LJMU Research Online

Quinn, K, Cornish, B and Orlek, J

Between co and solo writing: experimenting with constraint, composition, and community through writing 100s

http://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/id/eprint/25563/

Article

Between co and solo writing: experimenting with constraint, composition, and community through writing *100s*

Katherine Quinn, Benjamin Cornish & Jonathan Orlek

Published online: 15 Jan 2025.

Submit your article to this journal ☑

Article views: 56

View related articles ☑

View Crossmark data ☑

Between co and solo writing: experimenting with constraint, composition, and community through writing *100s*

Katherine Quinn[a], Benjamin Cornish[b] and Jonathan Orlek[c]

[a]School of Social Science, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK; [b]Library and Archives, Natural History Museum, London, UK; [c]Liverpool School of Art and Design, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK

ABSTRACT

In this article, we describe what we've learned about writing through the development of our academic-creative writing group, a community initiated during the first lockdown of Spring 2020. Called The 100s, we adopted and adapted a format of writing popularised by the writer-theorists Lauren Berlant and Kathleen Stewart in their publication, *The Hundreds*. Together, we share individually written creative reflections on everyday life and theory aloud and on a collaborative platform. As per the name, the wordcounts must be exact multiples of a 100: either 100 or multiple 100s, nothing in-between. With duration and regularity, our group's development provoked reflection on the organised and organising proclivities of writing in academic environments. Here we expand on five insights precipitated by this solo-collective writing experiment for a more humane approach to academic production: embracing diverse writing rhythms; socialising writing; socialising reading; being deliberative with technology; experimenting with orality.

Introduction

It started in the Spring of the UK's COVID-19 first 'lockdown' with an email. An email sent to friends and friends of friends: of people met inside libraries and outside clubs, in seminar rooms and on church pews. In 2020 with these places of communion closed, we were all looking to find each other again somehow. So the invitation was sent. An invitation to start something.

> In this time of lockdown an oddly disciplined collaborative writing-reading-writing practice might be attractive – I hope! – to some of you. I don't want to be a 'journaler', but I'd like to test out grasping at something observed, through short sharp writings.

(Hundreds author, personal communication, May 2020)

Without expectations for any formal outcomes, our 100s[1] group was initiated as a way of making sense of our surroundings when the boundary between work and home-life was blurred, when time was sapped and run dry, spaces were overburdened with roles, and our work selves had lost some of their form. From a starting point for reflection on the eldritch of lockdown, the group became a space for the creation and curation of novel forms of writing. We stumbled

This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

into 100-ing as a way of 'writing alone together' (Quinn, Orlek, and Cornish 2020) in/through lockdown life and have stumbled onwards as a writing community ever since.

The practice of our writing community was put forward by some of us who had already shared extra-intellectual fandom of either Lauren Berlant or Kathleen Stewart, and were excited by their shared 2019 publication, *The Hundreds*.

> In their so-called 'Public Feelings Projects', our guys Lauren and Kathleen (and others!) would meet and read their work aloud in groups, working over and chopping and over laying every word as it met the audible. We can't do that, though we might like to read them on zoom? (We could work up to that!) …
>
> If you're interested, let me know and we'll work out a group! … pass the email on please!
>
> Cheers,
>
> (Hundreds author, personal communication, May 2020)

In the intervening months and – now – years since these email threads we have evolved aspects of our dynamic, habits, and membership but remain with a central organising structure of periodically and regularly meeting online to collectively share – orally and digitally typed – constrained pieces of creative non-fiction. We began by meeting fortnightly, but have had periods of upping that to weekly, shorter meetings, and lowering it to monthly or occasionally longer intervals. In 100-word multiples (often just 100, but any number divisible by 100 is allowed), we write about both everyday and theoretically driven topics (and play with any lines between them) as they occur to us through our days. We have used the practice to follow a thought, play with an observation, a daydream, a theoretical knot. At times, 100s are brief interventions into ideas or problematics that have preoccupied our work lives but have not found release: for example, a rumination on the unspoken functions of the literature review, a working through of an awkward fieldwork encounter. At other times, 100s come from moving through a world that is wont to, itself, feel constrained: for example, describing the constellation of social shaming that emerged with 'socially distanced' shopping during the pandemic, or watching how skips get stealthily filled by neighbours.

In sharing the pieces aloud as a group on platforms like JITSI and Zoom, listening, discussing, and collating them on one piece of freeware (a digital 'pad' developed by the open-source activist platform, *Riseup*), we experimented with a writing practice that exists somewhere between collective and solo writing. This practice allowed a softer, slower, more intimate relation to the world, to writing, and to one another. The format of our 100s as it plays out in a meeting is for all participants to paste their individually written piece of text into the writing pad sometime in advance of the meeting. This could be days in advance, or just in the first 10 seconds of the meeting. The same possible time scales hold for the writing of the pieces too; some are rushed, others are chewed over for time in advance. We all have the pad open during the meeting, and we take it in turns to read our entries aloud, seeing the words as they are spoken. The 'meeting' of text and sound remained central to our organisation, and we discuss how this came to matter below. After the author of the 100 has read, there is a pause, some comments, and a discussion about sounds, images, ideas and influences.

As well as our own 100s we semi-regularly paste in pieces of writing we – as individuals – admire and speak to the developing shared interests of the group (these often share an experimentation with constrained writing formats, but not always). There is no specific theme or outline for 100s meetings or for shared texts; we felt our way into knowing one another's tastes, and developed a kind of tag-team of influences. Some prominent texts aside from Lauren and Kathleen's book we were inspired by included musicologist Angus Carlyle's 'hundred' based book about running through the South Downs in England: *A downland index* (Carlyle 2016) and artist Emma Cocker's experimental, provocation and poetry driven *The Yes of the No* (Cocker 2016). The format and cadence of trimming extraneous words down to multiples of 100 often added a rhythmic, poetic, quality to our experiments, and we are inspired by poetry. Ursula K le Guin's *Loud Cows* (le Guin 1992) and Ada Limon's *Wonder Woman* (2018) are two poems that, while having nothing to do with 100-word multiples, inspired interest in each of us and led to discussion and reflection. We are interested in interrogating and picking

over disciplinary boundaries, along with effortfully collapsing our own. It has led to the co-creation of a collection – in the form of our shared pad – which is multi-authored, amalgamated, and still in progress. It is a growing record of our thoughts, interests, reading habits and influences.

Throughout this paper, we include examples of our 100s in text boxes. We refer to the written products as '100s', and our group as 'The 100s'. In keeping with Lauren Berlant and Kathleen Stewart's original project, citations – including non-textual 'things we thought with' (Berlant and Stewart 2019, 157) – are presented in brackets at the bottom of each 100. These are like references, but also include topics, observations, objects. We have considered these inserted '100s' as objects akin to illustrations or figures, and while we refer to them in the main body of the article at points, they could also be read and considered as standalone segments of text, i.e. they don't necessarily cleave directly to the flow of writing around them. Some of these examples were written prior to thinking about this article (or any proposal to write about writing 100s) – simply for sharing within our group – while others were written as a way to think through questions raised through this process. The article has therefore been both produced by and productive of writing 100s. In each 100s text box, we outline where the 100 emerged from and described how it helped us to do academic writing differently.

In this article, we unpick and rethread the dynamics of our writing group. In doing so, we consider what we have learned about constraint, community, and composition and about what we, as people engaged in intellectual work, wish to move toward and against. It is structured as follows: first, we give some background to the field of 'writing differently' (Bozalek 2017). We then move into describing our interest in Berlant and Stewart's project and publication, *The Hundreds* (2019), and reflect on how we are both similar to and different from them. In the shorter sections that follow, we highlight five particular 'lessons' we have learned about writing. We conclude by summarising the different ways that writing 100s offer a counterpoint to conventional writing in academia: in being able to ask big, unrefined, questions of ourselves and work; change our habituated writing styles; establish a slower but more regular pace of writing; produce writing in moments in which academic and domestic life merge; and to share intimate reflections in community.

Academic writing cultures: against and towards

Spreading Literature

In Travelling Concepts, a guide for interdisciplinary humanities research, Meike Bal argues for a shift from coverage to concepts. 'Within an interdisciplinary setting, coverage – of the classics, of all periods or 'centuries,' of all major theories used within a field – is no longer an option.' Concepts, in contrast, can travel across disciplinary fields, leading to critical intimacies.

The use of the term coverage reminds me of the start of Ben Lerner's novel The Topeka School, where the strategy of 'the spread' within US debating societies is introduced. The spread involves one debater introducing so many interconnected points that the opposing team are unable to respond to them all, thus leaving 'dropped arguments', a win by default. The technique, of high paced, gasping, unpunctuated, prose, operates at the edge of comprehension (350 wpm). Learning on YouTube that spread practice can involve speaking with a pen in your mouth, 'and that would … once … ahh … I don't know how to explain that, this is really weird, why do we do that?'

Although the spread is controversial – time-constrained prose detaches policy debate from the real world – Learner compares it to the corporate language of advertising, twitterstorms, 24 hr news cycles, algorithmic trading, which 'spread' Americans while their politicians speak slowly about values disconnected from their policies. A form of constrained speech which both connects and disconnects from experiences on the ground.

Literature reviews as spreading, or at least covering enough ground to avoid counterarguments based on a gap? Giving equal place to traditional textual sources and more obscurist, fleeting or imagined objects of reference, the things we thought with drive the writing: literature situated in a relationally expanding moment, rather than spreading over linear time. Need a literature review section for Culture and Organisation? Or can we write a hundred on it and leave the rest in place? (300)

(Bal 2002: 8; Lerner 2000; Wired 2013)

This 100 followed a conversation about the inclusion of academic conventions within this article. It grapples with the limits of conventional literature reviews for interdisciplinary projects such the 100s, while offering an alternative to it.

We begin with a short outline of our location in debates and developments about writing. Recent years have seen renewed interest in interrogating the practice, product, and functions of writing in academia. This development, which is multidisciplinary but is perhaps most populous in arts, humanities, and social science spectrums, can be broadly split into two related camps: both concern 'writing differently'. First, there has been work which critiques the structural role of writing in the academic ecosystem. This cluster of work seems to move among the paradoxes of (academic) writing: writing has an ambivalent position as being both the primary medium through which our work is valued while also being undervalued as a practice that requires time and space (Henderson and Honan 2016). That publication expectations have never been higher for early career academics than they are now (Warren 2019) has been discussed and lamented. Writing has been described as 'torture' (Back 2016, 13), as being a source of stress and value anxiety (Gill 2009; McKnight 2020). At the same time, writing is understood as having the potential to be a space for resistance to these same metrics (Bozalek 2017). For example, writing retreats have grown in importance and offer the opportunity to write in contexts geographically, temporally and atmospherically removed from those in the modern university (Hammond 2021; Murray and Kempenaar 2020; Murray and Newton 2009). Writing, in this sense, has been seen as an avenue for generative, soulful, community building (Overstreet et al. 2021). This is work, then, which considers how the contemporary academy is organised around writing, its production, storage, access and impact.

The second cluster of work critiquing academic writing norms advocates for formal innovation. Such work does justice to the vitality of the social through variously live (Back and Pulwar 2012), fictionalised (Watson 2022), spatial (Rendall 2010), and poetic (Dutta 2021) approaches. As well as a representational issue, 'writing differently' (Kilby and Gilloch 2022) also reflects a recognition of the ways language shapes and binds the complex messiness of the research process at all stages (Caicedo 2011; Chng 2022). As such, writing becomes an ethical, epistemological, and public concern; rather than 'writing up' being a neutral final step in any research process, writing shapes and informs how we come to know what we know (van Maanen 2010). We can write differently, for different effects, and for different audiences. Beyond reflections, these streams of work have taken us beyond traditional academic writing formats themselves. We now see the proliferation of formats unusual to academic publishing, like graphic novels (Bailey and Tyler 2019), animation (Bates, Moles, and Kroese 2023), zines (Bailey and Tyler 2019), and podcasts (see, e.g., The Sociological Review's 'Uncommon Sense' podcast). This is work which experiments with the organisation of words themselves in response to existing ways that the university organises itself around writing.

Our experiments in 100s move between and learn from both streams; experimenting with writing through arbitrary constraint, through spoken word, through live collaborative technologies, while in-so-doing, reflecting on the binds imposed by an often inhumane academy. In other words, we have sought to move *against* what we perceive to be an often-constraining professional environment and *towards* new practices, communities, expressions.

Bracelet – Rotherslade

We walk the South Wales coastal path from the Big Apple to the ship, chirping 'it's a chilly wind though mind'. Frozen indentations of rogue names in the path – a Dylan and a dog's paw. Even dogs are enticed by the cheeky, acceptable, notoriety of naming wet cement. The path's width would accommodate two comfortable people, but not much more. Every minute or less we navigate oncoming 2-person-widths, and I slowly and silently built a typology of path-sharing-approaches; the single file-slip-wayers, gliding to queue formation at the passing pinch point; the romanticbunch-uppers, who sacrifice their side-bodies to stay nextdoors, besides, in conversation; and the never surrender-ers, a rare but potent encounter resulting in shoulder's back chests puffed and bumps, glares, last-minute-folding, and bracken. I think about how I'm always the corridor at gigs, the embodied pillar that drink buyers and toilet goers orientate themselves around. But Matt says he thinks he is, too, and we wonder if we all are and how could we know why? We pass a dog sitting up on a bench like a human with their human's arm around him, wistfully sea-staring it seems, perhaps remembering his cement-spree? And it's warm and with a cold wind. (200)

(Ethnomethodology-is-it-I-don't-know; Kay Burley; gender in crowds and music)

This 100 describes navigating public space, and observing how we muddle along, guessing at perceptions of relative power and prowess. I try to stay close to the moment under description, while capturing how micro interactions like these spark lifetimes, patterns, neuroses.

Moving from their Hundreds to our 100s

The founding text of our group and that from which we took our name is Lauren Berlant and Kathleen Stewart's 2019 publication *The Hundreds*. Stewart is a professor of Anthropology and Berlant was an English Studies Professor who died in 2021. Reading from a physical copy, bought shortly after its release and leafed through in early 2020, felt like catching a penny in the process of dropping. Their text emerged from various writing and thinking groups the authors had participated in as theorists and activists (Berlant and Stewart 2019), one of which was termed the Public Feelings Group. The idea of drawing out the false dichotomy between personal and general, private and public, is inherent in the naming of the group, Public Feelings, and resonated with each of us. For example, a *hundred* from the Public Feeling Group might begin with an anecdote at a cash register, or at the garage, or in a coffee shop. The *hundred* develops, sometimes, we might think, into more of a comment on public space in America, or a reflection on political partisanship and community, or on how we relate across difference. Those things are never spelled out, however, never given the space at the top of the podium, never presented as, 'and this is what this anecdote means'. In fact, we – as readers – have no particular way to know what 'it's really about', if 'it's really about' anything. It is an inference, an active movement on our – the readers' – part to respond and digest the work.

Gently related to the idea of public feelings is the idea of the 'ordinary'. This was important to Berlant and Stewart, and became a theme for our approach to writing 100s. Writing from and thinking within the ordinary meant seeking to account for the intimate sensory, emotional, interactional moments that animate and prefigure broader, more public states. Berlant says, 'From within the ordinary we are feeling out how the ordinary emerges, intensifies, glitches, twists, is sensational and so on. We are engaged by what happens, and what we take away from it' (Berlant and Stewart 2019, 291). Playing with ways of writing from within the present moment isn't to deny the existence of 'indexes' like 'neoliberalism, advanced capitalism, and globalisation' – or to deny the idea that these indexes are 'literally pressing' (Stewart 2007, 1). Instead, it can mean recognising that those broader themes only come about through moments, interactions, everyday life. While these key takeaways from Berlant and Stewart's Hundreds are seemingly unrelated – the format of being divisible by 100, the approach to 'public feelings', and the idea of the 'ordinary' – we felt them come together through our practice. As we explore further below, cutting out extraneous words does a lot more than it should; it encourages you to 'light on something' (Berlant and Stewart, 58), to choose carefully not only 'what to stay with' but also 'how to feel your way in' (59). Curiously, the format seems to encourage a focus on the essential ordinary.

The book's overall format is not prescriptive and rewards dipping in and out, following whims based on an intriguing title, a witty index, or a more formal cover-to cover reading. There are no sections and no explanations. We don't know exactly how or why the 100-word count was chosen, but can guess that it was – if not an arbitrary decision – a could-have-been-otherwise one. In one entry called, 'On editing', the authors say, 'our editing discipline involves decisions, mostly as given, like the one-hundred-word limit/but there are other overs and unders, punctuation exerting writerly will and unexpected contraction, too: and spreading' (Berlant and Stewart 2019). Elsewhere, in an entry called 'Writing Lessons', they describe developing a writing culture in their teaching by saying, that to come to class, 'The price of admission is 500 words' (58), that are then shared and dissected. Thus the word-count itself probably doesn't hold meaning, but developing something manageable, playful, workable, does. Taking their lead with this 'given', we found that while the wordcount does some work of constraint, surprising and – seemingly – unrelated affects blossomed from it.

Their Hundreds book was accumulated from years of friendship and care, openness to difference and change, phone calls, interviews, glee and generosity. Kathleen Stewart describes the process over time:

> There was a hard edge between fun and judgement and over time, not without trouble, we came to trust each other. We got braver together. We made a little world of thinking through a writing trained on catching what we could of whatever seemed to be happening or might happen in one scene after another.

> (K. Stewart in Kilby and Gilloch, 2022)

Lauren Berlant, who some describe as having a difficult writing style, responded when asked about how the practice came about by saying, with gorgeous simplicity: 'it was fun, it worked' (Berlant and Stewart 2019, 292). Their original desire was for the text to be complete in this form, to not even have an explanatory introduction to the book. However, as readers, we found the introduction – and fact they'd given in (or been obliged to give in) – useful!
They say:

> The constraint of the book is that our poems (makings) are exercises in following out the impact of things (words, thoughts, people, objects, ideas, worlds) in one hundred word units or units of one hundred word multiples. Honoring the contingency of the experiment there is no introduction up front but distributed commentary throughout the book, plus reflection in many spots about how writing attempts to get at a scene or process a hook … We tried not to provide even this commentary.

> (Berlant and Stewart 2019, ix–x)

The text of *The Hundreds* is profoundly interested in its organisation. As well as these comments on structure, 'no introduction upfront', it also includes experiments with citation and indexing. This is to draw attention to the importance of thinking about the relations of works to other works, of our words to other words. How we write but also find, how we read, how we access.

> *But where we are writing from, who we are writing for, what our writing is for, how do we write? Who are we writing to, what is our writing about, how is our writing read, how is our writing stored? Who do we cite, how do we format, how long are our texts, who reads our writing? What do we cite, how do we cite, when do we write, how is our writing heard? What is our writing for, why do we write, how does our writing sound, when do we cite? Will they like my writing? why? why not?*
> *(100)*
>
> *(Existential doubt)*
>
> This 100 was written in the early days of thinking about trying to collaboration on writing this paper. In this instance, the approach gave the freedom to ask questions too big or unruly than might be acceptable in other academic contexts. We used the 100s group to both discuss and write about how we might go about writing, it doubled up as a space to write from and to reflect on writing.

This discussion of Berlant and Stewart's work is not to say that our project is based on merely replicating their work in process and style. In fact, we were taken with the quotation on the back cover of the book which called for readers to consider how they were 'unlike' the authors. We can reflect now, with distance, that not only does our writing tend to be less theoretically saturated than theirs sometimes can be (necessarily, since they are both theory superstars!), we also came to recognise an additional, different, value we placed on the idea of the 'ordinary'. It is interesting to recognise the extent to which we happened upon this notion of the 'ordinary' during a highly unusual moment – the COVID-19 pandemic - and can perhaps infer some desire to attach to ordinariess that necessarily sets us apart from Berlant and Stewart. Not only a theoretical interest, we also placed value on making the writing itself *ordinary*. For us, producing 100s helped to push at the edges of the preciousness about writing that had developed with professional and disciplinary expectations and anxieties. This writing – and the sharing of it – required trust, and developed intimacy.[2] We sought often to write about 'ordinary'

things, but more powerfully worked towards making writing and sharing writing a low-risk, habitual, and community practice.

We now turn to a series of short 'lessons' learned about writing through 100s.

> *Can't sleep, thinking about hundreds. Or thinking about thinking about hundreds. Yawn. I've usually thought about them as chunks. Surrounded by blank space. But I've been seeing them a bit within longer writing I'm doing. Not like 'oh there's one!' more like, 'I need a knot'. A potential hundred to get from the end of one thing to the start of another. Hundreds as a patch. Not so much for the word count but for the mode, the packing, the travel. One word jumped over the fence, two words jumped over the fence, three words jumped over the fence, four … (100)*
>
> *(Insomnia)*
>
> While awake in bed at night, and thinking about writing this paper, thoughts turned to 100s. In writing about 100s, the 100s we wrote changed; they became 'used' as a way to illustrate or continue a longer argument. Written hastily on the notes function of a mobile phone (turning down the brightness, squinting to manually count the words), this 100 also illustrates how thinking-with-100s happens in spaces which usually fall outside of the purview of academic life. This is not to say that this is a positive thing at all – thinking about a more humane approach to academic life must involve thinking about the slippage of work into all aspects of life, of expectations to always be available, of a work/life balance which is not. However, how to address that must go beyond just calling it out. In this instance, I felt that the act of writing a 100 was a practical way of confronting this encroachment, it allowed for abatement and then space to discuss these feelings and find solidarity in peers who have encountered similar emotions and expectations.

Lesson 1. Embrace the multiple temporal rhythms of writing

Regularly meeting for the 100s altered the pulse of our writing, within and outside those 100 words. With some distance, we can now reflect on how, otherwise, academic writing can be characterised as existing in ebbs and flows, intensities and lulls. Many academics, as referenced above, associate writing as squeezed time, as loaded with expectation but often overlooked. The lulls don't necessarily feel restful or fallow, they can have a mildly grinding undertow. In these lulls – where we're perhaps waiting for reviews to come back from a journal or grant committee, waiting for a colleague's contribution, or simply waiting for blood-pressure urgency to return – there's often an expectancy, a latency, rather than a rejuvenation. The lulls often segue into 'binge writing' (Back 2016), as writing becomes essential again. 'Binge writing' has an imagery that is so contrary to the ideal we have as people who conceive of themselves as writers. Getting enveloped in the rhythm of hundreds, conversely, chipped away at this boom-and-bust cycle, without necessarily always feeling affectively positive (it isn't a 'good vibes only' group). Having a regular slot of writing – which was too short to feel too heavy, but long enough to feel substantive – diluted the demand. Valuing a time for snappy writing and sharing is therefore methodological and substantively meaningful, and it was also a practical and political move away from the unsustainable oscillations of academic labour.

Further, diverse temporalities emerged which were never equated with notions of 'failure and success', 'substantial or meaningful', 'promising or a dead-end'. A 100 entry can last as long as it takes to read it, and remain little beyond the record in the pad, or it can be reworked into a series, or a substantive piece beyond the group. Each of us has played with using the space of the 100 to develop longer pieces of work, or to work through a thought, or to simply commit a vaguely felt observation to paper. We felt there is something uncanny about how individual 100s can be either disposable exercises or pieces that live and evolve. Neither was valued more than the other.

For example, Katherine produced a series of 100s over several months that coincided with some challenging ethnographic fieldwork. She had been explicitly 'stuck' in the research, struggling to make her way through the sometimes complicated dynamics that were at play in the site, struggling to find her voice as a – at the time – insecurely employed researcher among (what felt like) powerful people. She was struggling to manage – at times – the mundane

rage that ran alongside the research happening during a period of industrial action. Writing 100 words every week for a month or so during that stuck period was an incredible chink of light. The 100s were small pickaxes into a period of blockages, and it was incidental to their intrinsic value that these snatches of writing went on to inform the formal writing of a chapter based on the research. While the 100s did not go into this finished piece as 100s, the exercise of starting small, writing regularly, not bothering with theoretical hedging, citations, qualifications, nuance, got thoughts moving. Ideas and phrases from the 100s grew into themes, paragraphs, arguments. Having seen this happen for several of us over time, we don't think that it's a coincidence that snappy, no-consequence writing can actually produce insight that striving for academic standards often clouds over. 100s can be taking your brain by surprise.

For others, and at other times, the function of a 100 remains self-contained, and present-tensed. Ben was always trying to fit writing into his daily work outside of academia. Furtively writing between emails and meetings, the 100s provided a perfect way to keep up a practice of writing and a commit small act of time reclamation from office work. Despite writing in various forms for work most of the day, writing a 100 required a different kind of focus. During these periods, time itself sometimes felt like it slowed, allowing focus and creativity.

Two sides of the same

The peloton is socialist. A Skeen. It stretches out, bunches up, chases down, swallows up. It carries along, in pockets of wind resistance, all those who need protection. It makes feats that would be impossible alone a daily achievement of hundreds. It is public transport, containing trains and autobuses. Nay! The peloton is fascist. Its logic is that of master and servants. It disciplines those who try and escape, do their own thing, form other groups. It is the ultimate in-group, protecting but not binding. To be behind it is to be unprotected from the wind and bound to lose. (100)

(Polwart 2017; Wilhoit 2018)

This was a 100 written in 2020 when reflecting on the Tour de France and how this can relate to political organisation. It is an example of the kind of open-ended, one-shot exploration through 100 writing (prior to writing this paper) as opposed to those written in the writing of this paper. The 100 above was chosen for inclusion here to exemplify this aspect of the 100s which inculcated a habit of thinking, distilling, and framing fleeting thoughts that might otherwise have been lost, but which have no plans to go anywhere further than this 100. Its topic is that of the individual and mass in relation to bike races, bird flights and British politics.

Lesson 2: Socialise writing

Part of the diverse temporality expressed above came from the way that our group tied together writing, reading, talking and listening. A short discussion followed each reading of a 100 out loud. This was an opportunity to share reactions and associations, and for the reader/writer to share some background to the text. Discussion notes were added to the pad. The post-hundred-reading discussion – both out loud and written in the document – lives and grows beyond its immediate rendering. All of this went to highlight not only the sociality of writing in a writing community in the literal sense, but also in more diffuse, subtle ways.

From lists of notes, left on the shared pad, we can trace references between individual hundreds and group reflections. For example, one member of the group had written their hundred discussing 'dirty writing' (Pullen and Rhodes 2008) and another had suggested Berlant (2022) and Halberstam's (2011) independent discussions of undisciplined writing and undisciplining. The following week saw several further hundreds written in and around this topic (see below). The back and forth of sharing inspiration and influence therefore has a literal imprint in these lists – making visible the backflows and eddys that sit between co and solo writing. But even without tracing the lines, establishing definitive citations, the lists and discussions represent extant organisations of collaboration, sites of co-creation, ingredients of developing collective and solo thoughts.

In-parenthesis

I comb my article to assess my 'parenthetic voice', starting with a futile control + f of "(" (d'oh) (there it is!). Berlant says this emerges when the author chooses to say what they really think, or when they want to be (feign?) self-undermining (lol to myself). Results: My brackets mirror the vanishing-voice ploy I use in out-loud conversations with people I don't know (often; most people) (argh!). I'm saying the words and perhaps I mean them, so un-think it better to hide in plain-non-hearing-slash-sight – where I'll have to repeat myself, or in obstructive punctuation marks, multiplying moments (but are they read?).

To adopt this voice frontstage – to speak the brackets outside them – helps to loosen relationships with objects, to unlearn habituated knowing-writing styles. Here I'd like to add self-undermining brackets about being attracted to ideas of undisciplining 'subjugated knowledges' while feeling insufficiently disciplined-read-competent to begin with. Another unbracketed thought: Practicing undisciplined sounds close but feels the opposite of lamentations of 'research siloes' and praises of interdisciplinarity. These, countered by 'spirals of collaboration' and 'playboxes,' seem a sniff at working slowly or disinterestedly than having much to do with disciplinary troubles. But my sniff at playboxes might not help either. (200)

(Berlant 2022; silly bookshelf article take 3; 'could you speak up a bit'; Halberstam 2011; 'dirty writing')

This 100 came from a moment of writing an article, responding to peer review and trying to locate myself in the text. Here the 100s allowed for sharing this attempt to change habituated writing styles, and was written partly in response to something I had read in a (non-hundreds!) book by Lauren Berlant and had then discussed with the rest of the hundreds group. Berlant describes seeking to write in the way that people write in brackets, with the idea being that this writing (the 'parenthetic voice') is where you become direct and truthful. I reflected on the ways that I felt intimated in academia and wrote in overly convoluted and qualifying ways. The 100 therefore helped me to play with positioning myself in the text, albeit in phrases that may make sense only to me, and to reflect on how this shaped what I communicated in research.

We have reflected that there is only ever a fuzzy line between collective and solo voices. As Jaramillo et al. (2024, 3) have recently explored in an article in this journal, reading together can be a precursor to writing together, can be part of developing 'a multiple Author in its becoming'. In our hundreds, we read/wrote personal entries and have only formerly co-written on a few occasions. As such, we were in the middle of a middle space – not entirely alone, but not entirely together. We appreciated over time that we had created a 'textual community' (Stock in Long 1993, 193) and that reading–writing is a social practice even when undertaken in isolation, or alone. Raymond Williams typifies the internal sociality of reading and writing evocatively:

> I am in fact physically alone when I am writing … yet whenever I write I am aware of a society and of a language which I know are vastly larger than myself: not simply 'out there,' in a world of others, but here, in what I am doing: composing and relating. (1993, 199 in Long)

The sense of communality in solo writing is relevant to all writing endeavours, but seemed drawn out and extended in ours. Here, the repetition of shared work overtime, in a trusted group of friends, seemed to accelerate how we came to know each other and our own 'styles'. While remaining personally written, our writing grew arms and connections. In a previous discussion of the 100s, we write how 'Over time, however, our Hundreds were constructed in relation to other hundreds. It was also a form which encouraged moments of sharing. Sharing by reading to each other and sharing ideas for what a hundred can be or do. Sharing where to go next' (Quinn, Orlek, and Cornish 2020). When we read and write, we do so not in a vacuum but in a social context.

The format of the 100s – both writing in 100-word multiples and constructing these in relation to group reading practices – has led to a specific group voice dynamic. There is a certain extent to which we developed shared associations across time and space, without having developed a consciously shared voice. Each of us comes with a bookshelf and a body that carries certain things. As Puwar writes, 'we acquire and carry a body of books as intellectual companionship … [but we also] carry sounds, aesthetics, traumas and obsessions, which stay with us and take time to appear before us, as methodological projects within our grasp' (Puwar 2021). There is resonance between our group and how Long (1993, 194) describes the reading groups of the US progressive

era in which similarity and difference are given a surface upon which to be managed, and we are able to be affected by each other's differences: 'reading groups often formed because of a subtext of shared values, and the text itself is often a pretext (though an invaluable one) for the conversation through which members engage not only with the authorial "other" but with each other as well'.

This line between solo and collective hinges around group membership and internal dynamics. At several points over the last 3 years of the group we have attempted, with greater or lesser success, to expand the membership. We're not sure exactly what it says about us that this has resulted in a core group growing only between about 4 and 6 but with several more having come and gone during that time. We invite people on individual consideration – usually a friend of one of us or a colleague. We have never done an open broadcast to ask people to join the group. There is a sense of trust and its extension in inviting other people to join the group. At the points where new members have come in, we noted a 'feeling out' of that person's style and approach, before a settling of understanding. In particular, as members who have had different writing backgrounds join, we note the group discussion and dynamic fluctuate a little and then settle into a new, lightly altered, rhythm. Often this is to do with managing different disciplinary languages. For example, as a creative writing student joined, some of us felt our egos twitch and our self-consciousness rise: as in, 'this is an expert, and we're [just] dabblers'. But almost immediately, this member's angle, expertise and open character positively affected our conversations about form, style, sound. Other times, a new member joining would provoke questions of the decisions we had silently made: why this frequent, why this format, why (not) these people? There was a productive questioning of our norms, our inspirations, our approaches to the affective experience of writing. In a powerful but simple way, membership changes provoke unconscious adjudications on trust and community: the authors of this article, at least, have shared heartful, vulnerable, introspective thoughts in their hundreds. We quietly – often simply through silent but active listening – developed support and care. Having an 'open' or 'everyone's welcome!' membership policy could have brought benefits, but also threatened that ethos.

All corporate endeavours have this tension at their heart, in that they are bodies made of bodies. Defining their boundaries, aims, objectives, structures and when these shift enough for the entity itself to be considered something new, is a key consideration. Thinking about the 100s as an organisation has drawn us into these discussions. The organisation of the 100s can be positioned as a counterpoint to other institutions we are all members of: workplaces of academia, research, artist collaboration, activism. It allows for some externalising and making sense of the academic organisation, and of considering what practices we value and which we would ideally like to discard.

Lesson 3. Socialise reading

Our experiments in 100s illustrate the extent to which reading and writing should be understood relationally: first, as interrelated, overlapping processes rather than discrete, consequential tasks; second, as socially inflected processes irrespective of whether they are done in formal collaboration. We are neither unique nor the first to experience or argue for this, but doing the 100s group has bolstered and extended our conceptions of the fruitful messiness of reading/writing solo/social processes (Jaramillo et al. 2024).

The authors within the collection *The Ethnography of Reading* (1992) similarly work to trouble the binaries of reading/writing and social/solitary, through diverse ethnographic case studies looking at collective textual interpretation, orality, and reading rituals from Highland Colombia to Anglo-Saxon England. As editor Jonathan Boyarin (1993) says in the introduction, 'reading is as much a part of literacy as writing' (1). Part of what obscures this knowledge has been, in a view also expressed by Elizabeth Long in the same collection, the fact that writers on literacy – in their case, anthropologists and social scientists – are themselves so embedded in reading/writing/literacy that they assume 'everyone reads (or ought to) as we do professionally' (1993, 192). While we as authors don't necessarily escape that framing in our 100s group (despite having a mixed membership in

terms of professional identity it would be a stretch to say we aren't all highly socialised into professional writing/reading practices), the process of 100s forces a reflection on what *reading differently* does to our capacity to *write differently* (Kilby and Gilloch 2022). Moreso than other forums, in our 100s session we not only actively and socially read our efforts, we also discuss inspirations, references, feelings. We bring the references out from the margins and into the main discussion. Working synchronously and asynchronously, we also add references beneath each other's 100 during and after meeting – 'ah that makes me think of so and so'.

In the *Common Reader* Virgina Woolf ([1986] 2003) considers reading to consist of two parts. Initially we 'receive the impression' then we must 'pass judgement upon these multitudinous impressions; we must make of these fleeting shapes one that is hard and lasting. But not directly. Wait for the dust of reading to settle; for the conflict and the questioning to die down; walk, talk, pull the dead petals from a rose, or fall asleep' (Woolf [1986] 2003, 266), or write a 100? One form of a 100 that is exciting to us is one which takes place in the immediate aftermath of reading, while the read text swirls. The reduced form allows for impressionistic, immediate responses. This is writing that takes place between Woolf's two-stage process of reading. While dust remains in sight, aloft.

I once heard the poet Alice Oswald speak about the dangers of naming. She associated it with the worse impulses of scientism; to name is to fix, is to hold, is to own. Was it in relation to an audience question? I think rather it was directly in response to another panellist. Maybe confrontationally? Poetry then as conduit, the poet an open mouth, a poised pen. Alice warning us off being Adams. To name as to claim domain. The world out the window, or even in the corners of the panes, as just learnable – English if marco, latin if micro.

'what's that?, oh it's a … .' End of conversation. Or beginning? I want to try and hold to something of Alice's pure encounter while not taking such a firm view. To be a Derridean Linnean? Perhaps not. But to believe in the possibilities of soft, weak, reparative naming. Of the love that I've read, I know, I've heard, the most ardent and fanatical naturalists fall trying to fill their books. With each instance, example, each individual, sample. With each other. Maybe sometimes the only way to see the wood is by trying to key out the flower under the tree. (200)

(Malay 2023; Marcus and Marcus 1962; Oslwald 2002; Sedgwick 2003).

This 100 came from the difficulties of being a poststructuralist working in a natural history museum! More specifically the tension I have often felt about wanting to know what things (flowers, moths, birds) are called and a simultaneous commitment to trying detach myself from such a need though focus on the moment, on the individual. Here the 100 allowed me to bring together some very disparate thinkers and try and get at how names even if appearing fixed in the natural sciences rarely are. It allowed me to think about the sociality of what are often considered solitary pursuits such as molluscs taxonomy (Marcus and Marcus, 1962) and how this could in fact relate to the sociality of writing.

Another reason why reading is an under-examined contingent process to writing is because the dominant framing of the research process is linear. As Holmgren Caicedo (2014, 409) has argued in this journal, the structure and style of scientific articles mirror the structure and style of much scientific research – that it is orderly and creates order: 'The unity of the story … is the triumphant organisation of the world into the cumulative masterpiece of humanity, the strife for progress and the need to solve problems' (413). In this orderly research process ('background') reading comes early on, in the formation of a research problem and in the justification for further research. Reading reemerges retroactively in the 'writing up' through disciplinary citation practice. There is a dominant paradigm that says we read for context and problem posing, then turn away to do empirical research (and 'collect data'), before turning back to 'write up'.

Real life is messier than that, and even when reading is spirited back into the early ground-clearing stages of research and research writing there is a necessary interplay between them. As sociologist John Law has said: 'In practice research needs to be messy and heterogeneous. It needs to be messy and heterogeneous, because that is the way it, research, actually is. And also, and more importantly, it needs to be messy because that is the way the largest part of the world is – messy, unknowable in a regular and routinised way' (Law 2004, 3). The 100s allowed us to occupy this messy between of reading/writing, of a research process that fed back, that could start with writing

which led to reading. Through inhabiting this space actively we were also able to challenge the idea that there are certain kinds of reading that are acceptable for inclusion within an academic writing practice. We sat our reading of emails alongside that of theory, of zines with journal articles, of memes with books.

Lesson 4. Be deliberative with mediating technologies

As with its constraining form encouraging us to reflect on constraints elsewhere, thinking with the tools of the 100s encouraged us to consider how tools (for writing/reading) organise us in emotional, interactional ways: daily and increasingly. We reflect on the gains, losses, and affects of these technological interfaces, many of which have developed in prominence radically and quickly.

I. Unstable connections

What was it that Jo Freeman said? I know it gave me that sagging sense of relief, that recline – an anxious recline, but still a floating relaxation … an "ah, yes … " feeling that comes when you're handed something your body already knew but hadn't yet reached words for. Structurelessness: 'as useful' as it is 'deceptive'. In calling it out as rife with elites, informal dominations, and, ultimately, inactivity, she also called towards this silent settling, this loving 'non-gregariousness', strength in structures. It's not about sympathy. With this newly integrated explanation – vindication? – we flipped tied tongues, from selves to wider circles.

…

But now. Years passed and Zoom tyranny brings the anxious weight back. The sagging "ah … yes" recline reappears but grimly, with time lags and unstable connections. The sinking into tongue-tied anger eases from interpersonal meetings – sometimes, often enough – but rages anew with COVID. Jolting, inner voice: "I haven't yet said a word", "unmute!". Outer voice: "sorry, you were saying", "did that make sense? sorry", "sorry – no, don't worry – nothing much to add". The worst is that tacit agreement – at least it feels agreed and made with others; maybe it would be better for someone else to talk.

…

Is it just that no one has said anything stranger? I shrug something mindless about renting and eyes beyond me gloss then glitch. Right hands in left-hand corners move mouses, scrolling away from speech to invisible (imagined?) pages, misting up like paranoid Connect-Four walls. Our screens become two-way mirrors. With all faces facing forward, silences that might otherwise have been comfortable - shared - creak: body language moves in foreign tongues. Thankfully, soon, someone 'puts-a-link-in-the-chat' – an unacknowledged Zoom move signalling a reset. A grateful rush to click follows; we all frown in interest, breathe, flick emails, then return to talk, eyes, sounds. Renewed, perhaps. (300)

(Freeman 1971; Goffmann [1959] 1990; Scott et al. 2012)

These 100s emerged over several meetings and concerned how Zoom mediates communication and interactional norms. The first stanza was written early in lockdown, when I noted how meetings on Zoom had thrown back into the air much of the 'shyness' I had managed in previous years, and how loaded small movements of identity were in this medium. The subsequent stanzas came with months in between, and there were more, not included here. Each could have been left as discrete 100s, but I recalled the earlier stanzas and discussions in the group, and retroactively added them to make a collection. Our 100s group allowed for space to reflect on this and discuss collectively how we each navigate these online spaces, and what norms of listening, sharing, and responding we want to positively promulgate.

Because we meet mostly online, our use of technology became another way to think through more humane forms of academic life. We learned how different – almost extra human – technologies afford and enrol particular behaviours, cues, and norms. We learned what ones we wanted to move towards and against. The proprietary, and highly invasive software of communication that infiltrated and blossomed among our creaking lockdown lives often purport to work towards collaboration, but in ways that jarred. Exiting from *Zoom* or *Teams* is difficult (both are programmed to stay logged in as default) and the always-on nature of neoliberalism seeps into the screen and notifies our presence (both have availability keys as default). Other tools within Zoom are more useful; the 'mute' and 'raise hand' buttons both have the potential to support ways of engaging that are more mindful of how hierarchy and power circulates in 'informal' meetings (as explored in the 100 above). Both seem to hark from a horozontilist or even anarchist tradition of meeting facilitation.

Word's preference for 'collaborative' documents is distorting in denying the norm of 'drafts' in favour of constant improvement, constant flux. In choosing to use a *Riseup* freeware writing pad we played with pushing back the tide of interference and technological overreach. The pad is simple and unfussy. Each contributor's writing appears in a different colour (chosen and maintained via IP addresses), you can see if others are online at the same time as you, and no other time. There are no tabs; it is just one continuous page. Edits made in the text can show up in different colours, so a bricolage of adjustments becomes visible. You don't need to save the pad anywhere (though it will expire after a year). The pad does not demand attention, send notifications, allow emojis, or crawl into our emails.

Using a *Riseup* pad which has a limited set of tools for commenting and adding/resolving edits has had an unexpected effect of bringing comments and discussions into more direct and permanent dialogue with 100s writing. There isn't a parallel conversation in the margins; notes following the reading of 100s aloud take the same textual form as the 100s themselves. This has emphasised the creation of a social container through 100s writing and enabled a deliberative reflection on the relationships surrounding reading and writing. The practices of our 100s making – before, during and after the meetings – involve reflection on inspirations and concepts, literatures and artefacts. By socialising the connections between different forms of comprehension we come to appreciate and enjoy the role of a generally silent(ced) part of the academic-creative process.

On not being a writer

despite writing all day i feel like i never write at all. i would like to alter the ratio. the most writing i do in a given day, by far, is in the form of emails to people i dont know. here i take a varying voice from business formal, though business zen to business sassy. i would like to alter the ratio. to write more in my many note books, dedicated to japanese, to botanical binomials, to my fleeting thoughts. i would like to alter the ratio. sometimes i worry ill get trapped in the work voice … .
kind regards,

(100)

(Endless work emails; Emails about managing your inbox, e. e. cummings)

This 100 is included to highlight a different kind of more intimate voice that this kind of writing and this kind of group allowed for. In this instance, I was thinking about diaristic writing, or poetic writing free from the formalities (although of course still bound by other registers) of the forms of writing which many of us produce daily. Here again this is an example of how the 100s allows for a diverse approach of forms. This was particularly freeing for members of the group with disciplinary backgrounds in which the boundaries of acceptable writing are more tightly bordered – such as law and economics.

Lesson 5: Sound writing

This final section turns to what we learned about writing through orality and reading aloud.

Linguists and philosophers of language have long been concerned with the relationship between speech and writing. Derrida's work in *Of Grammatology* attempts to undermine a supposed hierarchical relationship in which the written is degenerate to speech (1976). While not overtly engaging in these discussions of signs and symbols, our practice of reading our 100s out loud and engaging with live group discussions on the work immediately afterwards is important and generative. It signifies a further space that paying attention to research-creation, reading–writing, academic-creative practices can bring alive: a soft holding we might call composition. Hearing our words aloud through our voices every meeting jolts sensibilities around literacy and what words do, in epistemological, methodological, and dramaturgical senses. Hearing words aloud rather than silently reading them creates a wholly different dynamic. It encourages social trust: of listening and speaking in confidence. The aspect of orality in our 100s extends our writing in two ways: as a practice of voice-finding in a performance driven context (the organisation of writing in academia), and of developing

sensitivities to the way that sound and rhythm plays on the images we seek to conjure through the 100 (of re-organising what we do with words).

Starting our 100s group with orality in the forefront led to reflections on writing, performance, and confidence. It prompted us to consider the very formal practices and silent expectations that exist elsewhere in academia around the written and spoken word. Much of what we produce as writers will be produced and consumed silently (in offices, libraries, heads). To the extent that work is shared orally, it is often straitjacketed into restrictive forms that are fraught for us: the lecture, the conference, the job-candidate-presentation. Beyond the formal exposition of work in these variously interactional settings, our voices become powerful determinants of position, authority, belonging as they play out in work meetings: formal online/offline worlds, corridor conversations, networking. In this sense, and particularly for those in the group who can feel disempowered or intimidated in such spaces, the 100s community was a safe release for projecting their voice in a supportive, intimate space.

Additionally, speaking the 100s aloud drew attention to their substantive quality. The sonic qualities of words as attempts at representing and perhaps conjuring scenes and affects came to the fore. The idea that words, language and how we choose to arrange them, have a power to shape reception and interpretation often seems neglected. The idea that some words have carefully been chosen over others for the way they sound in particular orders, the images they create, the specific journeys through thought they facilitate is (partially) accepted in written words for silent private reading but that doesn't hold for orally engaged work.

Alongside altering writing for the sound of words, the constraint of the 100-word (multiple) word-count shaped the sound and cadence of our work in beneficial ways. The 100s format forces the consideration and selection of words in a particular way. The wordcount always requires a line-by-line review to tweak, add, edit – questioning what can be cut, or expanded on. In many ways, this is a familiar process; in more 'standard' forms of academic writing, one would normally be motivated to do this for precision, clarity, style. With such a precise – if, as mentioned, arbitrary – wordcount, this experience was certainly heightened. Not only did it turn out to be generative, pushing the process of editing even if and when you are inclined to stop, it also provoked reflection on the many constraints we work with elsewhere.

Through 100s, we can start to pay attention to sounds, vocabulary, affects as we write, but also hear unexpected rhymes, unexpected rhythms, when we read the 100 aloud in the group. We can feel a jolt of something when words clang together in ways we hadn't heard before, and might instinctively say 'there's something off there' or 'that bit isn't quite right' as we hear something we passed off as 'finished' earlier. It adds sensory dimensions to the idea on the page, and we seemed to grow together in this direction, towards the poetic perhaps, over weeks, months and now years. While often writing in 100-word blocks demanded editing in forms that cut back excess or unnecessary writing, we didn't seek to chop for the sake of it, but for the sound of it.

Framing MARC

041.#0 $a eng

100.10 $a Cornish, Ben, $e author

245.10 $a Framing MARC/$c Ben Cornish.

520.## $a The encoding language is only meant to be that. A last step. A translation for the machines to read. But it has become the dominant frame. We ask not of principles, of models, standards or rules but of formats. Form(ats) over function, cascading upwards. I am ever trying to soften it up, to thicken the rules, to loosen the frame. To add steps but its more work. Slow cataloguing to tight deadlines.

Conversely, we also experimented with visual writing organisation that explicitly resisted being (easily) read aloud. The 100 below takes the form of a library catalogue record for an imagined work, with controlled vocabulary, symbols, and discipline foreclosing easy reading. It is a further rumination on how the way in which we encode our writing, very often invisible to authors using word processors, can limit how we write. However in reading it aloud it becomes something else too; allowing for a consideration of the phonoaesthics of a form of writing that would only usually be 'read' by a machine.

Conclusion

In this article, we have illustrated the messy and ongoing lessons we have learned about ourselves and our writing through live solo-collective composition. The project continues to change and mould the way we write, and what we write. Rather than cutting out words for the sake of 'leanness', efficiency, or laziness, being tied to the constraint of 100-word multiples feels variously freeing, altering, illuminating. Taking everyday life and the Berlant and Stewart example as inspiration, we play with sound, affect, and cadence in our 100s in ways that have seeped out into our 'regular' writing. The importance of orality, constraint, and compositional listening that lies at the heart of the group is vital to our writing's development. Writing for the sound of words, and listening for their imagery, pushes us on to think harder about how to be faithful in representing the multiple, various, overlapping strands of life.

The format has also played a role in shifting our writing habits. The group allows us to write more regularly, rather than in gluts and droughts. It also allows us to 'publish' more regularly, with every meeting an opportunity to get an idea out on paper and into the airwaves. This challenges the ways that the organisation of academic writing in the mainstream enables and stimulates preciousness, anxiety, and safety. Though even sharing 100-word multiples at times feels challenging for some, the group has normalised the sharing of 'work in progress', and even the sharing of 'duds'; hundreds that will never be returned to and last only the length of the meeting. This is an important practice that has the capacity to gently alleviate some of the negative, constraining aspects in the organisation of academic writing.

The 100s we have shared throughout this article illustrate different ways that writing 100s offer a counterpoint to conventional writing in academia. 100s have been used to ask big, unrefined, questions of ourselves and work; change our habituated writing styles; establish a slower but more regular pace of writing; produce writing in moments in which academic and domestic life merge; and to share intimate reflections. 100s can make the tools and interfaces of writing visible, orate hidden organisational textualities, and use 'low' theoretical references from our daily lives.

The 100s is a self-initiated community which we have carved from our individual working lives and practices which has allowed us to inhabit a different kind of academia, not a rejection of academia as such. Rather, it can help create/consider a space between experimental writing practice and academia. Deliberative, collective, enduring, and experimental writing practices such as ours demonstrate the extent to which writing is a live practice of organisation in itself. It does this through encouraging us to: unpick norms and common senses of format, citation, affect in writing. It invites us to be more genuine and imaginative in attribution of inspirations, and encourages us to think and act beyond the often fairly painful norms of academic writing production. We hope to have foregrounded social practices of writing that are of benefit to developing a more humane academic life.

Postscript

Writing for the SI is trying to divide a prime number; no tang of sun soaked locked down one hundred-and-done days. Did we kill it? Riseup! towards Bill Gates. Thousands not hundreds; structures not snaps; manuscript central not pad. Attachments return to attachments; preciousness seeps into the spaces loosened by risks in safety. Still, with cities changed and contracts expired, renewed, made permanent, there are feelings of loss but structures of gain. The agony of writing gestured but was transformed. The article's difficulties may be the valid cost of sidling up to a creative outlet and asking it to pay-up. (100)

Back 2016

I wrote this 100 while approaching the second round of revisions for this article. I took myself to task for having slipped into a feeling of dejection and negativity and had the thought that one positive way to get to writing the article would be to practice to what we are preaching; doing a 100. I reflect on the ways that writing this article threatened to feel like instrumentalization of a pure pleasure release, and shared a worry that we had 'jinxed' the success of the group this way. Ultimately, writing it and sharing it with the co-authors broke the ice, renewed our playfulness, and illustrated the lessons really learned.

Notes

1. In this article, we use the following to describe 100 related things: *The Hundreds* is the 2019 book by Berlant and Stewart, 100s are their 100-multiple writings. *The 100s* is our group, and *100s* are our 100-multiple writings.
2. We are grateful to the review process for helping draw out this point: Writing the 'ordinary' 'is not simply any kind of writing; it is vulnerable emotional writing that requires trust'.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

Back, L. 2016. *Academic Diary : Or Why Higher Education Still Matters*. London: Goldsmiths Press.
Back, L., and N. Pulwar. 2012. "A Manifesto for Live Methods: Provocations and Capacities." *The Sociological Review* 60 (1): 6–17. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02114.x.
Bailey, C., and I. Tyler. 2019. "From Stigma Power to Black Power: A Graphic Essay [Online]." *The Sociological Review Magazine*, March 29. https://thesociologicalreview.org/documents/4/From_Stigma_Power_to_Black_Power.pdf.
Bal, M. 2002. *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Bates, C., K. Moles, and L. M. Kroese. 2023. "Animating Sociology." *The Sociological Review* 71 (5): 976–991. https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261231156688.
Berlant, L. 2022. *The Inconvenience of Other People*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Berlant, L., and K. Stewart. 2019. *The Hundreds*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Bozalek, V. 2017. "Slow Scholarship in Writing Retreats: A Diffractive Methodology for Response-Able Pedagogies." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 31 (2): 40–57. https://doi.org/10.208535/31-2-1344.
Caicedo, M. H. 2011. "The Story of Us: On the Nexus Between Metaphor and Story in Writing Scientific Articles." *Culture and Organization* 17 (5): 403–416. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2011.622902.
Caicedo, H. M. 2014. "Defying Interpretation: Dwelling on and Delving Into Metonymy." *Culture and Organization* 20 (3): 232–249. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2014.901969.
Carlyle, A. 2016. *A Downland Index*. Axminster: Uniformbooks.
Chng, D. 2022. "Love Languages Can Sociological and Literary Writing Styles Cohabit?." *The Sociological Review Magazine*. https://thesociologicalreview.org/magazine/september-2022/writing/love-languages/
Cocker, E. 2016. *The Yes of the No*. Sheffield: Site Gallery.
Derrida, J. 1976. *Of Gramatology*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
Dutta, U. 2021. "The Politics and Poetics of "Fieldnotes": Decolonizing Ethnographic Knowing." *Qualitative Inquiry* 27 (5): 598–607. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420935919.
Freeman, J. 1971. "The Tyranny of Structurlessness." *The Second Wave* 2 (1).
Gill, R. 2009. "Breaking the Silence: The Hidden Injuries of neo-Liberal Academia." In *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflection*, edited by R. Gill and R. Ryan Flood. London: Routledge.
Goffmann, I. (1959) 1990. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin.
Halberstam, J. 2011. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Hammond, K. 2021. "Threat, Drive, and Soothe: Learning Self-Compassion in an Academic Writing Retreat." *Higher Education Research and Development* 40 (7): 1437–1451. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1830037.
Henderson, L., and E. Honan. 2016. "The Production of the Academicwritingmachine." *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology* 7 (2): 4–18. http://journals.hioa.no/index.php/rerm.
Jaramillo, L., M. Cozza, A. Hallin, I. Lammi, and S. Gherardi. 2023. "Readingwriting: Becoming-Together in a Composition." *Culture and Organization* 30 (3): 291–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2023.2206132.
Kilby, J., and G. Gilloch. 2022. "Sociography: Writing Differently." *The Sociological Review* 70 (4): 635–655. https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261221108842.
Law, J. 2004. *After Method*. London: Routledge.
le Guin, U. 1992. "Loud Cows." In *The Ethnography of Reading*, edited by J. Boyrain, VII–VIII. Oakland: University of California Press.
Lerner, B. 2020. *The Topeka School*. London: Granta Books.
Limón, A. 2018. *Carrying*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions.
Long, E. 1993. "Textual Interpretation as Collective Action." In *The Ethnography of Reading*, edited by J. Boyrain, 180–211. Oakland: University of California Press.
Malay, M. 2023. *Late Light*. London: Bonnier Press.
Marcus, Eveline, and Ernst Marcus. 1962. "Opisthobranchs from Florida and the Virgin Islands." *Bulletin of Marine Science* 12 (3): 450–488. https://www.molluscabase.org/aphia.php?p=sourcedetails&id=444698.

McKnight, L. 2020. "Meet the Phallic Lecturer: Early Career Research in a Neoliberal Imaginary." *Gender and Education* 32 (4): 505–517. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2018.1495833.

Murray, R., and L. Kempenaar. 2020. "Why Do Women Attend Writing Retreats?" *Gender and Education* 32 (8): 1001–1018. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2018.1557321.

Murray, R., and M. Newton. 2009. "Writing Retreat as Structured Intervention: Margin or Mainstream?" *Higher Education Research and Development* 28 (5): 541–553. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360903154126.

Oslwald, A. 2002. *Dart*. London: Faber & Faber.

Overstreet, M., J. Avent Harris, L. Crumb, and C. Howard. 2021. "Facing the Storm: Our First Annual Faculty of Color Writing Retreat as a Microcosm for Being a Black Woman in the Academy." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 50 (6): 862–885. https://doi.org/10.1177/08912416211013883 A Pocket Of Wind Resistance.

Polwart, K. 2017. *A Pocket of Wind Resistance [Audio]*. Leeds: Husdon Records.

Pullen, A., and C. Rhodes. 2008. "Dirty Writing." *Culture and Organization* 14 (3): 241–259. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759550802270684.

Puwar, N. 2021. "Carrying as Method: Listening to Bodies as Archives." *Body & Society* 27 (1): 3–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X20946810.

Quinn, K., J. Orlek, and B. Cornish. 2020. *Writing Alone Together: Making Sense of Lockdown Through Hundreds [online]*. https://thesociologicalreview.org/magazine/november-2020/methodologies/writing-alone-together-making-sense-of-lockdown-through-hundreds/.

Rendall, J. 2010. *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*. London: I.B.Tauris.

Scott, S., T. Hinton-Smith, V. Härmä, and K. Broome. 2012. "The Reluctant Researcher: Shyness in the Field." *Qualitative Research* 12 (6): 715–734. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112439015.

Sedgwick, E. 2003. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Stewart, K. 2007. *Ordinary Affects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

van Maanen, J. 2010. "A Song for my Supper: More Tales of the Field." *Organizational Research Methods* 13 (2): 240–255. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428109343968.

Warren, R. 2019. "Publishing and Perishing – Does a New Generation of Social Scientists Have to Publish More to Achieve Less?" *LSE Impact of Social Sciences Blog*. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2019/04/02/publishing-and-perishing-does-a-new-generation-of-social-scientists-have-to-publish-more-to-achieve-less/.

Watson, A. 2022. "The Familiar Strange of Sociological Fiction." *Sociological Review* 70 (4): 723–732. https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261221109031.

Wilhoit, F. 2018. "There Is No Such Thing as Liberalism … " [Comment]. On H. Farrell. (2018). The Travesty of liberalism. https://crookedtimber.org/2018/03/21/liberals-against-progressives/.

WIRED. 2013. "High School Debate at 350 wpm - Wired." *Posted May 14, 2013, by WIRED. Youtube, 3.01 minutes*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FPsEwWT6K0

Woolf, V. (1986) 2003. *Uncommon Reader*. London: Vintage.