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Towards an Inventive Ethics of Carefull Risk: Unsettling Research Through DIY Academic Archiving

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we call for an inventive ethics of care-full risk for qualitative research. While methodological experimentation is widely welcomed across the social sciences, there is little talk of innovation in ethical principles and practice. We argue that research ethics is an 'invented tradition' (Hobsbawm 2012), which has become unquestioned convention. We take up the archiving and reuse of qualitative research data as a challenging, yet compelling, site of methodological innovation, where ethical considerations often appear as an insurmountable barrier. Ethical concerns about informed consent and anonymity, given unknown future use of data, and commitments to destroying data to protect research participants, appear undone by calls to share data. We take up the work of community archives, feminist and queer archivists and archival theory, as generative sites for developing an archival imaginary for researchers. We recount how we came to unsettle ethical practice through creating a 'DIY academic archive', a digital open access research archive, *Clayoquot Lives: An Ecofeminist Story Web* (https://clayoquotlives.sps.ed.ac.uk/). Against a paternalistic research culture of risk avoidance, we argue that care always involves risk. An inventive feminist ethic of care-full risk can resource new ethical research, reimagining research by embracing the risk of caring for data.

Introduction: Reinventing Research Ethics

In this article, we call for an inventive ethics of care-full risk for qualitative research in the social sciences. We argue that research ethics can be understood as an 'invented tradition' (Hobsbawm 2012) which has rapidly become unquestioned convention. While commitment to methodological experimentation, to 'live methods' (Back and Puwar 2012) and 'inventive methods' (Lury and Wakeford 2013), is widely welcomed and rewarded, we note there is little talk of innovation in ethical principles and practice.

We take up the archiving and reuse of qualitative research data as a particularly challenging, yet compelling, site of methodological innovation, where ethical considerations

have appeared as an insurmountable barrier to its development. The commitment to informed consent seems compromised because the future use of data remains unknown. Seeking informed consent from research participants for reuse in perpetuity, by other researchers addressing different research questions, can seem impossible. The commitment to anonymisation means that important contextual details are likely to be redacted, leaving data compromised for future researchers. Most obviously, the commitment to enacting safety for participants through destroying their data at the end of projects is utterly undone by the idea of retaining this data for future use. Thus the archiving and reuse of qualitative data appears to threaten established ethical practice in qualitative research (Broom, Cheshire and Emmison 2009; Cheshire, Broom, Emmison 2009; Hughes and Tarrant 2020; McLeod and O'Connor 2020).

Here we recount how our project to create our own 'DIY academic archive', an open access, online archive of research interviews, *Clayoquot Lives: An Ecofeminist Story Web* (https://clayoquotlives.sps.ed.ac.uk/), necessarily involved an 'inventive' approach to research ethics. We name this practice 'DIY academic archiving' to point to different genealogies and orientations to our work. Against the extractivist data harvesting of corporate interests and moving away from the automated data-mining of large scale computational research and big data, we turn to the creative work of archiving and sharing stories of ecofeminist activism to inform a radical data-sharing and archival practice for researchers. We draw on the practices of feminist and queer history-making, the work of community and independent archives, and crucially, to archivists and archival theory, as generative sites for developing an archival imaginary and archival ethics for researchers (Moore 2017).

Crucially, we are extending archival practices to propose the possibility of researchers building open and publicly-accessible digital archives. In making this leap, we are working with a feminist ethic of care. Against a culture of risk avoidance, we argue that research, and care, always involve risk. We suggest that an inventive feminist ethic of care-full risk, understood as responsible action (Welch 2000), allows us to take seriously matters of accountability and that creating archives for sharing our research data can offer an ethical practice of 'world-making' (Haraway 2016).

Research Ethics as an 'Invented Tradition'

We argue that research ethics can be understood as an 'invented tradition':

> a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. (Hobsbawm 2012, 1)

Commitments to informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, the use of information sheets and the destruction of data, have all become research tradition very quickly. However, the institutionalisation of ethical review has come much more recently, and arguably in a more ad hoc way than many researchers appreciate, involving a mixture of guidelines and governance from professional bodies, funder-led frameworks as well as, more recently, university-based ethical review committees. Here, our attention is less on these more formal processes of ethical review, which have been the focus of significant criticism, and more on ethical practice throughout the research process, where we are suggesting that 'invented traditions' are also readily invoked.

We have found it particularly curious that while claims to novelty and innovation abound in relation to methodology, claims to innovation do not usually extend to research ethics. Hobsbawm remains instructive, observing that '[i] t is the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant that makes the 'invention of tradition' so interesting' (2012, 2). Ethical commitments emerge as the part of the research process which is stabilised, arguably serving to legitimise methodological innovations.

In an insightful article, Nind and colleagues (see Nind et al. 2013) take up the question of methodological innovation and ethics through a study of research innovators. They found a strong orientation to responsible practice amongst researchers, suggesting that the relationship between innovation and ethics can be one of reciprocity, rather than tension. This separation between creative approaches to research and concern about ethical matters is also identified by McLeod and O'Connor (2020) in their recent reflection on archiving qualitative data, where they name these as two distinct trends in the literature. Research ethics do not have to be stabilised to vouch for innovation, rather creativity and innovation *needs* to extend to ethical practice.

We argue that it is the unexamined persistence of key commitments of research ethics that enables research ethics to be so effectively mobilised as a damning argument against the possibility of archiving qualitative data. Paying attention to the questions which emerge in a move to archiving and reuse of qualitative data exposes some limitations of the assumptions of research ethics. Noting that attention to 'invented traditions' has led to a fruitless search for the 'origins' of traditions and examination of how much of a tradition is fictitious, Palmisano and Pannofino (2016) instead approach tradition as a site of ongoing cultural creativity. Drawing on their concept of '*inventive* traditions' (Palmisano and Pannofino 2016) we draw attention to a tradition of creativity in ethical research practice. If we are engaged with inventive methods, we may benefit from an inventive approach to ethics too. Inventiveness does not mean fabricating ethics out of nowhere; it means building on ongoing interventions – this is where we turn to histories of feminist and other critical approaches to an ethics of care.

Towards an 'Inventive Ethics': Feminist and Other Critical Approaches to Care

There has already been reinvention of ethical tradition, largely led by feminist and other critical researchers. Feminists have challenged the application of abstract ethical principles to research encounters. They have insisted on the need to attend to the specificity of lived experience, to reflect on the importance of research relationships, to attend to the complexities of building rapport and to power differences in research encounters. A key feminist intervention was to understand research encounters as co-created (see for example Edwards and Mauthner 2002; Haraway 1988).

Feminist researchers have argued that it is a *paternalistic* ethic of care which has informed practice to date – one which assumes a hierarchy between researcher and researched: that the researcher is the knower and the researched is to be known; that research participants are vulnerable and in need of protection. In this model, the researcher is both the potential source of harm and also the one entrusted with avoiding

harm. This approach to research has produced strategies of risk avoidance intended to ensure participants come to no harm. This functions more to protect researchers through assuming asymmetrical relationships with research participants, where the researcher is always powerful, rather than approaching research encounters as much more fraught relationships where multiple inequalities and differences define and shape the research encounter. Feminists have rejected this protectionist, risk-averse ethic, which denies research participants a stake in their own story.

This kind of protectionist ethic has also been traced by Uma Narayan who identified a 'colonialist care discourse', noting that colonialism was rarely presented as being about 'crude self-interest' (1995, 134) but rather was also justified 'as being in the interests of, for the good of, and as promoting the welfare of the colonized' (Narayan 1995, 133). For Narayan, this means that calls for a turn from a rhetoric of individual rights to an ethic of care, and attention to relationships of interdependence, is not sufficient (1995). Rather she argues the need to also 'worry about who defines terms, such as rights and relationships', as these accounts of interdependence will differ for the coloniser and the colonised (1995, 133).

Against beneficent accounts of research, many communities have insisted on naming damage, and have called for more attention to the ethics of research practice. Linda Tuhiwai Smith continues to bear repeating in - *Decolonising Methodologies* she damningly names research as 'probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary' (Smith 1999, 1). Smith opens up a transformative indigenous research imaginary, offering a range of interventions which reimagine research practice. Disability activists have refused decades of objectifying research *on* disabled people, often without informed consent, calling for an inclusive research ethos of 'nothing about us without us' (Charlton 2000; see also Nind 2014). Researchers in Childhood Studies have also identified paternalism in research and have produced a rich literature engaging with children and young people participating in and leading research (e.g. Davidson 2017; Cuevas-Parra and Tisdall 2019). The growth of participatory, collaborative, and inclusive research is one response to these challenges. The history of research ethics is a history of creative intervention.

Sharon Welch has identified an ethic of control in protectionist ethics of care, which leads 'to a paralysis of will when faced with complex problems' (2000, 17), constraining the radical possibilities of social justice. Like Narayan (1995), she is attuned to the matter of who gets to define terms, and who can assume that 'the aim of one's action will be carried out' (Welch 2000, 17). Drawing on Black feminist theorists and writers, she calls for an ethic of risk which, for her, opens up the possibilities for action. We take up this invitation to undermine the opposition between care and risk, and the assumption that to take risks is necessary to be care-less. Rather a 'care-less' approach might be one which substitutes proceduralism for working through dynamics of power. For us, a feminist ethic of care-full risk calls for an inventive approach to ethical practice which can become a resource for supporting creative interventions and 'responsible action' in research.

Attending to Data as 'Neglected Things'

A feminist ethic of care continues to find new resonances – including with those working in Science and Technology Studies, data ethics and archival theory and practice. Maria

Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) calls for research to be a matter of care – supporting the 'relational, material and affective webs that are vital for collective flourishing' (Lindén and Singleton 2021, 2). She notes how some things are proper objects of care, whereas others are cast aside and devalued, and calls for a feminist attention to 'neglected things', to generate better ways of caring. We argue that data are neglected things in research. Against commitments to care for research participants, the traces of research – interview transcripts, audio files, video, images, or material objects, and so on – which are also the traces of participants, appear as some of the 'neglected things' of research projects. Commonly, there has been a benign, or not so benign, neglect, where data accumulates in chaotic disorder in filing cabinets, on office floors, or on computer drives and clouds, where it might languish, eventually discarded through office moves, and the technological obsolescence of new computers and multiple clouds. This practice of discarding data, and the invocation of research ethics as a reason not to save or share data, demonstrates the non-innocence of paternalistic, protectionist 'care'. To create an archive of research data is a matter of care (see also Baker and Karasti 2018). Like Puig de la Bellacasa, we are also building on the work of Haraway and others who understand feminist knowledge projects as matters of world-making (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Haraway 2016; Murphy 2015; Lindén and Singleton 2021; Lapp 2020).

To care for the neglected things of research is not an easy or simple task. Michelle Murphy (2015) reminds us of the need to separate care from feeling good or happy, pointing out that one meaning of care is to be concerned, and that to be concerned might also mean to be unsettled. To archive and share research data is to unsettle existing practice and researchers schooled in these conventions. It is to concern others, to take the risk of unsettling other researchers (perhaps more than research participants), and it is to the risk of unsettling taken for granted professional practice. To archive in the context of histories of data destruction requires us to be inventive about ethical practice. To unsettle research conventions certainly requires care-full risk.

Yet there are precedents for sharing research data – with quantitative data the common reference point. Critics argue the unsuitability of the comparison, insisting on the importance of qualitative data as co-created in the context of a relationship and encounter between a researcher and a research participant, against a fantasy of quantitative data as 'abstracted from the conditions of its production' (McLeod and O'Connor 2020, 1). The relational nature of qualitative data is crucial and goes against the assumptions of decontextualised quantitative data. While we want to resist reductive approaches to research materials and the relationships through which these materials have been generated, we also want to refuse any simplistic binaries between data and stories, or data and people. Here, the Feminist Data Manifest-No's (Cifor et al. 2019) commitment to refusal as feminist strategy appeals. Notably, the point of how refusal of existing data regimes opens up possibilities for the emergence of new data futures through making new ethical commitments – and these are futures which are not overdetermined by colonial *or* liberal ethics (see also Hoffmann 2021; Sutherland 2019). In continuing to use the terms data *and* stories, we understand data as always embodied, relational, and affective (Cifor et al. 2019). Against the model of disembodied data often offered up by corporate big data, feminist qualitative research has always been about relations. Against extractivist models, with dubious approaches to consent, feminist social science insists on the co-production of stories, offering participants a more engaged process in creating the

stories/data which might go on the record. Drawing on the recent take up of an ethics of care in feminist data science (Cifor et al. 2019; D'Ignazio and Klein 2020), we refuse data neglect, automatic data destruction, as well as extractivism, and call for care in the production, sharing and archiving of data and stories. The question then becomes how to maintain, multiply, proliferate and document relations - and we suggest a more thorough engagement with the productive affordances of archival theory and practice can help.

The Missing Archival Turn in the Social Sciences: Archiving as Care for Neglected Data

One way we can care for research participants is to archive otherwise neglected research data – archivists have long understood the archive is a site of value (Caswell 2016). Through the affordances of metadata, and the connections that archived data can make, concerns that data will be extracted from its context can be assuaged – archival practices can allow us to build webs of relations, to refuse transactional approaches, to multiply relations, to name contexts.

Despite a wide-ranging 'archival turn' across the humanities and social sciences, this turn has rarely extended to a meaningful engagement with actual archivists or archival theory. Michelle Caswell (2016) has written a searing critique of humanities academics who turn to the archive as a metaphor only, remaining largely oblivious to an established body of archival theory, a long history of professional practice, and a site of lively contemporary debate. When discussions about the reuse of qualitative data emerged in the UK in the early 1990s, there was little appreciation of the affordances of archival theory or practice. Discussion, such as it was, was about depositing 'clean' data into a repository, or database, understood as a time-consuming administrative task. Yet archival theory and practice arguably provides much more useful insight for qualitative researchers than, for instance, the continuing turn to, and then away from, quantitative data.

Interestingly, a feminist ethics of care has also appeared in archival studies. In a widely taken up article, Caswell and Cifor (2016; 2021) have called for the practice of 'radical empathy', which they describe as attending to 'theoretical and observed relationships between people, the self and others' (2016, 30). They map out a relational ethic of care for archivists, identifying four key relationships to attend to – the relationships between archivist and (i) record creator, (ii) record subject, (iii) archive user and (iv) larger communities. Crucially for them, these relationships are affective and embodied (Caswell and Cifor 2016; see also Douglas et al. 2019). While social scientists are familiar with the challenges of care for research participants, and generally also think about communities of interest and wider publics, we suggest that relationships with data, with research materials and with records, remain the neglected things of research. Taking up the insights of archival theory offers a way to extend our ethic of care to research data.

The Community Archive Turn: Creating Open Archives

We turn specifically to the overlapping fields of community archiving, activist archiving, independent and autonomous archives, and feminist, queer and anti-racist archival theory and practice as fruitful sites for building what we term 'DIY academic archiving'

practices. We are not alone in finding insight here. Leading archival theorist, Terry Cook (2013), offered an alternative archival genealogy, naming not just one archival turn, but four archival paradigms, where community archives are positioned as the cutting edge of contemporary archival theory and practice. Community archives are often understood as focused on community ownership and control of materials, with a commitment to retrieving histories which would otherwise be ignored, discarded, hidden from history (Flinn et al. 2009; Flinn 2011; Bastian and Flinn 2020). In this way, they challenge the centrality of formal institutions, calling for post-custodial arrangements for data and records. Interventions aiming to decolonise archives are calling for 'slow archives' which take care with the relationships at stake in archival processes (Christen and Anderson 2019). What we find most interesting and powerful about community archives is their inventive reworking of archival practices and processes, crafting these so they are fit for purpose. Despite, or perhaps because of, this, these 'DIY archivists' get to grips with archival terms and practices – and work to make them fit local practice (Star 2010). Community archives emerge as inventive with methods and ethics.

A key insight for academic researchers is the question of who gets *access* to these materials. Discussions of open research data often only extend to making data 'open' to other researchers – not to participants, or related communities, or even wider publics. With Jamie Lee (2021) in this issue, we want to imagine archives as 'spaces of radical hospitality'. Tonia Sutherland (2019) argues that carceral logics can pervade even social justice-oriented approaches to data storage and reuse. Behind the gatekeeping of licencing arrangements of research data repositories, research participants likely do not have access to their own transcripts, their own stories, their own words. How ethical is this?

DIY Academic Archiving: *Clayoquot Lives: An Ecofeminist Story Web*

We turn now to our experience working together to create a digital archive of research data – an accessible, structured, searchable online archive of interviews generated in an earlier research project in the mid 1990s. Subsequently, we have also engaged in writing and teaching on DIY academic archiving (see Moore et al. forthcoming, and our project website *DIY Academic Archiving*: www.diyacademicarchiving.org). The interviews consisted of a set of 30 oral histories and originated from Niamh's Ph.D. research on activists at an ecofeminist peace camp. The camp was based on land which is the traditional territory of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations (Native Land Digital, n.d.), never ceded to the Candian state, though known as Clayoquot Sound (pronounced 'klak-wat'), the West Coast of Vancouver Island, in British Columbia, Canada. In the summer of 1993, thousands of people came to Clayoquot Sound to protest against the clear-cut logging of temperate rainforest. A local environmental organisation, the Friends of Clayoquot Sound (n.d.), set up a peace camp with daily workshops teaching consensus decision-making and the practice of nonviolent direct action, which was described as based on ecofeminist principles. More than 800 people were arrested while blockading a logging road in one of the largest acts of nonviolent civil disobedience in Canadian history. The online archive, *Clayoquot Lives: An Ecofeminist Story Web* (https://clayoquotlives.sps.ed.ac.uk/), is predominantly a collection of oral history interviews, while also containing a selection of photos and other documents related to the campaign.

Niamh's desire to create a digital archive to share these stories came from a visceral sense of responsibility, compounded every time she moved job, packing up her box of cassettes carefully, always making sure she had the originals in her possession, and not just relegated to the back of a removal van. This sensibility intensified through subsequent work with feminist, queer and other community archival projects (e.g. Moore 2017; 2020) which brought new knowledge of archival practices, and a deeper dive into archival literature (see for example Ashton 2017a; 2017b; Bly and Wooten 2012; Henningham, Evans and Morgan 2017; Lee 2020; McKinney 2020; Sheffield 2020). Importantly this work drew attention to the ways in which feminist activism, feminist sociology and feminist archival practices are in ongoing conversation and traverse the boundaries of academia, politics and archives.

In naming our practice 'DIY academic archiving' we seek to gesture to the ethos of community archival practices. The decision was not whether to offer the interviews to a university data archive or repository *or* to put them online – rather the interviews can be hosted in many places. We are keen to multiply the sites where materials can be found and accessed. We also intend to deposit the interviews with the University repository as it offers more support for longer-term preservation, while also creating a digital archive, which supports wider access to the stories.[1]

In creating our digital archive, we turned to Omeka (https://omeka.org/), an open source, free, web-based publishing platform designed specifically for publishing accessible digital collections and using these collections to create digital exhibitions. Omeka originally emerged from the concerns of public historians interested in the potential of new media to reimagine history and was developed with the support of the Roy Rosenzweig Centre for New Media and Public History at George Mason University in the US. While Omeka does not explicitly describe itself as an archival platform, embedded in Omeka's infrastructure are useful features, such as Dublin Core Metadata which offers a standardised way of describing data, or items, in collections, documenting some of the context of the data, and at the same time, optimising relationality, enabling the data to be located and reused through systematic categorisation of data in digital collections. While we recognise Omeka's modest description of itself as a web publishing platform for 'digital collections', as well as appreciating Caswell's critique of the use of archive as metaphor, nevertheless we persist with our description of *Clayoquot Lives* as DIY academic *archiving* (rather than more precisely a digital collection). In this, we want to signal recognition of archival theory and ethics which inform our practice, even as DIY archivists we inevitably have much more to learn from archivist colleagues and scholars. Our ambition is for more take up of archival theory and practice across the social sciences to inform the sharing and reuse of qualitative data.

How to Build an Archival Web: Standardisation as Weaving Connections

The affordances of archiving became apparent to us in the early stages of the project, even in the mundane and invisible work of 'cleaning' data. We grasped that the process of standardisation enables the creation of a web of relationships between research materials (Star 2010). The practical work of making the *Clayoquot Lives* archive involved first retrieving cassettes and CDs from Niamh's filing cabinet. Since doing the interviews, Niamh had had the interviews digitised and the files

copied to CDs. Now, the initial tasks were to complete full transcription of all interviews and to standardise the format of the transcripts, the digital audio files and file names.

As Martina, Mary and Nikki worked on standardising the transcripts and audio files, the interviews came to life again. Approaching the archive with an ethics of care in mind, and aware that we were preparing the interviews for reuse, it became obvious that we were ourselves reusing the interview data, seeking out context and creating new contexts. By re-encountering the interviews through careful, embodied, listening, the technical work of standardisation emerged as a physical, mental, emotional and relational process. What became obvious to us really quickly once the work was underway – and we acknowledge should of course have been obvious to us as social scientists – is that technical work is always social. The usually invisible work of archiving (Oke 2020; Star 2010; Caswell 2016) became very apparent and we gained an appreciation of the affordances of archival thoery and practice. Reading a transcript or listening to audio can offer a way into building a relationship with an interviewee and caring about that person. Making the archive was a project where we learned through the process of doing, opening up a valuable space between doing a qualitative research project and 'depositing' cleaned up data into an existing repository. We argue that a stronger appreciation of the work that archivists do can help to address some of the understandable, but limiting, concerns of social scientists about the challenges of archiving and reusing qualitative data.

A Feminist Practice of Care as a Resource for Archiving Research Data

Feminist ethical practice is often a collective achievement. Crucially for us, the work of ethical decision-making became a collaborative process. There was a value to not making what felt at times weighty decisions alone. We recognised ourselves in Edwards and Ribbens' (1998, 6) account of their research meetings 'as a space in which to express doubt and admit the possibility of unanswerable questions, rather than falling prey to the certainty of academic rhetoric' (cited in Birch et al. 2002, 3). Although research ethics is often treated as the responsibility of an individual researcher, we want to acknowledge research teams, other colleagues and interlocutors as important resources for working through the unanswerable questions which research can throw up. Our collaborative approach involved the co-creation of practices of care (including care for each other). At points, we also recognised the value of drawing in other expertise into our discussions[2].

These ongoing and collaborative conversations were essential for working through the many dilemmas the archive project raised. As well as creating standard formats, we also needed to revisit the content of the interviews. Previous publications in articles, chapters in edited collections, and the book, *The Changing Nature of Eco/feminism: Telling Stories from Clayoquot Sound* (Moore 2015), meant that extracts could be carefully curated, and ethical issues addressed through a selective choice of materials. Now, however, whole interviews would be available. A key question which emerged for us was how to deal with references to other people mentioned in interviews, who might not be aware of being named, and clearly had not given any consent to be included in an archive. These questions about naming or anonymisation of 'third parties' mentioned in

interviews, and whether to redact small extracts related to them, were – and continue to be – ongoing conversations.

The requirement for informed consent and the practice of producing consent forms is now taken for granted but, in keeping with our argument that research ethics is an invented tradition, this was not yet the case in 1996, when Niamh carried out most of the interviews. That she did use a consent form at that time is perhaps the surprise. The reason Niamh had a consent form was less because of research ethics, and rather because of a conversation with a Ph.D. student, who had just returned from fieldwork in Canada, and who urged the use of consent forms because North America had such a culture of litigation, a reminder of how research ethics can sometimes be used as a cloak for self-protection.

Presciently, the consent form included permission to 'broadcast' interviews, asking participants if they were willing to approve the following statement:

> I agree that the contents of the interview may be used throughout Niamh Moore's research, in her thesis, teaching, in any ensuing presentations, publications or broadcasts. (https://clayoquotlives.sps.ed.ac.uk/ethics)

Realistically, at the time the distant possibility of a radio programme based on oral histories was in mind, but much has changed in 'broadcasting' since the early 1990s – developments in digital technologies have enabled new ways of 'broadcasting' research. In theory, we had consent to broadcast the interviews on the internet. Nonetheless, legal is not the same as ethical nor do legal frameworks offer an understanding of ethics as a process, ongoing throughout the duration of a project. Despite having nominal consent from the 1990s, we took a further step, contacting original interviewees to tell them about the archive project, notifying them about the planned launch of the digital archive, and providing them with a few weeks' window to view the archive and request any changes or removals before the site was publicly launched. Crucially, rather than sending participants their own individual transcripts to review, we wanted them to be able to see their own contributions as part of a larger digital collection and to be able to view the website as it would look online to any visitor to the archive.

Also important was that many of the interviewees in Clayoquot explicitly understood themselves to have been involved in a historic moment. For many, the experience of being arrested at the camp was a transformative experience they wanted to be documented and shared. As feminists, many easily understood the importance of creating archives of stories of activism. Some explicitly approached the interview as a conversation with future listeners – for example, Sile Simpson finished the interview and then asked for the recorder to be switched on again and she added an address to imagined future listeners. In fact, the dilemma for many researchers is that we understand that many research participants anticipate wider audiences and that we know that not enough people are going to hear the stories that we are entrusted with. Research encounters can be valuable and generative spaces which open up opportunities for participants to decide what story it is that they want to put on the record and to be supported and listened to in telling that story. This generous capacity of research encounters stands in stark contrast with data regimes which obscure the extraction of data, demand consent and seal data forever behind locked doors. An online archive makes the data more accessible to wider audiences.

Through reading and listening, it is possible for a researcher to be thinking about ethics and care. Landsberg's 'prosthetic memory' may be a useful starting point as 'memories of events through which one did not live, memories that, despite their mediated quality, [have] the capacity to transform one's subjectivity, politics, and ethical engagements' (2009, 221–222). For us, thinking about, and engaging with, the memories recorded in these interviews, was less about a prosthetic adoption of these lived experiences as our own, but rather about the archive offering opportunities of emotional encounter and connection, of care and investment via the data.

Building a Relationship with Irene Abbey

When preparing the audio files and transcripts, we divided them up to format and to flag any potential issues which would need collective consideration. We initially approached this as a somewhat mechanical task, yet it became clear that this process also involved a re-encountering of the interview, and as such, an opening for relationship building between interviewee and researcher through the engagement with the transcript. For example, Irene Abbey who was well into her 80s when she was arrested at Clayoquot, and has since died, was alive for Martina, who encountered Irene through listening to the audio files. In the process of careful listening and formatting of the transcript, Martina became invested in her story. The embodied experiencing of the data (reading, listening, typing) and the subsequent emotional investment in Irene's story came to the fore in the team's discussion about redacting specific sections in the transcripts and audio recordings. In one particular instance in the recording, Irene spoke somewhat dismissively about someone else, and this prompted the team to (re)consider questions of consent and redaction. Martina raised the question of removing this particular section so as to not 'taint' Irene's legacy and her own relationship with a woman now deceased. Indeed, she felt fiercely engaged with Irene, not with the data, but with Irene the person, or rather the memory of the person she had gotten to 'meet', and subsequently care for, again highlighting our relational understanding of data. Not wanting to reproduce a paternalistic care in an attempt to protect the integrity of her character, we revisited what it means to care in this case, given Niamh's knowledge of the context of the interview and Irene's own awareness of matters of consent at the time. The outcome was to leave in the material. The discussion highlighted, however, how the embodied relationship with Irene's archival material enabled the capacity of relationship building, and the consideration of an ethic of care towards Irene. This is a profound reminder for social scientists that connections and rapport can and do emerge through engagement with archival materials, that it is not always necessary to have been 'there' to care, and to reflect on the ethical implications of research. Rather the 'there' has moved – it is possible to be there in the archive and build connections that are meaningful and real, to echo Caswell and Cifor's (2016; 2021) emphasis on affective connections and radical empathy with the subjects of archival records.

Anonymisation and the Ethics of Names

Throughout the process of preparing the data for publication in the archive, consent was a key consideration. From the beginning of Niamh's research, decisions were made which

sometimes ran counter to certain taken for granted assumptions in much social science research. Specifically, and drawing on the ethical conventions of oral history, a decision had been taken to offer participants the opportunity to choose for their real names to be used in any publications and other research outputs (see also Moore 2012). This was consistent with the original consent forms and how use of interviewees' real names had been addressed in publications (see https://clayoquotlives.sps.ed.ac.uk/ethics). With the creation of the digital archive, we continued with this intention to use participants' real names and not to anonymise the interviews. Rather, we note that blanket anonymisation as a universal practice actually forecloses ethical consideration (see Moore 2012). The practice denies participants, and researchers, the opportunity to reflect on whether they want real names used, what the implications of naming, or anonymising might be, and to consider these questions as part of the process of informed consent (see Moore 2012; 2007; Grinyer 2002).

At the same time, in attending to the details of each story, we determined it would not be appropriate to upload all the interviews. By carefully listening to each interview in preparation for publication, we decided not to publish one interview. In the original research, one interviewee was anonymised, as the person wanted a pseudonym used in any publications (Moore 2015). In the case of this interview, making an anonymised transcript available did not feel in keeping with their original desire for a pseudonym; not least, it would have been very difficult to thoroughly anonymise the interview, removing not just names and locations, but places of work and family details. This case demonstrates how a blanket approach to using real names would also not be in line with the spirit of the feminist ethic of care we aimed to practice.

Extending the Web of Care to 'Third Parties'

As we worked through our approach to informed consent, we had to consider 'third parties' – the friends, families, other activists and people mentioned in the interviews, who would likely not know they had been named, and who had therefore not given any consent to be included in an archive. We initially considered a blanket approach to anonymising third parties mentioned in the interviews. However, a careful reading made us appreciate the need for attention to the specificity of each case here too. Some of the names were public figures – we did not seriously consider anonymising references to politicians or other well-known individuals. This also extended to some of the very public faces of Clayoquot Summer, such as Valerie Langer or Tzeporah Berman, or others who were named as supporting and facilitating activism, or merely named in passing with reference to the campaign. We did give further attention to references to participants' children or grandchildren, and to other children mentioned, and who would now be adults. References varied from mentioning children's own activism, to children's support (or lack of) for parents' activism, to the need for childcare while engaging in the court process, or mundane references to daily life. While we did reflect on possible impact on adult lives, for example, on employment possibilities if involvement in activism was being made public, in the end we decided to keep in children's names. We recognised, especially with reference to interviewees' own children, that they could easily be identified, and so anonymisation was relatively meaningless in this case. In other interviews, the nature of the stories required careful attention with respect to details

surrounding the experience of being arrested. We removed one disclosure of medical information about someone mentioned in passing in an interview. We removed a short section that one interviewee had asked at the time to be deleted from the record. This latter example is important because it shows that what is considered significant for participants, and their relationships with others can appear relatively innocuous to us as researchers, and we would not have considered redacting this text otherwise. This was not the only occasion when interviewees explicitly demonstrated that they were aware of and thinking through matters of public record and future audiences. Throughout the interviews, a number of participants were at times explicitly reflecting on ethical issues themselves. Sometimes interviewees did their own anonymising, by saying 'a friend', rather than giving a name; other times, having named someone, they paused and reflected aloud about whether it was okay to identify that person.

Particular challenges came when women mentioned their own ex-partners or others who had been abusive or violent to them. We realised that anonymisation of third parties, in this case, meant that we would in effect silence women's stories of violence and abuse, which seemed quite counter to our feminist approach. We were running the risk of sanitising the data and of distorting women's accounts. We went back and forth over what it meant to remove women's references to their own relationships where the abuse happened, but in the end, we left these in. However, we did redact names or identifying details when interviewees mentioned other women with experience of domestic abuse or violence.

It should not come as a surprise that participants, especially those involved in ecofeminist activism, should have a finely attuned attention to ethical matters. In this case, some had also become familiar with talking to the media and paying attention to matters of public record. This does not absolve us as researchers from responsibility. For instance, when participants refer to each other implicitly, they may nonetheless be identifiable to those in the know, when this was not their intention. It is a reminder that if we understand interviews as co-created, we can also extend this thinking to ethical matters, appreciating that an ethic of care in interviews is also co-created.

Ongoing Consent: Using a 'Take Down' Approach

While pressing the button and going live might create an impression of finality, this would be to perpetuate assumptions about the stability of the archive. With respect to consent, it became clear when preparing the interview audio files and transcripts for publication that we needed to institute an approach which reflected our understanding of consent as an ongoing process. This approach is particularly important in relation to the decision not to anonymise the data. To extend the negotiation of consent beyond the moment of the launch of the archive, we instituted a 'take down' policy, where interviewees (or indeed any user of the archive) can contact the project to discuss any content they would like to be edited or removed; and we remain mindful of the 'right to be forgotten' (General Data Protection Regulation, n.d.) In publishing the archive, material is not necessarily online forever.

As we worked through the practical challenges we encountered in preparing the data for publication, a feminist ethic of care motivated us to (re)consider informed consent as interactive, contextual, not without limits, and ongoing; building the online archive was a technological, relational and emotional process. While risk is always at work when it

comes to ethics, the different examples given in this article demonstrate how blanket approaches of standardisation and anonymisation fail to sufficiently enact care. Working as a team, it was necessary to collectively, and creatively, to take care-full risks, to find ways to move beyond sociological convention.

Pressing the Button and Taking Care-full Risks: The Ongoing Time of Ethics

We poured so much work into preparing the digital archive. Perhaps pressing the button to publish it should have been a celebration, that the data 'cleaning' was done, and that we could move on from our ethical angsting – but this moment was excruciating, at least for Niamh, who could hardly bear to press the button, and insisted that someone else did this, and Mary took on the responsibility for this. Despite, or rather *because* of, all the care, we were also profoundly aware of the risks. Here the risks were not only to the interviewees, and the people they talk about, but also to ourselves, and the work we had done. In the context of social science research, publishing interviews, publishing *non-anonymised* interviews, with participants' real names, online, for anyone to find and read, felt like the most outrageous act. Yet, at the same time, for Niamh, as a feminist, it felt like the most right thing to do, both for the interviews and as an intervention in conventional practice. People have been doing this for so long – but not social scientists. From a feminist ethic of care, from oral history, from political activism, from a desire to change the world, from a sense of commitment to participants, it felt like: what had taken so long to make these interviews available and to share these stories of activism with others? To destroy the 'data', these stories of incredible activism, incredible lives, would have been such an act of violence. We wanted others to read, hear these interviews – other Clayoquot activists, other activists, feminists and ecofeminists. But wanting other sociologists and social scientists to know about our project is a more ambivalent feeling. We also took a risk with the amount of work we did upfront, before recontacting interviewees. It was possible that we would have been faced with many requests for edits or changes that we would have to do so much more work or have to go back to the beginning, or even that the whole project would fall apart if too many wanted their transcripts removed, but this did not happen.

Pressing the button felt both huge and also small. All that work for thirty interviews. More than 800 people were arrested that summer and more than 12,000 people passed through the peace camp. These interviews represent only a fragment of stories of the camp – there are many more stories to be told. And indeed, even of the thirty interviews, it was clear that many stories were carefully constructed and that there was much yet to be said. In a place where the politics of 'race', class, gender and histories of colonialism are spectacularly visible, not all the stories can yet be told. At the time the interviews were carried out, Clayoquot was a place with an environmental movement that had many women leaders. It was a place where government processes had been led by mainly male politicians. The logging industry was dominated by male industry leaders and predominantly employed male loggers in highly paid jobs, which were rapidly disappearing as technological 'innovations' replaced labour. It was a place where local Indigenous communities were caught up in complex negotiations over land, over jobs and employment, and over matters of governance and participation in local political processes. We hope the archive continues to change, and indeed, understand this is

unavoidable, as even if the archive itself remains the same, contexts for understanding and interpreting the material will change.

The archive has a 'contribute' button - it is possible for people to contribute new stories to the archive, and we remain hopeful as the thirtieth anniversary of the peace camp approaches in 2023 that there will be renewed interest. Perhaps we can pursue further funding to develop the archive with new stories. The digital archive is now live, but the archive also lives. We have not stopped caring, having conversations about the archive, revisiting decisions, living with the response-ability for what we have created.

What became obvious from making *Clayoquot Lives* is that the archive is not the end of a project - a further reminder of the importance of research that takes temporality seriously (McLeod and Thomson 2009). The archive now opens up new research possibilities, for us, and not only for other potential users. The archive, and the access to data afforded by Omeka, provides Niamh new possibilities of engaging with the data originally generated in the 1990s. How can we share the archive – with academics, students, and other publics; how can we demonstrate creative ways of using the data; how can we bring this data into contact with new stories – of feminism, ecofeminism, climate crisis, indigenous politics, what it means to engage in nonviolent action, amongst others.

What new imaginaries of research can serious attention to archival possibilities bring into being? Thomson and Berriman (2021) offer a creative demonstration of what is possible when we start research with the archive in mind. They involved children and their families in the creation of an open access public archive documenting everyday childhoods, and included children, parents and researchers writing postcards to future users of the research data. In another project, *Reanimating Data: Experiments with People, Places and Archives* (http://reanimatingdata.co.uk/), Niamh is working with colleagues from the University of Sussex, UK (including Thomson, who was one of the original researchers), to archive data from a flagship social science project from the late 1980s, frank and compelling interviews with young women about sexual practices, sexual health and everyday relationships in the immediate aftermath of the emergence of HIV/AIDS (see the *Feminist Approaches to Youth Sexualities* archive https://archives.reanimatingdata.co.uk/s/fays/). We have worked not only to create a digital archive but also to 'rematriate' data back to communities, building new relationships with contemporary youth groups (Moore et al. 2021), through a series of creative experiments with data (https://archives.reanimatingdata.co.uk/s/fays/page/experiments). DIY academic archiving promises new research futures, and an ongoing need for an inventive feminist ethic of care-full risk.

Conclusion: Towards an Inventive Ethics of Care-full Risk

Research ethics are inventive and always have been. Moves to archive, share and reuse qualitative data do unsettle existing research practice. Yet continuing to rely on conventional ethical commitments in the social sciences does not provide the resources necessary to work through the challenges of archiving and reusing research data. Archiving and reusing does require ongoing transformation and inventive ethics.

In creating an open archive of qualitative research data, we resisted so-called 'ethical' injunctions to destroy data, calling this out as a paternalistic ethic of 'protection'. Against this single-use, disposable research culture of data destruction, we propose a risky ethos

of sharing data as a way of caring for and valuing research participants, and the stories, memories and accounts of the world they craft with researchers. What becomes curious as we worked through a feminist ethic of care, is why an *a priori* commitment to destroying data is considered the ethical standard.

Arguably a failure to innovate in research ethics leaves archiving and reuse more open to being framed by other drivers. These include increasing audit regimes under neoliberal governance and the take up of extractivist corporate data harvesting practices, which are also permeating universities, as well as the apparently more liberal ambitions of the open data movement. There are other genealogies we can turn to – feminist, queer and decolonial approaches to archival theory and community archiving practices – to inform archiving and reuse of qualitative data.

A feminist ethic of care-full risk can resource new ethical research practices. Care and risk can appear to be in opposition – a researcher cares by avoiding risks, by engaging in mitigating actions. We suggest that care always involves risk. Rather than approaching ethics as an inviolable, unchanging tradition, we approach ethics as an inventive tradition. Ethics can be a resource which supports taking new leaps in research, instead of a barrier which blocks creative interventions into existing research practice. It is precisely our commitment to ethics as researchers that can distinguish good academic practice from the sometimes more questionable practices of organisations who harvest data in return for services, who obscure matters of consent, and who abnegate the importance of simple, straightforward takedown policies and a right to be forgotten.

Ethical questions continue to arise in discussions of archiving and reuse. They appear as barriers when in fact they can be signs of the limitations and flaws of current ethical thinking. Archiving and reusing does not threaten to undermine the discipline and its ethical commitments, but to revitalise it. A feminist ethic of care-full risk is not just for archiving and reuse – it is for all research. A feminist ethic of care offers an inventive approach to the responsibility of research. A feminist ethic of care-full risk allows us to work towards 'responsible action' while taking seriously matters of accountability. A feminist ethic of risk is collaborative, refusing the individualising and privatising of ethical decision-making. And a feminist ethic of care opens to a commitment to re-making relations, to flourishing and re-making the world.

Notes

1. University libraries have been developing capacities for archiving research materials through creating data repositories, with the University of Edinburgh being a leader with its DataShare repository and its successful online research data management training, called MANTRA (Mantra, n.d.; Rice 2014).
2. We were fortunate to be able to discuss ethics, consent and open research data with Robin Rice, Data Librarian and Head of Research Data Support at the University of Edinburgh (see also Rice 2014; Rice and Southall 2016), and her colleagues.

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