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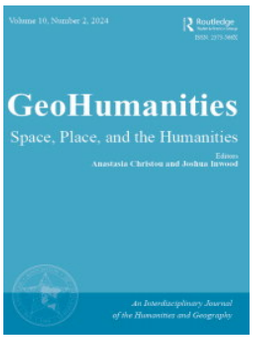

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Anti-Frontiers in *Zineing*: Zines as Process & the Politics of Refusal

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The implementation of zines and zine-making is becoming increasingly popular in academic spaces from teaching to research. While this uptake has been widely celebrated, in this article I reflect on some of the risks associated with the mainstreaming of zine culture. In particular the paper explores the risks associated with zines becoming reduced to mere "outputs" within the context of an intensifying neoliberal university landscape. In this context there is a danger that future work will focus on the product of the zine, neglecting to consider the values of addressing the more processual dimensions of zines. Reflecting on my own zine-practice as geographer, I call for a shift to the focus on *zineing* as process and politics of refusal that explicitly challenges neoliberal, capitalist agendas.
Key Words: creative geographies, creative methodologies, participatory methodologies, refusal, zines.

INTRODUCTION

Zines (small circulation self-published works of original and reused texts, images, etc) have long existed as a powerful way to share ideas that might not fit neatly within conventional publishing outlets (Piepmeier 2008; Poletti 2008; Ramdarshan Bold 2017; Zobl 2001). The exploration of zines within geography has gained significant momentum is recent years, being considered and explored as a pedagogical tool (Bagelman and Bagelman 2016), research method (Fannin 2020; Hawkins 2019), and tool for building complex solidarities (Schilt 2003; Smith 2012). Reflecting on this uptake of zines within geography, alongside Jen Bagelman, I convened a session at the RGS-IBG Annual Conference 2022, titled "New frontiers in zineing: zines as process and modes of recovery."

The well-attended session took inspiration from Jones' forthcoming doctoral research with neurodiverse and Tourettic communities and called for the consideration of the process of "*zineing*." By centring the verb zineing I hope to emphasise process. This move seeks to decentre the focus on the zine as a product. This shift is inspired also by ideas of community-*making* and especially the intimate acts of zine-making (Watson and Bennett 2021). In relation to this shift the session posed the a two-part question: what would it meant to sit with the *doing* without an expectation for a given output? In what ways might zineing function as a process that enables diverse voices to come to the fore?

After inviting papers that considered the potentialities of zines and zineing, as per these questions and in relation to the conference theme of "Geographies beyond Recovery," we were privileged to have significant interest internationally from early career researchers who joined us in contributing to the conversations. Together, the comvenors and presenters explored the topic of

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"new frontiers" in zineing with the help of zine-artist and activist Mel Sproates who assisted in the ongoing design and facilitation of the session. Vitally however, the initial framing of our session was turned on its head. Various speakers highlighted that rather than thinking about *new* frontiers in zine-related research, what was key to our conversations was in fact returning to and revitalising the ethos of zine culture, which in many ways enacts a politics of refusal (cf. Simpson 2014). Centrally we began instead asking: what are the implications if zines having "their moment" in contrast to how zines have previously been categorised as "anti-mainstream" (actively trying to push back against research *trends*)? In addressing this, the following paper explores observations from the session, particularly considering the popularity of implementing zines within geographical research currently, before discussing the possibilities of engaging zines through a politics of refusal. It does so by drawing upon empirics from the classroom; from our own research practice and environments; and critically from our participatory-zine workshop held with academics and activists who experiment with zines in different ways. I argue here that processual zineing is vital to consider, and that taking a processual approach urges us to consider the anti-frontiers in zineing that speak to broader conversations surrounding creative approaches to research.

ZINES ARE HAVING "THEIR MOMENT"

Zines and zine-work are thriving within various academic spaces and this is most simply reflected in the influx of zine-based published papers over the last 2 years (over 5,000 results for papers about "zines" on GoogleScholar, published since 2021). Recently published work on zines is significant and varied, including but not limited to Valli's account of interview-based zine-making as participatory method for dissemination (Valli 2021) and associated commentaries (Bagelman 2021; Cele 2021); Velasco *et al'*s exploration of zine-making as a creative, feminist geographic method for researching imaginaries of environmental justice (Velasco, Faria, and Walenta 2020); and Nash *et al'*s considerations of co-produced zines in producing knowledges via reflection and collaboration (Nash et al. 2022). There is evidently a strong focus on the collaborative aspects of zines, be it in their collaborative dissemination or the co-production. There is also a plethora of new and exciting research crafted by early career researchers such as those who presented work at our convened session "New Frontiers in Zineing." I reflect on this both published and non-published work here as it represents an important contribution to the field in terms of creative experimentation. Although we tend to cite work only once its reached peer-reviewed platforms, in keeping with the zine ethos here the paper seeks to raise emergent voices. Notably much of the work presented at this panel purposefully moves beyond the Global North, with academics representing institutions and communities from across the Global South. Early career researchers presenting as part of this panel raised vital questions relating not only to zine-production but the workshop space itself and how they might be considered as a facilitator of care and caring practices within the making of zines. Cosentino (2022) shared how in his research on *Cissie Gool House* and housing in Cape Town, "many participants said that attending the workshop was like attending a therapy session," with participants experiencing solidarity through the sharing of stories. This solidarity as a form of care was also explored in Vizel-Schwartz (2022) work on queer Judaisms, which highlighted the sharing of zine work as a kind, generative and informative act both from a participant and researcher's point of view in some

instances, this collaboratively facilitated caring resulted in the opportunity and ability to produce counter-narratives, as per Ghaffar's (2022) work reflecting on belonging and mental health amongst black and minority ethnic doctoral students. Further to this, presented papers also considered the tensions arising in workshop spaces through co-creational and participatory acts of collaborative zineing (Escorza 2022); creative tactile methods such as zine-making and collage as powerful tools for sense-making and alternative engagements with geographical issues such as the climate crisis (Edwards 2022), and the opportunity of zine-making and creative methodological approaches to research for allowing development of self-understanding and participant knowledges.

Zines are undoubtedly growing in popularity in terms of geographical research, and so a question that arises here is why, exactly, is it that zines are having "their moment"? For a practice that has frequently been associated and has roots in subcultures (Umam and Tri Hendrawan 2020; Voß 2008; L. Wright 2016) and resistance of norms (Goulding 2015; Nijsten 2017), they appear to be increasingly popular, even mainstream. It is important to acknowledge that there is a plethora of literature regarding zines that precedes the interest of geography as a discipline. As a geographers involved in this growing subfield, I am excited about these developments; however, we geographers are increasingly called to pause and ask questions about this direction. The next section considers some of the risks in the academic popularity of zines. I specifically consider these implications in light of transformative and innovative agendas, funding and educational landscapes in the context of both a pandemic and an increasingly marketized UK university.

Funding and Impact, Transformative and Innovation Agendas

As part of what might be termed a creative re/turn in geography (de Leeuw and Hawkins 2017), creative outputs have become prominent. We see this within health geographies and medical humanities spaces are becoming increasingly popular (Asker and Andrews 2020). As has been noted, this creative re/turn is partly shaped by impact agendas and funding opportunities for geographical research.

Relatedly there has been a move to the valuing and even prioritisation of participatory research within the social sciences as a whole (Houh and Kalsem 2015; Miewald and Mccann 2014). In fact, there are now multiple journals dedicated to participatory work, including but not limited to *The Journal of Participatory Research Methods*; *Participatory Educational Research*, and *Action Research*. It is in this context that we should understand perhaps the intensification of zines as a site of geographical interest. Considering the characteristically participatory nature of zine-making within research (French and Curd 2022; Hay 2022; Nijsten 2016; Valli 2021), zines are increasingly turned to as an answer to the question of participation.

Zines should also be understood in a context of academic culture which prioritises securing funding. We are increasingly accustomed to the following statements:"[i]n order to get grants, scholars and artists within the university are asked to frame their own work according to perceived use-value (read: grant-value)" (Manning 2016, 9). We see this, for example, in the Economic and Social Research Council stating "You are expected to take impact seriously" (ESRC 2022); the Arts and Humanities Research Council writing that "In a dynamic and creative research and innovation system, talented researchers must be able to apply their skills in different

contexts" (AHRC 2022), and also in the description of the Wellcome Discovery Awards, which states "This scheme provides funding for established researchers and teams from any discipline who want to pursue bold and creative research ideas to deliver significant shifts in understanding that could improve human life, health and wellbeing" (Wellcome Trust 2022). In these contexts, creative outputs are significantly valued amongst funders, and zines are oftentimes seen as a low-cost but effective and accessible way to disseminate research information, in a way that does not require prior artistic training. With the increasing popularity and acknowledgement of the value of participatory work, and zine work through its potential for knowledge dissemination and outreach (Du Laney, Maakestad, and Maher 2022; Watson and Bennett 2021; Yang 2010), it is clear to see a possible reason behind zines beginning to be popularised within academia. They are rightly being recognised as powerful tools for not only the application of participatory frameworks and epistemological approaches to research, but also in thinking about *public geographies* and the dissemination of research findings.

With significant amounts of funding for work that chooses to engage with creative outputs such as zines, it is perhaps no surprise that there are increasing numbers of early career researchers choosing to engage with them. Whilst the desires to implement zines may be authentic and genuine, it is no secret that doing so may help applicants *stand out* when applying for funding, whether it be for a PhD project; post-doctoral research and fellowships; or even artistic practice-based funding initiatives. Whilst previously published work has considered artist-academic collaborations (Foster and Lorimer 2007; Pfoser and de Jong 2020), it seems that within geography, academic publication is no longer enough – creativity and outreach are becoming increasingly fundamental in a competitive academic job market, and zines are being wrapped up in this. For better or for worse, this has at least partly played a role in the moment that zines seem to be having within geographical research. With this context of zines' academic popularity in mind, it is significant to consider the future of zine work, especially given the early career researcher engagement with them highlighted throughout our RGS-IBG Annual Conference session.

Attentiveness to Inclusivity in Teaching and Assessment

As it has been explored previously, the idea with zines is that they can be crafted by anyone. You do not need to be an artist to construct a zine. For this reason, zines can be a great democratising research tool: they can encourage participants to express themselves visually without needing the "artist" label. So too for this reason zines can be a wonderful tool in the classroom. Over the years Jen Bagelman and I have used zines as a form of assessment that might encourage students to experiment with their voice and connect with wider communities. The "cut and paste quality" of zines means that even those hesitant to craft find some comfort in working with already-existing materials which they can simply repurpose. Students have created incredible collages which serve as powerful interventions. One two-fold below, for example, features a student's zine which cut up their campus map to tell a different story of stolen Indigenous land, upon which their university is settled.

As we see in Figure 1, zines can be a tool for students to intervene into existing narratives – including that of their own university. The campus map above, typically telling a story of inclusivity and welcome, is exposed as being part of a settler logic and praxis which has denied many Indigenous communities the right to their own – in this case – Coast Salish territories.

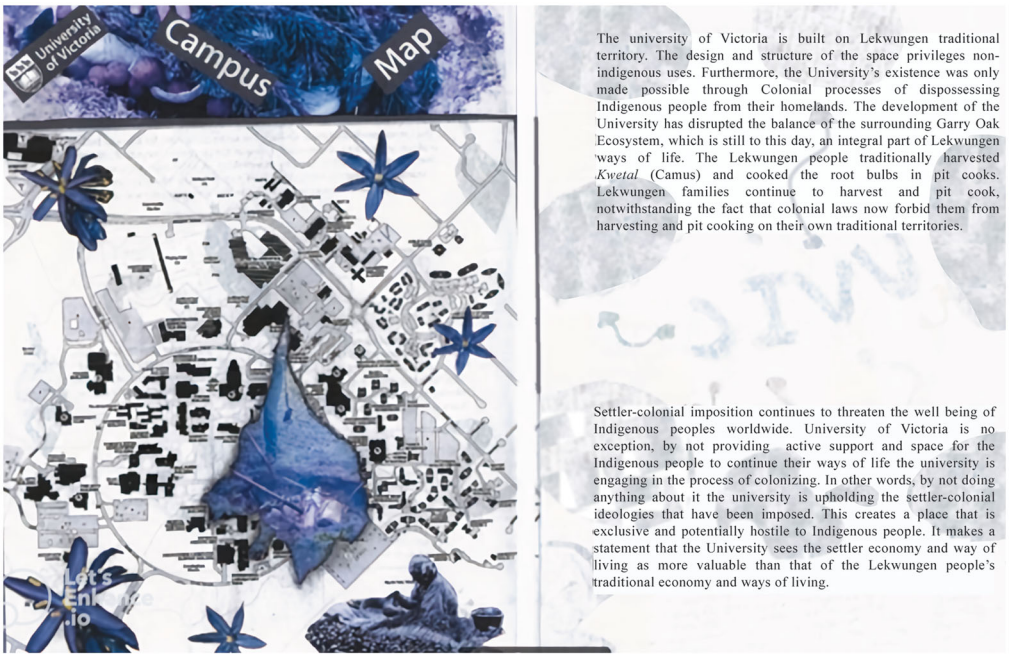

FIGURE 1 Zine two-fold shared with permission from author, reproduced from "Re-purposing the Neoliberal University."

Using a similar collage-approach, those who would otherwise not consider themselves "poets" have been encouraged to design "found-poetry" for their zines. Students find a written document, cross out the words they don't want and leave only those that they do. The remaining words spell out a poem. One memorable classroom example is how a student repurposed the UN Declaration of Human Rights to spell-out Britain's hostile environment policy.

Rather than just a product, students have often noted the important process of this zineing. Below, I reflect particularly on the experience of co-teaching an undergraduate third-year community-engaged module (that is, one working closely with local organisations) on displacement, which centred zines. One student in this module reflected, "the process of workshopping our ideas in class over scissors and glue let me get to know people." In workshops, music is played and there is a more playful feeling that takes over as tables are pushed together and chatter begins. This bonding experience is not insignificant, especially as we return to classrooms after an extended period of remoteness. Moving the course online during the global pandemic raised some challenges for this type of interaction; however, it was not devoid of opportunity. Some students who struggled to make it to all workshops – because of conflicting working schedules – actually found the online sessions a great way to join in whilst balancing life's other demands.

When the written assessments or exams tend to be completed alone and then submitted virtually to a single person (the teacher), zineing is an inherently more collective endeavour. At various points in this course students are encouraged to bring their work-so-far to class, and to exchange. Community-partners such as *City of Sanctuary*, in the case of this recent module,

were also invited to view student work and to provide input. The proves itself served as an important way for students to build peer-to-peer networks as well as learn from those beyond the academy, and find ways to feed-forward knowledge gained through conversation. This cyclical process of sharing visual work-in-progress can feel unsettling for students who have become accustomed to solo-working. Some students become nervous that others might "steal" their ideas but, again the singularity of the zine format itself (a highly personal creation, not easily replicated) tends to put students at ease. I often say "no two zines will ever be the same, so don't worry." This personal aspect, however, can also mean the students become fearful of potential judgements. Importantly, in workshops no one is ever forced to share. Interestingly, however, most students do in their own way. Even for those who were initially tentative, witnessing how the workshop space was inviting and safe to different ideas and perspectives seemed to build confidence. In these ways zineing as a pedagogy is something that we have noticed can serve to un-school the competitive lessons learned through university life as well as a way to tackle much of the uncertainties that higher education can foster.

If we think about the pedagogical process (rather than just product) of zineing we have to think about the moments of submission and return. In the wake of a global pandemic, many geographies shifted and changed – one of them being the classroom. Overnight, we moved from crowded (or sometimes not) rooms to screens. Zoom-fatigue became a mainstream issue. Whilst we had already been moving towards depersonalised, virtual forms of submission and return (Turnitin as one ubiquitous platform), the pandemic-period expedited this in many cases. No longer could we even accept a hard-copy of an assessment if we wanted to, for fear that it might be a health-hazard. Prior to the pandemic, it was already difficult to find ways for students to submit their zine work as an analogue "thing." As many of us working in higher education will know, the expectation to submit and grade assessments online has become increasingly normalised. Whilst this online process can have many virtues, such as saving paper, it also has its limits. Not least, it disabled creative forms of assessment that might not be easily digitised. Working alongside co-instructors, prior to the pandemic we had developed a workaround: we asked students to submit a physical copy of their work whilst also submitting photographed evidence of their work with a title page including at least 32 characters in order for the online portal Turnitin to recognise it as a legitimate form of assessment. The shift to these depersonalised forms of assessment represented a boundary for teaching and assessment, a frontier, as such, of which shifted expectations as to what a *proper* assessment, research paper, or more generally a piece of coursework is considered to be. The product resultantly became even further centralised to the process of teaching and assessment. With COVID-19 looming, the ability to submit a physical document became impossible. There was no main office to hand-in a document (one or two students did persist in posting their work). The interpersonal exchange of submitting carefully constructed work was mostly lost. Along with it was lost that vital interpersonal exchange of passing a document to a human being, saying even slightly in that gesture "I made this: this is mine"; there was a loss of acknowledgement of process in this regard. Returning to a blended moment yet again, we have returned to the hardcopy and virtual submission, which we have found brings back a sense of that vital aspect of connection, and the valuing of process.

One challenge that can arise with the zine process is the marking itself and the question of anonymity. The highly reflexive nature of zineing does not lend itself particularly well to the anonymous and standardised marking schemes to which we have grown accustomed. In thinking through this, in a recent course that I co-facilitated, we gave students the option to create their

work as either anonymous or not. All students chose the latter. I was working as a teaching assistant on this course, and in workshops I often encouraged students to think about how they wanted to be present in their work: are they a silent omniscient narrator? Are they embedded as part of the intended audience? Thinking through these questions is a feminist practice which zines enable in that they do call for the creator to be in the work. It is my argument that we as academics, educations and learners are deeply embedded in the methods we choose to engage with. There are no neat borders between researcher and research, and this is particularly highlighted in zine practice. Considering *zineing,* then, as an embodyminded process, the link between not only researcher and research in its completed form (whatever form that might take) but also in research as an iterative and ongoing process. Through making this more explicitly clear in modes of teaching and assessment by using zines in this regard, we can encourage the next generation of geographers to value process, their non-neutral voices in what they *do,* and to move beyond the limitations of product-focused assessment. The work being *done* with local organisations, as per the previous example, can be valued in this regard. Implementing zines in this way serves as a powerful way to engage with communities – a key element of widening participation practices within the context of UK higher education (Salisu, Douglas-Oloyede, and Jones 2024). The impact agendas of institutions extents into pedagogical practices such as these, further situating zines as productive and valuable for the wider work happening within these institutions.

Analogue/Digital

Further to this, during the lockdowns within the pandemic, academics were locked away in their homes, faced with the task of changing their research methodologies, teaching material, and other commitments to be carried out remotely. This sudden change caused significant frustrations for academics, and for many others too, that have been outlined in published, peer-reviewed literature. From discussions over the removal of autonomy and concerns over wellbeing caused through this forced remote working (McGaughey et al. 2022; Santihastuti et al. 2022); to specific concerns over the implications of asynchronous approaches to learning being adopted (Lowenthal et al. 2020); to discussions over the significant effect of Zoom fatigue on wellbeing, learning and research (Cranford 2020; Toney, Light, and Urbaczewski 2021), it is clear to say that the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic were concerning and frustrating to many. In this context it's not surprising that there appears to be a rush to return to the analogue, particularly within an academic landscape where prior to COVID-19, travelling thousands of miles to present a 10-minute paper, multiple times a year, was seen as the norm. This can be seen through drawing upon the open-access document that Huijg (2022) put together, highlighting key academic conferences that had taken an in-person-only approach following lockdowns. Some events offer written accounts of in-person presentations (Institute for Scientific and Engineering Research 2022); some offer partial conference coverage (British International Studies Association 2022); and some offer no remote attendance at all (Nordic Network on Disability Research 2023). These examples are not the full extent of the data collected by Huijg, and whilst there may be *some* scope for remote engagement, it is fair to say that a significant number of conferences are urging a return to the analogue (for better or for worse) through not having even or equal access available for both in-person and remote attendees, where applicable.

With this context in mind, the session we convened at the RGS-IBG Annual Conference 2022 was designed to be carried out in a hybrid manner, and we had both presenters and audience members physically in the room, and in the virtual Zoom room throughout the session. For those who were physically present in the sessions, verbal reflections included but were not limited to "It's nice to do something with my hands again rather than on Zoom"; and "I'm glad I was able to come to the RGS in person. Remote conferencing just isn't the same." There was a clear excitement and sense of relief in the physical room that aligns with academia's desired overall turn to the analogue (though it is important here to acknowledge that this excitement is not representative of the entire sector, and there is work published considering the negative implications on the return to analogue post-lockdowns (N. Brown, Hurley, et al. 2021; Tremain 2022).

Considering the use of zines within teaching, research, and dissemination specifically now, zine-making has historically been considered an analogue method, (Lymn 2018; Troutman 2011; Watson and Bennett 2021). Whilst there are examples of digital zine-making being explored (Boucher 2016; Scott-Dixon 1999), zines prominently continue to be framed as a tactile, physical, and material experience when it comes to considering creative research and *process* versus *product*. This is in part due to the significant potential for analogue zines to contribute to broader disciplinary discussions around the felt materiality of zine-making (Watson and Bennett 2021, 2021). Zines are understood as analogue, which may be significant in influencing the risk of their popularity and may have contributed to the *moment* they seem to be having within academic spaces.

ZINEING AND THE POLITICS OF REFUSAL

With zines therefore having their moment, and with the context for why in the back of our minds, I want to urge readers to look towards the future of zine research, considering the directions that it may take, and the directions I urge for us to take as the paper progresses. Within the convened conference session, a key theme that arose within this new and emerging work surrounded that idea of a politics of refusal; a refusal of conforming; a refusal of stifling creativity within academia; and also a refusal of the boundarying of zines, pushing back against the language of "new frontiers in zineing" used in the session's title.

Drawing inspiration from Audra Simpson's work on ethnographic refusal in her landmark text, *Mohawk Interrupts,* here I explore how refusal might help shape ongoing zine work and critical agendas (Simpson 2014). For Simpson, refusal is framed in generative terms and structures possibilities, as is the case with Kahnawà: ke Mohawk refusals of Canadian and U.S. state sovereignty. It is also an engaged research ethos that "acknowledges the asymmetrical power relations that inform the research and writing about native lives and politics" (Simpson 2014, 2014). It is a stance, resisting to write in a way that might compromise a community's own sovereignty. Sarah Wright has added to this powerful conversation by noting that as a non-Indigenous academic one must learn to better listen and "honour refusals, to acknowledge the enunciations such as those listed by Simpson and others" (Wright 2018, 129).

The politics of refusal has been discussed elsewhere in previous geographical literature also, such as considering the politics of refusal present in the use of humour in the context of war and conflict (Bhungalia 2020); the use of photography in the politics of refusal against neoliberal academic institutions (Metcalfe 2019); and the politics of refusal surrounding land ownership and

sovereignty (Wood and Rossiter 2017), amongst others. However the politics of refusal present within zine-as-method discourse itself are less developed. We see Harris (2003) explore the act of refusal adopted in *grrrlzines* in refusal to speak to unworthy listeners to reposition vulnerable populations as powerful. We also see the politics of refusal at play in Yam and Ma (2024) exploration of protest zines and the politics of care in Hong Kong, with zines challenging and "refusing" dominant institutions and the narratives they portray. Zines have been considered in the ways that they as products assist in these politics of refusal. However, this section will discuss the aforementioned aspects of the politics of refusal raised within the conference session, before extending discussions in urging a shift towards *zineing* in refusal to allow zines to be siloed into a capitalistic focus on product rather than process – a politics of refusal in the act of *zineing* will be considered specifically. By doing so, I call for a shift to the focus on *zineing* rather than zine-making, in refusal to allow zines to be further co-opted by the neoliberal, capitalist academia.

Refusal to Remain in a Disciplinary Silo

Zines have previously been discussed as facilitative of interdisciplinary practice and research (A. Brown, Hurley, et al. 2021; Weida 2020) and this was further emphasised within the presentations in the conference session. In particular speaking towards the interdisciplinary potentials of zineing, the speakers all added to conversations that we as co-convenors had already been having about my doctoral research. I often describe myself as an interdisciplinary scholar whose research interests fall somewhere between human geography and the medical humanities, and this research used a zine workshop to attempt to push back against disciplinary siloing, and focus on the lived experience of participants. I argue that zineing is a great tool for the expression, sharing and reclaiming of lived experiences (Chenevey 2021; Stanley 2015; Vinson 2014) and this is something deemed valuable across multiple disciplines. From disability and queer studies (Bailey 2019); to bioethics (Mukherjee, Tarsney, and Kirschner 2022; Shakespeare 2019); to human geography specifically (Eyles 1981; Simonsen 2013), the value of first-person accounts of lived experience has been acknowledged. I argue that the kind of data that a zine workshop produces goes beyond that of the zine as a final product. These workshops can foster interesting discussions through sharing stories and solidarities that may not have been present otherwise – community and solidarity can be created through the act of sharing in these spaces. Returning to the outcome-focused approach to academic zine work in recent years, this is something additional to consider in terms of how something more than a zine, or a product, is created or facilitated. The workshop space can be facilitative of outcomes including networking; the creation of support systems through solidarity and relationship-building; and the production of participant knowledge and understandings of their own experiences; zineing – as opposed to zine-making – can offer alternative ways of providing outcomes that still appeal to funding-providers' wishes of creativity, whilst politically refusing to allow the further capitalist co-opting of zines as product by the neoliberal academic sector, something that is beneficial beyond solely human geography as a discipline. This being said, it is important to acknowledge that this is not necessarily an easy or straightforward process. Perhaps then the focus here is moreso on the ways in which academics can implement zines and zine-practice/zineing in ways that do not "tame" what zines are and their deeply political histories.

Regarding existing published literature, there has been extensive accounts of concerns over the limitations of being interdisciplinary in our approach to work. Take the field of philosophy and bioethics, for example. Within bioethics, there is plenty of literature that is very much concerned that interdisciplinarity's potentials are limited due to the differing lexis applied to specific areas of study. For example, Borry *et al.* write "interdisciplinary dialogue runs the risk of communication problems and divergent objectives" (Borry, Schotsmans, and Dierickx 2005, 49). Meanwhile, geographers Bracken & Oughton write "language is an important tool for developing truly interdisciplinary projects" (Bracken and Oughton 2006, 372). Evidently, language is a key concern for interdisciplinarity and its future, particularly given the increasing calls for interdisciplinary work by funding bodies. One clear example of this is in the case of bioethics and human geography is the meaning of the term *ethics*. Whilst human geographers might hear the term *ethics* and immediately associate it with research methods; consent forms, and other aspects of working with people in our empirical research, bioethics as a discipline still experiences tension within their empirical turn meaning that ethics, to a bioethicist, might at the first thought relate specifically to normative ethics or everyday moralities and of rightness/wrongness, rather than methodological ethics in empirical research approaches (Jones and Hens 2023). However, implementing zineing in methodological approach, particularly regarding interdisciplinary projects, is beneficial in the way that it removes the sole reliance on discipline-specific words and academic tones of voice, and allows us to rid ourselves of the linguistic strongholds than our disciplines sometimes bind us to. Of course, this is not to discredit the feminist ethical roots that zineing as a practice have come from (Creasap 2014; Zobl 2009), but rather to state that the approach of moving beyond specific words or ways of knowing and sharing knowledge come directly from feminist ethics and zine-making's roots within them. Zineing allows for playful communication in non-restricted ways, that don't rely on discipline specific jargon, and the workshop space is a suitable space for fleshing out understandings of others, their experiences, their opinions, and their expertise.

I have previously worked with academics internationally, from varying departments inclusive of social work, literature geography, and bioethics, through using zineing workshops as a way to communicate information and knowledge, not through the finished product of a zine, but through the collaborative act of sharing and of *zineing* together. The discussions that arise through zineing together are creative conversational ways to allow others to understand the value of research outside of our areas of expertise. Specifically, I visited a bioethics department for a 2-month period of co-learning (Jones and Hens 2023), and a key element of this period of knowledge exchange was the incorporation of zineing workshops with the department (Figure 2). The power of zineing assists in the refusal of the siloing of work (and therefore contributes to the pace at which knowledges are shared between disciplines) and also in the refusal of isolating individual knowledges about topics, such as through participants of a zineing workshop sharing their lived experiences. The challenge of using creative, tactile methods of knowledge production allows us to escape these disciplinary linguistic strongholds and to deal with the challenge of differing jargon and lexis across disciplines, and on an individual scale at that. Despite concerns being shared over the extent of value in interdisciplinarity, zineing here highlights a politics of refusal to allow disciplines to continue to be siloed, and to break the boundaries between disciplines that I argue hold us back within academia. In this instance, through engaging in the creative act of zineing and the conversations that arose through our collaborations significantly enriched our own understandings of ethics and where they might be found – *everywhere* (Jones and Hens 2024)

FIGURE 2 Zineing workshops held as a part of the co-learning process between myself and the department.

Zines and zine-work long precedes geographical interest, and this is something that is key to be acknowledged here. Examples might be in the comparable pamphlet titled "Common Sense" by Thomas Paine urging declarations of independence from Great Britain to people in the Thirteen Colonies (Paine 1776), or in black women's contributions to the Harlem Renaissance through "Little Magazines" in the 1920s, such as "The Messenger," founded by Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph (cf. Marxists Internet Archive 1776n.d.). Looking to the roots of zines, they do not have a discipline themselves, and so the politics of refusal for disciplinary siloing is in line with zineing roots and of what zines were *supposed* to be. They existed before arguments surrounding the interdisciplinarity of academic work were being made. Again, zines are powerful ways to share ideas, thought and knowledges that may not be in line with conventional publishing outlets, inclusive of those within academia, whether through finding community in "Little Magazines" or in urging independence from Great Britain as a coloniser in "Common Sense."

All of this is regardless of discipline, genre, and so on. Therefore, the *process* of zineing specifically can allow communication across boundaries of genre, discipline, person, and contributes to the pushing back against neoliberalisation that considering zines as a product primarily may not offer. A zine as a "finished product," whatever we define that as, might help to disseminate isolated findings, but the politics of refusal here is found in moving to the rich potentials that *zineing* may offer that move beyond creativity for creativity's sake.

Further to this, the work surrounding the politics of refusal and *dialogue* by Sarah Wright (S. Wright 2018) further emphasises this. Wright writes that dialogue is not always productive because "some dialogue can be generative and enabling for capitalism" (p130) and this might be argued to be the case for those dialogues and conversations within zine-making. The dissemination of research findings in creative ways such as through the creation and distribution of a zine might also be considered a dialogue of sorts between researcher and public. However, a focus on product of a *finished* zine might shift our overall research approach to enable capitalism through a product and dissemination-focused approach. What then for the conversations in processes of *zineing*? What for a shift in dialogue that moves to centre the practice of sharing and co-learning rather than a focus on finishing a product? *Zineing* might offer us a way to ensure that our dialogue surrounding marginalised groups such as those Wright discusses in her paper are not being subject to exploitative research practices accidentally facilitated by ourselves, through the use of zines. The dialogues present in *zineing* are not underscored or contextualised by capitalistic approaches in the same ways as dialogues present in zine-*making* are. This stands true not only in research, but also in pedagogic practice. What changes when we focus on *zineing* dialogues that enable learning and conversation rather than a focus on creating a zine for a final piece for students to write an essay about? What possibilities might this provide, then, in the resistance against neoliberal, capitalist agendas? Perhaps, as Wright explains it, in this instance *zineing* dialogues as I have outlined here mean refusal.

CONCLUSIONS – REFUSAL TO BOUNDARY ZINES THROUGH THE LANGUAGE OF "NEW FRONTIERS"

As academics we can see that zines are having a moment. Indeed, they are being used in HE settings as an output for research, pedagogical assessment, management even using zines as an output to celebrate its gains in various areas such as EDI. It is clear to see that zines as a *thing* speak to the requests of funders for creative outputs, and to educators desires for creative assessment design. They are widely appealing. In focussing on dissemination and *final products*, in these ways, zines have a tendency to become a celebratory tool: rendering public the "findings" of research in an accessible format, as they get unintentionally coopted and tamed in the process of attempting to enrich our research and its dissemination. Although these can be vital outputs, I attempt to show in this paper some of what is lost in this dominant approach. Drawing on the participatory zine-session I co-led with geographers and activists at the RGS-IBG Annual Conference, I suggest that perhaps what is needed at this moment is a language to think about zines not as product but as a process, and one that considers the process of *doing* and not solely *dissemination* – especially one that can articulate resistance and indeed refusal. A clear case is made here for the value of stepping beyond zine-as-product, and moving towards the centring of process and *zineing* in this paper; *zineing* as an intentional attempt at refusal to be sucked into

the neoliberal research and educational landscapes through a focus on process rather than product. In doing so, it may well bring up difficult questions as to how we shift our own practices surrounding zines, zine research, and pedagogic approaches that implement zines to ensure that we are not becoming stuck in the excitement that might arise from zines sounding new, unique and distinctly participatory. There is a fruitful opportunity here for a *deepening* or a repositioning in our approach to zines and *zineing*. To do this work again perhaps requires of us not to look for "new" frontiers, but rather look back to the activist roots of zineing in order to resist the limitations fostered through neoliberal, capitalist agendas.

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