

The epigraph for English 466 notes, “a book exists only through the outside and on the outside,” quoting Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. A book is something to be viewed by a real viewer. This immediately precludes the idea of a modernist, transcendent view of (any and all) literature. It speaks an interesting philosophy: It intends to imply that the meaning of a text is a function of a single variable known as society: the viewer. The question then is how this meaning is differentiable with respect to society. That is, how does the meaning (and subsequent import) of a text change as compared to a change in its readership? If a text is translated and imported across socioeconomic boundaries, how does its perception vary from its original (dare I say ‘intended’) perception? This is not easily answered; some might argue in line with the Heisenberg uncertainty principle that the order of the change cannot be measured because it would have to be done so by a member of one particular culture. (A continuous--indiscrete--model of culture preempts “cross-cultural” individuals.) Since it cannot be measured to an absolute degree, simply noting a change in a text’s perception is little more than a sociology footnote on par with other trivial details.

The *enfant terrible* of this study, however, is when we regard texts as functions of both society and of each other. (Since the text is a product of a society, this does not violate Deleuze/Guattari.) What this produces is a matrix with possible non-singularities along the directions in which a society has internal conflict. Moreover, if a text is ‘targeted’ at a specific society and if this targeting is based on how that society perceives other texts, the differentiable order of society (again, the idea that changes in society are continuous and predictable about some locus) is disturbed if the imparted idea is unexpected. What is interesting then is to notice how texts are functions of each other. If one text applies the *social implications* of another, the litmus test of any attribute of society is exactly how the same texts are perceived in other societies.

This is simply a direct application of Deleuze and Guattari’s quote to an abstract domain of recursive texts and is precisely why there is tension in any normative society. When the domain is considered to be the literature of the normative society and if the literature is directed at the society and considered recursive of texts in queer theory in particular, then the normative society emerges as self-destructive because normativity requires the lack of the non-singularities (i.e. the infinite continuity) that Guattari says are intrinsic to societies with literature that is constituent of inter-related texts.

This idea is broad and difficult to observe (again deferring to Heisenberg). A slightly specialized example can be found in the eighteenth-century missionary movement in the continental United States. The groups arrived with the intent to bring a particular religion, Christianity, to a completely foreign society. The natives did anything but immediately receive the literature of the missionary society, the Bible. To relate the natives’ distinct and obvious intents to those in the Bible, the missionaries had to turn the book’s teachings into distinct and obvious oral literatures all their own: derivatives of their original form. These added to the constituency of the missionaries’ literary body; they were intended to relate the Christian religion to the new culture and unify the society of native-and-missionary. While the “conversion movement” was enormously effective with the natives, it was similarly affective (with grammatical intent) within the missionary society. The oral literatures sparked debate about the original stories’ intents and there was instantly noticeable non-singularities in the missionary society. These non-

singularities within the normative society caused the previously unitary group to dispel into almost competing religious camps that were all supposedly precipitated from a single body of literature.

(It is true that the groups arrived in already different sects, but the existence and emergence of sects within a religion alone are enough to evince this point. The normativity is apparent if we regard that they were exporting an entire ideology.)

This idea conceived my understanding of queer theory literature and *why* it tends to draw more lines than it blurs. How all of these texts (i.e. queer theory) relate to each other shows on a large scale the implications of an inherently-different set of literature in a normative society (by the very word *queer* meaning atypical). How Western normativity relates to normativity within the queer community is itself exemplary of the same rite experience by the missionaries. Western normativity and hegemony exist on the exaction of what Foucault called *biopower*, "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations." Society as a function of biopower is an interesting point on its own but is for reasons discussed in the second paragraph of this paper, "little more than a sociology footnote on par with other trivial details." This is precisely why my final project, a "concept database," does little in the way of describing *why* the related quotes are related.

The concept database, available online at <http://staff.washington.edu/rtimmons/english466/>, is a first attempt at modeling the recursive nature of the texts in queer theory. In particular, it models the texts as being nodes in an *undirected cyclic graph* with edges being some sort of a relationship between the nodes. The discussion of singularity is relevant if we map the nodes into the matrix with transitions being the cy-graph's relationships. The database does not directly draw all of the relationships but instead allows one to select a particular node (which is represented in concrete form by a quote from a work) and visit all nodes that are related to the selected node. This allows for very complex ideas to be seated in the concrete roles assumed by literature. In fact, the very ideas expressed earlier are visible in relating the quote on biopower to a quote on religion in Rabih Alameddine's [Koolaid](#), which is in turn related to a quote on normativity found in Judith Butler's [Gender Troubles](#). Of course the database can only allow for a finite number of outcomes (actually there are at most $n! = n(n-1)(n-2)\cdots(2)(1)$ such possibilities, where there are n quotes in the database; proof left to the reader), but this relationship between ideas is substantively the difficulty in writing critically of or in the genre. The database allows for the rapid evolution of these ideas. Thus the project serves to broaden the scope of the course's texts into the conceivable domain of the connected edges. It has no specific application, but *that is precisely the point* for reasons belabored earlier.

At current count there are fewer than 30 quotes in the database with even fewer relationships. This is due in part to the difficulty in adding meaningful nodes and edges but is also due in part to the time consumed in writing the program for the underlying database and program to access it (constructed in MySQL and PHP). I was unable to find an existing satisfactory solution. At a certain point I decided to simply leave some features (node and edge removal) un-implemented; at this time I started to actually input meaningful data. If we take the database as an abstraction of all the possible papers that one could write combining any path of nodes and edges in the database, then it is easy to see not only why the database is meaningful but also why into which it is difficult to add data. Given more time, I would add more nodes and edges. I definitely plan to do so in the next few days and hopefully before it is graded (the grader is asked to wait until at least Thursday the 7th, but I would understand a grading as early as the 4th).