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Article

## Collaborative Writing as Bio-Digital Quilting: A Relational, Feminist Practice Towards “Academia Otherwise”

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### Abstract

In this article, we explore how quilted poetry as methodology, through the practice of collaborative writing, can help us to attune to and think with what is un/seen, un/heard, and un/spoken in our bio-digital ways of working, as a way of resisting normative, exploitative practices in the neoliberal academia. We are a group of academics with different journeys and localities, connected by a common interest in the effects of boundaries, the dynamics of power, and the desire to do things differently. Drawing on our daily mundane encounters with/in both virtual and physical spaces of academia, including Teams meetings, Outlook emails, Google documents, and Miro board collaborations, we write quilted poetry with fragments of precarious matter: silences, messages, rhythms, feelings, and materialities. We attend to the entanglement of our bodies and their enmeshment in technology and share how bringing relational, feminist theories and the bio-digital together has helped us to both materialise new patterns of relations and enact a more ethical approach to working in academia.

### Keywords

academia otherwise; assemblage; bio-digital; diffraction; post-digital; precarious kin; quilted-poetry; relations; response-ability

### Issue

This article is part of the issue “Resisting a ‘Smartness’ That Is All Over the Place: Technology as a Marker of In/Ex/Seclusion” edited by Karin Hannes (KU Leuven) and Fred Truyen (KU Leuven).

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### 1. Assembling With Precarious Kin

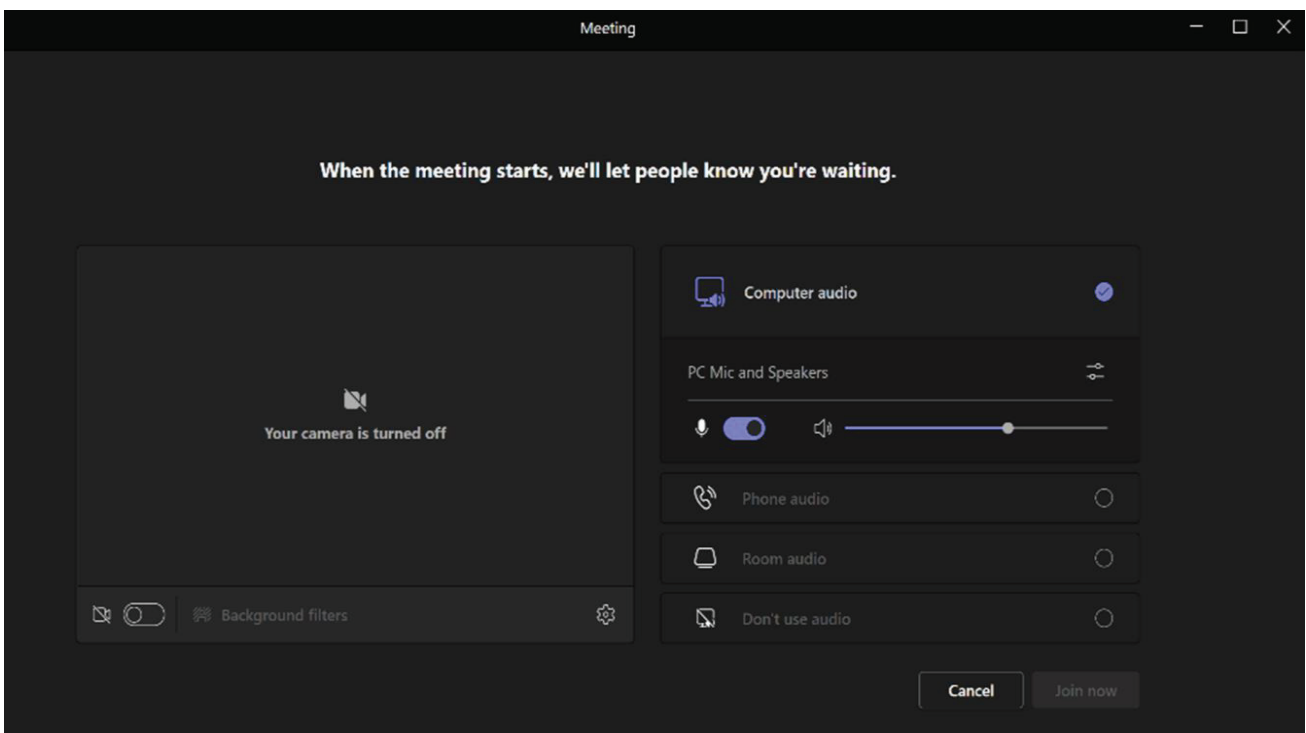
Quilting involves an assembling of matter across a multitude of times, places, and bodies; producing layers to protect against “cold, pressure, or impact” and “strengthening textiles that had become fragile” (Gwinner, as cited in Strohmayr, 2021 p. 15). Often the materials involved in quilting are what Vicuña (2022) terms “precarious materials”—scraps, leftovers, modest and imperfect kin with uncertain futures. Similarly, our collaborative writing-as-quilting involves a collective gathering of matter across the physical and virtual, time, space, and place to strengthen working relations that have become fragile, and in the hope of creating layers to protect

academic kinships against the pressures and impacts of academia. The precarity of the materials we work with is closely entangled with the precariousness of being women and mothers, working in academia, writing in “other than expected” ways, and living with/in/through precarity (Burton & Bowman, 2022). Attuning to our precarious bio-digital kin, we challenge the uncritical (re)production of academia “governed, regulated and lived by neoliberal principles” (Sotiropoulou & Cranston, 2022, p. 2) that privileges some at the expense of others. Through making the precarious explicit and visible, through acknowledging the ways in which our kinships with precarious “oddkin” matter, we collectively (re)make academic spaces. Moreover, by developing new

bio-digital patterns of relations, we contribute to “care-full” ways of working that withstand current neoliberal pressures (Sotiropoulou & Cranston, 2022). We share our collaborative process of quilted poetry writing, in which we assembled, stitched through, and responded to our precarious bio-digital kinship, as a contribution to experiments in developing more just futures rooted in more ethical and care-full ways of working in academia.

We explore and think with our own daily mundane, virtual, and physical entanglements with digital technologies, our email discussions in/with Outlook, online meetings in/with Teams (Figure 1), and virtual conference exchanges in/with Miro board through the method of quilted poetry, as a way of coming together, to (re)think and (re)imagine new ways of living, working, and becoming

in academia. We pose the questions: What happens when meetings are conducted in Teams? What response-able relations are enacted as we are consigned to online waiting rooms accompanied only by the silent presence of bright screens? What other ways of working in academia are possible if we begin to pay attention to the silences in our virtual spaces, to the messages on our screens, and to the ways technology moves us as we move with/in/through it? To that end, we are guided by a central question: How can thinking, making, and becoming-with the digital in academic environments help us think productively and anew about ethical working relations in the post-digital, in which the bio-digital, rather than merely the digital, becomes a fertile ground for doing academia otherwise?



Teams: How do you want to join your Teams meeting?  
 L: Are we meeting today?  
 D: I am in the waiting room @ Teams  
 PC: [muted hum, silent screen]  
 Teams: You are offline  
 E: I have some unexpected obligations. Could you record your meeting?  
 Teams: When the meeting starts, we'll let people know you're waiting  
 P: [Am I not the organiser?]  
 Teams: Your camera is turned off  
 C: Sorry—just on an urgent call. Will let u all in asap  
 Teams: Recording. By attending this meeting, you consent to being included.

**Figure 1.** Meeting, living, becoming with/in/through Microsoft Teams, November 2022. Screen capture by Petra Vackova.

## 2. Attuning to the Digital in Academia

There is a need to write more about the changing relationship between academics and the digital technologies in their workplace (Decuyper & Simons, 2016). Some research emphasizes academics' "technophobia," and their resistance to using technologies more readily and creatively (Khalil, 2013). Some explore the emergence of new negative impacts of technology on academics, such as growing videoconferencing fatigue (Oducado et al., 2022). But to date, little attention has been given to the possibilities beyond neoliberal patterns of work that these difficult, daily encounters of academics and digital technologies in their work settings open up, and any new patterns of relations they generate. This is despite the rapidly increasing presence of digital technologies in the higher education environment. From computer technologies in their various forms, such as mobile phones (Ferreira, 2022), and communicational technologies, such as social media platforms (Williams & Greenhalgh, 2022), to data analytic systems (Nguyen et al., 2020), digital technologies are changing not only the way we work, communicate, and create knowledge, but also the way we relate to each other in academia.

The digitalization of higher education and the omnipresence of digital technologies is driven by the idea that digital technologies aid learning, teaching, and knowledge-exchange processes (Ifenthaler et al., 2022), and also generate inclusive and transformative spaces by lowering barriers to participation and supporting new modes of communication (Fulcher et al., 2020; Schwarz et al., 2020). Despite these recognised opportunities, some have nevertheless been wary of the role of technology in inclusive ways of working. Vicuña (2022) writes:

The entanglement of our bodies—with both the material world of nature and the places that we live—is enmeshed in the hive-mind of technology that connects us with each other, while isolating us in new and uncertain ways.

Recent studies dispel the myth that digital technology itself can make higher education spaces more inclusive or fair (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Smith et al., 2020; Thompson & Prinsloo, 2022). Digital technology in academia is not a neutral tool nor is it a universal good (du Toit & Verhoef, 2018; Prinsloo, 2020). Much like Sancho-Gil et al. (2020, p. 71), we are critical of the "inclusive and collective view of technology" because its effects may "end up having opposite results." Digital technologies can (re)produce normative forms of workplace power relations and exploitative, neoliberal practices when they are employed and engaged uncritically in academic work. Moreover, we are increasingly in a world where digital technology and virtual reality are not separate from a "natural" human and social life (Jandrić

et al., 2018); the boundary between these once separate spheres is blurred, giving rise to new ways of being and becoming in academia in the post-digital (Cramer, 2015; Hodgson, 2019; Peters et al., 2022).

Our objective is therefore to complexify current discourse at the intersection of academic work relations and digital technology by experimenting with new patterns of relationality and moving beyond the discourse of inclusion. While we strongly support efforts to resist exclusionary practices and structures in academia, we posit that social inclusion as a concept and a practice is not only reductive but also problematic because it produces ideological patterns of difference and sustains a human-centred justice paradigm and therefore cannot successfully counter systemic injustices (Vackova, 2022). Thinking-with Sancho-Gil et al. (2020), we also challenge the simplistic notion of digital technology as a neutral object, a tool to be employed for the greater human good. Instead, we (re)frame digital technologies as precarious oddkin with whom we are intimately and inevitably intertwined in a "parliament of things" (Sancho-Gil et al., 2020, p. 71), where alternative practices are (re)examined, (re)imagined, and (re)enacted. Digital technology, while an important more-than-human kin, is merely one of the actors of our bio-digital becomings that both shapes and is being shaped towards new possibilities for more just futures in academia. There is an urgent need to think and act beyond the current narrow conceptualizations of both technology and justice when working against institutional injustices and towards new ways of working and thriving in academia. With this article, we hope to inspire academics in all fields to start attuning to what is un/heard, un/seen, and un/spoken in their daily bio-digital encounters in order to co-enact academic practices differently and co-create new ways of working in academia. We show how imagining and actively (re)making mundane institutional practices through entangling-with, layering, and stitching together precarious oddkin (Terranova, 2016) has helped us imagine "academia otherwise" and create "more livable stories" (Adsit-Morris, 2017, p. 43).

## 3. Thinking-With and Alongside Relational Theories and Concepts

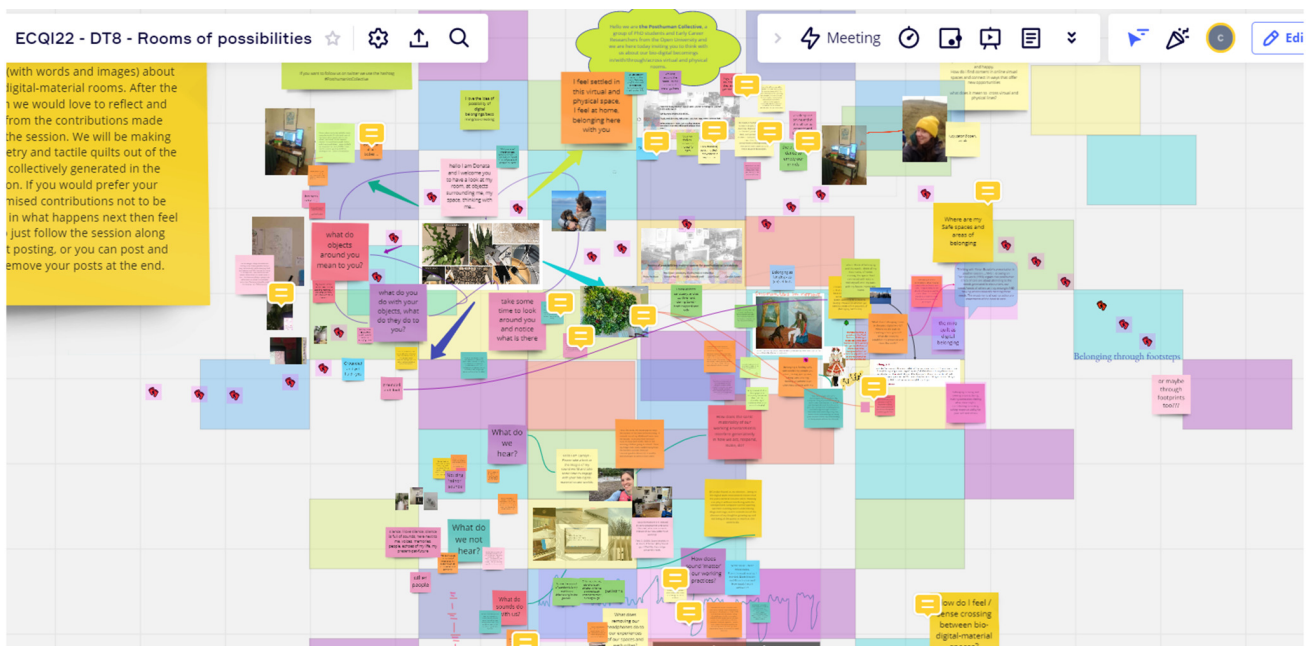
Our doing of academia otherwise is characterised by the premise that existence comes to matter through relationships; *being* does not pre-exist relationships (Barad, 2007). Theorising, knowing, doing, and being are enactments in and of "specific material configurations" (Barad, 2007, p. 91), a material and iterative process that reconfigures and re-articulates the world (Bozalek, 2022). Rather than working with a critique of the binaries that constitute the bio-digital, the virtual and the physical, or the human and more-than-human, as separate, we think with/through the notion of assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988) and experiment with the various arrangements that constitute bio-digital

kinships. Inspired by the philosophies of Deleuze and Guattari (1988), who recognise matter and meaning as coexisting in complex “assemblages,” we work with theory as concept to respond to how academic collaborations in the post-digital might materialise differently. Foregrounding heterogeneous relations through the concept of assemblage, we develop a productive practice of strengthening kin in resistance to divisive neo-liberal effects of power in academia (Macgilchrist, 2021). In doing so, we show the rich complexities in contemporary human–technology assemblages that add depth to how we might enact and enliven our ways of working in academia. To think with bio-digital assemblages, such as those enacted with/in/through the Miro board (Figure 2), we propose, offers a way to scratch at the surface and explore new kinds of ethics.

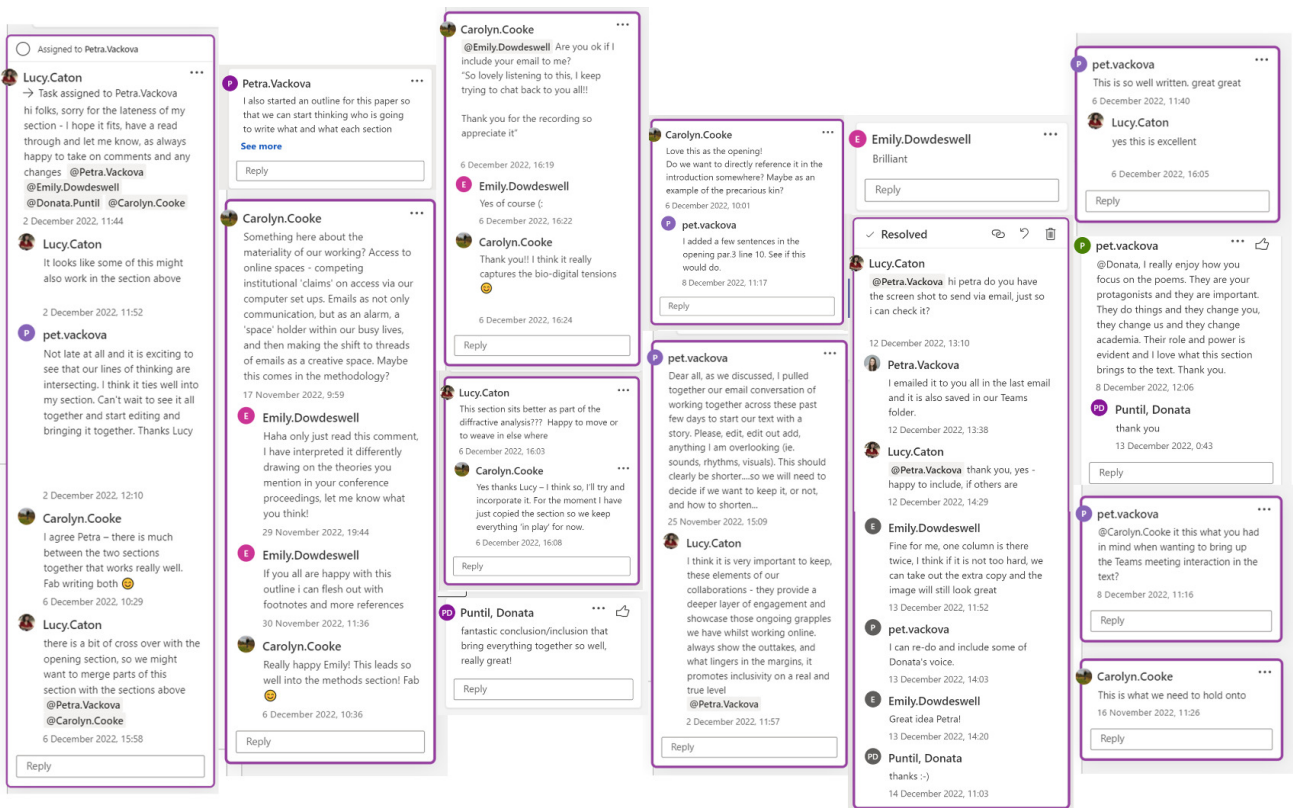
Quilting-with and alongside relational, feminist, and post-digital theories we seek to be accountable to the material conditions we co-create as we experiment towards “new possibilities for living justly” (Barad, 2007, p. x). We contribute to experiments in doing academia otherwise (Beauchamps, 2021; Bozalek, 2022; Osgood et al., 2020; Romano, 2022), to support material, relational, and affective spaces in academia, and “reimagine the academy as a space of/for justice and flourishing” (Shefer & Bozalek, 2022, p. 26). By attending to our collaborative writing as a material and iterative process of quilting-with and alongside relational, feminist, post-digital theories, “we loosen the frame of our habitual academic practice in order to make space for unrecorded, small stories to bubble up, becoming undeniably present” (Beauchamps, 2021, p. 395).

#### 4. Reframing Collaborative Writing as Bio-Digital Quilting

We conceive our collaborative writing as a quilting practice, as an act of kinship, of exploration, and of imagining, allowing us to “strengthen” each other, to “protect” and care for each other, but also to acknowledge and deliberately think-with the precarity of our materials and ourselves as we “become” in academia. Our quilted poetry is a space of political feminist resistance within academia that places the mundane, the othered, and the personal at the centre of academic writing, as a performativity of resistance against neo-liberal forces (Taylor & Gannon, 2018). Our collaborative writing is an act of care (de la Bellacasa, 2017). Taking care of each other with/in/through writing is an act of doing academia otherwise to us (Figure 3). Moreover, it challenges established orthodoxies about linearity in representing professional lives in favour of a rhizomatic, collaborative, artful, and playful act of doing-being together. In our writing, we collaborate not only with each other but with places, spaces, and mundane objects surrounding our daily academic life (Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010; Coole & Frost, 2010; Taylor, 2013). Entangling and becoming-with the mundane, the matter, the surroundings, our collaborative writing becomes vibrant and agentic story-making. Such collaborative writing is a democratic ecology of events in which hierarchies are flattened, and in which what matters is the interconnection of parts, the knots, the entanglements of bodies, objects, stories, and voices, where the marginal is reworked and repositioned.



**Figure 2.** Assembling, experimenting, doing otherwise with/in/through Miro board, ECQI 2022, February 2022. Screen capture by Petra Vackova.



**Figure 3.** Writing, caring, quilting with/in/through Microsoft Teams. Screen capture by Petra Vackova.

Our collaborative writing through and with the presence of digital technologies, inspired by evocative auto-ethnography (Bochner & Ellis, 2016), creative-relation writing practices (Gale & Wyatt, 2021), and feminist storying practices (Taylor et al., 2020), is not to be understood as a fixed order of parts, but rather as an assemblage, a creative and relational movement, as a quilt of stories stitched together-apart, made and re-made, continuously, where the individual original patches are no longer recognisable. While quilting as method is well established within qualitative research (Clark, 2019; Flannery, 2001; Koelsch, 2012), (re)seeing and (re)enacting quilting as a relational, feminist, bio-digital, performative method acknowledges its position “at the intersection of material, embodied and textile rhetorics,” whereby it becomes a practice that values the physical labour, the knowledge base of the creators and the relationality between human and more-than-human (Arellano, 2022, p. 17). With our collaborative writing as bio-digital quilting, we stitch together theory and practice. Doing and embracing the core values of care, labour, knowledge, and the materiality of our writing together, enacts academia otherwise. We conceive our bio-digital quilting as an artful collaborative practice (Kirkpatrick et al., 2021) in which the various bio-digital assemblages produce a generative space/place (Taylor & Gannon, 2018) where stories move, grow, change, and take a new life as they are stitched through, across and together. A collaborative writing-as-quilting is a practice of taking care, enacting academic writing differently, and

a joyful, vital space/place for becoming that is imbued with creativity, co-creation, and co-response-ability of actions where traditional subjectivities and relationalities are destabilised.

### 5. Unfolding a Collective Practice

As noted by Knapp (as cited in Strohmayr, 2021), the English language is closely related to metaphors of sewing (e.g., piecing together, weaving ideas, stitching different sections together, threading an argument). This relationship between sewing, quilting, and language, creates a space for collaborative gatherings of writing/making/visualising in what we term “quilted poetry.” Adopting what Lahman et al. (2019, p. 215) term a “poemish” approach to writing, which they define as a safe space for the creation of something resembling a poem for research purposes, we perform a process of making, embellishing, layering, patterning our bio-digital becomings in academia into poetic forms. Bai et al. (2010) note that poetry-making “provokes presencing,” enabling transformations to happen while we pay attention to each other, as the assemblage of the poem “sinks into our being, and alters who we are” (Bai et al., 2010, p. 359). Collectively paying attention, making spaces for deliberately acknowledging and explicating our bio-digital “becoming” together through poetry-making, foregrounds differences that help us resist established relations in academia and consider ways of being and becoming that strive towards doing

academia otherwise. As we quilt our poems, we engage diffraction as an ethico-onto-epistemological practice of interference, or in other words, as a thoughtful and accountable knowledge practice that makes a difference (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1997). In our collaborative poetry writing, diffraction is a process and a product through which we re(see), (re)hear, and (re)make tangible patterns of commonality and difference (Barad, 2007). By reading our poems with/through/between each other we pay attention to what the poems “do” in speaking to different patterns of relations and towards more ethical ways of working, being, and living in academia.

We start quilting by gathering and thinking with precarious matter (e.g., sounds, objects, metaphors, images) within our meetings, conversations, conference presentations, and our own writings. The precarity of this matter relates not to a substantive fragility, but to one of the multiple forms of precarity, enacted in the academy. We turn to the matter that surrounds us but

is often un/heard, un/seen, and un/noticed while we are on video calls or writing emails, the sounds between, across, or excluded from our bio-digital ways of working, and to our embodied responses to the spaces we are engaging in. Each of us acting as a quilter sets in motion the creative process of writing by attuning to our daily bio-digital encounters with precarious oddkins and creating the first line of a quilted poem. The first line of a poem is then passed to another person, and then onto another until, over a week, each poem is materialised through our close entangled encounters (Table 1).

We share the emerging poems by email, thereby “holding a space” amongst all the other emails calling for our attention and time (Figure 4). These emails feel like daily presents, vitalising settled ways of working. As poems travel across various virtual and physical spaces, new layers, embellishments, and scraps are added, or threaded through the existing material. Once the journey is complete, the original quilter “binds” the emerging

**Table 1.** Mapping our quilting poetry-making.

	Poem 1	Poem 2	Poem 3	Poem 4	Poem 5
Initial line	<i>Emily</i>	<i>Donata</i>	<i>Lucy</i>	<i>Petra</i>	<i>Carolyn</i>
Thursday 17th	<i>To Donata</i>	<i>To Lucy</i>	<i>To Petra</i>	<i>To Carolyn</i>	<i>To Emily</i>
Friday 18th	<i>To Lucy</i>	<i>To Petra</i>	<i>To Carolyn</i>	<i>To Emily</i>	<i>To Donata</i>
Monday 21st	<i>To Petra</i>	<i>To Carolyn</i>	<i>To Emily</i>	<i>To Donata</i>	<i>To Lucy</i>
Tuesday 22nd	<i>To Emily</i>	<i>To Donata</i>	<i>To Lucy</i>	<i>To Petra</i>	<i>To Carolyn</i>
	(edit, embellish, extend)				
Friday 24th	<i>Share</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Share</i>



**Figure 4.** Gathering, working, presencing with/in/through Outlook, November 2022.

quilt together, entangling it with the layers and materials that had been added, thinking with the additions and finishing to create the final quilted poem (Figure 5).

### 6. Diffracting Through-With Quilted Poetry and Following Loose Threads

Quilting with/in/through our daily, mundane bio-digital ways of becoming in academia and assembling, layering,

and embellishing poems with patches of un/heard stories, ideas, sounds, un/felt rhythms, feelings, and un/seen images and materialities helps us to think through, think-with, un/do, and ask further questions about our individual and collective becomings with digital technology in academia. The process surfaces the synergies and tensions within our writing experiment, both reinforcing performative academic models (Sotiropoulou & Cranston, 2022), where efficiencies of time, money,

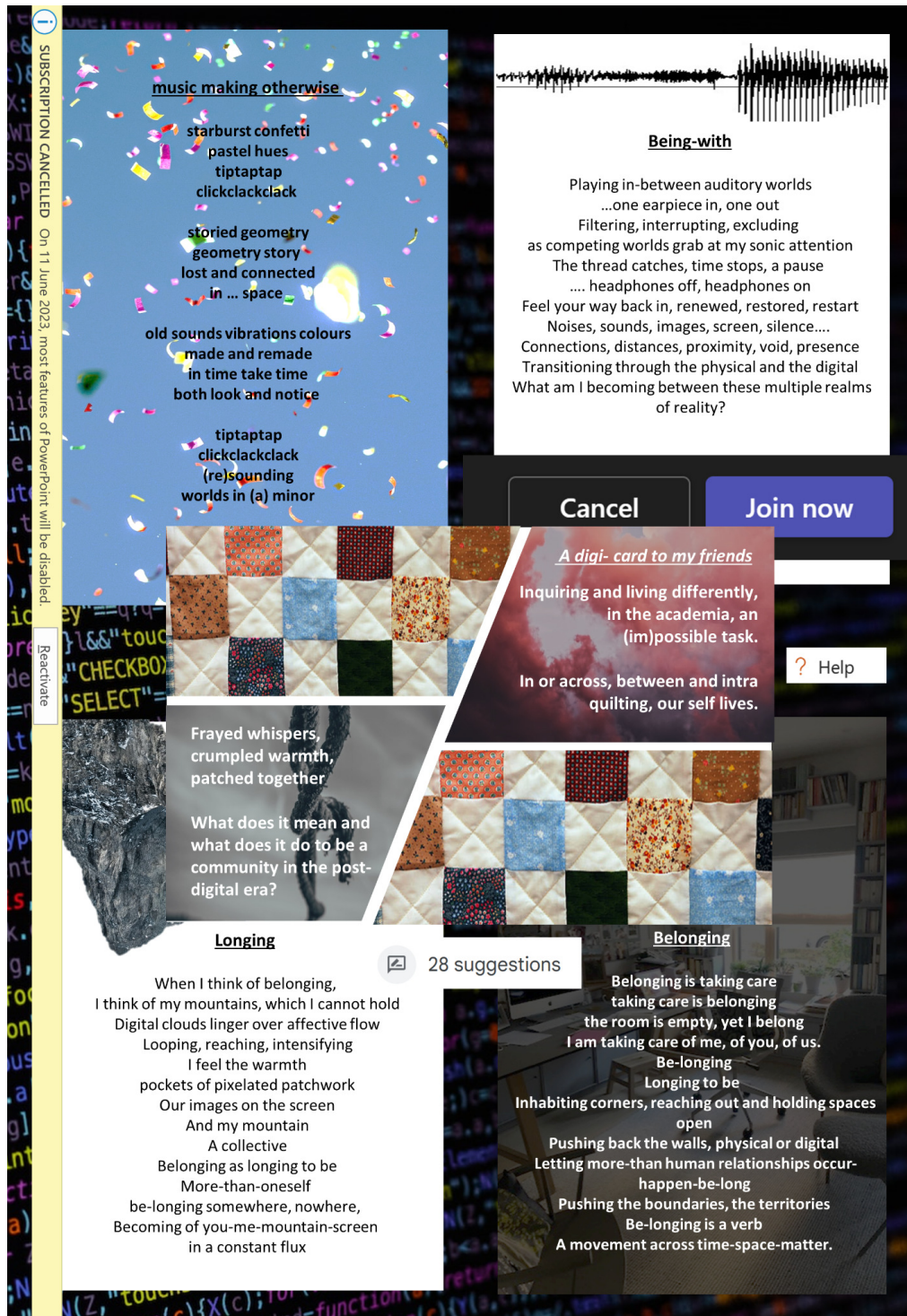


Figure 5. Bio-digital quilted poetry.



and resources are prioritised and amplifying the careful, bio-digital, embodied experiences of co-creation, where the wider bio-digital assemblages of precarious kin become an encounter of new meaning and mattering. Quilted poems become a precarious meeting place that both illuminates and interrupts the dominant neoliberal practices in academia, helping us move beyond militant metaphors of strategies and targets (Phipps & Saunders, 2009). The tensions-filled realities of writing-as-quilting, our seated aching bodies, failing technologies, noisy backgrounds, family emergencies, or asynchronous work, lead to a generative deepening of bio-digital kinships and the co-creation of new threads of possibilities towards more ethical ways of working together.

Diffractively reading the poems, concepts, and materialities of our bio-digital quilt through and between each other, the following vignettes, written in response, explore what else the bio-digital quilt “does,” what concepts towards new patterns of relationalities emerge in the encounters along its seams, folds, and threads. The following responses are not merely individualistic bounded thought exercises, but a practice of responding to and making with the assemblage of the diverse kin, materials, concepts, and affects that come together in the writing of quilted poems, in their diffractive re-reading and in the writing in-response.

Carolyn: The poems re-make what it means to collaborate. The etymology of collaboration is “working together,” with a focus on producing something. This product view of collaboration is woven throughout academia; we collaborate to write courses, to bid for funding, to present at conferences. Our poems experiment with collaborating differently, re-making collaboration as more-than piecing different peoples’ thinking together (which would be more akin to patchworking). Instead, collaborating as quilting is an “un/doing together” where we are constantly re/stitching through our bio-digital layers, between ourselves, our thinking, our acts, our lives, our materialities, our past-present-futures in academia. We make and re-make, we feel and re-feel, we stitch and re-stitch as a constantly dynamic process of coming to know and coming to be together.

Petra: The poems prompt us to (re)consider settled concepts and ideas such as the notion of belonging in the post-digital by unseaming, loosening, and (re)stitching the edges of the concept together. The notion of belonging comes to matter and reorients understandings around ethical bio-digital encounters in academia. To “be-long” is to be and is to “long.” It is both turning to oneself and turning to the other at the same time. Be-longing is a generative concept that challenges the harmony of the fixed realities of the self and opens to the entanglement of the self and the other for more just futures. Be-longing means being (un)settled, being both settled and being on the move, and taking the “other,” the people-places-animal-things with you, as much as being taken with them. It is actively growing and wandering towards more just futures in academia

in which the self is more than human, it is a more-than-human, emergent, nomadic community that allows for new ways of being and becoming (Braidotti, 2011). Thinking and becoming-with the notion of be-longing means attuning to being, the reiterative processes of worlding among kin in each moment, and to longing, the desiring the im/possible that drives experimentation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983), towards new modes of working and becoming in academia.

Donata: The poems speak for-of-with us, are part of us, of our being together in space-time-matter. Co-creation is at the core of these poems, co-creation is at the centre of our collaborative inquiry, of our collaborative writing, and of our journey of being and becoming academics within and beyond a bio-digital environment. These poems speak of movements, of vibrations, of absences, and presences. They speak of knots, of connections, of lines of flight. They make and create new knots, new ways of being within academia. They are full of care, of taking care of each other, of emotions, of be-ing together, yet apart. They are togetherness. They make togetherness. They are process and product. They move, they are not static knowledge fixed in time. They change and fluctuate with us, with readers, with new encounters. They make new encounters possible. Writing them creates new lines of flight, new possibilities of exploring and producing academic knowledge differently. They are little pearls of beauty co-created across e-mail exchanges, inboxes, word documents, images, cut apart and stitched together. Creating something new, from the old, from dissonances, silences, rhythm, sounds, images, words, embodied experiences of togetherness. They make me happy, they keep me company, they keep me warm, wrapped within their stitched-together-words.

Lucy: The poems make tangible the kinship within our collective and bio-digital, more than human entanglements. What becomes stark, more than the words alone, is the shifting attention to relations at the cross section of the biological and the digital. What more can be accounted for, experienced, and unfolded, at this intersection? These questions lead to a growing sense of self-awareness, which means a renewed attentiveness to behaviours, fragments, and singularity, yet it also encourages recognition of my own entangled responsibility throughout, which incites an ethics of care (de la Bellacasa, 2017) towards “the others.” Adjusting to an active rather than passive mode of accountability prompts a way to recognise the physicality of participating within the quilted digital poetry-making. Re-attuning to what I am *doing, sensing, hearing, and feeling*, becomes significant, within the wider assemblage that incites a more embodied and immersive enactment of response-ability. In other words, what matters and is made to matter in our bio-digital becomings, becomes clearer or, at best, easier to sense.

Emily: The poems unsettle linear scripts of living in academia and centre connections, creativity, and

processes of meaning-making to generate an analysis otherwise that blurs methodological boundaries:

Any work...founded on carefully, collectively considered principles of justice, can only begin when the weapons are still and language is allowed to sing again. This makes a poetic project in such a context a political act with words; working to rebel phonemically; to change the air...to speak of the hidden, unjust things felt in the depths, bodying forth, despite itself, all kinds of emotion, shapes and patterns which are fundamentally disrespectful...of boundaries. (Phipps & Saunders, 2009, p. 359)

Our poems change the air of the academy by stitching through our fragmented scraps of precarity, community, and care to strengthen stories less told, layering and holding together what lies to hand. Pulling together frayed whispers, empty rooms, digital clouds, and auditory worlds that encompass both proximities and voids, into the crumpled warmth of community. Like the piercing of fabric in the act of stitching there is a violence to inclusion: pulling together rests on the assumption of an apart-ness. But the dispersed air that makes up spaces in between is caught up in the process of quilting and held in pockets of warmth. What previously kept us cold (technology, sounds, words, erasures, pushed aside-ness), now keeps us warm (connection, sounds, memories, presences, pulled together-ness), enacting “possibilities for intimacy, pedagogy, learning, creativity, adventure” (Bozalek et al., 2021, p. 844).

## 7. In/Concluding

Quilted poetry, a bio-digital, feminist, posthuman methodology developed here, is an experiment at thinking, working, and (re)doing academia otherwise. Through quilted poetry, new meaning is generated when language is used differently, when scholarly text meets everyday language, images, and sounds. The assembling of unlike things, through playful writing/quilting/entangling encounters, disrupts the settled flows and rhythms of academic writing practices. Quilted poetry is not a representational practice, it is an attempt at care-ful workplace collaboration and bio-digital kinship that decenters expertise, unsettles individualisation of thinking, and performative agendas of neoliberal academia. It is a safer (s)pace for new patterns of relation beyond inclusion to emerge through its interactiveness and responsiveness rooted in attentiveness to more than oneself. It challenges how we engage and inquire in academia in the post-digital. While developing our quilted poems, the familiar “bing” noise of emails demanding our productive attention becomes the sounding of relationality. Seeing each other’s cursors flicker in shared documents as we work the same text, instead of being a distraction, becomes an act of be-longing. Making time and space in busy academic schedules for

un/doings, software failings, and productive frictions, becomes a matter of ethical urgency. Quilted poetry-making is therefore imbued with possibilities to engage otherwise in the spaces of and beyond the university. Through quilted poetry, we come into contact with each other’s physical and virtual communities, we share each other’s homes and entangle with the precarious fragments of work/family/self/place/other, we (re)attune to our daily bio-digital kin, the various modalities of online documents, video calls, electronic mailboxes, and instant messaging.

Quilted poetry is a poemish opening of—and opening to—a particular process of becoming that produces new imaginaries and makes precarious kinships tangible through which new ways and stories of becoming and living in academia unfold. It is a diffractive experiment at re/assembling self/other/digital/academia away from precarity and towards new possibilities for more just futures. It is therefore not an endpoint that has an outcome or a conclusion. It is a “what if” and “what else” proposition that asks: What if academia becomes enacted otherwise? What will academia be, feel and look like once we start imagining ethical work relations beyond inclusion? What are the possibilities towards more ethical ways of working, inquiring, and becoming with/in the virtual and physical spaces we are so intimately entangled with? How else can re/making settled concepts reorient understandings around ethical encounters in academia in the post-digital? What other relations are possible when collaboration is enacted as a process of bio-digital un/doing together? What if we enter spaces where more-than-human kin speak for-of-with us? What if we not only listen to stories less told but weave our own scraps of precarious living into their fabric, what new possibilities for more ethical ways of working and inquiring can we make to matter then?

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The author declares no conflict of interests.

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