily managed factory that will turn your natural inclination for curiosity and
21
22 experimentation into process waste.
23
24
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28

29
30 On the factory floor, people who tend to think, act and write alike establish rank and
31
32 superiority by competing to see who can piss the farthest. The great task is to determine who
33
34 publishes the most in places some obscure parties with power and vested interests have
35
36 defined as ‘best’ and others have accepted as ‘mandatory.’ For sure, one can win because one
37
38 is hardworking and talented but also because one is skilled at all sorts of misbehavior or eager
39
40 to massage the fragile egos of the members of the ruling party.
41
42
43
44
45
46

47
48 This is a ruthless hunger game that is dominated by a conservative establishment against
49
50 which the other groups, including the self-proclaimed critical ones, timidly position
51
52 themselves. Dissidents say ‘the system,’ ‘patriarchy,’ ‘neoliberal university,’ or ‘western
53
54 hegemony’ *makes them* and nothing can be done. Slowly, you may start believing in this,
55
56 citing Foucault or something else sophisticated to exempt you from personal responsibility.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Becoming a PhD-student means low levels of autonomy. The precarious employment
4 conditions would cause an uprising anywhere else. Whether you receive a position or a grant
5 or support of *any* kind, depends almost entirely on the whims and competence of your
6 supervisor– or any other patron you may find who happens to like you. Many fall into
7 oblivion or predatory, abusive relations. Some are left spinning alone, some drift away
8 fighting severe depression.
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20 With time the imagined Temple inevitably crumbles down – and may become a labyrinth you
21 cannot exit as your mind is trapped inside. You will find some genuinely intellectual
22 individuals, and that is when light shines onto the factory floor. However, they may not take
23 interest in your magnificent drafts, philosophical insights and brilliant ideas – they have their
24 own battles to fight and demons to face. Your likely destiny is either exit or becoming a unit
25 of production like most other technician-researchers on the factory floor.
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38 I am still here because despite all this, academia can be an addictive, fascinating place if one
39 can develop a somewhat functional existence in it. Many won't. I must have some
40 undiagnosed obsessive-compulsive disorder and want to be part of *something* that is
41 important to me that I want to defend and that I cannot define with words.
42
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51 **Writing is a form of collective resistance**

52
53
54

55 *I knew that I was not for this. I didn't just want to choose for myself a spacious*
56 *cell in a comfortable prison. I preferred a slam in the open air, feeling the sun*
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *and the rain nourishing my skin and then writing about it. To let my body breath*
4
5 *more fully, to take the air down to feel my belly moving, to fill my lungs with the*
6
7 *oxygen that I need to be able to continue living... and thus writing...or is it the*
8
9 *other way around?*
10
11
12
13

14 Writing is personal. It begins with a person and it ends with a person. You can call one a
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writer and the other a reader, but it may not be so.

Writing is collective. It begins as a relationship between people and it ends as a relationship
between people. You may call one a text and the other understanding, but it may not be so.

Writing is political; it produces knowledge. Writing is political; it challenges knowledge.

Writing as resistance is personal; you object, refuse, insist. Writing as resistance is collective;
you examine, influence, organize.

Sometimes it is important to resist writing, when the politics of writing are such that the text
is no longer the purpose of writing, when writing has become divorced from the text and only
the mere existence of the text is its purpose.

Writing is a form of collective resistance. Writing as a form of collective resistance is writing
that examines, also, itself, is suspicious of itself, examine its own assumptions without
turning on itself and without turning in on itself. Writing as a form of collective resistance
cannot be about itself.

1
2
3 Academia is no longer what it used to be. We are operating during a time where the ability to
4 predict consequences and possible results of research projects are decisive for managing the
5 academic everyday, including the possibility of attaining research funding. To make sure we
6 are not hit by surprise we can never lose control of our direction, or force forwards. To that
7 aim we have to write from that which we already know, turning writing into a machinery
8 practice as we write in under publication pressure. Writing becomes fragmented, flat,
9 disembodied, and it is lacking depth just as the horizontal arrow that symbolizes this view on
10 time.
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24 At its worst this work hurts me, this work makes me cynical and angry. It makes me not want
25 to write anymore. It makes me want to resist it.
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32 Questioning 33 34 35 36

37 What is the power that writing resists? Is it more writing, other writing, competing
38 knowledges? How does writing resist? What is the principle with which it resists? With new
39 words, with new voices, with new forms, with new languages. Can those be heard?
40
41
42
43
44
45

46 *Ok. At least writing does not kill, does it?*
47
48
49
50

51 I get distracted by a message from Facebook and start surfing. There has been another
52 unfounded arrest of an investigative journalist in Moscow. A picture of protesters catches my
53 eyes. People are standing in line in order to hold a single picket. One by one. Unsanctioned
54 collective political rallies are forbidden in Russia, and concerning this case, there is no
55 chance a permit would be issued. A single picket is the only legal way to resist. Therefore, all
56
57
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60

1
2
3 these persons are waiting for their turn to hold the poster with a call to free the journalist.
4

5 They are together, but, at the same time, each one adds her or his own voice to the common
6
7
8 cause.
9

10
11
12 The pen is heavy.
13

14 The screen is blank.
15

16
17 Is there space for me here?
18
19

20
21 Am I experienced enough? Am I legitimate enough? Am I powerful enough? Do I need
22
23 permission for this? From whom? For what? Where am I (hidden)? Where is my body?
24

25
26 Where is my sensuality, my affect, my rigidity, my fragility, the messiness that I carry? Why
27
28 do I do this and for whom?
29
30

31
32
33 Should I first learn to publish more traditionally before beginning to resist it? I'd rather still
34
35 write differently, because it's more fun, more lively, more something I want to do, but will I
36
37 succeed to publish by doing so?
38
39

40 41 42 ***Resisting prevailing forms of academic writing and resisting that resistance*** 43

44
45 I am joining the line of those who are determined to write differently, 'acknowledging the
46
47 risk of embarrassment, of not being understood, of being dismissed or ridiculed, of being
48
49 considered self-indulgent, or of being rejected' (Kiriakos & Tienari, 2018: 266). While
50
51 staying in the line, I am summing up what seems important to me in writing and formulating
52
53 it as a manifesto, as suggested by Jenny Helin at the GWO workshop.
54
55
56
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60

1
2
3 *I intend*

4
5 *to be honest to myself in writing;*

6
7 *to lean on, but not to hide behind stronger others and to be supportive myself;*

8
9 *to allow myself to write slowly, but to keep on moving, stretching higher and deeper;*

10
11
12 *I will try to find the strength to write through being weak, shamefully imperfect and*
13
14 *vulnerable, but to save and protect the vulnerability*

15
16
17 *Just because there,*

18
19 *on the other side of a journal,*

20
21 *probably, there is Someone.*

22
23 *A One who waits for my text,*

24
25 *needs it the way I needed*

26
27 *Academic Writing as Love*

28
29
30 *by Carol and Janne.*

31
32
33
34
35 *No, no, I will not. I will not participate in this collective resistance thing. I am*
36
37 *not yet there; I have not yet learned to fill the gaps properly. Besides, they all are*
38
39 *so cool, and experienced, and 'vertical' in writing, and so poetic.*

40
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43
44
45 I keep staring at Carol Kiriakos and Janne Tienari's article 'Academic Writing as Love'. I see
46
47 writing as a long-term relationship, in contrast to writing as passion and competition. I do not
48
49 like the idea of participating in the race. It does not inspire me, this race, which suggests no
50
51 space and time for dealing with being weak and vulnerable, being attentive and protective to
52
53 others.
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3 *“You see. Love has been conceptualized for you personally. Have you not been*
4 *looking for it? Just take it”.*
5
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9
10 *I find it difficult to find the balance between peaceful me and collective*
11 *resistance. As I see it, the 'battle, fight, protest, resistance' -rhetoric is about*
12 *looking for courage in myself to oppose dominating power. However, opposing*
13 *is not the aim in itself.*
14
15
16
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19
20
21 *All these are questions that have been circulating in my head since the early years*
22 *of my PhD, unsettling my few hours of rest, the endless nights that I spent alone*
23 *after long days of developing rigorous argumentations and deductions of*
24 *'counter-intuitive' (but otherwise soulless) hypotheses for my academic texts.*
25 *What a word! Counter-intuitive! it has to be so to 'sell' ... just doing the intuitive*
26 *is not enough.*
27
28
29
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38 *Just writing is not enough! ... for what really matters!*
39
40
41

42 *For years, I kept my body constrained; limiting it from its potential to express*
43 *what inherently inhabited it... ideas, dreams, sensations, pleasure, pain, worries,*
44 *confidence or lack of it...I held back from writing a language that touches, to*
45 *write about a topic that touches, to write about writing itself. I kept all of this for*
46 *my personal scripts, which I had very little time to care about. And I was afraid*
47 *of sharing these concerns with my supervisors or colleagues, in fears of being*
48 *seen as the crazy one.*
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58
59 *Vulnerability in academic criticism... In fear of being rejected... Yet another time!*
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I wish I could be brave enough.

I suppose people hurt people in academia. In purpose or accidentally. During the workshop, I heard about the power game that is ongoing in academia. This game makes even the most experienced and highly respected professors to be afraid to speak out so that they would not sound stupid! I did not want to sound stupid or ignorant. I did not want to be ‘revealed’ as a person, who really does not have a right to be here with such a short history in the academic world. I noticed the vulnerability there, where I expected to see stable self-confidence. This was a relief to me because it made the academic world look more human to me. Is showing our vulnerability through experimenting different styles of academic writing a threat to us?

According to my observations during my short experience in the academic world, there is something hurtful in the appreciation of criticism. Although critical thinking is, in my opinion, a necessary practice to produce any new understandings and therefore new knowledge through research, it can be used in very harmful ways in the academic world between people. After listening to more experienced colleagues, it seems to me that criticality is too often used as a form of oppression or to support the individuals’ place in the hierarchy. That is the opposite thing to what critical thinking tradition, in theory, was supposed to do (Duncum, 2008). The critical theory aims to break free from the prevailing and ‘taken for granted truths,’ but it is itself taken for granted in education literature (Duncum, 2008) and in academic practices in general.

‘We honor others by challenging them when we think they are wrong, and by thoughtfully taking their criticisms of us. To do so is to take them seriously; to do any

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3 *less is to dismiss them as unworthy of serious consideration, which is to say, to treat*
4 *them with disrespect. Respect means the willingness to listen, openness to the*
5 *possibility of learning from, responsiveness, criticizing when necessary. ---Respect*
6 *does not mean that everything they do is “fine for them” or beyond the pale of critical*
7 *judgment. Emphasis on the acceptance of difference is meant to express and*
8 *encourage tolerance. Sometimes it succeeds in this. But sometimes it can have the*
9 *opposite effect. Valorized differences can harden into Difference.’ (Fay, 1996, 239)*
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22 ‘Critical theory tends to operate from within the binary terms of dominance and a liberating
23 counterpoint in which a singular truth is opposed by a singular alternative’ (Duncum, 2008,
24 253). I think that this kind of confrontation as an accepted truth in academia does its silent
25 work in us. It puts us to the positions of self-defence and makes us to focus on fighting for
26 our existence in academia instead of creating a fruitful conversation. ‘One truth colliding with
27 another does not necessarily lead to enlightenment but to retreat, not to synthesis or
28 compromise but to an endgame’ (Duncum, 2008, 250). So how to criticize without hurting?
29 How to take critic and avoid cutting vulnerability out of it?
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41 *Resistance as a fight or invitation to a dance?*

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44 Gilmore et al. (2019) are calling us to arms towards the positivist and normalized
45 understandings of the only right way to do research. But is the war as a form of collective
46 resistance that can really make space for difference and multiplicity in writing that Gilmore et
47 al. (2019) want to achieve? I agree that fighting and defending oneself is sometimes
48 necessary, but are there some other ways to create space for different forms of academic
49 writing?
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3 I might be naiive and childish by saying this, but cannot we just do it? Write differently and
4 by doing so, be the examples of how many kinds of forms of expressions in academic texts
5 can create more understanding of the complex world we are living in? And with those texts
6 invite the others, that might not accept this kind of writing as academic, to the dialogue? Are
7 we, who want to defend the 'polyphony' of different ways of expressing research (Bakhtin,
8 1981 according to Duncum, 2008), able to understand or at least give space to the others that
9 do not want to allow this plurality?
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21
22 Could we somehow go beyond that attack-defence practice that is apparently experienced as
23 hurtful in the academic world? Could we somehow just ask or persuade the partner, who
24 thinks differently than us to join the common dance with us, get in the dialogue (Duncum,
25 2008) with us? Can we give space for the other who might want to stay still and not to dance
26 with us? After all, we are all in the same 'academic ballroom' and any kind of expressions of
27 movements in that space should be allowed.
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38 I know your rules. I tried to play by your rules. Let's just try to play by different (my) rules.
39 And then we will discuss it and agree on common rules. And I promise I will respect your
40 choice.
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46 This text is *y-ours*.
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51 Being at this workshop in Helsinki, among colleagues who persist to ask the difficult
52 questions even though there are no immediate answers, who understand and embody the need
53 for safe inquiry spaces to emerge, and who create the moment where we can have
54 conversations "for real", offers resistance in solidarity. It is pockets like this that give hope
55 for another future in academia.
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6 And thus share, and thus resist...

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8 And finally here I am, with all of you...not alone anymore...

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12 I now feel that I know the answer:

13
14 I write to relate. I write to share. I write to live and to continue to live...

15
16 I write for me and for you ... with you...

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20
21 Just add your voice. Free yourself. You are not alone. There are others to support you.

22 23 24 25 26 **Reflecting**

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31 During the GWO workshop I noticed more clearly, how those who have been in academia for
32 long have a kind of hard message for me who is just starting in this field: 'This work hurts
33 me, this work makes me cynical and angry. It makes me not want to write anymore. It makes
34 me want to resist it.' I did not have enough time to ask the questions: 'Why this work makes
35 you angry? What things in academia make you cynical?' I guess that writing academic papers
36 is sometimes so hard that it makes you want to quit, but I don't think that it is the reason that
37 makes people cynical, angry and raises resistance against their work.

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49 I noticed that on the first day it was not easy for me to talk about my thoughts among the
50 more experienced colleagues. I think this happened, because of the respect that I felt for the
51 experienced colleagues. I did not want to be 'revealed' as a person, who really does not have
52 a right to be here with so short history in the academic world. At the time this happened, I did
53 not really know why I felt this way. That's how I got caught in the practice that values highly
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1
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3 the appreciation of the experience and some sort of hierarchy that is embedded in academic
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5 culture.
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11 *Experiment survivor*

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14 I decided to participate in a writing workshop organized by GWO and hosted by the
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I decided to participate in a writing workshop organized by GWO and hosted by the
GODESS Institute (Gender, organization, diversity, equality and social sustainability in
transnational times) at Hanken in Helsinki. I entered the workshop with the ‘standard’
expectation of improving my writing, and in particular, writing of academic journal articles. I
left the workshop realizing that I have started a new journey during the process of battling
with the uncertainty and my own inertia through writing. We were quickly grouped with
participants who haven’t met before. My group is quite diverse in terms of academic
background. It wasn’t easy to produce a coherent idea for a small piece of writing given that
we all have just met.

We discussed in our small group what we were resisting collectively in writing. Resistance
against the dominant publishing regime, against Authorship with the capital A? Towards the
end of the workshop, I came to realize that I was resisting my “old” self! No one has forced
me to write for a particular journal, with a particular group of scholars, or even just to
continue with the same way of writing. It has always been me who is not receiving all the
other possibilities of writing. It’s not easy to move out of the comfort zone that one has built.
And this is just me in my 4th year of academic job. What a terrifying thought to think what if I
am just going on like a publishing machine.

1
2
3 I also learnt how to write through vulnerability. As an Asian female, I have always tried to
4 keep my head down. I blame Confucius for the bad influence of the 中庸philosophy (The
5
6 Doctrine of the Golden Mean). I have learnt to just take on whatever comes to me and try not
7
8 to talk about the negative, the challenging and most importantly the painful experiences.
9
10 What a liberating moment for me to know that one can seek to heal by writing about these
11
12 vulnerabilities in academia too. Reflecting on my research journey on the topic of gender, it
13
14 suddenly became clear to me that I am strong enough now to face this issue straight on
15
16 finally. I have been hiding behind the excuse that it would be too painful for me to research
17
18 gender particularly in my country of origin. My academic father, a gender sociologist, has
19
20 been so awfully gentle and kind to me when I continuously discarded gender by listing it as
21
22 limitations in my PhD thesis, my articles (written mostly for job with as much of me in them
23
24 as possible), and in my book (written for my interviewees who I didn't think would know
25
26 how to care for gender). At this stage of my career, I am truly glad that I came to the
27
28 realization that researching gender won't cause me more pain than the gendered phenomena
29
30 around me have already caused it themselves. Instead it will be a way for me to heal my long
31
32 term wound regarding gender since probably birth.
33
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42

43 I heartfully thank the workshop organizers for their unconditioned authentic love in educating
44
45 junior academics. As much as I felt like an animal being experimented on during the 1,5 day
46
47 workshop, I have rediscovered so many important things not just for work, but also for life. I
48
49 can now also joyfully claim that I understand the power and meaning of education.
50
51
52
53

54 ***Solidarity***

55
56 Joining in and contributing to a workshop on collective writing left me with a sense of
57
58 academic solidarity which still exists in today's academia dressed in a plethora of
59
60

1
2
3 competition and pressure for productivity. Like Jenny Helin proposed in her presentation
4
5 about the valuation, and recognition, of vertical time, so was the workshop a pause in the
6
7 seemingly chronological timeline of academic work where junior researchers aim to one day
8
9 become recognized senior researchers, perhaps professors, that are cited more, more and
10
11 MORE, in order to be someone, to EXIST. The workshop embodied scarcity and
12
13 unfinishedness, in its beauty – showing its participants how we are not alone in our struggles
14
15 in the neoliberal academia.
16
17
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19
20

21
22 Not only did it leave us with a sense of solidarity, it made us act: Alison Pullen's suggestion
23
24 of actually becoming involved in collective act of resistance through writing made us to
25
26 activate our hands, our minds, mouths, pens, laptop buttons – for a joint effort. While we
27
28 started to work collaboratively to achieve a goal of sorts (an outcome to be sent for
29
30 publishing in GWO), I dare to argue that it was more about being HERE and NOW. It was
31
32 vertical time that we experienced – and, I suggest – we keep on experiencing, as we open our
33
34 joint writing documents of our own group, carrying on writing. Carrying on, carrying on,
35
36 pausing, pausing. To work as a collective cannot stand infinite carrying on *without* a time to
37
38 pause, even it would manifest through our very own comprehension of it, and that is one of
39
40 the reasons why collective writing is so powerful. It invites, perhaps forces, us to solidarity.
41
42
43
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45
46

47 *Sensitivity*

48
49 Working on sensitive issues together is, well, sensitive. I believe in letting everyone speak,
50
51 even if they speak against the grain. Then I see some others being offended and hurt.
52
53 Sometimes I do not even see this, but I am reminded about it later. I know I should know
54
55 better, and see, but time and again I am caught in this dilemma. When someone pours their
56
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1
2
3 heart out and there may be collateral damage, I am blind and clueless... because who am I to
4
5 police others?
6
7
8
9

10 Perhaps time is again the great healer. Perhaps we need time. Writing, and writing together, is
11
12 one way to heal; to bring multiple voices into the open, to converse, perhaps. We do not have
13
14 to agree, but let's listen to each other and care. Even if we sometimes end up hurting each
15
16 other. Because those who hurt have themselves been hurt.
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21 **The academic picket line – or resisting ‘Authorship’ through collective writing**

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25

26 Two interrelated themes emerged when exploring ‘collective writing as a form of resistance.’
27
28 First, we see collective writing as a resistance strategy against the prevalence of hierarchical
29
30 articulations of academic Authorship and certain institutionalized discourses and interests.
31
32 This resistance takes the form of collective writing as a form of *picketing*, a demonstration of
33
34 solidarity through which writing becomes an embodied practice, and our writing-together
35
36 marks an assemblage of bodies in solidarity. Second, by drawing upon tensions, power
37
38 struggles and ambivalence within collective resistance, we suggest that collective writing
39
40 may be considered a form of ‘unionizing’ that could help scholars better advocate
41
42 marginalized issues, challenge dominant norms, rules and customs and promote care, respect
43
44 and community within academia.
45
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51 The following paragraphs are a collection of reflections and responses grounded in our
52
53 experiences as early-career scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds, coming together
54
55 in a workshop on writing, assembled to speak to and with each other. By mixing our voices,
56
57 we explore possible strategies for a collective resistance against hierarchical articulations of
58
59
60

1
2
3 individualized academic Authorship and knowledge production. Our focus is placed on
4
5 discussing the challenges and possibilities in the collective construction of resistance against
6
7 an Authorship, that is, the contemporary competitive logic of scholarly work, which has
8
9 turned academic publishing into an individualized production line.
10
11
12
13

14 ***One Authorship, One Academia?***

15
16
17 What is the soul of the text? Maybe a discussion around Authorship and the redistribution of
18
19 academic capital – is that playing into and reproducing a capitalistic logic? There is
20
21 something about a paradox; the horizontal and vertical that actually each serve purposes; we
22
23 do not need to choose one. But by engaging with one, at a certain point in time (!), there is
24
25 also a need for full, honest, true commitment to the cause; that is why we draw on the
26
27 metaphor of picketing and the picket line that one collectively ensures is not crossed. Not by
28
29 people who are, who belong to, who oppose, or just randomly walks by. It works to disrupt
30
31 very concretely, but also takes up space, calls to it attention to spread, in the minds and in the
32
33 practices of organizations that share similarities.
34
35
36
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40
41 Already in this writing process, our voices start to mix. I read you, you read me, who are you,
42
43 who am I? What remains a topic of uncertainty is the actual error in the current scene of
44
45 academic publishing. What is so wrong about it that we want to stand in the picket line? It is
46
47 a crucial question, as we probably all have been publishing and been excited to see our own
48
49 names as authors of a particular piece of research and writing. It is a piece that embodies so
50
51 much more effort that can be guessed from reading the typed words from a, usually
52
53 electronic, paper. But when ready, who cares to protest or rebel? Can we not just adjust? Our
54
55 answer is no, not really. To write collectively also speaks against the drawback of who
56
57 actually benefits from an academic outcome. To write alone, or with two, three, or four
58
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60

1
2
3 colleagues – especially if you are not a big name in your ‘field’ and thus you are most
4
5 assumedly insecure of whether your work will actually be read and, yes, cited – requires an
6
7 effort that does not equal to the ‘price’ one gets when the work is eventually published.
8
9

10
11
12 We do not get direct compensation for our efforts. Our work is fueled by long temporalities
13
14 and a wish of our works’ recognition sometime in the future by our ‘colleagues,’ or strangers,
15
16 who might be able to find our work from the jungle of academic publications (all of which
17
18 nobody ever has the chance to go through in peace as we, at least many of us, are obliged to
19
20 produce, produce, produce). Our work is fueled by a third-party benefit as well, as we feed
21
22 the journals that feed us indirectly, and get their compensation for doing that. Yet, there is
23
24 more complexity: our universities might form a block to this author → editor(s) of journal
25
26 → reviewers → editor(s) → author → journal (x 1,2,3,4) → money to the journal
27
28 through subscribers → possible reputation through citations to the author / significant merit
29
30 in the CV to get an academic position, by not allowing (cannot afford?) access to journals in
31
32 which our work is published, thus blocking the distribution of our efforts to our own
33
34 communities. So, the question “can we not just adjust?” is crucial: we simply cannot, even
35
36 though we have to be part of the system to be alive as academics.
37
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45 We need to be bold and brave. This means that we need to be ready to face the criticism
46
47 regarding our statements as well. This is far easier to do when we write together – when we
48
49 stand together – when we write as a collective. This does not mean hegemony. This means
50
51 diversity and its embracement. This means multidisciplinary in its fundamental sense. Why?
52
53 Why to write as a collective? What are our motivations to stand in the picket line? In a
54
55 neoliberal world of academia, academic publishing counts as a quest and competition of
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1
2
3 individual academic capital. This is the enforcement and feeding of An Authorship. The big
4
5 A.

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9
10 Our first suggestion is to give away authorship by signing it over to anonymity. But that is
11
12 nothing, it is not generative of academic capital, it does not resist the dominant discourse
13
14 around Authorship, it just rejects it and take the conversation to a different space. One where
15
16 authorship does not exist. A similar idea, that insists staying with, resisting or challenging
17
18 dominant discourses on authorship, is one that does not turn over authorship to anonymity,
19
20 but which turns it over to a collective, defined by individuals who turn over authorship. That
21
22 is the union. Would it be possible to unionize; have one writing union that publishes, but still
23
24 keeps track of authors. Allow the union to negotiate terms of publications, but also to
25
26 redistribute capital among the members. By, for example, publishing member lists which
27
28 shows the number of publications each member has published; or contributed through,
29
30 through reviews, proofing or otherwise. Maybe citations are shared; maybe a reviewer is
31
32 allowed a share in citations in terms of h-index; impact and so on.
33
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40 In the case of writing in academia, we can form different fortresses by choosing with whom
41
42 we write, to which journals we write, and advocate for the meaning in the texts that we
43
44 produce as opposed to those produced by the 'other'. However, there is just one academia. It
45
46 is a paradoxical Yin-Yang relationship because all the different kinds of writings co-exist
47
48 together. With a white dot in the black half and a black dot in the white half, the collective
49
50 whole of writings in academia are balanced.
51
52
53
54
55

56 While we pick our own picket line, we must also look beyond the line. As we march forward
57
58 in the line, we do not forget that there is a bigger world out there.
59
60

1
2
3 ***We write. United.***
4

5
6 A picket line is a shared embodied space, where workers stake out common grounds to signal
7
8 their needs for change and working conditions. It is a safe and protected space for individuals
9
10 to advocate for things that matters to them. In a similar vein, academics need a safe haven to
11
12 feel that we can write authentically what we think about issues. And this applies especially to
13
14 academics who work on less dominant topics from marginalized perspectives. Collectively by
15
16 standing in the picket line, we can resist towards the powerful established discourse of
17
18
19 Authorship.
20
21

22
23
24 To stand in the picket line is not to try to destroy the system altogether at once – even though
25
26 it can be an effort towards such aim. It is more about disrupting what is problematically
27
28 normalized. It is about chewing one part of a bread and putting it back to the bag. Communal
29
30 chewing! To stand in the picket line evokes communality which encourages academics, be
31
32 they junior, senior, whatsoever, to take part in discussions possibly not one's 'specialty.' It
33
34 gives room for learning from each other meanwhile it forms a united voice. A united voice
35
36 that is multivocal at the same time. Paradoxical, yet necessary. A rainbow-colored, non-
37
38 hegemonic voice of the union, affectively engaging with writing as picketing.
39
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44

45 **Together**
46
47
48

49
50 As bell hooks reminds us: 'feminist theory is complex ... it is less the individual practice that
51
52 we often think and usually emerges from engagement with collective sources' (1991, p. 3). In
53
54 this spirit, we are writing resistance together. Co-writing is a practice shared with others to
55
56 craft a message. Writing with others, with others in mind calls for negotiation, respect, and
57
58 care. At times, it is necessary to set aside individual aims to accomplish this for the sake of
59
60

1
2
3 clarity, to be coherent individuals have to conform, but within compromise and negotiation
4
5 there is possibility for building on each other's ideas. Collective writing, as a resistance,
6
7 enables us to produce something together, to face these challenges, both temporal, content-
8
9 wise, and 'expertise'-bounded. It does not mean we would only write whatever comes to our
10
11 minds – no. This piece of writing we are now producing together may not fulfil the
12
13 requirements of a 'proper academic paper,' if you wish, entailing sections considering
14
15 empirical fieldwork (if existing), analysis, positioning to a particular field of research, review
16
17 of earlier work done, unfolding of the theoretical framework, discussion and conclusion.
18
19 Nevertheless, it is a piece of writing that has enabled us to learn from each other, to affect
20
21 each other, and hopefully also to affect others. This piece of writing is about suppressed
22
23 thoughts and feelings that our collective picket line of many authors allows us to express
24
25 without revealing ourselves as individuals.
26
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