Adventures in Academia: Demystifying Research and Building Working Class Solidarity Networks Through

ZINES

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Overview

- Background to project

- Reflexivity

- Why use zines?

- Adventures in Academia zine project

- Talking about money

- How zines can be useful to "the PhD journey" and to other working class academics

- Conclusion

Background to project

- Involvement in DIY cultures for over a decade

- Rapid closure of music venues, intersection with personal precarity and housing crisis

- Reliance on digital platforms and social media

- Working as an archivist and wanting more time to do work in my community

Reflexivity

- Definition: "self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher" (Kim England, 1994: p. 82)

- Makes visible the process of research and the relationship between the researcher and the subject of research

- Criticisms: naval gazing? Inadequate? Still centres the researcher? Doesn't change power dynamics in research?

Why zines?

- Controlled circulation

- Personal narrative style

- Space outside of academia

- Existing presence in zine making communities

- Valued in DIY cultural communities

- Used by other researchers - Phiona Stanley used zines to reflect on "the dark places, the badlands… the anxiety and loneliness that traveled with me, the emotional "journey" of the PhD" (Stanley, 2015: p. 160).
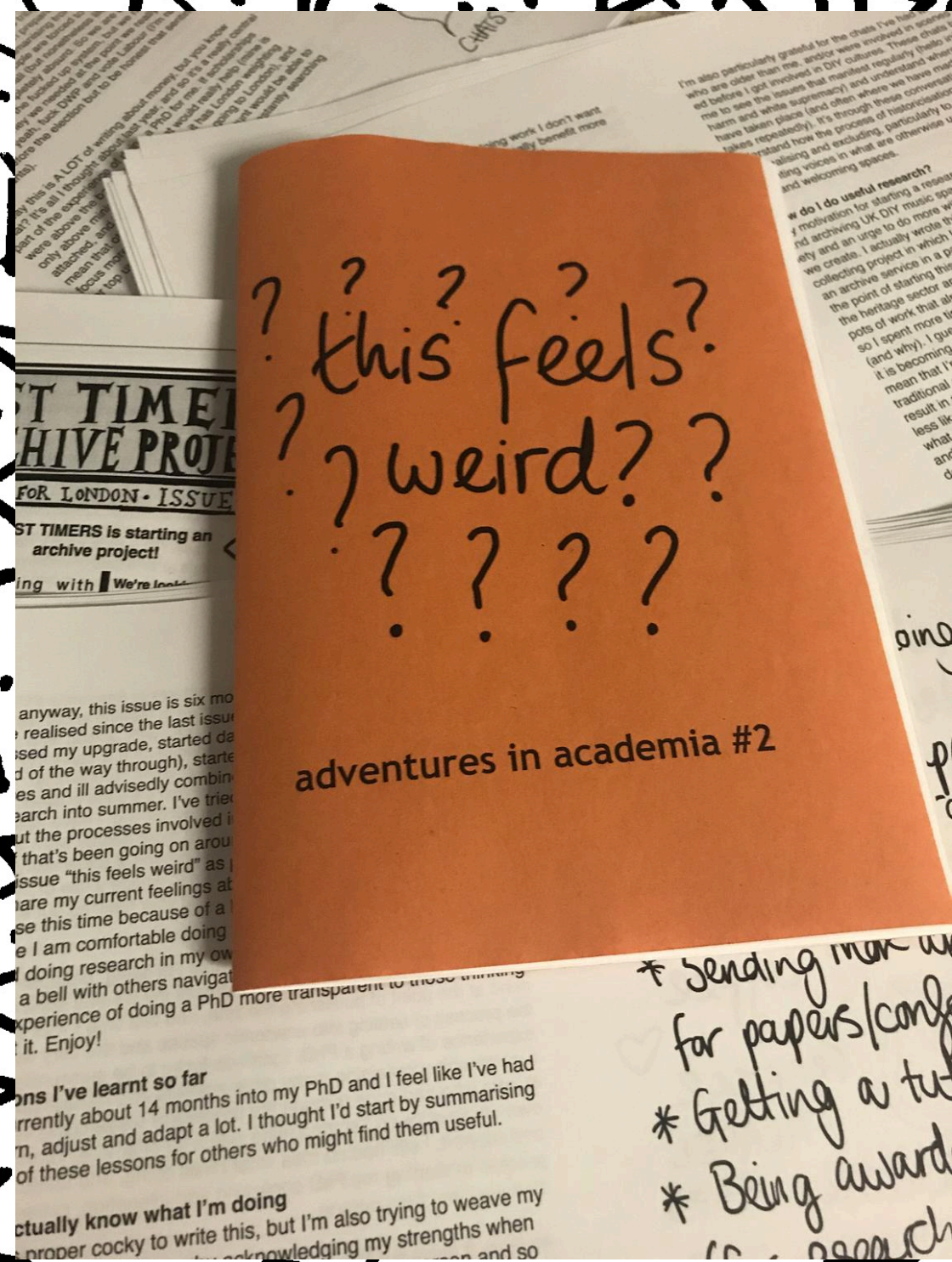
i have no idea
what i'm doing

adventures in academia #1

? this feels ? weird ? ? ? ?

adventures in academia #2

ST TIMER
RCHIVE PROJE
FOR LONDON · ISSUE

ST TIMERS is starting an
archive project!

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experience of doing a PhD more transparent to those thinking
it. Enjoy!

ons I've learnt so far
rrently about 14 months into my PhD and I feel like I've had
m, adjust and adapt a lot. I thought I'd start by summarising
of these lessons for others who might find them useful.

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* Getting a tu
* Being award

Centring the student voice

- Writing and education about doing a PhD often comes from established academics or early career researcher who've had success

- Internal resources tend to be focused on getting you through and building resilience - keeping the university's interests in mind - whereas the zine allows me to be more openly critical of the university and PhD system in the UK

- Leaving something behind to help others through their processes

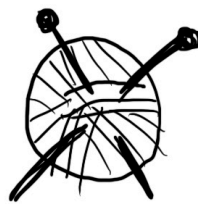# Toolkit for supporting DIY cultural researchers ♡
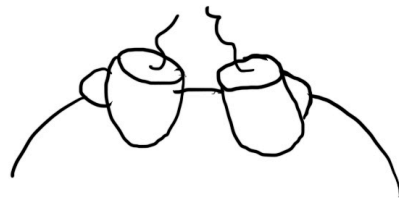
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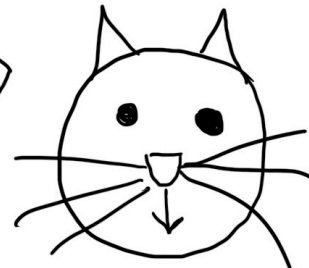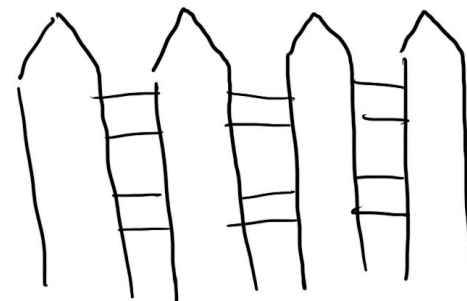
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

FRESH AIR

COMPLETELY UNRELATED HOBBY

THERAPY

SELF-REFLECTION + TALKING

DID YOU FIND THIS WEIRD TOO?

OF COURSE!!

CHATS WITH PEERS

BOUNDARIES!

Demystifying processes

- So many PhD processes are opaque

- Accessing CPD through teaching and publishing is reliant on personal connections rather than established processes

- How to access funding for study and public engagement

- What to say no to (unpaid labour)

- How stages of the PhD can emotionally affect you/ feeling less alone

Making inequalities visible

"I write blogs for the same reasons that I write auto/ethnography—to make black girls visible, and through visibility to affirm them and (possibly) change their lives and worlds in the process" (Robin Boylorn, 2013: p. 80).

- Let's talk about socioeconomic inequality

- How do academic environments and processes enforce these structural inequalities?
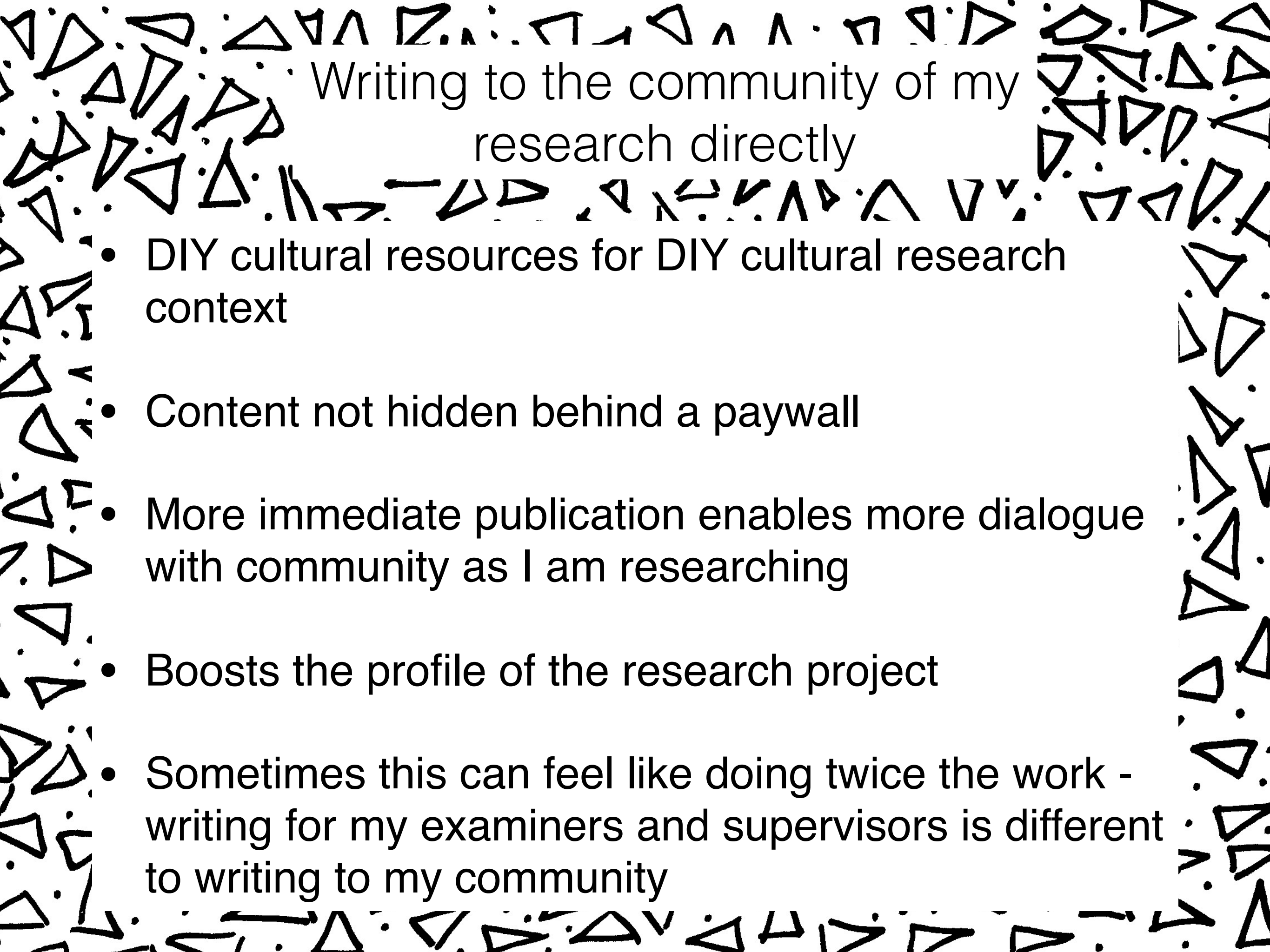
Money and academia

- Not having enough to live on as a base line

- Juggling DWP appeals and caring with study

- 13 paid jobs in one academic year

- Not being able to say no to work or prioritise mental wellbeing

- An anxiety about a lack of safety net that underpins all work and study experiences

Expectations

- A fourth unpaid year is an option

- You can afford books and conferences

- You can afford to pay expenses up front

- You can afford to swallow travel costs to training, interviews or other academic events

- You can afford to work for "prestige"

- You can afford to turn down work

Writing to the community of my research directly

- DIY cultural resources for DIY cultural research context

- Content not hidden behind a paywall

- More immediate publication enables more dialogue with community as I am researching

- Boosts the profile of the research project

- Sometimes this can feel like doing twice the work - writing for my examiners and supervisors is different to writing to my community

Conclusion

- Zines are great for disseminating research, dialogue and emotional reflection

- Zines are also a lot of work!

- Writing outside of academia helps to demystify structures, build connections and help others to feel less alone

- Your personal experience as a marginalised person in academia is powerful and we should document them more

Thank you!

Questions/comments?

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