

**Tags, tagging, tagged, # - undisciplining organ-ization of [academic] bodies**

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## Tags, tagging, tagged, # - undisciplining organ-ization of [academic] bodies

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### ABSTRACT

We write as a collaborative mode of embodied writing that moves, tags, and re-sites us elsewhere, that mis/dis/aligns self-other, and permeates various stable body(boundaries). We write as a group of (un)bounded (virtual) bodies who aim to collectively create and tag arguments. We write as a collective body where materialities, ideas, discussions and writing become in the doing. Different relational collective practices shared here disturb, disperse, question, undo and undermine sole authorship and consider how tags work and what tags might produce when these objects/things shape our academic lives. While engaged in tagging we also considered how tags tug, how tags shape the ways we think, feel and experience our academic lives. How are we produced by tags? What do tags produce (in/on) us and in our embodied lives?

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### KEYWORDS

Tags; bodies; research-creation; embodied experiments; writing otherwise

### Tagging- entry

This article was crafted after a dream team session at the 2022 European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ECQI). The session was an opportunity to explore and experiment with the 'tag'. The word 'tag' has many meanings, the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) describes a tag as: 'a small piece of paper, cloth, or metal with information on it, tied or stuck onto something larger' (n.p.) indicating the normative view of tags as a means of giving information on or about a body, object or thing. This is the first of a myriad of associated meanings. Etymologically the tag can be both a noun and a verb, where the noun form indicates the act of labelling something, a small part that is attached to a main body (e.g. skin tag), or a repeated and frequently used phrase. The verb form of tag/tagging is more active – attaching a tag to something, or adding/following something or someone (e.g. tag something to the end of or tag along). We wanted to move away from the idea of 'tag as signifier' and, instead, to put 'tags' and 'tagging practices' to use as a mode of research-creation (Manning and Massumi 2014) which instantiates embodied and speculative theory-praxis that unsettles the

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

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# | TAGS, TAGGING, TAGGED, # |

**Figure 1.** #.

(hu)Man as the site of knowledge production. We continue to move with tags and tagging practices in this article to unsettle and resist dominant modes of academic writing (Figure 1). We consider how tags work and what tags and tagging practices might produce when (dis)placed with objects/things/concepts/affects that shape our [academic] lives.

As a collective of [academic] bodies, we write in/with/from/outside our disciplines to un/do those disciplinary locations, expectations and identities. Our transdisciplinary collaborative mode of embodied writing moves and re-sites us elsewhere, mis/dis/aligns self-other dyads, and permeates the place-space of skin, for another purpose, something else. This elsewhere is a move away from separate individuals who comprise a group of bounded bodies that aim to defend their arguments. In opposition to this, our relational collective is greater than the sum of its component parts, in which our parts emerge and combine temporarily or fly off in different directions. Our ideas, discussions and writing are a becoming-collective endeavour in the doing. In theorising and writing this article – as in our tag and tagging practices – we embody and enact a relational collective mode of post-authorship (Benozzo, Koro-Ljungberg, and Carey 2016, 2019a). We thought-felt, experimented, discussed together, wrote as individuals, wrote into and over-wrote as a collective, (re)moving, adding, transforming, making embodied connections. These relational collective practices disturb, disperse, dispense, question, undo and undermine sole authorship (Fairchild et al. 2022). In the sections which follow we explore a number of tagging practices that are relationally connected but also disparate in nature. Tag(s)/tagging becomes a connection point for each practice as we expand on and explore topics including tagging and un/doing academic writing, tagging and academic bodies. We consider what a tag does, how these tags tug and mark our academic bodies, and how we find collective hope within our tagging collaborations.

## Tagging the research/writing process

The ECQI dream team session was held online and had been advertised as a participatory session, so those who attended were already primed to engage with the provocations we had prepared. These included a set of editable slides and a padlet board that all could access and add their thoughts, images and comments on. Before the end of the session we asked whether the updated items on these platforms could be used in this subsequent article. The dream team and subsequent article employed processual ethics where the responses of those who had participated in the session and denied permission to use material were respected. All materials used in this article were from those who had permitted its' inclusion in the writing process. At the end of the session contact details of those who wanted to be part of the tagging collective were taken and further meetings were arranged. These tagging meetings were held online and the article was written using a shared, collaborative, online document platform that all could access.

We acknowledge that productions which attempt to activate a collective voice are challenging: there is always the potential to negate gendered, racialised, classed embodiments, and (dis)placed bodies. When a group of individuals becomes a collective there is also a need to consider power dynamics. Both in the ECQI dream team session and the subsequent writing of this article the scholars who became a part of this collective were at varying stages of their career (student, early career, and more established scholar), came from different disciplinary backgrounds and geographical locations, and had differing and multiple identity positions. Some of this new collective had worked together and written using the idea of 'post-authorship' before. For others, this approach to writing was a new experience. To help mitigate the possible power dynamics in the group and

the tensions this might bring we discussed at length the affirmative and ethical potential of post-authorship and how we would work and value each individual contribution and collective expression. The article was 'led' by two of the collective: their responsibility was to edit and format the contributions of others, to stimulate and curate further overwriting/tagging, gain final agreement of all in the collective and, finally, to deal with the submission process. We discussed at length whether to have a collective author name for this article in the spirit of other collective writing experiences (Mycelium 2020; Swift et al. 2022). However, we also acknowledged the imperative for scholarly accountability of productivity (some of which we discuss later on) – especially for early career scholars. On the basis of these negotiations, we agreed to include author names to support the diverse nature of the scholars in the collective.

However, we know that power is a trickster; that power tags our bodies and actions; that power pervades in slippery ways. Have we done enough in the processes we undertook to diffuse power's power? Can we ever really know if all collective members were happy with our arrangements? The peer reviewers of the first draft of this paper encouraged us to question whether our accounting with power had produced another neat story despite our messy un/doinings? They encouraged us to push our discussion of power further in order to surface and explore power's unresolved (and unresolvable) dynamics (thank you reviewers – this was a good and necessary provocation!). The reviewers are, of course, right: power remains and power's remains no doubt continue/d to inflect and infect our tagging and writing processes. The two who compiled the paper were also charged with editing – they got to choose what was left, what needed rephrasing and what was not included. On reading the final paper one of the collective commented that some edits were done for 'understandability'. The edits were strategic and pragmatic, yes, but also exclusive and at this point the power rested with those making the edits.

The writing process highlighted the need to unfold where/how power appeared and materialised, tagging in unsuspected ways into our collective writing processes. Maybe one unfolding is to acknowledge that this kind of post-authorship is something that some of the collective have been very used to doing, having written in this way for many years. Perhaps this familiarity hid some of the complexity and the potential dis/comforts that other members of the collective might be feeling. There were, no doubt, instances in which the power of the collective and the propulsions of the writing worked in abrading and muting the power of the individual. These fragments, from discussions where sections were edited, deleted or overwritten, intimate these concerns:

Where is the section I wrote?

That was not really what I meant ...

Whose tag is this? (mine/not mine ...)

In what ways might it matter? (to me quite a bit ...)

Ah I can see my words in here ...

The knotty problems of working in post-authorship collective mode are that we might fail to attend sufficiently to these oh-so-human graspings at 'what is mine'; at those clenchings compelled by the uneven power dynamics of the systems and networks we continue to inhabit. Knowing that collaborative writing is messy and problematic, and that power cannot be flattened easily, means that we should work to attend more carefully to the gaps and silences, to the unsaid and the unspoken, as much as what materializes on the page. Power tags bodies intimately and pervasively; power is nuanced and messy and does need further considerations. Whose tag is this? (Mine! Not mine!). Does it matter? (YES! PERHAPS? ...).

In starting the writing process we agreed the collective process of writing, overwriting and editing. This is in a similar vein to the Mycelium collective who note 'Mycelium writes collectively, but not monologically; the particular voices of individual spores, as they weave in and out of each other, are made to stutter as they resonate throughout' (2020, 163). The stutters and weavings

in the current article are embodied in the ways the tags are presented and reflect the fact that, although originally written by members of the collective, they were overwritten and tagged by others. The effect of this kind of (over/under)writing may jar and jolt the reader: perhaps these jar-rings resonate with the stuttered changes that sound in a collective writing voice that emerges as individuals write (tags), and others melt and meld those original writings through affective editings. Whose tag is this? In what ways might it matter? The tags do not function in and as a linear sequence; they are connected (by tagging) but are both discordant in their appearance and divergent in their content.

In another tagging layering during the article's co-creative composition, we employed the figuration of skin (tags) to intervene further with our earlier tags to create a relational non-linear text. These tagging practices function as a spacetime-mattering (Barad 2010), a move beyond linear notions of time and temporality to a 'multiple heterogeneous ... past, present, and future ... threaded through one another in a nonlinear ... topology that defies any suggestions of a smooth continuous manifold' (Barad 2010, 244). This approach was productive in further developing the dream team session and in nurturing a sense of collective potential for those who participated. This article then, becomes a set of tags and taggings that were conceived and written by members of the collective across and through different times, spaces and matterings. The ways these are materialised in this article open up new possibilities for thinking about tagged bodies in the future. Our tagging process aligns with work by posthumanist, feminist materialist and post-qualitative scholars who have successfully used non-linear writing (Koro-Ljungberg 2016; Kuby and Christ 2020) and feminists who have long been interested in modes of *écriture féminine* (Cixous 1976; Zarabadi et al. 2019). The tagging in/as embodied writing in this article resonates with other current innovative and experimental practices and ways of writing (Benozzo et al. 2019b; Taylor et al. 2019; Carey et al. 2021; Fairchild et al. 2022; Hannes et al. 2022; Swift et al. 2022).

Tags might also function as positive and affirmative practices and techniques. For example, hash-tags used in social media can be seen as lively doings across multiple specialities (Albin-Clark 2022). They can signal and facilitate creative and innovative movement(s): #notinmyname, #LandBack, #blacklivesmatter, #metoo, #academicconferencemachine. Such tags enact collaboration. Being part of a tag team is productive; people 'have your back' and, when you need it, someone can step up in your place to help. Tag team labels mark togetherness and support. Tags can link to touch, being tagged and reaching out. The affective moments of tagging and being tagged can be playful and nourish us as being part of something. Tags and tagging practices can also marginalize us if we are not part of the tagging teams. They can also function as ordering mechanisms that label and archive us, put us back in our place if the tag does not 'fit'. Tags can exclude – they can embody and materialize the injuries we suffer in academia – and engender feelings of (un)belonging; whether we are part of the in-group or not; whether we meet the mark; how our bodies are marked, bruised, written on and over.

Fairchild (2021) offers clues as to how the tag may be a negotiator between place and space. When we embody the tag, it feels like we are becoming the place within the space, through the tag. When we do this together – as an embodied generativity of/from/with the relational collective – the 'we' we are becoming immerses the 'I' in the becoming-document, just as #article/tagging is becoming-self. We are becoming-collective 'I'. The skin enacts a permeable boundary: a viscous porosity undoing inside and outside; osmotic, oozing; agape, airy; available to relationality. The multiple force(s) within, outside and through the space-place of the knowings and doings of tag/ging lubricate the relational collective creative process: they are continually becoming (in) the tagging process.

The tag-body–bodies-place-space-skin-outside-inside

It is and isn't

Tag and not tag

Force-process-perceptions-receptions-negotiations

Embodiment of all these Others and all these selves/I's

But is this ever really or fully our choice?

Tags as organizational phenomena can dis/organize as well as organize us. In this respect, tags become a risky proposition. Our tagging experiments are provocations/demonstrations/speculations of tags and tagging practices as dis/un/organizing forces of thinking, doing, knowing, embodying, experiencing and writing differently. These tagging moments can, we suggest, act as resistance to dominant academic practices. We realise that this assertion is, in itself, a risky proposition: there are always forces that will try and normalise the (un)tagging mo(ve)ments and co-opt them so that they lose their power to resist the neoliberal practices to which we are subject as academics. Nonetheless, we suggest that what we can do in and for our collective and individual academic lives is to continue attempting to resist where possible (see Fairchild et al. 2022 as an example of this) whilst recognising the on-going and endless nature of this quest. We live in and with hope that fractures brought about by tagging practices may spark and implode into spaces of nurturance for individual and collective resistance.

Henderson, Honan, and Loch (2016) have explored the challenges and expectations of 'good' academic writing and propose the academicwritingmachine as a neologism that academic writers embody. They argue:

The academicwritingmachine shapes who we are as academics. We necessarily have to be literate with the workings and conventions of academic writing-publishing-performing if we want to be counted and recognized as legitimate. But what does it mean to be a cog, a wheel, a lever or a pulley intricately caught up in this machine?

(Henderson, Honan, and Loch 2016, 6)

As academic writers, we are all becoming academicwritingmachine; our bodies are marked and scored, our outputs are graded, who we are is metricized. We are algorithmically tagged and quantified, we become part of the academicwritingmachine: What is your *h*-index? How many citations do you have? What impact factor are your journal publications? How much funding have you won? Is that all you have? How many papers have you published? Wow, you are an academic superstar!

```
print 'add a publication to ORCID'
```

```
if number of publications > 400 then
```

```
  print 'Good Scholar'
```

```
endif
```

Through metrics, we are tagged and bodies become machinic dividuals, coded, striated, a digital body (Deleuze 1992).

## Tagging in use, using tag/tagging

Tag is a busy word. More than 6 billion results when searching the word tag. I search for barbershop music and watch videos of barbershop music (Figure 2). Four singers pulling a chord, tenor, bass, melody, a vocal entanglement between bodies, sound, words, heightened dramatic tension of the song while carrying the rhythm. Watch this tagging in music [*within the skin*]; The Chordettes – *Mr Sandman* (1958) [*outside the skin, but felt within*]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNUgsbKisp8> (Figure 3) [ ... from here to ear: vocal cord, vocal fold; ear drum, tympanic epithelium. Tissue, muscle – mucoïd membranes. Are these (like) skin? In what ways touched/tagged?]



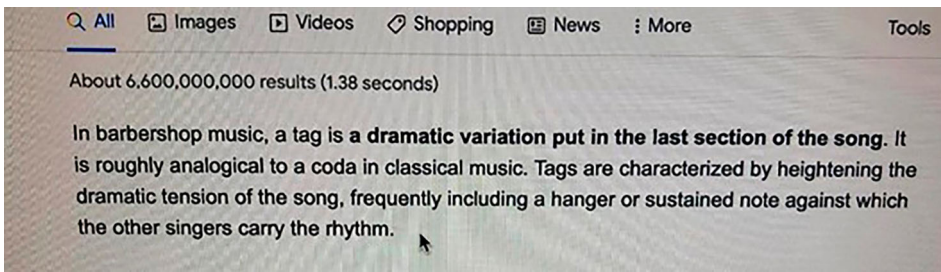


Figure 2. #109.



Figure 3. #610.

Tag and tagging heighten the tensions of being and becoming. My entanglement with tagging started from a droplet about to fall and the words 'life in a dew' [*anticipated time, requiring us 'to be' within the 'what will be' – or maybe it never does.*].

Falling, dropping, dripping; sounds like tensions in music; tagging that becomes heightened and carried, one singer after another, overlapping sounds [*all the others, all the relations within and outside*]. These images (Figure 4) tugged me into thinking about tagging as a temporal, relational and embodied process; as a vital materiality that enables difference and transformation to become. The dew forces me to think what was/is before and after tagging, here the fall, the drip, a falling droplet from a tree branch and becoming with the soil [*the (changing spaces-places within the two limits of the skin) liminality – inside and outside the system and the structures, physical and temporal and spatial and none of these, too, and more than these too*]. Tagging involves bodies emerging in/through an enduring temporality and spatiality. The butterfly life cycle, the egg, the larva (caterpillar) and pupa (chrysalis) and the tree. Coleman describes the question of 'who I am' (Coleman 2009, 127) as an enduring temporality rather than an immediate one. This is not a linear temporality but the past that lives in the present and future [*and through all of the other skins with the past, present and future*]. Benjamin (1950/1999) uses the concept of the flash to think of temporality as flashes of experience [*the forces upon and within the skin, the changing, flashing moments of fire and ice*]. Such affective temporal dis/organizations complicate and confuse linear temporality.

Tagging is not a sudden or fixed determination; rather it is processual.

*Do we long for tagging, the transformation, the falling?*

*What does desire do in this relational processual experience?*



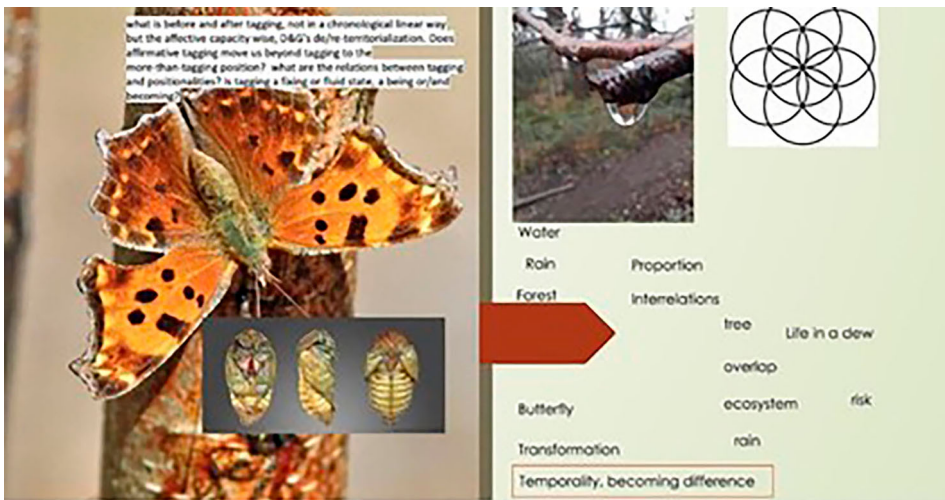


Figure 4. #9265.

Could the skins of the 'I's and the 'Others' align?

*Isn't it what we wanted: to be tagged, to be transformed?*

*Isn't this a cruel optimism?*

It is still becoming, once it is, it is elsewhere.

In the anthropocentric world we humans-nonhumans are all tagged in one way or the other.

Questions continue to haunt:

*Who has the power to tag?*

and

*Who has the power to become un-tagged?*

Ahmed's (2019) notion of 'use' resonates with tagging/un-tagging (Figure 5), provoking further questions:

*Do we tag to use things for?*



Figure 5. #12609.

*Are we tagged to be used for?*

*Tagged, tracked, surveilled.*

Ahmed defines use as the ways we handle things and mingle with things (Ahmed 2019, 22). Use, they say, offers a way of telling stories about things. Tags and tagging tell stories. The body in the picture (Figure 9) like Ahmed's post-box and the note, is tagged 'to employ for some purpose, to expend or consume, to treat or behave toward, to take unfair advantage of or exploit, to habituate or accustom' (Ahmed 2019, 23). Tagging and being tagged, like use, is part of the ways of arranging the world and ourselves; We are in this sense already in use before we pick up objects, to inhabit a world is to be inhabited by use (Ahmed 2019). Tagging involves the processes of knowing/presuming/imagining/positioning (in advance?) what others, things and I/we are *for*; their use.

Inspired by Ahmed's uses of use, can we think of *using tagging to un-tag the tags that are in use – in particular, the tags that are in use of normalising machines of racism, sexism, war and violence?*

Becoming un-tagged, in this sense, is 'a breakage and a transition moment' (Ahmed 2019, 31) in use (Figure 6), a change in relation. Becoming un-tagged is to become not-in-use, to break, to no longer be of use, to fail, fall, to fall out of use [*to fail; to rest; to go unnoticed; to go off-grid. 'failure allows us to escape the punishing norms that discipline behavior and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthoods.'* (Halberstam 2022, 131)]. Tagging can be a chance, an opportunity, of/for being in another way, what Ahmed calls queer use, 'when use becomes proper, queer use becomes misuse' (Ahmed 2019, 208). Following Ahmed, we propose using tagging to speak out, 'to become a leaky pipe, drip, drip' (Ahmed 2019, 214), to fall, to drop like a droplet on the soil (Figure 4). A fail, fall, is to misuse the tags that you are tagged for, in being not in use for the tags that you are tagged for, to refuse the instruction, to break like the handle of the cup to no longer be of use (Figure 6). Tags and tagging practices, then, can activate queer possibilities. [*In putting*] to use differently, tags and tagging refuse the past ('use') in order to unpack a figuration of potential, of futurity. Tags as multidirectional figuration activates 'the processual and performative connotation of the verb to figure, and thereby emphasizes the act before, in connection with the process during, after, and beyond, the (encounter with) thought figures' (Van Der Tuin and Verhoeff 2022, 98). Mis-using tags, refusing the proper use of tags, tagging otherwise and differently, then, suggests/proposes tags and tagging practices as figurations to think with, to give abstract and (in)accurate thoughts shape or form, to materialize thoughts, to make thought possible and happen. Tags/tagging, a concept to think with.

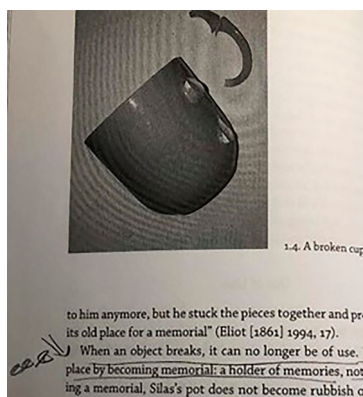


Figure 6. #9199.

## I enter the TAG-system

An illness, a body, a number  
 Illness: Coronavirus  
 Body: Woman  
 Number: NHS  
 The number is a passport  
 Health. Care. Healthcare  
 Under pressure  
 The system is falling apart  
 The number assures a pathway  
 The number evidences a claim  
 The number offers relief  
 The number tags, records and labels (my) body  
 Tracked through institutions  
 By algorithms, unseen and unknown to me  
 A body unfit to work  
 A body parked in the Long Covid cul-de-sac  
 My doctor says there are 1.3 million of us  
 A hidden army, she says  
 Invisible  
 Also tagged and labelled and tracked (Figure 7).

## The virtual life of fit note

The (my) fit note (ironic as I am tagged as *not* fit, as *unfit*)  
 Attaches itself to me  
 Appears on my phone, *Ping!*  
 And commences to live its own virtual life  
 In the emails of department notifications  
 The records of HR  
 The files in my computer  
 The fit note cuts-together-apart health-employment  
 The fit note entangles contract-taxation  
 The fit note assembles trajectory-career

### Statement of Fitness for Work For social security or Statutory Sick Pay

<b>Patient's name</b>	Ms Taylor
<b>I assessed your case on:</b>	19/11/2021
<b>and, because of the following condition(s):</b>	Post Viral Fatigue
<b>I advise you that:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> you are not fit for work.

Figure 7. #19112021.

The fit note dis/places time–space  
 The fit note offers relief-release  
 Tagged to my body forever  
 By algorithms, unseen and unknown to me  
 The fit note enters and becomes in the annals and chronicles  
 It has entered and become  
 It is becoming and will never leave  
 Systems I can never leave.  
 I am unfit  
 I am tagged: An ill body  
 Ill or healthy  
 One or the other  
 The virus has tagged me.

## hu/wo/man/inai

The genome of CoVs (27–32 kb) is larger than any other RNA viruses  
 SARS-Cov-2 is 30,000 nucleotides positive-sense RNA (+ssRNA) repeat units in a single strand RNA  
 SARS-Cov-2 belongs to the betacoronavirus 2B lineage  
 SARS-CoV-2 has a close relationship (96%) with the bat SARS-like coronavirus strain BatCov RaTG13

Betacoronavirus isolated from pangolins has a sequence similarity of up to 99% with the currently infected human strain

SARS-CoV-2 has been detected in two dogs

SARS-CoV-2 replicates efficiently in cats and ferrets and can also transmit in golden hamsters

The nucleocapsid protein (N) forms the capsid outside the genome and the genome is further packed by an envelope which is associated with three structural proteins: membrane protein (M), spike protein (S), and envelope protein (E). The coronavirus's entry into host cells is mediated by spike glycoprotein (S protein). <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcimb.2020.587269/full>

*[membrane, skin-fold; envelope, skin-full; touch, tear, breathe. Mucoid oozings, untouching spikey entry.]*

The virus has tagged me

Aerodynamic droplets

Transmembrane

Irreversible conformational changes

Binding

Fusing

Repeating

I am becoming-other

Coronaviruses tag, attack, tug

The virus, unseen and unknown to me

A body newly knowing different things in cells, membranes, synapses, skin, brain, blood

Infection

Species-shifts

Spooling posthuman ecologies and economies

Living and dying.

Tsing et al. (2017, G5) say that 'big stories take their form from seemingly minor contingencies, asymmetrical encounters, and moments of indeterminacy'. All those formerly-well-and-now-ill bodies are minor situated knowledge-space-place-being-becomings of multiple contingencies, encounters and indeterminacies (Figure 8). All those bodies tagged, dis/placed, dissipated and disappeared by the Covid-19 virus.



**Figure 8.** #532.

Covid-19's 'productive horror' (Tsing et al. 2017, G4) tags different bodies differentially. In the UK, for academics, the long list of Covid symptoms can produce organizational problematics for HE institutions and their Human Resources systems: how to 'make fit' these 'unfittable' bodies whose symptoms stubbornly endure and remain invisible to the naked eye? Brain fog, fatigue, breathlessness, muscle ache and dizziness [*fetid, feverish skin. Betrayer of the cool, cruel touch of the whitening norm*]: unseen and silent, fluid and shifting, effects which come and go, elude control and demand counter-measures outside the 'normal' patterns of 'reasonable adjustments' and work policies that organizational cultures are used to (if not always efficient at enacting). Covid's symptoms are erratic and dis/organizing, posing an errant challenge to the requirement for docile and disciplined bodies geared to performative time-and-motion. Sontag (1978) discusses the dread that illness produces and, citing Menninger, how disease functions as a 'damning index tab' which names and labels people; she talks about how those labels (tags) afflict people as their diagnoses 'stick' to them; and how naming and having a disease produces social dis-ease which isolates, dis-sociates and individualizes [*dissociates and others the skin*].

Away from the privilege of the UK with its quick vaccine roll-out, those in the majority world in impoverished communities with fragile health systems have suffered most. Their deaths have been accounted as the political cost of 'keeping capitalism moving'. These despicable and inhumane calculations are, as Mitropoulos (2020, 3) notes: 'centuries in the making,' arising from capital-colonialist imperatives to shift death and disease onto those whose bodies are deemed disposable and more killable. The deathly tagging of bodies in Covid-19 attests to McKittrick's (2021, 109–10) point that predictive algorithmic models 'are underpinned by differential racial histories and privileges', produced through the mathematical logics of colonialist and plantocratic systems, mentalities and practices. Algorithms are spectral data bodies; they tag Black bodies in order to negate Black life.

## Tags and recognition

I recently bought a new computer. With this new device I appeared in a few Zoom calls and had no name. Instead of the name and surname there was 'Admin'; something that I was not able to change. I was annoyed because of that and I felt vulnerable. This made me think about how both 'Admin' and the name and surname are tags. So, what do these tags do?

Tagging 'Admin', Tagging 'Name' 'Surname'

These tags make me recognizable.

[virtual body tagging – named, gendered, located, timed, (in)visibilized]

[tagging more-than-humans and non-humans]

Individuals [Tagging 'Name' 'Surname'] and identities. Predefined social positions. Discovering your 'deep authentic self' [self tagging]? Negotiate our place in society and within organizations [Who am I? How and in what ways might I belong?]. Who do I compare myself to? Who am I in competition with? Self as relational. The recognition of academic bodies-selves-others. [I am tagged, what if I want a different tag? how do I change the existing tag?]. Butler (2005) argues that all human beings desire to be recognized and that nonrecognition and misrecognition can inflict serious harm.

[Who am I?] [I am 'admin'] [I am 'Name' 'Surname']

The word 'recognition' has its root in the Latin *recognoscere* meaning 'to acknowledge'. Recognizing someone means identifying and constituting them as a person. [Who am I?] [I am my tag?] [Am I my tag?]. Butler (2005) argues that an individual's self-understanding is always mediated by the encounter with the Other. Identity, she suggests, is inherently relational, precarious and vulnerable. Identity's precarity is a politically induced condition (Butler 2009) one that is organized and socially situated (Tyler 2020) [Is recognition (more than or only) skin-deep? A blush, a sweat, a tan? Healthy surface? Awkward nervous sheen. Sebaceous emissions. drip. leak. betray]. Precariousness, Butler (2009) explains, is a continuum, unequally distributed in that it depends on the degree and form of recognition granted. This resonates with Deleuze's (Deleuze [1968] 1994) accounts of encounters as open-ended, where entangled relations are intersectional, gendered, and influenced by racialized histories. Tags and tagging as processual, embodied and embedded encounters can encourage us to think beyond normative ideals of recognition. Following Deleuze, tags and tagging practices are encounters which force us to think in ways which contest normalising academic becomings, knowledge productions and identities as objects of recognition.

## Complaint-as-tag

To be heard as complaining is not to be heard. To hear someone as complaining is an effective way to dismiss someone. You do not have to listen to the content of what she is saying if she is *just* complaining or *always* complaining.

(Ahmed 2021, 1)

What happens when a complaint occurs in academia? Does complaint-as-a-tag follow us? Ahmed (2021) investigates how women in the academy are marked and tagged by the materiality of complaints. The hearing of complaints-as-a-feminist-pedagogy highlights the gendered and intersectional marginalization of those who have experienced physical, social, citational, emotional and epistemic injustices (Figure 9). Complaining can be career ending ... someone told me once that those who make a complaint, even when they have evidence or are supported by HR policies, end up leaving within a couple of years after making the complaint ...

Some days I feel SILENCED

I complain to have to choose a complaint. I have many ... ..

[I do understand that you have greater experience than me & are a hugely more knowledgeable researcher but your mark in the 50s is] UNFAIR

Can I ask ... to discuss the equitable, fair and reasonable share of teaching and marking.

PERCHÉ DEVO VESTIRMI 'DA DONNA' PER PARTE CIPARE A UNA RIUNIONE?

NON VOGLIO PIU FARLO, MA NE SONO CAPACE?!!

The neoliberalization of Higher Education has seen competitive positioning for jobs, promotion and research grants become the norm where performance targets and increasing workloads make for





**Figure 9.** #297766.

toxic environments [*you got that by the skin of your teeth!*]. Questions are asked: What is your *h*-index? How many citations do you have? What impact factor are your journal publications? How much funding have you won? Is that all you have? How many papers have you published? Wow, you are an academic superstar! The quantification of our roles sees academics enact agency through constant negotiations of the situations involving people, things, numbers, and materialities. These competitive processes include some bodies (male, white heteronormative) and marginalize others (female, white, BIPOC, non-heteronormative). These embodied materializations 'have highlighted the resultant anxiety, stress and debilitating effects of these toxic times on academic subjects' (Taylor et al. 2020, 1). Bodies become tagged as 'top performers' and job titles stratify: Teaching Fellow/Lecturer (Assistant Professor)/Senior Lecturer/ Reader (Associate Professor)/Professor. These tags become a hierarchy and moving between them (upwards) is problematic – just look at the statistics on the lack of women professors and emotional labour required of some bodies in Higher Education (Zarabadi et al. 2019; Taylor and Fairchild 2020). Anyone who decides to make a complaint already marks themselves as a trouble maker, making it even harder for promotion prospects (Figure 10).

I understand your work ... it is [*bullshit*] ...

Perchè NON è SERIO!! Fare lerioni o lavorone all'aperto??

VOGLIO SENTIRE LATERRA e RESPIRARE ARIA!!

[*Can you come to the session, No worries if you can't I know how evenings are hard for you!*]

I depend financially on my husband to be able to do my PhD and raise my son at the same time. I can barely afford daycare and must pay the additional expenses when bringing my son to fieldwork with me.

[*There are times when [your] research appears to do nothing more than add Dr in front of your name, self-absorbed hours of reading and writing to improve academic CVs rather than make a difference.*]

[Complainant, plaintiff, supplicant, lamenter: #moaner]

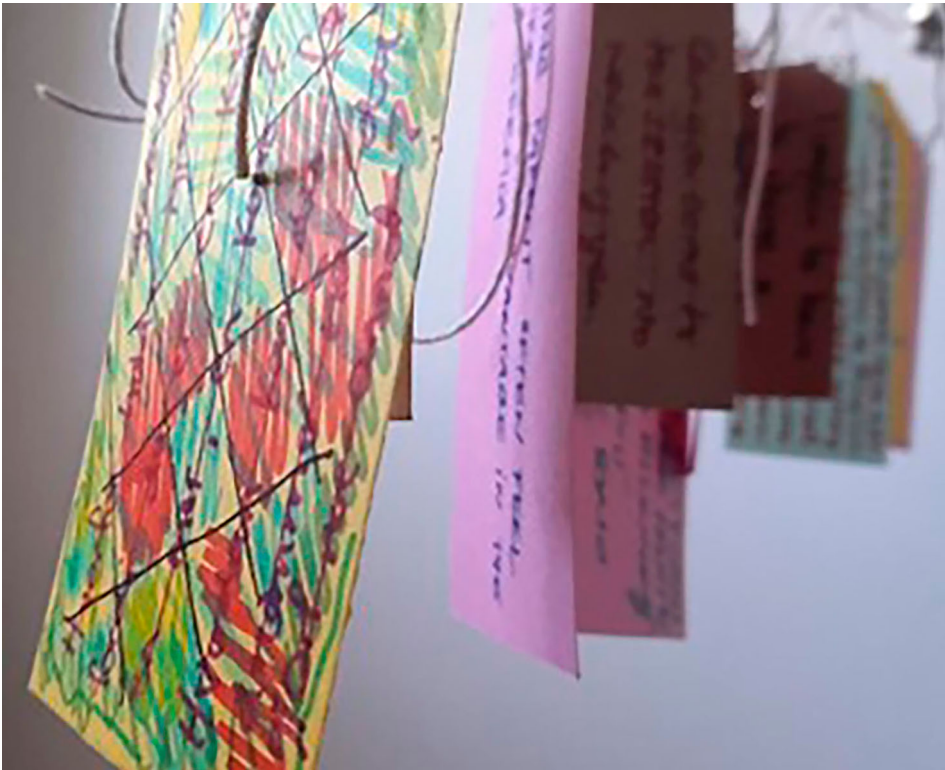
## Tagging – it was the same for all of us

It was the same for all of us ...

Tiny ankles bore the first tagging of our names to our mother's wrist, replacing our cords, as we wriggled, stretched, cried, fed – and left, to tag our lives ahead.

A military child tagged by her father's rank and posting. My words and gaps tagged my difference as my mother's hand stitched me to each new place, via name-tape





**Figure 10.** #097655433.

The rules of each new classroom hazy, but I learned them fast. I tagged-in. To fit-in.  
De-tagged, and re-tagged. De/Re-territorialization moments and experiences.

In '96 we all de-tagged. By 2000 we had different names.

Now my name is tagged to letters which stretch so far along the page they make me laugh, this little girl who couldn't do maths, so busy was she tagging.

My tagging is by what counts, not to me, but to the Academy.

Outputs, like a factory assembly line they count what counts.

*What counts?*

Is it that nobody tells you, or that nobody knows?

This week I tagged love with a rose left by a grave. I was the apple of his eye, of hers, too.

A Rose and a rose as I whispered to them both '*look down, look down, that baby turns 18*'.

I see her now, my darling first born child who tagged me a mother by cord, ankle and wrist.

She too is tagged with numbers, grades and applications.

They called her 'Nurse Georgia' at school as she rushed to help friends with grazed knees,

and now she waits to tag-in to that very place, while her new numbers say '*now, you may come in*' and all doors stand open.

My flame haired laughing girl.

I hold tight to my end of our tag, like the string of a kite, and watch as she gulps the fresh air of her freedom.

Processes of de/re-tagging are gaps, intervals or passages between 'no longer and not yet' (Van Der Tuin and Verhoeff 2022, 32):

A fluid place, moment or movement;

The potentiality to fly with string of a kite;

Gulping the fresh air of freedom

Momentarily!

Lines of flight.

Fresh air on skin

Freedom and flying.

## Tagging as (in)accurate representations

First – 2/28

Second – 3/1

Third – 3/2

Tagging is designed to represent. *(re)present*.

Tagging is a representation. *(re)presentation*.

Tagging captures the desired representation. *reflection of perceived and received understanding, feeling, and embodiment*.

Tagging enables shared representation. *Collective*.

Yet.

Taggings are (in)accurate and tags carry (in)accuracies.

Rings, flags, and entangled academic bodies.

Whose and where?

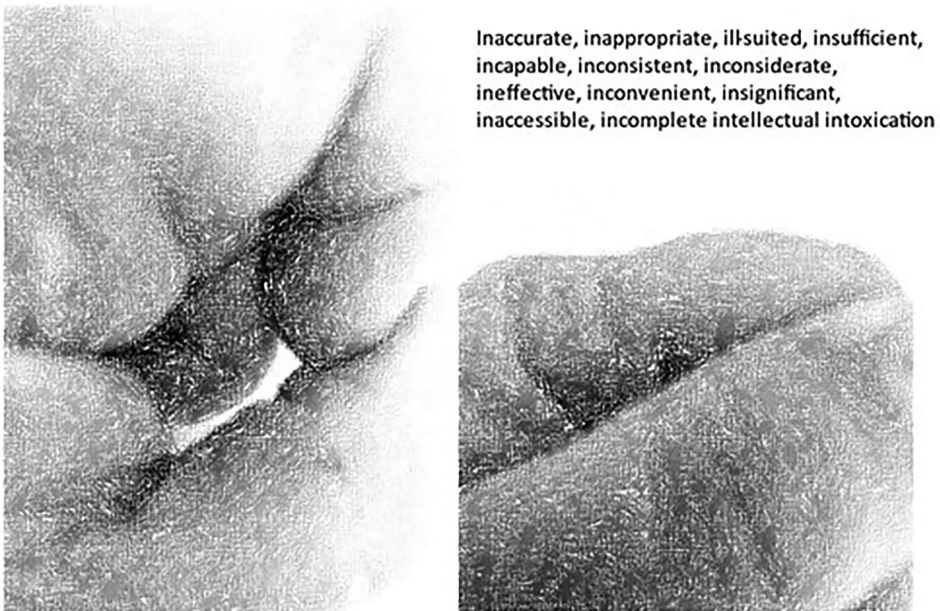
Representation challenges researchers. Many scholars engaged in embodied inquiry and writing practices problematize representation as a form of truth or authenticity (Figure 11). Rather, representation might be characterized *through* an exercise in faithfulness and commitment to an idea or perspective (Galman 2009). Representations in the context of qualitative research could also be seen as translations which carry within themselves violence of reduction, excessive essentialism, and obliteration (see Critical Methodologies Collective 2021). (*without an attempt to embody and (re)present collectively(?)*). Representation is always situated in power relations, which prompts questions of accountability and responsibility. Schostak (2005), in turn, emphasized the role of language in



Figure 11. #201 *In Reverence* (Archibald 2008).



**Figure 12.** #333.



**Figure 13.** #01.

interpretation and they proposed that human actions are always mediated by language (*medias through modes*) which is more or less accurate and never innocent or apolitical (Figure 12).

Yet.

Tagging blinds the (curious) view and prohibits inspiration: 'leaving one strand out' [*while*] and allowing for new songs to be (re)created (Tachine 2018). It obscures otherness and difference (Figure 13). *The cage rattles. The ribs quake.* Tagging silences dissent and potentially eliminates the subaltern and minor. *Am I falling into the trap? Where and whose trap?* Tagging produces (in)accuracies.

I've been told that if you make your hand into a fist, it's about the same size as your heart.  
Clenching the fingers together in this way, I can feel the beats of my heart.

Beat, beat. Pause. Beat, beat. Pause. Beat beat. I can't stop it.

When I release my fingers, the white impression of my grandmother's strong nails appears and fades back to light tan as the blood returns. My fingertips track and touch the keyboard, yearning for some/thing else. Flick out – shoot out of me, push through me.

*We close our mouths and tighten our lips. Teeth bite a nail. Bite again. And bite again.*

*[Do you wear your heart on (the end of) your sleeve? Cut that skin – get that heart back inside!]*

Beat, beat. Pause. Beat, beat. And within the pause I return my wedding ring to its home – the tangible representation of the tag we've placed upon and within ourselves. 'Husband'. *We fought for our link.* My hand caresses the stubble on my chin and holds up my head.

Beat, beat. Pause. Beat, beat. The metal warms back and I feel it through the eight bones in my wrist. 'Husband' can turn, circle around, crack, pat. I need it to support, I need it to carry again.

My right-hand crosses to assist the twisting of the wrist in opposing directions (Figure 14).

Beat, beat. Pause. Beat, beat. The elbow can straighten or it can flex. 'Husband' can turn and hyperextend, or it can clench. I can jab. Activating these *[components]* pieces, I sip red wine from a stemmed glass. *We feel it's relaxing power descending down our throats. [Does this wine make a port-wine stain on your inner skin? Would that be a birth mark? A grapeskin mark deep under the skin-deep surface? Have you had a skinful?]*

Beat, beat. Pause. Beat, beat. My shoulders are wide and broader than others; I can't sleep on my side, away from or towards you. I can plough through or raise my arm to meet your shoulder. You are taller than me. I prefer your waist. The arm circles and reaches backwards, exposing the chest. *We see your linkage, encased within the ribs: a pericardial sac.*

Beat ... beat. Pause. Beat ... beat. Pause. You flow through my lungs, into my heart, along with all the other meanings from the outside: the ones we allow to enter and the ones we think we can reject, but cut through instead. I am cutting through you. Other expectations, other imaginations.

*[feel your pulse on my skin, that rhythmic hemic throb. Alive! #2become1]*

Between the beats there is one long pause and one short pause. Beat / Beat ... Pause. I need to catch up.

*We need to catch up with our (in)accurate (re)presentations.*

– (re)presentations of (in)accuracies

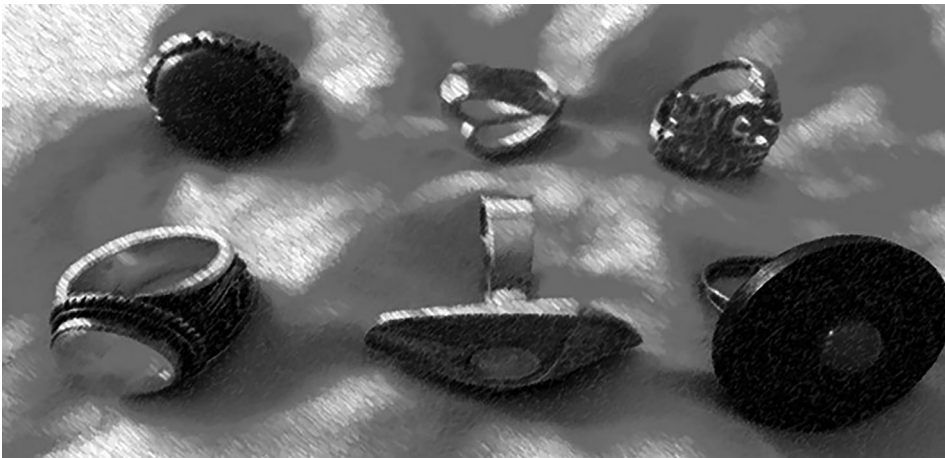


Figure 14. #18886.

## Tagging-storyings

No love is more complex (Figure 15). No lovemaking has given birth to such a complete mess – a mess I have to claim. *Each long hair curls up and seeks the company of others. No comb is able to get through. Entangled long hair mess has agency of its own. The anticipated beauty of the (re)creation and (re)generation pierces through my heart and begins to slowly churn inside-out and envelop my senses. The heart beats.*

A mess (of another kind) I've learned to love. My baby. The one I birthed. *One heart knows.*

With each contraction I breathed ... in and out ... in and out. I stare at my lover's red and white brilliance. It's blue-like night richness. I breathe in its beauty with each contraction. I breathe in its longevity to prevent distraction. No breath disguises the depths of our pain. *The night sky is speckled and painted with the stars of our past and future. the longing for a new kaleidoscope of dawns through the depths of chaotic yet focused darkness. The heart pauses.*

The pain that reaches beyond my years and curls up in my chest. *A dull but then suddenly sharp pain gives us shivers. Sharp beyond controllable pain lingers in our bodies. Muscles and cells call for help.* The angst that surpassed the worry in my head and made a home clutching my heart. *The pause is cut through the heart and pushed elsewhere.* I breathe, breathing in and out, in and out.

I see my lover's every bend, every stitch and wonder why it endured. I wonder. Why does it mean more to some and less to others? I seek in it the answers that I long for. I stare into an oblivion-like history. A history of newness, excitement and joy. A history of pain, alcoholism and destruction. *The w(h)ine.* A history of bloodshed the likes of which no young country had ever seen nor hopefully will ever see again (Figure 16).

*The heart wanders through wonder.*

I look at my lover breathing in and out, in and out. Tears track down my face at all we've endured. So many eyes have laid on its bareness. Many fought and died – revelled, loved and languished in its folds. the American flag. A mirror that reflects what is, but cannot be a (re)presentation. *[My] our head is pierced.*

Beyond exhaustion the memories rack my body and align with each contraction. I breathe in and out, in and out. Six Marines raised my lover on Iwo Jima. Friends Neil and Buzz travelled and planted my beloved in the talcum like dust of our nearest neighbour in space.

Eyes in the Lone Star State were gripped with paranoia and pain in seeing my lover flapping wildly aside a speeding limousine as a president was hunted down in his prime. Our song prominently played as Tommie Smith and John Carlos's feet stood firmly on podium – their black-

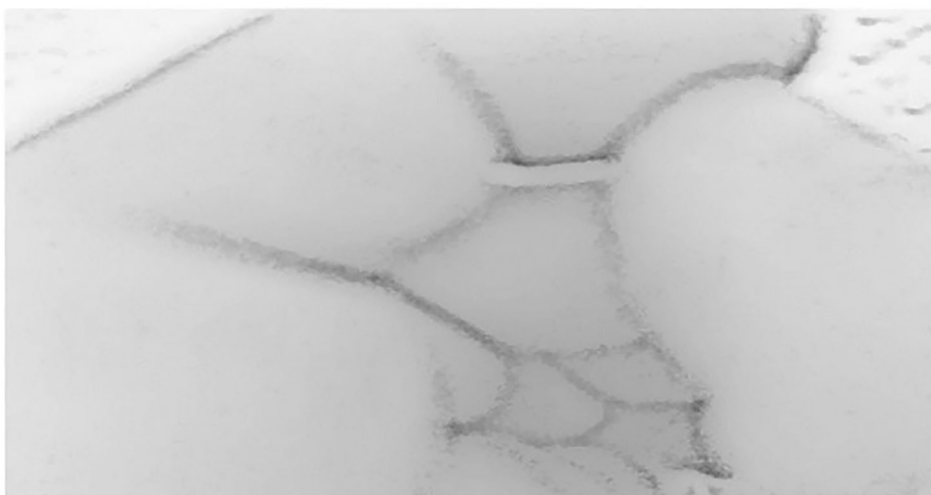


Figure 15. #2558.





**Figure 16.** #7937.

gloved fists raised heavenward in Mexico City while my lover danced in the wind witnessing the display of athleticism and protest. *Breath, breath, give away other shallow breath of ours. Our organs engulf their heads and parts through the chaos of the wind, singing and smiling and dancing and powerfully clenching ... embracing one an(Other) through the pain.*

My labour never-ending, we recalled horrific deaths of nearly 3,000. The acrid smell of fuel and ashes filled the sky. Three firefighters raised my beloved amid smoke and destruction: to remember, to motivate, to inspire, to mourn. *The grand metaphor is destroyed ... what does the spirit sense with (in) this moment?*

Our anxiety climbed as childbirth grew more harried. *am i ... are we ready for the (re)creation anew?* Our minds' eyes saw people climbing our Capitol. Rifling through our disciplined walls. Fingering our protected documents. They screamed, 'Treason! Treason! Defend your liberty. Defend your constitution.' Gallows complete with noose were erected just as my baby crowned. *Will we strangle the inevitable truth of what is to become, what is becoming – what is (in)accurately (re)presented?*

Should I fight for our child? *Breathe once more before a piercing wail filled the room. (an)Other determination, still connected. forever and continually (re)presented.*

*resolution in and with and within and for and through and because of collective (in)accuracy.*

– *An Other's beautiful 'elsewhere'* (Patel 2016)

## The weight of a TAG

I am a mother

I am tagged as 1/a female parent.

I mother three children.

I am tagged as 2/a woman in authority.

I mother many collectives.

I am tagged as 3/the source, the origin,

I must be from ancient times, I must be wise.

I gave birth! I founded! I invented!

I wanted to.

These tags, what will I be remembered for when I am dead?

Do I want to, if so, how?

This mother has a body and a weight.

A scholarly weight.

She does not carry this weight in pounds.

It does not disappear when she is dead.

ResearchGate Impact 34.09

Google Scholar h index 38/31

Google Scholar I index 66/58

Highest Citation rate Book 376

Highest Citation rate Article 460

Highest Citation rate Report 423

Highest Impact Factor Journal 9.27

Imbalanced, she is, from carrying this weight.

A she that is understood as a trend-oriented set of data points. Death is impersonal (Downey 2022).

I am

Chair, Co-chair, Coordinator, Co-coordinator, Promotor, Co-promotor, Convenor, Co-Convenor, Editor, Co-editor,-Teacher, Co-teacher, Writer, Co-writer, Curator, Co-curator, Creator, Co-creator, Leader, Co-leader, ...

I want to.

I lead and I am led.

I judge and I am judged.

I win, I lose. I feel like winning the moment I give up my own personal tags.

The art of collectivism is to make yourself redundant or superfluous without the mission or project of falling apart.

We are a collective virtual, scholarly identity.

We operate under the gender neutral pronouns 'they, them and theirs'.



'They' have no particular gender, race or fixed identity.

'They' do not belong to any particular subject, nor are 'they' currently of or in someone.

'They' have no weight. You can use their ideas free from referencing.

It is in adopting 'them' that their virtual scholarly weight will emerge.

Amarante Swift (Swift et al. 2022), I will co-carry you.

Because I want to.

## Tagging-clothing

### *Tags political*

The Anthropocene becomes embodied in/with the tagging sewn or attached to our clothes. Tags as labels in clothing are everywhere once you start to look. Soften your gaze to the liveliness in-between our human body, non-human clothing tags and the more-than-human: tagging is hard at work. Tags are a vibrant matter (Bennett 2010).

Ponder awhile. Look at the tags on the clothes you are wearing (Figure 17). Turn out the seam on your jumper, notice what embroiders your hoodie or roll back a collar. Some tags contain words and symbols that signify origin, fabric type, sizing, naming, price and care instructions. Time is sewn and

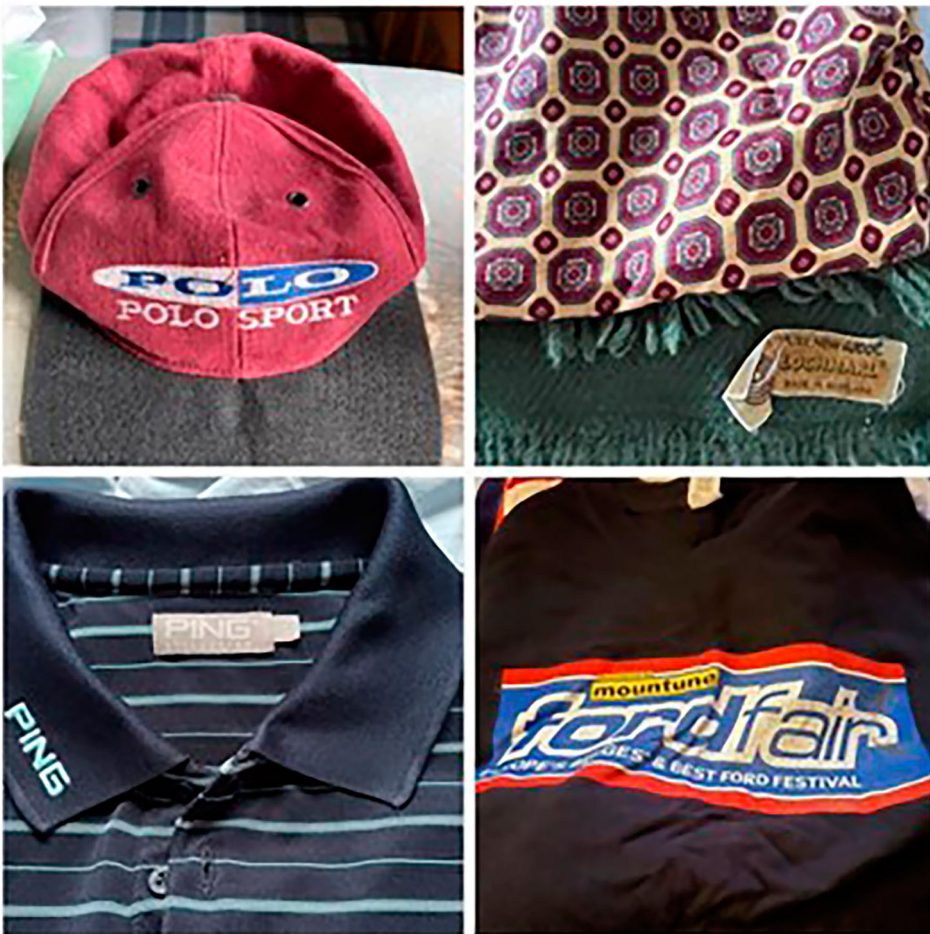


Figure 17. #420.

woven into cloth; clothes have a life cycle. Homemade clothes are often the exception here. Tags mark global manufacturing processes, with fabric's fabrications and components criss-crossing multiple continents, sewn by the unseen, often women and girls on piece work in cramped, dangerous conditions. Clothes tagging practices are complex human, non-human and more-than-human assemblages, entwining dizzying profits for the privileged few (often men) with back-breaking and eyesight defying drudge for shop floor staff on zero-hour contracts. Tagging tags water-hungry, fossil-fuel guzzling hypercapitalism at work as well as the continual re-making of remarkable social inequalities (Braidotti 2019) that fast fashion wreaks. Tagging is classy like that. Tagging in clothes is the Anthropocene tugging away. Tagging: names, annotates, identifies, labels, sizes, datifies, documentalizes, customises, personalizes.

### ***Tags personal***

Tags are worn and warmed on the body each and every day, over lifetimes and sometimes passed on through generations. Human skin and hair weave in fibres and bodies' baggy knees and worn-away elbows. Tagging tags one and multiple bodies. Tags can be unseen, unwritten and verbally given. Nametags are sewn on occasion. Tags traverse ownership, as hand-me-downs and charity shop finds are treasured, sought out, fought over, worn with mixtures of guilt, shame, thrift, pride and love.

### ***Tags professional***

Tags denote the work that people do, acquired for a purpose. Hard-wearing jeans, uniforms and embroidered aprons. Tags age with the body. Tags fade with time. Attached texts have textures. Tags rub, soften after washing, dry and blow in the wind on clothes lines. Tags flung on wooden maidens, steam in front of the fire, drape over radiators (Figure 18). Grandma's coat, Dad's jeans, Mum's trousers, Son's jumper, Daughter's t-shirt, Husband's shirt, Someone else's suit.

### ***Tags inherited***

Tags can shift ownership. I have inherited my dad's jeans and I wear them when I write at home about the matter and what matters about the observations of young children (Albin-Clark 2021). Tagging traces memories and embodies his presence and absence (Gibson 2015). The Wrangler tag tags the manual work he did, with deep pockets much washed and worn (Figure 19). Now I write as part of my academic role as a first-generation university botherer, the tagging entangles with a new body wrangling pens and keyboards rather than wrenches and spanners. Tags are hauntological: they embody the past as it resurfaces (Derrida 2006). Old oil splatters fade and are overlaid with ink. Becoming-with academic writing entwines traces of other timespaces, classes and lives that I embody anew. I embrace responsibility for the inheritance of the ghost in the tag (Barad 2014). Tagging christens, marries, buries, inherits, haunts.

### **Struggling with some strangulated (un)taggings**

There were many provocations caressed and cared about during the Dream Team session and the collective authorship writing of this article, as we were haunted by what the productivities of untagging might entail and produce.

Codifying, labelling, identifying  
 Categorising, being, belonging  
 Wrapped in longings to belong  
 Enraptured by the bliss of capture



Figure 18. #99612.

I am this, you are that  
 A supplicant to the thrall of recognition  
 Pliant to the carceral pleasures of being known  
 This is fixed, that is strict  
 I am clone, that is done  
 Perlocutionary force: spoken, inscribed  
 Etymologically endorsed.  
 Tired of the tug of the tab, the terror of the tag?  
 Marred by the misshape of the marker?  
 Spurn, shun, snub  
 Decline, dismiss, discard  
 Resist, refuse, reject  
 Criticise, condemn, castigate  
 Raging for crumble, for fissure, for reparation  
 Ethical energies zapped by the hegemon  
 'You can't say that.' 'Any civilised person would know ...'  
 Thankless Sisyphian choring  
 'Let's be reasonable.' 'You've gone too far.'





**Figure 19.** #2021.

Righteous efforts tripped and trapped, gorged by a perpetually voracious and shifting norm(al)  
 NO! NO! NO!  
 NO to endless NO.  
 No to the rapacious tangle of normalising (k)nots that tag.  
 Relational joys  
 Riffing with raff  
 Tags riff-raff  
 Rapping on rage  
 Circumlocutionary contrivances, flimflam foibles  
 Mumble, fumble, jumble, stumble  
 Codding codifications  
 Disabling labellings  
 Indenting identifications  
 Circumvent  
 Prevent  
 Invent  
 Funambulistic reformations

Sonorific deformations  
 Conbobulating informations.  
 Untagging, mistagging, pervertagging ...  
 Putretagging, distorttagging, corrupttagging ...  
 Tagging in (Dream) Teams: invoking absurdity; hatching follies; proliferating joys.

## Tagging: algorithms

The dividualization of algorithms takes away our body, we become code, number, frequencies, quantified and tagged by algorithms. The algorithms denote our worth, affect our promotion prospects, produce, binarize and mark us a good/bad scholar [*What is your h-index? ... # Wow, you are an academic superstar!*]. We offer the tagging in this paper as a way to disrupt and disturb the quantified self, even though we are always drawn in and seduced by its power. Being, presenting and writing collectively distributes the quantification across the individuals in the group – we understand the tensions of the neoliberal academicwritingmachine but we all benefit from the relational collectivity we are part of:

```
print 'add a publication to ORCID'

if number of publications > 400 then

  print 'Good Scholar'

endif
```

McKittrick's (2021) point about the entwinement of unequal racial histories with algorithms that tag some bodies differentially is a good and necessary one. Her suggestion – that tagging is a colonialist practice – links to Blackman's (2019) analyses of data's haunting presences-absences in capitalist neoliberal formations. Tags embody and enact data's haunting/ data hauntings. Tags have powerful afterlives: they continue tagging with or without our permission, presence or knowledge. Tags are data proliferating, recombining, contaminating. Tags become autonomous agencies, laying down material traces as they move, leaving haunts and almost imperceptible shadowings that tell of their after-lives. Tags continue re-moving as spectral data, comprising a 'data hauntology' that shapes who we are, what we are becoming, what we know, forget and remember. 'We' are becoming tag-human-data-body-cyborg – automated, inhuman, machinic, bio-techno-logical. AND BUT AS WELL. 'We' are becoming untagged, un-hinged, disturbing and disruptive, dis-jointed. Tags can enact racist, sexist, ableist, classist algorithmic patternings which repeat and reproduce necro-capitalism's organising power; they also, in Blackman's (2019, 56) words 'attract, collect and channel fragments, gaps, anomalies, puzzles and parallel temporalities'. This, we think, is the generativity of tags and tagging practices we enacted in the workshop and in this paper. Tags can be 'bent' (tags may playfully bend) in ways which push normative presumptions of academic identity, authorship and writing out of the damningly square academic window. Crash. Bang. Tag. Thud. Splat.

## Tagging: exit

This paper is/was an experiment with the concept of the tag and tagging practices. It has explored a range of provocations to consider what tags do, how they function, how they govern and how they are entangled in our [academic] and other lives and multiple livings. Written in a relational collective mode of post-personal post-authorship, our com-position(s) dis/organizes writing practices through/ as a collective body. We stitched together a set of tags as an initial starting point and then tagged the tags, collectively writing in and through the sections with a series of skin tags (tags related to the body and embodiment). Just as our tags dis/organize and disrupt, our tagging writing practices move this paper beyond linearity into nomadic flows whose rhizomic resistances aim to up-end

the academicwritingmachine (Henderson, Honan, and Loch 2016). As a final provocation, we invite you to keep the tags tagging:

How do tags tug?

## Disclosure statement

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