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To cite this article: T.L. Cowan & Jasmine Rault (2018): Onlining queer acts: Digital research ethics and caring for risky archives, *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, DOI: [10.1080/0740770X.2018.1473985](https://doi.org/10.1080/0740770X.2018.1473985)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0740770X.2018.1473985>



Published online: 25 Jun 2018.



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Onlining queer acts: Digital research ethics and caring for risky archives

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This essay considers how the current compulsion to digital reproduction – the urge to digitize, network, and *online* previously not-online materials – offers researchers of and within queer circuits the opportunity to defamiliarize and denaturalize our participation in academic systems of exploitation and to reorient our work towards decolonizing research economies, habits, protocols, and relationships. It takes the Cabaret Commons, the authors' speculative digital archive of and for trans- feminist and queer (TFQ) grassroots performance scenes in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, as its point of departure. The authors frame TFQ performance and party scenes as negotiated intimacies, cultivating ethics of vulnerability and risk, which operate within and as networked intimate publics. Reading across decolonial, queer, feminist, and trans- ethics and methods, this essay revisits the value of ephemerality, of strategic evaporation, non-storage, and forgetting in online research contexts.

Keywords: digital research ethics; trans feminist queer ethics; ethics of risk; digital culture

My own interest was not enough justification for pursuing this type of potentially risky research that could expose an already vulnerable community to more vitriol and negative visibility. Moya Z. Bailey (2015)

How can we understand publicity not in terms of the need for safety and protection, which is neither safe nor protecting, but rather the fight for a space in which one can be vulnerable and not attacked? Wendy Hui Kyong Chun (2016, 158)

Digital archival environments are here to stay. Therefore, we must shift the focus from debates over their appropriateness or utility of them to discussion of how our research practices require rethinking in light of them. Michelle Moravec (2017, 196)

What if the ethical and evaluative structures of academic research did not normalize systems of exploitation? In this paper we consider how the current compulsion to digital reproduction – the urge to digitize, network, and *online* previously not-online materials – offers

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researchers of and within queer circuits the opportunity to denaturalize our participation in some of these systems of exploitation and to reorient our work towards decolonizing¹ research habits, protocols, and relationships. We start with the trans- feminist and queer (TFQ)² performance and activist scenes with which we are most involved. Since 2011, we have been working on an online digital archive of and for TFQ grassroots performance scenes in Canada, Mexico, and the US, called The Cabaret Commons. While we began the project with a desire to digitize, share, collaborate, expose, and network – to *online* these materials – we quickly recognized the need to change our research habits away from the crowd-sourced, user-generated model of Web 2.0 production economies and the extraction-exposure logics of scholarly research economies, and to account for “the labour of being studied” (Cowan and Rault 2014, 471). Informed by many thinkers, especially Paulo Freire’s (2000) and bell hooks’ (2014) invocation of education as a practice of freedom, and the call to dismantle the domination logics that shape classrooms, research projects, and the larger program of knowledge production, we have been grappling with the challenges of building and sustaining online academic research protocols that are accountable and reciprocal. Systems of education and research have been shaped by domination logics that reproduce the structures of power that form them (religious orders, the patriarchal family, the nation-state). Here we discuss how the production of online archives can reproduce these systems of domination for the purposes of scholarly interest and access, over and above the needs and interests (and often access) of the communities being researched: those communities making these archival and archive-able materials and cultural knowledges so vital to the research economy.

We have found ourselves taken, like so many researchers recently, by the fever to (digitally) archive precarious, precious, minoritized, invisibilized, intimate, forgotten TFQ knowledges, scenes, resistance cultures, and alternative futures. Bound by their beauty³, we are also, however, bound by the institutional and platform logics that we hope these archives can transform, and by accountability to the “the people whose belongings have become [our] ‘collections’” (Nowviski 2016). Conventionalized research practices reflect longstanding and ongoing taking without much giving. Our reflections on the ethics of queer circuits – especially the stage-to-online-platform circuit – are informed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (2012) analysis of decolonizing research methods; Margaret Kovach (2009) on the complex contextual dynamics of reciprocity in Indigenous research methods; Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015) on the acquisitional “white possessive” in settler-colonial knowledge production; and Michelle Murphy (2016) on academic research habits as “abductive,” in terms of “both kidnapping of the past ... and the non-innocent binding of a particular future to the always constrained possibilities that can be made out of the past.” Academic research, as a centuries-old function of imperialist, settler colonial occupation, dehumanization, and theft, is normalized as a non-reciprocal activity that primarily benefits university research communities. As Canada’s national research ethics guidelines explain, “researchers and REBs [Research Ethics Boards] should be aware that most research yields no identifiable benefits for participants or their groups but may contribute to our existing body of knowledge” (Panel on Research Ethics 2014).⁴ Whose body of knowledge is our research being called into here? Given these colonial conditions and contexts of academic work, we want to suggest that even when our research projects are not primarily situated within or towards Indigenous communities, we can risk refusing these

research conventions in order to unsettle the imperialist university and to dismantle the domination habits of academic knowledge production.

Some of the questions that are orienting this essay include: to what extent are TFQ online archives, and researchers of TFQ digital culture, complicit in the reproduction of extractive, possessive, individualist capitalist modern colonial projects? Where and how are we doing harm even when we think we're repairing harm? How does the project of TFQ scholarly authorship and publication mine the scene-produced knowledges and social, sexual, economic, intimate practices that circulate as common sense and survival strategy – turning collectivized cultural heritage into individualized cultural, intellectual, fiscal, and institutional capital? How are we *ground-breaking trailblazing pioneering frontier-crossing disseminators* of TFQ knowledge? How do the industrial technologies of academic scholarship synthesize relational knowledges into individualized genius?

As academics, artists, audience members, and activists within the scenes we study, we are working towards and experimenting with research practices and processes based on collective authorship, collaboration, accountability, mutual care, harm reduction, shared risk, and reciprocity. This research takes the risk of being unrecognized within current measures of academic value. We argue that the project of digital reproduction offers us the chance to render transparent the structurally entrenched hierarchies that function as archival in Michel Foucault's sense of the term, as "the set of rules which at a given period and for a given society define: the limits and forms of the sayable ... of conservation ... of memory ... of reactivation ... [and] forms of appropriation" (Foucault 1991, 59–60). We want to break the habits of extractive and possessive research and publication and build affective and epistemic infrastructures that acknowledge and disentrench the compulsory normativities of existing *hiearchives* of compensation, credit, value, precarity, security, and exposure.

The Cabaret Commons and speculative research ethics design

When we first imagined the Cabaret Commons project in 2011, we thought we would work, following Johanna Drucker (2009), with a speculative methodology in order to conceptually design not only an online archive, but also an "anecdotal encyclopedia and gossip rag for trans- feminist and queer artists, audiences and researchers" (Cowan, Rault, and McLeod 2014). In collaboration with performance artist and scholar Dayna McLeod, we started working on our first case study: the already digitized (but not online) collection of materials related to Montreal's Meow Mix – the tri-monthly cabaret produced by Miriam Ginestier "for bent girls and their buddies" which ran regularly from 1997–2012 (and had a twentieth-anniversary show in October 2017).⁵ Montreal's Meow Mix (not to be confused with the New York City bar also called Meow Mix) was a dyke-oriented queer party night starting with a short variety show usually featuring six to eight acts of local (and sometimes visiting) talent performing for an audience of 100–300, followed by a DJ'd dance party. We wanted to put all of the collected videos (some high-definition but mostly degraded, low-fi, grainy), photos, listserv archives, and posters online in order to both chronicle this sexual, cultural, and political scene and to facilitate the start of conversations with, and materials from, the TFQ grassroots performance scenes that have been thriving, worlding, and ignored or forgotten in other places. Our onlining momentum was quickly slowed by our own ethical questions. On the one hand, we have copyright

permission to publish these materials online, and so have legal protection. Moreover, we are not exactly working with “live human subjects,” though most of the subjects in this collection are indeed living, so our publication/onlining of the collection has been approved by university Research Ethics Boards (known as the Institutional Research Board in the US). On the other hand, the TFQ Research Ethics Board *in our minds* kept returning the project with a big *Think Better About This* red stamp. We could not allow ourselves to put any of these materials publicly online without approval from everyone identifiable in the files – and a video of just one cabaret includes footage of anywhere from 15 to 50 performers, not to mention the crowd shots. That is, our ethical self-intervention kicked in once we started to upload these digitized materials to an online server and began to populate the typical descriptive metadata fields (name, location, date, and so on.). The Meow Mix context of performers and audiences was a scene of negotiated intimacy that was not just a research jackpot, but, more importantly, was a set of experiences that the people involved had not agreed to share with a search-engine-enabled, entitled, and emboldened public beyond the initial, intended, integral audience.

That is, we became attentive to the ways that the Meow Mix scene (and indeed a larger, intergenerational feminist, dyke, queer, and trans- scene in Montreal and beyond) negotiated a kind of closeness, cultivated over the years of good shows and bad shows, good break-ups and bad break-ups, dance parties in which everyone saw everyone else hooking up, or going home alone. Meow Mix built and depended on messy, painful, and pleasurable intimacies that were risky and protected, negotiated with old friends, current and ex-lovers, but also strangers and newcomers. The collective knowledges and affects of these scenes are shared through a negotiated intimacy, like so many other queer party and performance scenes, which was not quite “what happens at Meow Mix, stays at Meow Mix,” but something approximate to it. To talk to people who were not there, or especially who had never been there, about what happened in these spaces was in bad taste, bad form, tacky behavior that also felt like a breach of trust. Like most TFQ nightlife, these parties and performances were nominally accessible to “the public.” However, Meow Mix publicity was targeted at particular audiences through various media (flyers at TFQ-friendly cafés and bars, bookstores and community centers; posters in the Mile-End, Plateau, Little Italy, Parc Ex, Gay Village, and St. Henri areas of town; personal ads and listings in the free local weekly papers; updates over an email listserv). These events also depended on and built a shared vulnerability and practices of collective care and patience especially for first-time and amateur performers; getting very drunk or high; flirting or fucking with socially, politically, emotionally, and/or physically risky consequences. These acts were all tacitly understood to be at once none-of-our-business *and* our responsibility. Meow Mix, like so many TFQ party and performance scenes, relied on negotiated intimacies to enable whatever safe/unsafe feelings, actions, impulses that performers and spectators brought to and took from these spaces. These negotiated intimacies create and depend upon a set of often unstated ethical attachments to the valuing of and caring for risky behaviors, for behaviors that make us vulnerable. These are places in which risk was expected, desired, and desirable, and ideally you could trust that the scene, or at least a few intimates within that scene, would care for you through any consequences of those risks. For a couple of researchers to come around and post it all up online requires some protocol that both accounts for the ethics of risk within these scenes and gives

participants the option to (refuse to) extend that risk, or the documentation of those risks, to the very different, often punitive, scenes of the internet.

We came to recognize that this project involved massively unequal risks and rewards for us as researchers and our “research subjects.” While Meow Mix was certainly a hotbed of dyke culture and sociality throughout its history, it was always a local, small-venue event with very limited publicity directed at those who were already part of, or who were *looking for*, dyke scenes in Montreal. The space was a lab for experimentation and risk, and many Meow Mix performers (and audiences) were trying out material for the first time. Your terrible first drag show; that time you got naked in a creative way onstage; that beautiful performance you did that is horribly misrepresented by the video; that time you performed under your assigned-at-birth, former, or legal-but-no-longer-used name: these were intended for a small audience of your friends and their friends (who were probably also performing at that or some other Meow Mix show). We often cannot even identify in photos, videos, posters, and playbills *who* these people are – partly because we weren’t at all the shows, or these people are no longer in the scene, or these people have transitioned over time and are unrecognizable, or the quality of the image is so low that we just can’t make out the details. There are differential consequences to circulating this media without *these* people’s permissions – for some, these media are at worst an embarrassing but funny or nostalgic reminder of another time and life; for many it can do real damage, threatening their current lives and resource networks; some people’s professional and artistic reputations and possibly careers would be hurt. Additionally, even the research required to find these folks and ask for permission can have the unintentionally harmful consequences of detonating a former name in a search engine, algorithmically linking that name, gender, sex, and/or other marker to a current identity that the person has worked hard to delink.

While for some Meow Mixers, the prospect of having their amateur performance captured in video and circulated online for the world to Google is merely a matter of wounded vanity (but then, when does our vanity *merely matter!*?), for many racialized, Indigenous, undocumented, queer, trans- and feminist artists and audiences, the appearance of their work or their images online, in an open-access way, represents a risk they need to carefully consider. Given the prominence and popularity of trolling behaviors (doxxing, threatening violence, spambotting, or jamming social media feeds or websites), the intensification of online immigration and police surveillance technologies, the chances of being attacked because of who you are or what kind of content and data you are linked to, and the material consequences of that attack, are increased with the level of precarity you are experiencing in your day-to-day life. That is, the risk of being openly queer, trans- feminist, or otherwise deviant online is augmented when you are racialized by immigration laws, white supremacy, Islamophobia, and settler entitlement. As Graham Willett and Steve Wright (2015) discuss in their essay about onlining the Australian Gay and Lesbian Archives, moving materials from a hard copy in a bricks-and-mortar archive to an online archive – even those materials in the public realm like newspapers, newsletters, and posters – drastically changes their potential or intended public⁶ and increases the risk of attack against the people or groups represented in these materials. While the desire to create a scene-based online collection of TFQ performance materials seeks to put more good stuff in the world and has the best intentions of spreading the multi- and inter-generational histories, politics, and aesthetics of these scenes, we must face up to the realities of internet-

enabled violence. Moya Bailey (2015) frames research on born-digital ephemera – focusing on #girlslikeus, a hashtag for trans women originally posted by writer Janet Mock – as the “type of potentially risky research that could expose an already vulnerable community to more vitriol and negative visibility.” On top of the potential harm, circulating these materials as part of a research agenda, for the purposes of “contributing to our body of knowledge” (Panel on Research Ethics 2014), might just miss the point of exactly the TFQ subcultures and their shifting, historically specific and very local politics, ethics, and aesthetics that we are ostensibly working to archive and sustain.

Decolonizing digital design

The decolonial, community-collaboration, and accountability methods for the digital transmission of traditional Indigenous knowledges, practiced by Mukurtu and Local Contexts, provide a generative model for negotiating the challenges of intimate publics and networked cultural histories and memories. Indeed, Indigenous Studies scholars have pointed out the colonial and Western-expansionist logics and impulses underlying the push to open-access and digitization, and have developed networked information management and archiving systems that follow Indigenous cultural protocols, prioritizing multi-tiered user-generated-access levels (Brown and Nicholas 2012; Zaman, Yeo, and Kulathuramaiyer 2013; Velden 2013).

In collaboration with Warumungu community members, the Penobscot Nation, the Passamaquoddy Nation and other research partners, the co-directors of Mukurtu and Local Contexts, Jane Anderson and Kim Christen, have developed a set of Traditional Knowledge Labels (or TK Labels) and Cultural Protocols to support Native, First Nations, Aboriginal, and Indigenous communities in the management of their intellectual property and cultural heritage specifically within the digital environment:

The TK Labels are useful when valuable cultural heritage is in the public domain and appears as though it can be shared and used by everyone. This is often not the case for Native, First Nations, Aboriginal and Indigenous cultural heritage materials and labeling is designed to identify and clarify which material has community-specific, gendered and high-level restrictions. (Local Contexts: TK Labels, n.d.)

Mukurtu.org is an online Content Management System (CMS) putting some of these TK Labels and Cultural Protocols into action: restricting, limiting, and contextualizing cultural heritage materials (Dietrich and Bell 2011; Bell, Christen, and Turin 2013; Anderson and Christen 2013). As one reviewer of the site explains:

The restrictions [on Mukurtu] also allow the visitor to better understand the culture. Why? You might think that the best way to experience that culture is to be shown all of it at once, but you should consider that men who live in this culture never get to see certain things. Think of it as a simulation of a culture. Use it to reflect on the assumptions you make about who is entitled to what information. (qaramazov qtd. in Dietrich and Bell 2011, 209)

Indigenous-led efforts to *limit* the accessibility of digitized cultural heritage materials foster better understanding through restriction rather than openness. Creating context- and

content-specific restrictions on certain materials, for certain times and certain users means prioritizing community-specific values and interests rather than, say, capitalist university and platform metrics of maximum exposure and impact. These efforts inform our commitment to making space for strategic forgetting, non-storage, and ephemerality, as part of a decolonizing approach to ethical digital research, archiving, and publication.

In *Feminism, Digital Culture and the Politics of Transmission: Theory, Practice and Cultural Heritage*, Deborah Withers provides us with the framework for the collection and re-circulation of TFQ archives as cultural heritage: “working in a heritage context ... lends itself to thinking about responsibility, custodianship, curation and *caring for* historical materials” (Withers 2015, 7).⁷ When we treat minoritized cultural materials as “heritage resources,” we recognize how they “transmit the values, knowledges, techniques, practices, and cultural forms that [minoritized cultures] have created across historical time” (Ibid.). Our work with the Cabaret Commons is informed by decolonial and TFQ cultural heritage models that prioritize context over exposure.

In a recent blog post about the ethical demands faced by archivists of TFQ-community-oriented, DIY print materials, librarian and blogger Tara Robertson outlines some accountability problems with the recent online release of the full run of *On Our Backs* – a queer women’s erotic/porn zine, published in San Francisco by Blush Productions from 1984–2006 – hosted on “Independent Voices: An Open Access Collection of an Alternative Press.” Robertson points out that

[m]ost of the *On Our Backs* run was published before the internet existed. Consenting to appear in a limited run print publication is very different than consenting to have one’s sexualized image be freely available on the internet. These two things are completely different. *Who in the early 90s could imagine what the internet would look like in 2016?* (Robertson [2016], emphasis added)

This is indeed the paradox continually faced by researchers and archivists working online: of course it is exciting to think that young queers might be able to access this material for the first time and have a sense of how queer women’s culture was being formed in the US and Canada since the 1980s. However, *On Our Backs* features the work of people who are not “out” to everyone in their lives, whose sexual orientations, genders, names, and professions have changed since they included their work in this zine, and for whom the consequences of this kind of exposure could be extreme.

Queer Circuits, Queer Acts

“Queer Circuits” recalls for us Donna Haraway’s framing of “the integrated circuit [as a way] to name the situation of women in a world so intimately restructured through the social relations of science and technology” (Haraway 1991, 165). We are oriented towards the integrated circuits of TFQ artists, audiences, activists, academics, and other cultural workers and the ways that these intimate worlds are restructured through the social relations of digital technological affordances. These restructuring integrated circuits include the academic-research-driven digitization and online publication of previously analog and/or non-online materials, as well as academic research conducted about online (born digital) materials generated within TFQ worlds.

Negotiating risk and cultivating creative modes of care within a culture organized against your thriving – that is, “the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture – even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them” (Sedgwick 2003, 150–151) – has been central to queer activism, queer performance studies, and queer digital cultural and media studies. Indeed, one of the first and most influential essays to consider the documentation and research of queer performance cultures revolves around the vexed questions of caring for and cultivating the safety of minoritarian scenes, subjects, and documentation that are under attack. In his 1996 essay, “Ephemera as Evidence,” in the “Queer Acts” special issue of *Women & Performance*, José Esteban Muñoz famously explains:

Queerness is often transmitted covertly. This has everything to do with the fact that leaving too much of a trace has often meant that the queer subject has left herself open for attack. Instead of being clearly available as visible evidence, queerness has instead existed as innuendo, gossip, fleeting moments, and performances that are meant to be interacted with by those within its epistemological sphere – while evaporating at the touch of those who would eliminate queer possibility ... I want to explain some of the ways in which critical writing and scholarship that address and enact queer phenomena, ontologies, politics, or styles are attacked by homophobic and conservative forces. These resistances, attacks, and contestations of queer and other modalities of minoritarian work often follow predictable patterns of assault. (Muñoz 1996, 6)

The “predictable patterns of assault” to which Muñoz points here in the early and mid-1990s in the United States revolve around the conservative scholarly “ideology called rigor”⁸ – that is, the attack based on the accusation that queer scholarship is never rigorous enough – familiar to those of us who might have some experience working in a transmisogynist, homophobic, white supremacist, and patriarchal academic culture. In this formulation, queerness, and scholarship on queerness, is at risk in part because it lacks “clearly available visible evidence” – which might be collected in archives and concrete repositories – but “queer phenomena, ontologies, politics, or styles” are perhaps no less subject to attack when we attempt to render them clearly available. In some ways, however, assaults on the rigorousness, seriousness, and permanence of queer studies are slightly less common with the homonationalist, neoliberal academic institutional “reorder of things” that Roderick Ferguson (2012) has so painfully perfectly tracked.⁹ The attacks we’re seeing these days and again are related precisely to the increasing visible evidence and availability of queer and trans- phenomena, ontologies, politics, and styles to which the online (re)mediation of TFQ performance, art, culture, and sociality contributes.

What stands out for us in reading this essay again 22 years after it was published, is that this now-infamous reflection on strategic disappearance in queer-of-color performance scenes was written in response to heightening anxieties about the epistemic link between queerness and the internet. Muñoz situates his essay as a response to Donald Morton’s “Birth of the Cyberqueer,” which Muñoz calls the “most recent assault on queer theory, scholarship, thinking, and lifeworlds” (1996, 15). Morton’s essay links the “(techo)birth of the cyberqueer” to the historical “appearance in late capitalism of such notions as virtual realities, cyberpunk, cybersex, teletheory” (Morton 1995, 369). He takes these appearances as evidence of the faddishness of “ludic (post)modernity” and the pleasure-driven,

“ahistorical” updating imposed by queer theory against Marxist thought and the “historically-minded” gay and lesbian movement (369–380). Morton is not talking about queer online cultures, or any online evidence of queerness, or indeed such a thing as “online” at all. Instead, his argument is that queers are just like the cyber – untethered to any sort of material historical responsibility – and so serious-minded scholars should track, expose, and shame (we might say troll) this symptomatically capricious turn to “[c]yberized queer theory ... [which] envisions a decentered, Interneted, normless society” (375) and “the technocultural expansion of the bourgeois subject’s desire [in] cybersex, or ‘teledildonics’” (376). Quite inadvertently, Morton’s attack reminds us of the entangled history of “the queer” and “the cyber,” and helps to both demonstrate and trace the prehistory of risk in being queer online (or evidencing queerness in the cyber) and doing research on or about online TFQ cultures.¹⁰

Perhaps neither Muñoz nor Morton could have anticipated that the co-emergent technocultural update brought about by “cyber” and the methodological and political update initiated by “queer” would ultimately compel us back to the ideology of rigor in the form of open-access online archives full of “clearly available visible evidence” we can point to, to prove whatever it is we need to prove about TFQ culture, politics, lives. In some ways we can see that rather than continuing to reimagine and redefine standards of evidence and rigor, or to value “[w]ork that attempts to index the anecdotal, the performative, or ... the ephemeral as proof [which] is often undermined by the academy’s officiating structures” (Muñoz 1996, 7), our field has conceded to these structures in part by seeking, digitizing and creating something akin “to traditionalist scholarly archives and methodologies” (Muñoz 1996, 7). We have no interest here in calling out individual online archive projects, most of which are undoubtedly both politically well-meaning and professionally necessary, both motivated by care for and commitment to the transformative but elided potentialities of the past and simultaneously compelled by institutional mandates and funding structures to generate Digital Humanities projects across the disciplines (as indeed, our Cabaret Commons was and is).

In a perhaps predictable turn in queer studies’ institutional futurity, 22 years later we see that, far from alleviating the expectation for historically grounded research claims, “the cyber” would produce the technological affordances that would compel TFQ cultural workers and scholars into exactly the kind of evidence-driven research economy that Muñoz argues against here. Our scholarship is now taking place in a context that includes the concurrent forces of the institutionalization of LGBT, sexuality, and queer studies, the homonormative and homonationalist sanctioning of gay marriage and It-Gets-Better, the synchronicity of Digital Humanities as an academic discipline and the Web 2.0 open and free labor (“sharing”) market of content-producers, and the empirical, archive-driven research economies of discovery, originality, and evidence thereof. The compulsion for digital archives puts us into the funny situation wherein the “cyber” of Morton’s nightmares has turned Muñoz’s call for queer acts back towards the ideology of rigor and evidence that began this attack/hollaback in the first place (if, for the moment we can accept 1995–1996 as “the first place”). What can we learn from connecting Muñoz’s earlier work on the survival-through-evaporation of queerness, which protects itself against attack through its ephemerality, with the more contemporary drive to digitize earlier pre-digital and non-digital queer ephemera and publish it online where it will never be forgotten, can never

evaporate? Unless you are a hacker in a Wachowski sisters' Netflix show,¹¹ it is very difficult to self-erase material/data that has been linked to you on the internet or to have any control over its circulation and use. Indeed, the update that “queer” and “cyber” made to academic operating systems is addressed, if perhaps obliquely, by Wendy Chun's *Updating to Remain The Same: Habitual New Media* (2016).

In 1995–1996, the “cyber” was a relatively new media and “queer” was a relatively new mediation of sexuality and politics but both were, already, on the verge of becoming what Chun identifies as “habitual new media”: both were moving from new to habitual, becoming the default settings of queer and performance studies' methodological and discursive practices. Chun explains that

[n]ew media, if they are new, are new as in renovated, once again but on steroids, for they are constantly asking/needing to be refreshed. ... Things no longer updated are things no longer used, useable, or cared for, even though updates often “save” things literally by destroying – that is, writing over – the things they resuscitate. (Chun 2016, 2)

If we consider the digitization and onlining frenzy of recent years, it seems that we find ourselves in a situation in which “queer acts” have become less viable. This is simply due to the fact that while TFQ scholars of performance and cultural studies may retain the methodological update that Muñoz called for, this update has “cared for” and “saved” our queer past by writing over, by destroying, “its epistemological sphere” (Muñoz 1996, 6), necessitating an ever-updated finding aid to make TFQ cultural, political, sexual scenes *discoverable*. As we continue to realize with each new (un-released) iteration of the Cabaret Commons, such digital archival impulses might write over/obscure the negotiated intimacies and strategic ephemerality through which such scenes thrive.

According to Chun, the logic of the update operates on the neoliberal circuit of crises-habit and the promise of security that our technologies can never fulfill but will continually market. This promise is premised on “[c]elebrations of an all-powerful user/agent – YOU as network, YOU as ‘producer’ YOU as the sovereign subject, YOU as the decider” (84) – a mythical subject whose sovereignty, privacy, and self-determination are simultaneously and constantly undermined by the networked electronics through which it is reproduced. Our devices undermine our sovereignty at every turn: “At a very basic level, our networks work by ‘leaking.’ ... Our devices, our computers, constantly leak. They are wonderfully creepy” (51–52). Our devices are always operating in social networks beyond our control or apprehension – leaking data that mingles, cruises, and socializes with other leaky devices all around us. The promise of security peddles the myth that new updates, patches, gadgets, or individualized changes in user-habits will keep us safe from risky behaviors – our own and those of our promiscuous digital technologies. Rather than pathologizing and privatizing individual (subjects' and gadgets') promiscuous desires and practices – shaming us for putting ourselves and others at risk by leaking in public, “this logic blames the user, her habits of leaking, for the inherent leakiness of new media” (147) – Chun asks, “how might we occupy networks differently? How can we understand publicity not in terms of a need for safety and protection, which is neither safe nor protecting, but rather the fight for a space in which one can be vulnerable and not attacked?” (158). This kind of public space might be constituted by something like the negotiated intimacies and ethics of risk

that we find in local TFQ scenes (like Meow Mix). We want to suggest that creating such a space online means first grappling with our own complicities in attack culture (Nakamura 2015), recognizing how and where we as researchers of minoritized subjects, scenes, and materials, reproduce and escalate harm, capitalize on rather than care for vulnerable data.¹² To break these trolling habits of scholarly research, we can not online photographs, videos, newsletters, posters, and so on, without also onlining accountability to the ethics and practices of risk cultivated by the people and pasts responsible for these materials.

The ways that we, as institutionally situated researchers, are compelled and rewarded for publishing (publicly circulating and laying claim to) the intimate, culturally/community-specific, exclusive or deliberately not-public, sexual, cultural, and social lives of minoritized subjects – think Indigenous, Black, incarcerated, low/no-income TFQ people – needs to be reckoned with (since forever but), especially as our research is increasingly operating online. That is, we are overdue for some serious thinking about digital research ethics. Decolonizing research methods in TFQ circuits means developing new ethical habits for digital research, focusing not only on the legal frameworks of copyright, intellectual property, and (sometimes) moral rights that tend to be institutional priorities (protecting the university from attack), but also on the ethical frameworks already in place in the minoritized scenes we study. As Chun urges:

Rather than “consent once, circulate forever,” we need to find ways to loiter in public without being attacked. We need a politics of fore-giving that combats the politics of memory as storage, that fights for the ephemeral and fights not only for the right to be forgotten but also the right not to be stored in the first place. (2016, 172)

A research practice of fore-giving might involve an ethics defined by knowing that some materials are both none-of-our-business *and* our responsibility, both nominally public and not-for-public-use. Fore-giving might take the risk of not circulating, or circulating in deliberately small, intended, intimate circuits and publishing in ways that might not be rewarded or recognized by “our [institutional] body of knowledge.” Fore-giving might question the assumed good of online accessibility, networked exposure, and academic recognition, prioritizing instead the cultures of negotiated intimacy and ethics of risk central to the TFQ scenes that we are part of, that we study and to which we are accountable. For us, fore-giving means developing cross-platform ethics and modes of access that move, for example, from offline stage to online archive – from IRL to URL. It means bringing the ethics of queer acts to queer circuits.

UnTrolling

While there is much research, publishing, and debate about topics of online privacy and how to protect one’s self, one’s children, and one’s personal information on the internet, the majority of the scholarship, popular journalism, and internet chatter about privacy is concerned with ideas of government and corporate surveillance, cyber-attack, identity-theft, and internet trolls. What we are interested in is the scholarly researcher *as* the privacy problem. For example, in Canada, current Tri-Council¹³ ethics policies dictate that “REB review is also not required where research uses exclusively publicly available information that may contain identifiable information, and for which there is no reasonable

expectation of privacy” (Government of Canada 2014). This national ethics policy effectively encourages researchers to operate as trolls, or, perhaps, as troll-enablers. As Howard Fosdick put it: “The traditional definition of trolling includes intent. That is, trolls purposely disrupt forums. This definition is too narrow. Whether someone intends to disrupt a thread or not, the results are the same if they do” (Fosdick 2012).¹⁴ Academic researchers who mine, quote, and re-publish parts of an online conversation/thread, of which they are not active participants, have not asked for permission to study, and for which they have not provided deep context – or who online previously not-online TFQ materials, without ensuring that each person who had a part in the production (and reception) of those materials has consented to being shared in this new context, are technically following recommended ethical research practices, but are also (potentially) disrupting the scene (and potentially exposing it to harm) whether or not that is their intention.

At this point, there are no widely adopted academic research protocols for how to ethically publish, circulate, and use the proliferating archive of digital and digitized cultural materials – including archival collections that are newly available online as well as the apparently endless and seemingly public archive of new social and cultural data produced as user-generated social media content.¹⁵ However, the prospect of involving research subjects in the creation of research projects and enabling agency for research subjects – requesting anonymity, providing cultural and historical context, co-creating knowledge and consenting or not consenting to have their ideas, words, or works included – in the publication and circulation of knowledge is not new to academic practice. The ways we think about onlining analogue materials into digital archives/publication, and the use of online social media as archives, need to be linked as we bring to bear these ethical practices on the Internet (or many internets) as our primary site of scholarly publication and research. While the various academic disciplines have long-established ethics protocols for engaging with “human research subjects,” as well as accepted methods for participant-observation, ethnography, auto-ethnography, and the recognized need for deep cultural context, the uniquely accessible and seemingly public nature of online communities and archives has allowed researchers to observe, with no burden of responsibility for being observed. Indeed, isn’t a Tweet the same as any publicly available *text* like a book, a published poem or a newspaper article? Isn’t an image that you find in an online archive the same as an image that you find in a box in a bricks-and-mortar archive? Increasingly, social media content producers (i.e. the tweeters and posters) are indicating that social media posts are not texts, but rather community-specific conversations (Thériault 2015; Tufekci 2014). And those whose images were once stored in a box and now find themselves Google-searchable in an online archive are indicating that an online archive is not the same as a box. The lack of digital research ethics protocols can result in significant misrepresentations of decontextualized cultural events, communication codes, and community-generated knowledges, and contribute to the demonization, devaluation, and general misunderstanding of minoritized people’s knowledges and cultural practices.

This is not to say that many researchers and researched peoples have *not* been developing protocols for ethical digital and online research, but that these protocols have not been widely adopted by institutions or scholars. Michelle Moravec (2017) explores feminist concerns and ethics in the creation and use of digital archives: “We must shift the focus from debates over their appropriateness or utility of them to discussion of how our research

practices require rethinking in light of them” (196). She asks researchers to pause and consider the “individuals who are exposed to a wider audience when analogue archives move online, the [labor of] people who created digitised materials and the infrastructure that facilitates access, and finally, persons who are obfuscated, misrepresented, or entirely absent in digital archival environments” (195). Although she doesn’t frame it this way, we find that Moravec’s article offers a very helpful, *How Not To Be A Troll* guide for researchers making and referencing digital archive environments. Moravec’s point is that researchers who attend to feminist research ethics avoid reproducing and further normalizing trolling or troll-enabling research practices by instead normalizing habits of “informed consent, a commitment to equity in all aspects of the research cycle, and a desire for research that empowers, not further marginalises, individuals and groups” (195).

Dorothy Kim and Eunsong Kim’s “#TwitterEthics Manifesto” offers guidelines for “radical scholarly and journalistic practice that decenters hierarchies by rejecting the idea of expert,” suggesting ways that social media researchers can “collaborate with Twitter users to write their narratives, their analyses, and map their activism and conversations” (Kim and Kim 2014). Another resource that we would love to see in greater circulation is the research ethics materials produced by the Center for Solutions to Online Violence (CSOV), in which many collaborators have considered the ways that violence is normalized in and by digital research environments. In collaboration with the Alchemists – a women- and femme-of-color collective of writers and activists engaged in digital media practices, including Bianca Laureno, I’Nasah Crockett, Maegan Ortiz, Jessica Marie Johnson, Sydette Harry, Izetta Mobley, and Danielle Cole – the CSOV has generated research ethics frameworks from the perspective of social media content producers. In particular, *The Alchemists’ Power & Control Wheel* (2016a) and *Respect Wheel* (2016b) are resources developed to help researchers practice ethical collaborations with research participants and the authors of material they want to cite. For example, the *Respect Wheel* asks researchers to “slow down and consider the ways that they cite and utilize information both on and off the web” (The Alchemists 2016b). The Alchemists reorient research ethics toward the slowed work of “self-awareness, equity, communication, self-care, intention vs. impact, accountability and solidarity” (2016b).

Jamie Nesbitt Golden and Monique Judge’s CSOV post, “Journalism, Social Media & Ethics Part I,” highlights the increased risk of being targeted for harassment and other violence when a journalist or researcher re-circulates a person’s social media content beyond its intended audience and context, and without permission. While journalistic and research ethics and even audiences differ, Nesbitt Golden and Judge’s analysis is applicable to both. They write:

What many of these journalists fail to grasp is that a person tweeting to a small audience may very well understand that the public tweets are subject to being shared and seen by a larger audience, but the type of exposure that comes when a larger media outlet shares your story in no way compares to 100 people on your timeline retweeting your tweet. (2017a)

Like a TFQ community-based cabaret, most people’s social media posts are directed towards an integral audience, “people who know each other, are involved with each other, support each other” (Schechner 2004, 220), even though they are technically open

to an accidental audience that is not part of the insider circle with whom the poster is in deliberate discussion. Disproportionately, it is women, trans- people, queers, Indigenous people, and people of color who are targeted for online trolling behavior for the purposes of threat and harassment, but also for TFQ academic research. While our academic and political intentions might be to support the subjects (conversations, opinions, arts, and quips) we research, we need to consider the various forms that “support” might take – beyond the extractive logics in which we are embedded and the economy of exposure that we might assume imbues added value to a subject or cultural artifact:

So often the logic of *mere citation* is that in the food chain of ideas, scholars and journalists who have access to high circulation or high prestige publishing venues, will use their profile and access to increase the exposure – to signal boost, amplify the voices – of artists, activists and other grassroots cultural workers, and the payment these folks receive, as my collaborator Jasmine Rault and I have argued, is the “*cachet* of being studied” [Cowan and Rault 2014]. That is, so often scholars and journalists don’t pay the artists and activists whose work and words they study because the *labour of being studied* (of answering questions, of dealing with the potential blowback) is understood to be in the interest of that artist or activist, i.e., for their own good, for the good of exposure. As the artist Alexis O’Hara says about these logics and practices, “You can die of exposure.” (Cowan 2017)

One of the common-sense principles of TFQ research is that we are “doing justice to” the subjects, communities, works that we study – and that this desire to “do justice” constitutes a just exchange. As if our desire to do good by good work is itself an equitable offer of goods. While the queer research circuit has been operational for at least a generation of scholarship, the online research environment makes this economy more starkly visible, and these maldistributions of value, risk, and reward become an even more obvious part of the academic operating system.

Beyond templates and research time

Following a womanist ethical tradition, Sharon D. Welch argues that the dominant ethical framework in Euro-America operates through “a political imagination shaped by an ethic of control, a construction of agency, responsibility and goodness which assumes that it is possible to guarantee the efficacy of one’s actions” (2000, 14). She argues that an ethics of control produces despair and cynicism because in no way can one’s intentions determine the impact or outcome of their action. Rather, informed by the works of Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Katie Cannon, and others, she proposes an “ethic of risk,” “responsible action,” and “communicative ethics” cultivated within the conditions of racism and other systems of domination, “possibilities of moral agency when one is not free” (31). We can’t know in advance how our research partners will want to deal with their materials, which makes building a template-based platform for the Cabaret Commons out of the question. Indeed, we need to move beyond the template-based infrastructures of online environments, in order to imagine and create spaces, like the bricks-and-mortar spaces of TFQ performance scenes we work with/in, in which each context requires us to evaluate how and if we will enter and how long we will stay.

For example, in our consultations for the Cabaret Commons, we have found that while there was interest in the performance studies research community for raw footage of

cabarets, the artists in the cabarets were not impressed with this plan whatsoever. Each artist has their own understanding of what would represent an equitable research relationship. Some are happy to have material launched online if it is accompanied by a scholarly essay contextualizing the work. Some want to be able to curate theme-based “exhibitions” in the Cabaret Commons. Some want to have just clips or thumbnails of their work available so that interested researchers can contact them directly and *pay* for the full-length or high-resolution versions of their work. Some only want people who were at the shows or other artists they know to have access to the work. Some want as much as possible out there in order to document the long history of their work, a history that quickly becomes erased as new scenes, performers, and relationalities emerge, intertwine with, and replace earlier ones. Ethics protocols for queer circuits need the flexibility to work with the various shapes of accountability and reciprocity.

To a great extent, conventional research ethics hinge on questions of risk, harm, informed consent, and the benefits or social good of the research project. However, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes in her field-defining book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*:

Debate about ethics distinctions are drawn between legal requirements and ethical codes of conduct. Indigenous groups argue that legal definitions of ethics are framed in ways which contain the Western sense of the individual and of individualized property – for example, the right of an individual to give his or her own knowledge, or the right to give informed consent. The social “good” against which ethical standards are determined is based on the same beliefs about the individual and individualized property. Community and indigenous rights or views in this area are generally not recognized and not respected. (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 123)

These issues are articulated most clearly by Indigenous scholars and communities because of the long histories of research violence done by outsider researchers to Indigenous peoples, knowledges, and worlds. Taking Tuhiwai Smith’s words to heart can help to shift our protocols beyond individualized consent and authorship when researching highly relational activities like performance, activism, social media work, and other modes of TFQ cultural production. Thinking within networks and processes of creation can help us to think beyond single-authored protocols towards new strategies for sharing risk *and* credit.

As micha cárdenas’ work has expansively shown, trans- and gender nonconforming people of color have long been cultivating complex “politico-aesthetic strategies” as “methods of modulating perceptibility that may aid in the project of reducing violence against trans people of color” (2016). cárdenas’s work allows us to consider the ways that dealing with risk requires an augmentation of our perception, and an understanding and responsibility for the extent to which our linked interactions (online and elsewhere) navigate and often produce situations of risk, but also of increased care, support, protection, collective response, value, and credit. TFQ research circuits have the opportunity to mobilize cárdenas’ modes of modulated perceptibility so that our research publications and sites function as spaces for recognizing but also experimenting with and navigating risk in ways that seek to reduce harm, but also to be engaged in the world knowing that intention does not equal impact.

Additionally, we can shift our temporalities away from chrononormative (Freeman 2010) research time, which – in addition to the alarming tick-tock of two-articles/year – presumes

that a person's first name, gender, sex, publicity preferences, and tolerance for risk remain constant throughout a lifetime. As Kadji Amin has argued, following Jack Halberstam and Elizabeth Freeman, "transgender lives may require mixed strategies – not only healing and an achieved coherence but also the ability to represent and to inhabit temporal, gendered, and conceptual discontinuities" (Amin 2014, 220). We want to argue that in the same way that decolonizing methods are necessary for all research projects, not only those primarily impacting Indigenous peoples and communities, so too transgender research methods and ethics help to shift the domination logics that regulate all research norms. Shifting temporalities and temporal expectations is key to an ethics developed within queer circuits.

Returning to Welch we can think about these shifts in research protocols not as onerous *new* methodological/epistemological updates that create more work for already beleaguered and increasingly under-employed scholars, but, rather, as a continuation of long ethical genealogies that dominant research worlds have ignored or neglected. Shifting from institutionally oriented ethics that enable a research project to be completed according to the demands placed on the institutionalized, or institutionally aspirational researcher – the publication / peer-review / endless-job-application-seasons / if-you're-lucky probation / tenure clock – we might consider accountable research-oriented responsible action that shifts this temporality:

[Responsible action] is, rather, participation in communal work, laying the groundwork for the creative response of people in the present and in the future. Responsible action means changing what can be altered in the present even though a problem is not completely resolved. Responsible action provides partial resolutions and the inspiration and conditions for further partial resolution by others. It is sustained and enabled by participation in a community of resistance. (Welch 1990, 75)

While we may need to publish before we perish, and digitize before we disappear, working with/in the traditions of womanist, Indigenous, and trans-epistemologies, we might also consider shifting the ethical relations within the queer research circuit, towards what Kara Keeling calls a Queer OS (2014); this will be a collective struggle that may take more than a generation to reframe. Furthermore, challenges to scholarly rules about originality, authorship, collaboration, and access will need to reshape and reframe the conditions within which scholars get work and keep working (stay employed), so that we might not always need to stake our scene-based insider knowledges as discovered, claimed, and copyrighted.

Learning: "The crisis of not being able to hold on to what you think you know"

"How does one stage utopia?" (Muñoz 2009, 97). Muñoz opens his chapter on "Stages: Queers, Punks, and the Utopian Performative" with this generative question. In this chapter he is inspired by the paintings of Kevin McCarty, paintings that display and reproduce the "utopian performative charge" (103) of the queer and punk stages of Los Angeles. While we are also interested in stages and other TFQ platforms for utopian possibilities, we are especially interested in the doors, the alleys, the signs, the routes to and from – not to mention the stairs, which are so often a feature of these spaces/stages that contribute to making TFQ scenes physically inaccessible to many. When considering uploading the staged work of TFQ performers to online platforms, we want to know who was there and how they got there. What are the modes of intimacy that created not only the scenes and

performances within venues like those Muñoz discusses, but those media and infrastructures of risk and care that get us to these stages? While there are many people in the room, only one writes about it while on sabbatical and authorizes it towards a tenure and/or promotion file. This is not a cheap shot from the cheap seats at Muñoz, whose work has and continues to shape our thinking about pasts and dreams of possible futures, but an opening for us all to have the conversations, to work into our work the complex conditions of access, intimacy, exclusion, and unequal dividends of reward, value, and security. Speaking/writing from and with the authorizing power of imperialist colonial institutions of knowledge brings with it a legacy of uncomfortable questions for scholars who are trying to do good. In *The Better Story: Queer Affects from the Middle East*, Dina Georgis offers an analysis of queer affects and aesthetics indivisible from conditions of colonialism that bring us to proximity with the ambivalent, contradictory, and often painful processes of changing and making knowledge, or simply learning:

Learning, in this sense, is the crisis of not being able to hold on to what you think you know and bearing it enough to make way for insight If we take seriously the presence of injury in our constructions, then it requires that we become different (ethical) learners and readers of history. It means that we account for the site of loss and injury in our postcolonial narratives and that we face all of the past's ruins; namely, all of our postcolonial dreams and nightmares. There are monsters and monstrosities everywhere. (Georgis 2013, 17, 22)

Georgis's research care for archives of queer, postcolonial affects and aesthetics leads us to close with questions rather than answers. Rather than simply updating our contemporary queer circuits by trolling new utopias, might we take advantage of this moment of increased vulnerability and loss to bear these as insights from which to transform the circuit? How can we account for and face the past's ruins without repurposing them towards monstrous inequality? Might the nightmares of the injuries we've inflicted, the dreams of the losses we've borne, provide the affective terrain for a commitment to research in this sense of learning without repeating the traumas we've survived – bearing the pain of letting go of what you think you know long enough to make way for an ethical practice of history?

Acknowledgements

With many thanks to Theodore Kerr, Alexis O'Hara, Stephen Lawson, Aaron Pollard, Dayna McLeod, Alexandra Tigchelaar, Jordan Arsenault, Miriam Ginestier, Andrea Joy, Julia Dyck, Moynan King, Susana Cook, Carina Guzmán, Itzayana Gutiérrez, Lisa Nakamura, Laura Wexler, Moya Bailey, Veronica Paredes, Jacqueline Wernimont, Elizabeth Losh, Dorothy Kim, Eunsong Kim, Gabrielle Bellot, Alexandra Juhasz, Danielle Cole, Alexandrina Agloro, Julia Antivilo, Joss Greene, micha cárdenas, and Izetta Autumn Mobley for important conversations that helped to shape these ideas. We are also grateful for the support of a Digital Humanities Seed Grant and a Fund for Lesbian and Gay Studies (FLAGS) grant, both at Yale University.

Funding

This research has been funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Development Grant as well as a Seed Grant from the Digital Humanities Lab at Yale University and the Fund for Lesbian and Gay Studies at Yale University.

Notes

1. We are both settlers/trespassers/uninvited guests and visitors, raised and educated in the settler-colonial state of Canada. We currently live in Tkaronto/Toronto, which is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, the agreement between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes region. This agreement was violated through the several iterations of the Toronto Purchase, starting around 1787, again in 1805 and continuing into the 2010 Settlement, and we live with and in this violation.
2. For many years now, we've been framing our work as oriented within and towards "trans- feminist and queer (TFQ)" cultural, sexual, and political scenes. For those who are in these scenes, this might seem like a rather obvious framing: by "trans- feminist" we mean an intersectional, assemblaged, and entangled feminist agenda that centers – is oriented by, towards, and not away from – transgender (transsexual, two-spirited, non-binary, gender-non-conforming) people, politics, and theory. Trans- scenes that are also queer and feminist. Queer scenes that are shaped primarily by commitments to trans- feminist people *and* politics, aesthetics, theory. Queer scenes that center women and trans people. You know what we're talking about: the queer scenes with an analysis of gender and without money.
3. As Jane Siberry put it, we're "bound by the beauty. Bound by desire. Bound by the duty" (Siberry 1989).
4. We point to Canada's guidelines because this is the current context of our work, but we would bet that the ethics guidelines of your university (or your country's research funding boards) probably contain a similar statement.
5. Here we characterize Meow Mix within the spectrum of trans- feminist and queer scenes that we study. However, like most feminist and dyke scenes, Meow Mix has not always been as oriented towards transgender and transsexual performers and spectators, especially trans women, as it was in its final years. We want the Cabaret Commons to have the capacity to address transphobia in feminist and queer scenes, and trans people's work to call it out, call feminists in, and transform these scenes – not to mention the capacity to showcase and engage trans-oriented cabarets and performance scenes thriving alongside but independently from feminist and queer scenes and venues.
6. Regina Lee (2011) makes a similar point in her discussion of fan cultures and intended audiences.
7. Recent publications have begun to situate LGBTQI2 within the scholarly and information fields of cultural heritage, including Alana Kumbier's *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive* and Rachel Wexelbaum's edited collection, *Queers Online: LGBT Digital Practices in Libraries, Archives, and Museums* (both Litwin Books, 2014).
8. Muñoz asks: "Who owns rigor? I suggest that rigor is owned, made, and deployed through institutional ideology. This essay will attempt to interrupt the regime of rigor to make this dominant institutional ideology visible" (1996, 7).
9. Although we think it would be an overstatement to suggest that the queer, feminist, critical race, and ethnic studies whose history Ferguson chronicles (along with kin like diasporic, transnational, disability/crip, Indigenous studies) are seamlessly institutionalized or somehow 'safe' now. Even those scholars who we, in these fields, might see as secure in the firmly hierarchized academic star system are often embattled and imperilled in their home departments, colleges, and universities by very much the same ideologies of rigor that Muñoz traces in this essay.
10. A great introduction to this co-emergence is Kate O'Riordan and David J. Phillips' (2007) collection *Queer Online: Media, Technology & Sexuality*.
11. See Wachowski and Wachowski (2017), "Fear Never Fixed Anything."
12. For more on the work of caring for vulnerable data (and the people indexed by that data), see Jacqueline Wernimont (2017), "Remediation, Activation, and Entanglement in Performative (Digital) Archives," as well as "Vibrant Lives Presents: The Living Net" (2016) and "Feminisms in Digital Humanities" (2015); Maria Cotera (2015), "'Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster': Feminist Archival Praxis after the Digital Turn"; and Nishani Frazier's book *Harambee City: The Congress of Racial Equality in Cleveland and the Rise of Black Power Populism*

- (2017) and web project, “HARAMBEE CITY Digital Archive” (n.d.). Marika Cifor has also contributed a great deal to this field: “Affecting Archives: Introducing Affect Studies to Archival Discourse” (2016); Cifor (2016), “Aligning Bodies: Collecting, Arranging, and Describing Hatred for a Critical Queer Archives”; and Caswell and Cifor (2016), “From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives”; as well as Zavala et al. (2017), “A Process Where We’re All at the Table” and Caswell et al. (2017), “‘To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise’: A Framework for Understanding the Impact of Community Archives.”
13. The Tri-Council Agencies are made up of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).
 14. Jade Davis’s (2014) “An Experiment in Trolling: A Teaching Moment” thematizes a “pedagogy of risk.”
 15. Other notable contributions to this field include Vanessa Dennen (2012), “When Public Words are Not Data: Online Authorship, Consent, and Reasonable Expectations of Privacy”; as well as new essays forthcoming in *Bodies of Information: Feminist Debates in Digital Humanities*, especially chapters by Amy E. Earhart (2018) and Babalola Titilola Aiyegbus (2018). Additionally, the *Ethics Guidelines* generated by the Ethics Committee of the Association of Internet Researchers (Markham and Buchanan 2012), as well as Katharina Kinder-Kurlanda and Michael Zimmer’s (2017) edited collection, *Internet Ethics for the Social Age: New Challenges, Cases, and Contexts* also provide excellent guidance.

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Together, Rault and Cowan write about research economies, Trans- Feminist & Queer research cultures, and digital archives. They are co-investigators on the *Digital Ethics Research Collaboratory* (DREC) and are also developing the *Cabaret Commons: An Online Exhibition and Publication Space for Trans- Feminist & Queer Artists, Activists, Audiences and Researchers* (coming soon!). Cowan and Rault are currently co-authoring a book, provisionally entitled *Checking In: Experiments in Trans- Feminist & Queer Networked Intimate Publics*.

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