Putting place back into the patriarchy through rematriating feminist research: the WRAP Project, Feminist Webs and Reanimating Data

Abstract

This chapter takes up the invitation (McLeod 2017) to explore questions of time and temporality, not only as objects of research but, also, as central to how research is done – with the implication that this has a profound consequences for how the research happens and what account of the world it produces. It reflects on research that involves young people and educators in youth clubs, universities and community centres participating as co-researchers in exploring sex, gender, sexuality and social change. The discussion centres on a project that brings interviews from a 1988–1989 feminist social science study back to a network of feminist youth workers, using participatory archival practices, to a northern city in the UK, Manchester. The chapter involves an exploration of what it means to 'rematriate' interviews with young women about sexual health, returning them to the city in which they were generated 30 years previously. The project requires an engagement with the awkward knowledge generated through revisiting earlier research now, reflecting on what it might mean to create an open archive and how researchers might put 'place' back into feminist analyses that were coined 30 years ago.

Niamh Moore
University of Edinburgh
Orcid ID: 0000-0002-5372-7428

Rachel Thomson
University of Sussex
Orcid ID: 0000-0002-3955-5818

Ester McGeeney
University of Sussex
Orcid ID: 0000-0002-2809-5780

Introduction

In this chapter we take up the invitation (McLeod 2017) to explore questions of time and temporality, not only as objects of research but, also, as central to how research is done – with the implication that this implications for how the research happens and what account of the world it produces. Our chapter also calls into question where research happens and who carries it out and, particularly, what happens to the traces of such research. Our account centres on the entanglements of three projects bound together through youth and community work, feminist academia and archival practices. In *Reanimating Data: Experiments with People, Places and Archives* (2019–2020) we bring interviews from an earlier social science study, the *Women, Risk and AIDS Project* (WRAP, 1988–1989), back to Manchester, the northern UK city where it was generated. In doing so, we also return to a network of feminist youth workers, drawing on the participatory archival practices of *Feminist Webs*, to explore what we can make of/with the data now. In the wake of the AIDS crisis, WRAP involved interviewing young women in Manchester and London about sexual practices, sexual health and relationships. The original researchers used a feminist analysis of the interview data to develop an influential account of gendered power relations in sexual relationships – the 'patriarchy' of our title. This analysis was nuanced by social class, age and ethnicity but paid little attention to the specificities of place. Thirty years later we explore what it might mean to put place back into the patriarchy, through revisiting and returning data to the city and communities where the research was carried out and, crucially for us, through creating and experimenting with an open archive of data, available to all.[1]

We approach our project as a form of feminist time travel, with a certain bumpy turbulence en route in articulating and making sense of our work together. As a team, we are brought together by a shared conviction that the boundaries between social science and social history, education research and practice, are disrupted by feminist approaches to archival practice. In freeing ourselves and our sociological imaginations, we have necessarily turned beyond mainstream sociological theory and methods to feminist, queer and Indigenous theory and practice. Drawing from the work of feminist theorist Susan Leigh Star (2010), we explore our feminist archival practice as a 'boundary object', a site where the sense of here and there – and now and then – is confounded. In this way, the archiving can be understood as enabling

collaborations that both reimagine the archive through time, was well as offering the promise of remaking time itself. Our archive is made at the interstices of academia, youth work practice and archival practices. This allows us to name sociology as an extractive economy in which stories are renamed as data and sometimes destroyed in the name of ethical practice once they have been put to single use in a monograph or article. We turn to Indigenous feminist theory and practice to try and understand how to build a reparative practice of care, to work through what it might mean to take data – stories – back to the communities where these stories were first told. We approach this return of data as an 'ambivalent gift' (Diprose 2012; Hird 2010), which requires the awkward work of building new relationships, where the outcome is not certain and where there is no certainty that the gift will be gratefully received.

Entangled Projects: WRAP, Feminist Webs and Reanimating Data

Reanimating Data is a project which emerges out of a series of entanglements – of history and sociology; of academia and communities; of formal and informal education; of then and now. It is inextricably bound up with two other projects – WRAP, and *Feminist Webs*. Significantly, *Reanimating Data* emerges out of webs of connections between generations of feminists and the work of feminist researchers who have been involved in these projects. Collectively, these projects centre practices of feminist archiving and history-making, understood as processes of knowledge- and world-making.

Feminist Webs is an open-ended and ongoing intergenerational feminist youth work project about the histories and futures of feminist youth work and girls work in Manchester and the North West.[2] It was inspired by a conversation between Alison Ronan and Jean Spence, both youth and community workers, academics and researchers and feminist activists. Alison and Jean shared a concern about what to do with all the feminist youth work materials that they had collected over several decades and stored under beds, in attics and in spare rooms. Their sense that it would be a tragedy for all these materials to be lost and the traces of a generation of feminist youth work to disappear inspired a series of intergenerational projects in North West England that have come to be known as *Feminist Webs*. Central to the emergence of *Feminist Webs* has been the process of creating an archive of feminist youth work (consisting of oral histories with feminist youth workers and materials from girls'

work groups around the North West of England over the past 40 to 50 years), and (re)using this archive in a number of ways. It has also involved a participatory oral history project, the creation of an online and physical archive, exhibitions, bringing the archive on tour, a book (Feminist Webs 2012), and an ongoing engagement with girls work in Manchester.

WRAP was a feminist social research project, commissioned by the UK Economic Research Council in 1988 and conducted by Janet Holland, Sue Scott, Rachel Thomson, Caroline Ramazanoglu and Sue Sharpe. The research was part of a suite of enquiries at the time seeking to generate vital knowledge for understanding the social dimensions of HIV/AIDs, which in 1988 was a terminal diagnosis, and a new focus for public health education. Employing in-depth interviews as a method of enquiry, the research team engaged with 150 young women, ostensibly aged between 16 and 21,[3] in both Manchester and London. The study was part of a movement within feminist enquiry to turn critical attention to the institution of heterosexuality[4] and can be understood as an important moment in which heterosexuality was named, denaturalised and broken down into component parts: practices, silences, asymmetries of desire and anatomy. WRAP combined a radical feminist analysis of the centrality of sexual violence to female oppression, alongside a Foucauldian sense of the subtle cultural processes through which power is articulated, including modes of learning and notions of respectability. A key message from the research was that ordinary heterosexuality was an unsafe sexual identity for women, where trusting in love and maintaining a socially acceptable femininity, overruled concerns about the risk of sexual violence, pregnancy and HIV (Holland et al. 1998).

The WRAP project shared its emergent findings at the time by taking up the opportunities offered by the revolution in desktop publishing to produce a series of 'purple pamphlets' that popularised the study's feminist critique of heterosexual intimacy and disseminated its key messages. These pamphlets were shared and distributed amongst community health practitioners, youth workers and other activists.[5] A decade later in 1998, a book was published that synthesised the findings of the study (also integrating material from a follow-on study of young men) and diagnosed the problem with heterosexuality in terms of *'The Male in the Head'*. The book offered a critique of a version of heterosexuality built out of powerfully iterative binaries: male/female, active/receptive, physical/emotional (Holland et al. 1998). This

was also an account of heterosexuality that spoke powerfully to feminist youth workers at the time. Embodying these entanglements, former youth worker, academic historian, Feminist Webber and *Reanimating Data* project team member Alison Ronan reflected:

> I was a youth worker in 1988 working with a group of girls .... The research was published in little purple pamphlets and this was the first time I'd seen ... particularly the one about negotiating pleasure and enjoying sex. Most girls had been told ... this was liberating ... it legitimised what I was doing. These pamphlets were really extraordinary. There was nothing around saying this at the time. [contribution to a workshop, March 2019]

WRAP became a landmark study, establishing the value of qualitative sexuality research and developing an account of heterosexuality that has remained influential for researchers working in different countries, as well as having an ongoing impact on sex education practices in the UK (see Holland et al. 2004 edition).

The relationship between WRAP, *Feminist Webs* and *Reanimating Data* can be thought of as an entanglement – connecting the past and the present of feminist knowledge making in the city of Manchester and the intersections of personal, political and professional lives. The WRAP materials have remained in the attics and spare rooms of the original research team, much like Alison Ronan, Jean Spence and others' youth work materials. The concern to save key materials from an important time in feminist history and precious stories of young women's experiences and animates a desire to collect material and to reshare it with new generations of youth workers, researchers, activists and young women. When making sense of these entanglements, we have found it useful to imagine the process of creating archives as a 'boundary object' (Moore 2017), drawing on feminist science and technology scholar, Susan Leigh Star's awkward term for a collectively generated 'shared space where the sense of here and there are confounded' (Star 2010, 602–603):

> Archive as boundary object draws our attention to the evolving archive, and to the ad hoc infrastructures emergent from different but intersecting and overlapping approaches to the archive. So the archive remains in a dynamic relationship with its necessary infrastructures. We can then think of the archive, any archive, as a flexible capacious changing space, rather than a contest between different places and spaces, or archival practices. And that it is this flexibility, this wibbly-wobblyness of the sharedness of the meaning, that holds people together who have different understandings of the archive. (Moore 2020, 200).

As an archive building project, *Reanimating Data* has involved developing relationships with student, youth and community groups in Manchester and inviting them to collaborate in revisiting the WRAP interviews, working to see if we can make a 'home' for the collection in the city. In doing so, we seek to ask new questions of the WRAP data and of what situated youth work/artistic/archival/feminist/research practices can tell us about gender, sexuality, sex education and social change in Manchester over the past 30 years. In doing so, we have created new materials (poems, collages, performances, films, interviews, group discussions), which we are then adding into the evolving archive.

It is not only projects that are entangled but also the people who have traversed these projects and places, and it is these interconnections which enable *Reanimating Data* to happen. To gesture to some of our multiple locations and roles in relation to these projects: our team includes Rachel, who was a member of the WRAP research team, and, importantly, could provide access to the original WRAP data and team. Niamh and Alison have been part of the *Feminist Webs* collective (along with 'critical friend' Janet Batsleer) – Alison, in fact, was some of the inspiration for *Feminist Webs*. Alison and Ester are both youth workers and feminist researchers. Rachel and Niamh lived in Manchester for many years, although a decade apart, both leaving for work; Alison continues to live there; Ester has had to make long journeys in order to be able to spend some time engaged in our experiments, as have those of us who have since moved away. These kinds of entanglements characterise all of us – journeys to and fro from academia to youth work, from research to teaching, from place to place, and are the conditions which make our current work possible.

Queer rematriation: Troubling our hopes of return

Our ambition for this project was to create a public digital archive from the original WRAP material – and to take interviews from the WRAP project back to the place where young women's stories about sexual health, sexual practices and everyday life were originally told. In order to do this, we hoped to draw on a network of feminist youth workers and the transgenerational participatory archival practices of *Feminist Webs*. In conceptualising this work, we were inspired by the concept and practice of 'rematriation' from Indigenous feminist scholars and activists (Moro 2018; Muthien n.d.; Tuck 2011; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). Our question was how we

might put this idea to work in UK sociology, and especially UK-based feminist research in order to articulate what is at stake in our plans to return and share the stories with the communities where they were originally created. While for some it may seem counterintuitive to bring Indigenous feminist theory and methodology to the UK, to Manchester, we suggest that taking seriously Indigenous critiques of the colonial logics of research practice can also be revealing about the practice of research closer to home.

Rematriation is not just about a simple act of return, not a repatriation of objects or artefacts back to a point of origin. Importantly, it cannot be conceptual cover for a project team dumping data and returning to our universities. Rematriation takes the politics and practices of return seriously, asking how we revisit a moment in place and time to create new spaces of possibility. In invoking a methodology of rematriation, we are pushing against the gatekeeper logic of social science where the reuse of data depends on a paternalistic notion of protection arising from the deposit of data in archives and repositories. Such data is usually only to be made available to *bona fide* academic researchers – a 'protection' which can mean that the very people whose interviews or other research materials are deposited are locked out of the archive. While anthropology as a discipline has had to reckon more explicitly with its colonial legacies, sociology's apparent focus on research 'at home' obscures enduring relations of power. UK social science has often been an extractive economy, with stories and lives renamed as 'data', recorded and removed from communities, repackaged in journal articles and books, and hidden away in filing cabinets or behind the licencing arrangements of more formal archives. Communities and individuals, too, often do not have access to their own stories. As feminists have long understood, home is as fraught a site as any other, a necessary site of scrutiny, not a private domain of safety.

We have found rematriation to be a generative relational conceptual and ethical framework for making our intentions explicit, shifting from research 'on' to research 'with' – from us using the data, to also asking how communities might use the data, and to doing the work to create and forge new relationships. We invoke a queer rematriation to signal that this is not a reproductive legacy model of feminist knowledge, passed from feminist mothers to unwilling daughters. We take this in part from *Feminist Webs*, which might look like a project of younger women listening to

and recording the stories of older feminists. However, the youth work context here is crucial. *Feminist Webs* has involved young women hearing and gathering histories of women who had been committed to girls work for many years and who had passionately campaigned to make girls work possible. These were stories of the value of young women, of how now older feminists had valued young women and continued to value that work in the desire for an archive of that work. The transgenerational participatory history-making practices of *Feminist Webs* proposed the making of feminist knowledge through the making of intergenerational feminist community. *Feminist Webs* echoes Bracke and Bellacasa's (2004) reflection that 'when translating feminist struggles and their achievements into theories, we would rather be *better with/because of* – than *better than* those who came before us' (314; see also Moore 2017, 146). Our queer rematriation is best understood neither as a search for origins, nor a reliance on a future tied to hetero-patriarchal reproductive logic. In exploring what it means to share stories with the communities that generated them, we are imagining those communities as connected in and through time. Foregrounding a queer rematriation is a way to demonstrate that our project is informed by histories of feminist theory and practice that have troubled any sharp distinction between theory and activism, academia and communities, then and now. At the heart of rematriation is a commitment to reclaiming the regenerative power of feminist storytelling and/as knowledge co-creation and sharing with and through generations. This involves retracing and remaking genealogies to germinate new queer feminist kin and give birth to new movements of feminism.[6]

But where did place go?

At the same time, we have to note that feminists have also been complicit in the practice of extraction. Rematriation is not about countering the abstractions of a sociological commitment to make generalisations by deferring to a reified 'sense of place'. While Rich's (1986) commitment to a 'politics of location' and Haraway's (1988) injunctions to 'situated knowledges' and 'partial perspectives' have been widely taken up by feminists, nonetheless it is the case that generalisations persist. Our desire to return these stories to the communities in which they originated is motivated by a feminist politics of responsibility and accountability. Indigenous feminists' attention to rematriation pushes our research practice further. Indeed, Muthien (2011), in her advice to 'European allies', suggests a focus on 'rematriating

[one's] own ancient knowledge and practice as women-centred (instead of gawking at Native women as exotic and ideal)'. Thus, we conjoin Rich and Haraway with Plumwood's commitment to 'an ethic of place' (Plumwood 2005); that is, paying attention to how places are connected and related and how some places – 'shadow places' – flourish at the expense of others. In our case, for example, how universities might flourish at the expense of geographical communities, or communities of practice, which resource them (Plumwood 2008). How might London overshadow Manchester in writing up data? How might the mobility required by academic careers interrupt relationships with research participants? Is it possible that 'the archive' as an official building saturated with knowledge could be supplanted by archiving as a practice which might happen anywhere, even and especially in a youth centre?

While the WRAP interviews took place in two very different places, with young women of different ages and from different class, ethnic and religious backgrounds, in practice these interviews constituted a 'sample' that shed many of the specificities of time and place. In the introduction to *Male in the Head*, the original team are explicit about the decision to privilege gender analytically:

> Our data were collected at particular times and in particular places, and, while we draw out themes and patterns in the data which may be more general, we recognise the limits set by time and place...For ease of reading we do not qualify our reporting of what particular young people in our study have said with the specificity of the location and timing of the interview each time, but refer to young people … and write of their accounts in the present tense. (Holland et al. 1998, 5)

This move could be understood as part of a wider shift away from 'landscape' conceptions of social change associated with community studies towards more socially abstracted approaches (Savage 2010, 2017). In Caroline Steedman's (1986) terms, women exist within landscapes that offer specific occupational and moral resources for building ideas of respectability and autonomy – in the northwest, this has been elaborated in terms of 'Cottons and Casuals', reflecting the contrasting divisions of labour demanded by cotton and engineering industries that characterised the city and surrounding towns in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Glucksman 2013; Langhamer 2000). However, the first time around, the WRAP interviews collected in Manchester were not interpreted in relation to this landscape

but subsumed within a large qualitative 'sample'. The focus for these claims was an analysis of gendered power relations:

> Our analysis of young people's sexual relations is focused on common pressures on them to be feminine or masculine in particular ways, and also the difficulties of generalising about sexuality and power across social divisions and cultural differences. Feminist investigations of sexuality and gendered identities are always in some tension with social divisions between women and between men. The question of how far our findings from interviews with young people in two English cities can be generalised is one that has to be answered through comparative empirical research. The complexity of the interconnections of gendered power with other forms can reach the point at which male power cannot be explained without some account of social organisation and interconnection of all social political and economic relationships. We recognised this problem, but have had to restrict ourselves to what is practicable in one study. We argue that it is reasonable for our purposes to analyse sexuality in relation to men and women, and in terms of femininity and masculinity, noting particular qualifications where differences between the young people appear relevant. We have identified extracts from interview accounts by the gender, social class, ethnic identity and age of the speaker, so that the reader has some check on this claim. (Holland et al. 1998, 19)

Our current *Reanimating Data* project responds to the challenge of understanding gendered power relations in a way that would have been quite alien to the WRAP team in 1988. Our approach involves undoing the initial merging of the London and Manchester datasets that took place in 1990 and to attend to the significance of 'place' in recounting stories and weaving collective narratives. Yet we do this in retrospect, after the passing of 30 years, something which also enables us to gain perspective on the original enquiry. Our study focuses exclusively on the Manchester side of the study, through working with just the Manchester interviews and through situating our reanimating work in the city. In doing so, we ask new questions of the WRAP interviews: how might they form part of local histories of sexual cultures and gendered biographies; and how might these provide a different starting place for thinking about 'troubling heterosexualities' before, during and after this documented moment of the late 1980s? We are not alone in our ambition to make new knowledge through revisiting earlier research (see McLeod & Thomson 2009, Chapter 7, for overview). Similar to the revisiting of Ray Pahl's Sheppey project by Dawn Lyon and Graham Crow, we do not try to replicate the original sample, nor necessarily to work with all of the original data. Rather, we draw on fragments as a starting point for creative and participatory work in the present that helps us consider change within the environment over time (Lyon 2017). Where their study worked with an already

archived data set, our project also involves the process of creating and sharing a new open access archive, *Feminist Approaches to Youth Sexualities*, containing the 150 original interviews from WRAP and documentation of our experiments with the data (see https://archives.reanimatingdata.co.uk/s/fays/).

Returning to the youth clubs

In 1989 young women were recruited by researchers via a range of sites in Manchester – youth clubs, schools, colleges, universities, workplaces and trade unions. This generated a diverse sample of young women for the WRAP project, including those who had moved to, or across, the city from elsewhere for education, work or training. Our plan in the *Reanimating Data* project was to return to some of these access points to meet new groups of young women. If not the *same* site then an equivalent access point – a college, a school, a youth centre, a university, a workplace. We started by thinking about youth centres. Drawing on our webs of relationships in Manchester we hosted an event at the People's History Museum in Manchester in February 2019 and invited current and former youth workers with an interest in girls work. This workshop was our springboard for the reanimation work – a moment in which new relationships were formed and old ones reactivated. We quickly found that there would be no simple return to the youth cubs that the WRAP team visited in the late 80s. In Manchester – as in many areas of the UK – youth centres have been hit hard by years of government austerity. All of the youth centres that the original team visited in 1989 had been closed and none of the sexual health peer education programmes, or young mothers' groups that thrived in the late 1980s and early 1990s, were still operating. When we spoke with former youth workers, we heard stories of anger and sadness about the decline of these services, alongside stories of pride and nostalgia for the important work that was carried out in the past. We also found that girls' work in Manchester continues in different forms. There are girls' groups at mental health and LGBT charities, community groups and at the one youth centre we find that has managed to survive the cuts.

The youth clubs that WRAP visited in 1989 were in the north and east of the city: Ardwick, Moston and Blackley – places also revisited by *Feminist Webs* over a decade later. These areas had traditionally hosted heavy engineering plants and chemical manufacturing – providing family wages for men with women tending to

'be at home' or work for 'pin money' (Glucksmann 2013). In 1989 the young women that the WRAP team interviewed at these youth clubs were mostly white, working class and, often, Catholic. Their interview accounts describe strongly gendered tight-knit communities in areas of Manchester that had been hit hard by the deindustrialisation instigated by the Thatcher governments of 1979 to 1990. A city defined by manufacturing was turning slowly and painfully into a city defined by the provision of services (Mellor 2002), with profound implications for gender identities (Nayak 2016; Weis 2004). As we write, this part of Manchester is being transformed once more, with 'regeneration' taking the form of intensive building of high-rise luxury apartments, mostly for rent to an imagined population of young professionals and University students, offering a high return on capital investment to pension funds and international capital.[7]

We do not have space in this chapter to present or even summarise the original data from the youth clubs, although in a recent article we have revisited the researcher field notes for a series of interviews undertaken with a young mother's group in Higher Blackley (Thomson 2020), revealing the complicated nature of the encounter that had the potential for mutual bafflement as well as recognition and identification across difference. In 1989, turning up at youth clubs involved talking with, and persuading, groups of young women to join in the study and, as such, was a different undertaking than the wider recruitment processes that relied on distributing questionnaires through institutions such as workplaces, unions, colleges and schools and waiting for volunteers to respond. Youth club interviews were often done there and then, and the presence of friends and youth workers could be sensed in the material. Sometimes they were shorter interviews and only really make sense through researcher fieldnotes. Other times an interview takes place after trust is secured, elsewhere in the locality. In retrospect, we might think of these interviews as collective biographies of groups of girls in shared circumstances. We may also think of them as conversations taking place across differences of social class, culture and religion/ethnicity. Some things may be easier to talk about than others with an interviewer who is effectively an outsider. Encountered in the context of a wider collection of 150 interviews of young women in London and Manchester, the specificity of these conversations is lost. Understood again today, we can see them as

traces of a network of feminist youth workers and youth clubs now dismantled (Thomson 2020), as well as traces of communities in transition.

In 2019 we visited three youth groups where, instead of mainly white working-class Catholic girls, we meet groups of young women from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. This time round we don't ask for information about the age, religion, ethnicity and class background of each young woman that participates in the project. Neither do we try to document their intimate stories as daughters, sisters, friends, partners and mothers. This new kind of feminist methodology gets to know the young women as co-researchers who participate in creative activities in and around an archive (Thomson, Berriman & Bragg 2018; Withers & Fanin 2019). Through working with these young women, we are quickly reminded of the ways in which migration complicates ideas of a 'return'. This is not a return to the predominantly white, working-class Catholic community that the WRAP project worked with 30 years ago but a return to a community that is always changing through different iterations of migrations and is currently 'super-diverse' (Vertovec 2007).

Falling down a wormhole: Emma and Tonya's stories

The *Reanimating Data* project has enabled us to engage in a series of experiments with people, places and archives. We have thought of the experiments as methodological 'wormholes' that bring together moments in time/space; for example, the Manchester youth clubs of 1989/2019.[8] These experiments are incredibly generative, though often challenging and sometimes uncomfortable and we continue to work through our learning. For example, we have found it easier to work with young women who identify as feminists and with a feminist tradition and with groups who have a shared creative practice or sense of community. We have found that where we have been able to create precise rather than general points of contact things have been easier. For example, the University of Manchester Women's Theatre Society enthusiastically took up the opportunity to work creatively with the three interviews in the archive that were conducted in 1989 with drama students at the same university. We also worked with a LGBTQ+ group to reflect on the small number of explicitly lesbian stories in the WRAP interviews to create new poems and conversations. The 18 months of our funded work has been characterised by intense activity – we end the study with a safely deposited sustainable archive,[9] an open and

accessible version of that archive using the Omeka platform,[10] and a range of collaborations with academic and non-academic partners experimenting with how the archive might be used in the future.[11]

In order to provide a taste of the knowledge-making involved in this work we can now fall into one of the wormholes created by work over a six-month period with a girls group that met each week in a local community centre. In this group different girls come each week, although there are regular attendees. There are two college-aged girls and the rest are at local schools. Most are black and asian. A few are white British. The group don't have any facilities – there's no kitchen, arts cupboard or sports equipment. Sometimes they decorate cupcakes around the table, or chip in money to get a pizza. There is one paid youth worker running the group and sometimes a volunteer.

Our previous experiments with 'reanimating data' had encouraged us to collaborate with creative artists (music, drama, makers), recognising that critical pedagogic spaces open up in the interstices between the source material and creative transformations (McGeeney 2017). This part of the work was meant to be facilitated by an artist who had been volunteering with the group for some time. She approached us to run a sculpture project with the girls, working with the WRAP data, but she had to stop volunteering and withdraw. So, instead, the work is led by Alison and Ester, who work slowly with the young women to find out what themes and art forms they are interested in and to create safe spaces for them to have the discussions and debates they want to have. Alison and Ester are both youth workers and work here within a youth work framework committed to co-production and making a contribution without getting in the way (Batsleer 2013, Hanbury, Lee & Batsleer 2010).

At the start of the project the youth worker was cautious about us working with the girls – we were reminded that the girls are 'young' and from 'strict' religious families. We too were cautious. This is our first experiment and the WRAP archive suddenly felt like a sexually explicit resource that stands between us as feminist researchers and the young women we are working with. The archive seems to speak more to our concerns and interests, rather than the lived experiences of these young women, some of whom are almost ten years younger than the WRAP interview participants. When we invite them to explore the data and discuss sexuality, there are often more

compelling issues that the girls want to talk about: relationships with friends, parents and siblings, restrictions to their freedom, curfews, sleepovers, religion, and menstruation. We are reminded early on that the Manchester WRAP interviews capture and describe a predominantly, but not exclusively, white sexual culture, itself formed through an earlier wave of Irish migration. As we invite and tell stories about gender and generational change, we also need to talk about global migration and cultural difference.

Over time we make connections with digital community artists from Manchester Libraries and they are able to run sessions with small groups of young women over the summer, which leads to one young woman, Emma, making a beautiful 1.5-minute animated film called *A Story to Tell* (see https://youtu.be/SO93crRQXjQ; McGeeney 2020). Emma's method takes animation literally. She takes a short extract from a WRAP interview with Tonya,[12] which tells a story about a young women's relationship with her 'protective' parents and brothers. Emma animates the story through drawing and cutting out figures and putting them in motion and then adding an audio recording of herself and another group member re-reading the transcript. Before working with us Emma explains that she thought that girls in the 1980s did what they were told – that they didn't rebel or sneak out, nor break their parents' curfew. She was surprised to find out that girls in 1980s were so much like girls today, saying when she read the extract that 'it felt modern'. Reflecting on generations in her own family, Emma thinks her mum probably did follow the rules – she grew up in Nigeria where Emma thinks things were different and you had to do what you were told. Emma explains that she wanted to work with this particular interview when she found out that Tonya was black. She was surprised. She had assumed that all the WRAP girls would be white British as she didn't know that Manchester was a diverse city in 1989. In one of the workshops led by the digital artists and playing around with Lego figures and filmmaking apps, Emma was asked to tell her own story and think of a story she wanted to tell. For Emma, this was hard. Instead, she chose to (re)tell Tonya's story, which she says, 'is also my story'. For Emma, it is easier to talk about the things she wants to explore (girls' freedom, relationships with parents, curfews restrictions and representations of black women) through reanimation and retelling and, as for so many of the young women who took

part in the project, engaging with the WRAP material gives Emma the idea that she might have a story to tell.

Our experience of the youth clubs in 2019 encourages us to understand stories about parental restrictions, curfews and sleepovers – as stories about being young black and female in Britain, yet where blackness itself is not named. All of the youth workers, researchers and artists involved within this group are white. It is hard to talk about and across these differences and inequalities of age, race, migration and religion, but retelling your story through the story of a black girl provides a way of doing this without having to explicitly name anything. Representation really matters. Emma asserts that it's important to have role models and to see people 'like you' – in the past as well as in the world around you. Her reanimation of Tonya's story – 'with a modern twist' – could be seen as an allegory, the telling of an old story through a new one, allowing both to remain visible.

The allegorical is territory that is familiar from our previous experiments with reanimation – with young people creating 'cover versions' of songs and 'alternative versions' of stories as a safe and oblique mode of communication (McGeeney et al 2018). We understand this with the help of Freeman's 'queer temporalities' within which past and present can collide and coexist, with the past exerting a temporal drag on the present and helping us notice the failed projects that precede it. We are able to appreciate the imperfect sutures between past and present – providing insight into how the original research was constituted, including an appreciation of the costs and the affordances of our bold feminism. This framework also enables us to experience an awkward fit between two versions of feminist methodology. The 1980s version focused on the intimate conversation and the imperative of 'speaking out about sex'. It is a method that involves a search for common ground, recognition and revelation – something that feels uncomfortable in 2019.[13] We try and attend to and stay with the trouble that the juxtaposition reveals. We get a sense of how radically our modes of engagement have changed. Have we become more respectful of boundaries? Perhaps we don't believe that there are still personal troubles that need to be made into public problems, or that we, as researchers, can be storytellers for others? We find it possible to be more explicit about the whiteness of the original study and the research team then and now. In the same way that Emma tells her stories through Tonya's, so the *Reanimating Data* project tells its story through *Feminist Webs* and WRAP.

Feminist archives as an ambivalent gift

Our focus for this chapter has been on how the reparative practices of rematriation may generate awkward but productive knowledge for a feminist project. In this sense we are both looking back at a moment in feminist research to think again about how certain arguments were formed and evidenced, as well as thinking about feminist knowledge today. We have found it useful to think about our research as an 'ambivalent gift' (Diprose 2012; Hird 2010), both now and in the past. Research is a creative act but is it always a welcome offering? Early work on gifting focused on economies of exchange, debt and calculation. Yet cost-benefit analyses can only ever offer a partial accounting. Gifting is unavoidable when we understand life as inter- and intra-related. Diprose encourages us to engage with the incalculable debt of embodied generosity – which, for example, may be involved in acts of sharing stories and listening attentively. She emphasises the incalculability of gifts: they engage an open, undetermined play of forces, a 'network of unknowable and immeasurable outcomes' (Hird 2010). The feminist archive is profoundly ambivalent in that it assumes and demands an encounter between feminists over time, raising questions of inclusion/ exclusion and vulnerability and defensiveness as reputations and legacies are held in trust (Eichhorn 2013; Jolly 2019).

The WRAP research team might conceive of their gift of interview transcripts and other research ephemera to the *Reanimating Data* project as an ambivalent gift – carefully, but demandingly, requested, perhaps reluctantly given. The fact that one member (Rachel) spans both teams is significant in creating a bridge between two generations of researchers – a conduit for memory, understanding and dis/identification. The *Reanimating Data* project offers the WRAP research team value through claiming the data to archive and recirculate/reanimate; while also possibly taking something away, both literally (a pile of tapes and papers) but also symbolically, a sense of a project finished, an analysis settled, an argument secured. In archiving and sharing the interviews, against a logic of single-use data, we are not only engaging with a conversation within feminist research but we are saying that these interviews have more to say or things to say that were not previously heard. Some of this may be the consequence of hindsight; it is only in looking back that we see locality as so important. And it is only in looking back that we recognise this, perhaps, as a moment when abstraction played a strategic role in feminist

generalisation (a search for similarity rather than a staying with difference) – but perhaps also the consequence of precarious research contracts within the political economy of academia.

The reputational dangers of archiving and revisiting projects are real, and 'backstage' marginalia can reveal in the wrong way (Evans & Thane 2006). Yet, original investigators can also be excited by new interpretations, sometimes happier to be proved wrong than right (Crow & Ellis 2017). The recognition that a dataset after 30 years may become a valuable historical resource, making sense in conversation with other local archives, is also a compensation for the labours involved in undoing earlier analyses. The research community may well welcome the 'gift' of the newly available archive and the task of reframing interviews in order to privilege place as an ethical relationship in the creation and sharing of knowledge. However, the project of bringing the archive back to Manchester in 2019–2020 is another matter. McLeod has identified two trends in work on reusing and archiving data, one emphasising ethical and methodological risks and one focused more on historical study and creative encounters between history and sociology (2017, 20–21). We can recognise both at play in the *Reanimating Data* study and perhaps our approach is compromised by our desire to do both. Whether or not we are successful in our attempts to share the archive, to encourage others to make it part of a place will soon be outwith our control. In earlier writing Niamh (Moore 2017), has argued that 'tracing the extent to which community archives are more or less successful in creating boundary objects might help to explain why some projects flourish more than others' (134; see also, Moore 2020). She reminds us that 'interpretative flexibility' is central to the idea of the boundary object, drawing on Star (2010) to emphasise the ad hoc 'boundary infrastructures', in order to support the non-standard working practices that emerge in these kinds of collaborations (602). There are times when the interpretive flexibility and the tacking back and forth between different locals does not always work and tensions emerge. Star's model does not necessarily provide an account of when and how these tensions should be ameliorated or accommodated. But using the boundary object as a diagnostic tool might help us think through the ambivalences involved in gifting a project of queer rematriation.

Conclusion

Feminist academics are at times complicit in the extraction of stories and knowledges. At the same time, feminism's commitment to reflexivity and attention to questions of power provide important conceptual resources and politics for thinking through these complexities, driving our work and supporting our collaborations. The *Women, Risk and AIDS* project was a landmark in British feminist sociology as well as an 'event' in Manchester, intersecting with a highpoint in feminist health activism and the cusp of the emergence of a new city built on the service economy and the regeneration of previously industrial neighbourhoods. Revisiting the project has enabled us to ask questions about how place figured in the original study, bringing into focus the unfolding of research design and claims about the history of sociological enquiry. In other writing (Thomson 2020), we have used fieldnotes as a way of revitalising the awkwardness and the tenderness of these encounters. Connecting the interviews with contemporaneous sources also begins to ground the collection in time and place in new ways.

The project of returning the archive to today's young people in Manchester complicates the romance of the project – forcing us to ask difficult questions about the past, about how easy it is to connect the past with the present in a city where most of us no longer live, and some never did, and whether and how our feminist research practice has evolved. Encounters between past and present can affect us strongly, without a clear sense of what is involved. We experiment wildly to find approaches to reanimation that attract and make sense to our collaborators. Theory becomes a vital resource for freeing our imaginations. Freeman's notion of allegory helps us recognise how stories become layered and we are encouraged by Muthien and Plumwood to expect trouble when seeking rematriation. The most important lesson, perhaps, is that working with and through an archive is likely to be generative but, also, confusing in that the stakeholders that share the archive as a boundary object by definition understand it differently. But perhaps it is staying with this trouble – both the 'gender trouble' named by Butler in 1990 and the trouble of the Cthulucene[14] named by Haraway in 2016 – that will help us keep place in the picture this time around.

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[1] Our team includes Rachel Thomson, as PI and member of the original WRAP Team; Niamh Moore, Co-I, has been an active member of the *Feminist Webs* collective; Ester McGeeney is both feminist academic and practicing youth worker. We also acknowledge the wider team here. Sharon Webb has

brought her knowledge of community archiving and archival practice. Rosie Gahnstrom has brought a meticulous and careful attention to data, ethics and creating metadata, and telling sexual stories of young women. Alison Ronan covers a lot of ground, as feminist academic in youth and community studies, historian, youth worker, and founding Feminist Webber. We acknowledge funding from the ESRC Transformative Research Grant Number ES/R009538/1.

[2] For more about *Feminist Webs* see www.feministwebs.com. See also, Batsleer 2012 and Moore 2015.

[3] Secondary analysis has revealed a messier data set with participants younger and older than the claimed sample range.

[4] Key texts illustrating this moment include Adrienne Rich's 'compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence' (1980), Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), Monique Wittig's *Straight mind and other essays* (1992), and Wilkinson & Kitzinger (eds.) *Heterosexuality: A Feminism & Psychology Reader* (1993).

[5] Pamphlets published in 1990–1991 included: *'Sex, Risk and danger'* (1990), *'Don't die of ignorance – I nearly died of embarrassment: condoms in context' (1990)*, *'Pressured pleasure: young women and the negotiation of sexual boundaries'* (1991) and *'Learning about sex: young women and the social construction of sexual boundaries'* (1991). See http://www.tpress.free-online.co.uk/.

[6] Muthien nd. See also, Moore (2017) and Moore (2015, 72–81).

[7] The 'Billion-pound property boom' reshaping Manchester is the focus of a three-part documentary 'Manctopia' broadcast on the BBC in August 2020 .

[8] A wormhole can be understood as something that connects two points in space-time – allowing travel between. This is a key concept for the study with each of our reanimating experiments understood as a wormhole, for further discussion see http://reanimatingdata.co.uk/uncategorized/wormholes/

[9] See https://sussex.figshare.com/collections/Women_s_Risk_and_Aid_Project_Manchester_1989-1990/4433834

[10] See https://archives.reanimatingdata.co.uk/s/fays/

[11] See https://archives.reanimatingdata.co.uk/s/fays/page/experiments

[12] https://archives.reanimatingdata.co.uk/s/fays/item/815#?c=&m=&s=&cv=

[13] Our language for describing such discomfort has been facilitated by the JARring methodology proposed by Renold & Ringrose (2019).

[14] An alternative to the anthropocene, which remains too focused for her on human exceptionalism, Haraway coins the term Chthulucene to focus on the now, and on the need for reworlding through making multi-species kin.

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