# Contents

This dissertation looks at new ways of reading queer bodies and experience within technological contexts. How do digital tools and platforms change the way we interact with affect (associated with queer experience) within texts? What about the digital allows us to create sensational reading experiences? In other words, how does media touch us, and how might we touch what we read?

This chapter proposes a reading methodology that leverages the critic's relation to the text to open possibilities for interpretation and connections to the textual material. It explores the ways that reading practices across two different fields intertwine, and how this creates a new method for reading queer narratives in digital contexts.

## 0.1 Touch: a new way of reading: Sedgwick

If digital humanists and queer theorists are going to find some common ground, they might as well start with *touch*. Touch is driven by a desire for connection, for correlation, for linking one "body" to another. The root of the word digital, "digitus," comes from the Latin word for finger or toe. Our digits extend forth, the furthest appendage still considered part of the coherent body, as the first line of contact with the world. Touch goes both ways; what I touch also touches me; one body impressed by or in collision with another. The sensation of touch often obscures this dual effect, and some bodies appear to desire touching rather than being touched. Queerness is similarly concerned with contact and desire, and more precisely with the desire for contact. Queer contact connotes not traditional contact, but contact that opposes or even offends expectations. It is to the side of the acceptable, bounding the confines of the normative.[1] Both queer and digital are out there, our frames for engaging with the outside world. Both queer and digital are alternative ways of engaging with the environment.

[1]What is "queer"? How do we define "queer"? Queer is the feeling I get when I'm reading something that I'm not supposed to.

Touch either keeps or recuperates the inherent connection between bodies. All things touch each other, something that heteronormativity tries to suppress. For things to not touch, to be severed or "objectified," moves them into a relation of violence. Gloria Anzaldua explains that separation is brutal: "In trying to become 'objective,' Western culture made 'objects' of things and people when it distanced itself from them, thereby losing 'touch' with them. This dichotomy is the root of all violence" (37). Losing touch is a prerequisite for exploitation. The sundering of "objects" from our touch primes us to take advantage of them. Colonial history is a case study in losing touch: "White America has only attended to the body of the earth in order to exploit it, never to succor it or to be nurtured in it" (68). Anzaldua's *mestiza*, birthed in the open wound of the border, "where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds," is an attempt to bring together what has been separated (3). Those who live on the border know better than anyone–divisions between bodies puts those bodies into conflict.

Touch offers myriad ways of relation. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick offers touch as a way of connecting to objects that evades "dualistic thought," that is, in "binary" thought, where things are presumed to be discrete and opposed. Sedgwick explains that "the sense of touch makes nonsense out of any dualistic understanding of agency and passivity; to touch is always already to reach out, to fondle, to heft, to tap, or to enfold" (13). Touch is notable for what it manages to avoid—the upper hand, the either/or. Touch opens a range of relations where power is not always reduced to opposition. Touch opens relations to the outside world. There is more than one kind of touch.

As an antidote, touch is not a naturally western mode of relation. Touch is queer. Touch can inflect the way we read and talk about what we read.

## 0.2 The problem: Queerness as untouchable

In some queer theory and digital humanities runs a similar hesistation not to overdetermine or overinterpret the content of what we read. For queer theory, this hesitation pushes against the trend of locating pain in order to redeem it or reveal its workings. This reading practice (which has been called "suspicious reading" or "paranoid reading"[2]) seeks to expose the effects of homophobic prohibition and repression, often with the goal of affirming queer subjects or recuperating their losses. Reading is oriented around finding and exposing these aspects about queer experience (the pain and shame

[2]Rita Felski? and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

of the closet, for example) and turning those aspects into sites of political resistance, liberation, or pride. [NEEDS A QUOTE, SEDGWICK, THAT EXPLAINS PARANOID READING]

### 0.2.1 Heather Love's *Feeling Backward*

In resisting the temptations to redeem or console psychic suffering by queer subjects, Heather Love offers an alternative reading strategy, "feeling-backward." This strategy opens a space for bad feelings without trying to recuscitate, justify, or transform them. She focuses on feelings such as "nostalgia, regret, shame, despair, *ressentiment*, passivity escapism, self-hatred, withdrawal, bitterness, defeatism, and loneliness," which, according to Love, are tied to "the historical impossibility of same-sex desire" (4, emphasis original). She examines the burdened protagonists from famous modernist texts like Walter Pater's *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873), Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), Willa Cather's *My Ántonia* (1918), and Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Summer Will Show* (1936). Love argues that the shame and stigma experienced by these characters ought to be recognized rather than resolved. Instead of turning negative histories into sites of resistance or affirmation, these hurting characters might have full reign over their own darkness. And this darkness must be where the critic will meet them.

### 0.2.2 identification is risky

As readers, identifying with literary subjects is both dangerous and seducticve. Identities within texts are not stable across time and place, and acts of identification might collapse or overlook the complexity of experience. For queer readers in particular, identification often emerges from a desire to recognize within the past something that affirms queer experience in the present. Love describes queer critics, "Like demanding lovers [who] promise to rescue the past when in fact they dream of being rescued themselves" (33). Reading in this sense is a search for reflection, community, or similitude, a link between past and present. When identification is possible, however, it can be shattering. In "The Torment of Queer Literature," Kelly Caldwell explains the quandry of reading James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* as a transgender woman: "what if the only available act of identification is one of stigma and shame? Embracing queerness is often embracing abjection. Sometimes identification is loss and despair" (par. 4). Identification tends to center around these "bad feelings" which offer less fodder for political resistence. However, identification with more positive aspects of queer experience

is hardly an alternative. For many readers, the more redemptive or celebratory narratives offer no consolation. The reader is stuck between recognizing their own pain or feeling guilty for not recognizing pleasure: "Either read a book like *Giovanni's Room* at the risk of recognizing David's denial and repression as my own, or read a book that celebrates queer lives and sex boldly and end up despising my own cowardice" (par. 17).

### 0.2.3 queerness is a failed project, which is why it's so tempting.

The more hopeless and resistant queer subjects make for more tempting identifications. Love explains how these subjects remain beyond the reader's grasp: "As queer readers we tend to see ourselves as reaching back toward isolated figures in the queer past in order to rescue or save them. It is hard to know what to do with texts that resist our advances" (8). The reason that these subjects remain so unreachable has to do with the nature of queerness itself, which represents absence, loss, and failure. Love illustrates this quality by evoking a Greek myth, Orpheus and Eurydice, in which the lover botches his beloved's rescue by looking back at her as they exit the underworld. Love quotes from Maurice Blanchot's account of the story in "The Gaze of Orpheus," to describe what Orpheus searches for in the prohibited and doomed glance backward:

> Not to look would be infidelity to the measureless, imprudent force of his movement, which does not want Eurydice in her daytime truth and in her everyday appeal, but wants her in her nocturnal obscurity, in her distance, with her closed body and sealed face—wants to see her not when she is visible, but when she is invisible, and not as the intimacy of familiar life, but as the foreignness of what excludes all intimacy, and wants, not to make her live, but to have living in her the plenditude of death. 50

Orpheus's downfall is his desire for a glimpse at what cannot be grapsed, at what remains beyond the light. This desire is not for "daytime truth" but for "noctural obscurity," which is always receding at the moment of pursuit. Like Eurydice, queerness emerges only to slip away, turning its face from the parched gaze. Can we be blamed for looking for that which cannot be grasped? No, because queerness has always been structured by that which is not, by what Love calls "impossible love" (24). Not only is queerness projected to fail, it is a project of failure. Love reminds us that "Queer history has been an education in absence" (50). In learning failure

and loss, queer readers can only identify with what they have been taught to recognize as untouchable. Full identification, like Eurydice in the daylight, is prevented by design.

### 0.2.4 identifying, but not fully.

Love proposes a method in which the goal is not to redeem queer subjects or resolve queer failure. Rather, the problem of identification is turned to a reading strategy: "I want to suggest a mode of historiography that recognizes the inevitability of a 'play of recogniztions,' but that also sees these recognitions not as consoling but as shattering" (45). Reading, for Love, can enact a "play of recognitions," which is a way of making fleeting connections that do not presume complete understanding. It is a way of identifying, but not fully. Full identification would attempt to wrench the subject from its suffering, and effectively transform it into something else. Rather that attempt to rescusitate it, Love looks to the ways that identity unsettles and dissolves subjectivity. She gives the example of Stephen Gordon from Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. Once considered too depressing as a model of lesbianism, recent critics have cast Stephen Gordon as a transgender figure. Love resists this label, maintaining that Stephen is "beyond the reach of such redemptive narratives" (119). The question, for Love, is not whether Stephen is a pre-op FTM (Female-to-Male), but how Stephen's existential negativity can be read as an embodied phenonmenon, as "a social experience insistently internalized and corporeal" (108).

### 0.2.5 Critique of affirmation: Cvetkovitch

Attempts to affirm negative queer experience can be harmful. Ann Cvetkovitch's work on trauma studies provides an example of how this tendency can create further misunderstanding about suffering. In her book, *Archive of Feelings*, Cvetkovitch explores expressions of trauma within the public sphere. She asks how individuals might reclaim some of the most negative and traumatic feelings into something positive and theraputic: "I want to place moments of extreme trauma alongside moments of everyday emotional distress that are often the only sign that trauma's effects are still being felt" (3). She wrests trauma studies out of medical discourse and into public culture—turning something that is traditionally private and pathologized into something communitarian, an open, everyday "archive of feelings."

Importantly, Cvetkovitch marshalls this reconfiguration of trauma to expand what we consider the 'archive'. She also makes some incisive points

about the inability to fully portray suffering: "Because trauma can be unspeakable and unrepresentable and because it is marked by forgetting and dissociation, it often seems to leave behind no records at all" (7). Cvetkovitch explores alternative methods of figuring trauma, which are transformed when they enter the public sphere. She cites examples from public performances like rock shows or documentaries, in which the artists enact "moments of intense affect that are transformative or revealing" (26).

Although her focus on the affective and ephemeral dimension of performance opens up conceptions of the archive, Cvetkovitch perhaps goes too far when she suggests that these performances are redemptive or in some way compensate for traumatic experience. She indicates that such performances go so far as to alleviate psychological damage and suffering: "Imaginative work that may bear an oblique relation to the actual event of sexual abuse can ultimately be more 'healing' than an explicit rendering of the event" (94). Trauma is a real medical condition, with real consequences (death) for those who do not seek treatment or downplay its life-threatening effects. Critics should be careful in extending a definition of trauma that will end up hurting those who are affected by it. We do not need to move trauma strictly from the medical discourse in order to have a more communitarian, open, and public relationship to it. There are other ways to confront stigma which doesn't attempt to redeem it, as Love explores with her notion of "Feeling Backward."

The step that Cvetkovitch takes with regard to trauma is interesting, however, for what it suggests about the role of the critic in analysis. The point isn't to find evidence of overcoming queer suffering, but to examine the ways that queerness is figured in abstraction. What does queerness look like, what can it do?

### 0.3 The problem: Data as cooked

As a mode of relationality, "Feeling Backward" not presume a full connection between the critic and subject, keeping the subject at arms length. It approaches queerness as something receding, even when the critic is perpetually in pursuit. This relationship between critic and textual subject evokes some of the attitudes that digital humaninists take toward their data. Critics such as Johanna Drucker and Ted Underwood are careful to qualify the nature of data as constructed, wrenched from the reality of lived experience, and necessarily reduced to fit whatever environs required by analysis.

### 0.3.1 Drucker's skewing the graphs

Johanna Drucker argues that quantification techniques (such as visualizations in graphs and charts) actually misrepresent the data they are meant to convey. Drucker explains that, in order to place this data on a graph or chart, it undergoes a transformation. Complexity is reduced to whatever quality the visualization apparently requires. To illustrate this reduction, Drucker presents a chart displaying the amount of books published over several years. The chart appears to convey production during this specific time period[3], but Drucker explains that publication date is an arbitrary metric for capturing production. She brings to the surface all the assumptions made in such a metric, for example, the limitations of "novel" as a genre and the connotations behind "published," which suggests date of appearance, but has no indication of composition, editing, review, distribution. Drucker reminds us that each piece of data carries with it the result of many interpretive decisions, which carry with them varying degrees of opacity. These interpretations ("reductions") are necessary in order to present complex concepts like book production as a bar on a chart. Drucker explains: "the graphical presentation of supposedly self-evident information (again, formulated in this example as "the number of novels published in a year") conceals these complexities, and the interpretative factors that bring the numerics into being, under a guise of graphical legibility" (Drucker par. 23).

To resist the reductions of "data," a term that connotes that which is "given," Drucker proposes "capta," to suggest the act of being taken and transformed. Drucker's "capta" is deliberately creative, turning graphical expressions into expressive metrics: components used for measurement, like lines or bars on a graph, break or are fuzzy and permeable. Objects are not discrete entities, but interact with the other objects in the visualization. For example, in a bar graph of book publications/year, she warps the bars on the graph, making some of them fuzzy, wider, shorter, in an attempt to show that publication as a metric elides other information such as composition, editing, purchasing, etc.

This activity is a way of figuring elements that have been reduced, resolved, or ignored in traditional quantitative analysis. It evokes what Love says about queer subjectivity and experience being beyond the reaches of the critic. Drucker makes evident what is overlooked or assumed when dealing

[3]Drucker implicitly refers to the first chapter from Franco Moretti's *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (2007), throughout which Moretti graphs novels by their publication date between 1700 and 2000 and draws conclusions about the relationship between genre and generations of readers.

with complex subjects. She places those elements there, for all to see, in a way that muddles (rather than simplifies[4]) the relationship between them. She does try to figure these elements, but not in a way that attempts to clarify or resolve their complexity. Rather, like Love, she works on the "image of exile, of refusal, even of failure" (Love 71).

### 0.3.2 Ted Underwood's models as object of study

Ted Underwood and other literary critics doing Computational Literary Studies (CLS) approach their data with vastly different commitments. Underwood harnesses computational power and sophistication to glimpse the big picture of literary history, what he calls the "distant horizon" of literary trends across centuries. His argument convincingly begins with the observation that human capacities—sight, attention, and memory—preclude them from grasping the larger patterns of literary history over time periods. Distant reading, whereby "distance" implies abstraction, or the simplification of textual data into computable objects such as publication dates and genres, allows critics to make connections in apparent chaos, to draw a steady line of historical development through the swarm of overflowing information. According to Underwood, distant reading opens new scopes to literary analysis, which would otherwise be invisible to readers: "a single pair of eyes at ground level can't grasp the curve of the horizon" (x).

Though to a much lesser degree than Drucker, Underwood similarly turns his computational method into an object of study. His research deploys machine learning, that is, computer programs "trained" by certain data sets to make predictions about other datasets. Underwood studies how "models," or calculations based on multiple variables, created by sample data can then be used to measure further data. One of his models measures the probability that computers can guess the sex of a fictional character based on the words associated with that character. Underwood explains how the test is configured:

> We represent each character by the adjectives that modify them, verbs they govern and so on—excluding only words that explicitly name a gendered role like *boyhood* or *wife*. Then, we present characters, labeled with grammatical gender, to a learning algorithm. The algorithm will learn what it means to be 'masculine' or 'feminine' purely by observing what men and women actually

[4]Moretti: "'Distant reading'... where distance is however not an obstacle but /a specific form of knowledge" (1).

> do in stories. The model produced by the algorithm can make predictions about other characters, previously unseen. 115

The computer takes in information about some (the more the better) books and studies that information in order to make predictions about other books. The resulting model, therefore, is always guided by its previous experience. Underwood rightly points out that such calculations cannot be taken as fact. Like humans, "machine learning tends to absorb assumptions latent in the evidence it is trained on" (xv). To Underwood, machine learning is no more "objective" than regualar analysis. This is why Underwood calls his work "perspectival modeling," where he studies how datasets reveal, not the truth of literary histroy, but the *approaches* of those who study it: "By training models on evidence selected by different people, we can crystallize different social perspectives and compare them rigorously to each other" (xv).

The results of the analysis is baked into the process, something that Underwood understands and accepts as part of the obstacles toward his distant horizon. In looking at the way gender is characterized, or rather how perspectival models characterize gender, in novels from the 18th century to the 21st, he finds that the results reproduce some of the structuring assumptions from the outset. His examination of gender characterization finds that "while gender roles were becoming more flexible, the attention actually devoted to women was declining" (114). The analysis points to a steady overapping of words used to describe men and women over time, shown as a convergence on the graph between words previously associated with women, such as "heart," which begin to intersect with words typically assoicated with men, like "passion," toward the middle of the 20th century. However, while the categories of "masculine" and "feminine" words are progressively blurred over time, the actual number of female *characters* declines. Underwood explains this drop could be due to several reasons, one of which is the simple fact that the practice of writing "gentrified" through the 20th century, when writing became acknowledged and pursued as a male occupation (137). His analysis shows that men tend to write more about men, while women write equally about men and women. With less women writing, the amount of female characters therefore declines. This explains how Underwood's seemingly paradoxical conclusion, that gender roles become more flexible while the actual prevalence of women dissapates from fiction, might be possible. But Underwood also admits that another factor—the assumption of gender as a binary category—might very well be guiding his results: "One possible conclusion would be that the structural

positions of masculine and feminine identity, vis-'a-vis each other, have remained very stable—while the actual content of masculinity and femninity has been entirely mutable" (140). Viewing gender as a binary construction perpetuates the structural categories of male/female in a way that is at odds with the actual content of such categorie. In other words, if gender is binary, then it stands to reason that the relation between male and female will be one of opposition. Underwood proposes that one way around this confining structure of binary gender would be to refigure gender "as a spectrum or as a *multiplication* of gender identities that made the binary opposition between masculine and feminine increasingly irrelevant to characters' plural roles" (140).

## 0.4 Critique of Reproducibility

Scholars like Da, Underwood and Altschuler and Weimer who want something reproducible, this overlooks the performativity of engaging with texts online.

### 0.4.1 nan Z da on reproducibility

In a controversial peice about text analysis, Nan Z. Da deems Computational Literary Studies (CLS) ineffective when her own experiments fail to reproduce or verify the results of her colleagues. Her emphasis on the "reproducible" in CLS extends one of distant reading early champion's originating call for a "falsifiable criticism": both advocate for a methodology that is as reliable and verifiable as the social sciences. I understand that Da uses "reproducible" to mean analyses that can be copied and rerun by other scholars in order to test the original result. This (though boring) act is not the object of my critique. The object of my critique is the insinuation in *reproducible* that somehow these analyses exist by themselves, outside of the critic.

### 0.4.2 Ted Underwood on studying models

Underwood from PMLA example. He only reproduces the gender binary. Interweave with what Sedgwick says about binaries.

Ted Underwood puts forth a good understanding on quantification being no more more objective than words. Rather than using "distant reading" to ascertain "facts" about literary history, he's examining what models are doing when used by humans. His focus on "perspectival modeling" reveals how the computer process reproduces human assumptions.

However, the results of the analysis are always baked into the start, ask Underwood's conclusions about gender reveal gender to be a binary and

oppositional force.

## 0.5 For alternative readings: queer theory

### 0.5.1 Felski's post critical reading: the illusion of emotional detachment

The reality is that we are stuck in these bodies of our thinking. Rita Felski describes how seemingly neutral and detatched critical stance belies an emotional disposition:

> Scholars like to think that their claims stand or fall on the merits of their reasoning and the irresistible weight of their evidence, yet they also adopt a low-key affective tone that can bolster or drastically diminish their allure. Critical detachment, in this light, is not an absence of mood but one manifestation of it—a certain orientation toward one's subject, a way of making one's argument matter. 6

The "low-key affective tone" of scholarly discourse suggests that affect, and the feeling subject associated with it, has been left out of the critical process. However, appealing to the apparently unemotional does not succeed in removing emotion from argument—this is impossible—but it does reinforce the illusion that emotions don't belong in rational thought. Actually they do—though the emotions of critical discourse are of a quality and degree that mask their own presence. Felski explains that, "Rather than an ascetic exercise in demystification, suspicious reading turns out to be a style of thought infused with a range of passions and pleasures, intense engagements and eager commitments" (9). One follows the exposition of the framing paradigms, the twists and turns of the driving question, the climax of of discovery followed by the of denouement of the conclusion, one immediately senses the full dramatic repertoire of critical inquiry.

And the illusion of reason as being devoid of emotion is not limited to verbal discourse. It also pervades–perhaps even more insidiously—the apparently objective reprsentations data visualization. Graphs, charts, and maps all contain persuasive elements that succeed through their invisibility, in the trust, for example, that the souces are truthfully represented in the visualization or the implied preference of some metrics over others. Lauren Klein and Catherine D'Ignazio point out that "so-called 'neutral' visualizations that do not appear to have an editorial hand... might even be the most perniciously persuasive visualizations of all!" (*Data Feminism*,

chapter 2). Not dots on a graph can be said to be removed from the predelictions of the creator and the generosity of the viewer.

### 0.5.2 Felski & Sedgwick affective approaches

Critics like Rita Felski and Eve Sedgwick adopt an alternative approach toward reading that exposes knowledge as derived from embodied experience. Felski talks about reading as an affective orientation, where readers position themselves and their desires around texts. Felski critiques the popular orientation in literary criticism centered on what Paul Riceour has called the "hermeneutics of suspicion"—the desire to unmask and demystify the secrets of literary works. According to Felski, critics generally behave as if language is always withholding some truth, that the critic's task is to reveal the unsaid or repressed. She identifies the affective modes of suspicion to include disenchantment, vigilance, paranoia.

Sedgwick makes a similar assertion about tendencies of "paranoid reading," though she bases her critique on Michele Foucault's repressive hypothesis from his *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, which approaches discussions on sex and sexuality through the lense of repression or prohibition. Rather than excavating the workings of the repressive hypothesis, Foucault is interested in the ways that discourse on sex has proliferated, in its multiplications that avoid censure while satisfying the desire for sexual discourse. Left with no place to go, discussion on sex simply continued to spread by transforming itself into palatable discourses such as Marxism, pyschoanalytic, libertarian, etc. By looking for the specter of sex/power dynamics in these discourses, Foucault seems to work outside the logic of the repressive hypothesis. But this is not the case. Sedgwick explains that, "the almost delirious promise of the book" is "the suggestion that there might be ways of thinking around [the repressive hypothesis]" (9). In fact, Sedgwick explains that Foucault's inquiry has been, from the start, structured by repression and prohibition. She finds that the "critical analysis of repression is itself inseparable from repression" (10).

Felski and Sedgwick see a dead end in militant reading practices.

Felski's nightmare: Sedgwick's wish:

"How do we step outside the repressive hypothesis "to forms of thought that would not be structured by the question of prohibition in the first place?" (*Touching Feeling* 11).

Speaking on Foucault's repressive hypothesis: "I knew what I wanted from it: some ways of understanding human desire that might be quite to the side of prohibition and repression, that might hence be structured quite

differently from the heroic, 'liberatory', inescapably dualistic righteousness of hunting down and attacking prohibition/repression in all its chameleonic guises" (*Touching Feeling* 10).

Felski shows how this suspicion toward texts forecloses other possible readings while providing no guarantee of rigorous or radical thought. Rather than adopt a suspicious attitude, Felski suggests that literary scholars try "postcritical reading," which looks to what the text suggests or makes possible. Felski wonders what if we allowed ourselves to be marked or struck by what we read. Then, rather than just be a cognitive activity, reading can become an "embodied mode of attentiveness that involves us in acts of sensing, perceiving, feeling, registering, and engaging" (176).

Reading is about movement

Postcritical Reading — "Reading, in this light, is a matter of attaching, collating, negotiating, assembling—of forging links between things that were previously unconnected"... "Reading, in this sense, is not just a cognitive activity but an embodied mode of attentiveness that involves us in acts of sensing, perceiving, feeling, registering, and engaging" (176).

### 0.5.3 Sedgwick on generative shame

What if we read Henry James mobilizing shame as a creative resource? For many queer people, shame is a structuring force in their identity. But this doesn't mean we need to be negative, we can look to the ways that shame unlocks creativity and productivity—to the ways that metaphors are made possible through shame. James' "blushing", "flushing" is linked to a fantasy of the skin being entered, or touched by a hand. GLOVE, GAGE, GAGEURE... We can reclaim a negative affect of shame and approach it as a generative force.

- "Shame interests me politically, then, because it generates and legitimates the place of identity–the question of identity–at the origin of the impulse to the performative, but does so without giving that identity space the standing of an essence. It constitutes the as-to-be-constituted, which is also to say, as already there for the (necessary, productive) misconstrual and misrecognition. Shame–living, as it does, on and in the face–seems to be uniquely contagious from one person to another. And the contagiousness of shame is only facilitated by its anamorphic, protean susceptibility to new expressive grammars" (63).

## 0.6 Paralleling Queer & DHers looking for alternative readings

### 0.6.1 Case in point: klein's figuring the absence

Draw Klein and Hartman together—this is what I want to do for Queer texts.

## 0.7 Performativity

Digital formats and interfaces facilitate queer encounters methods, an intimate process of engaging with literature on a computer, where users can manipulate and transform text.

### 0.7.1 Bode's materiality, critque of Underwood

Katherine Bode's critique of Underwood points out that QLS methods incorporate hidden assumptions about the data, about what is findable. She offers a method that builds off the humanistic approaches in textual scholarship and bibliography, where the model is prior to computation.

### 0.7.2 Tanya Clement: discovery

### 0.7.3 Against reproduction, for remediation/deformance

### 0.7.4 McGann's "prosthetic extension"

These tools work alongside the reader's intuition, in what Jerome McGann calls a "prosthetic extension of that demand for critical reflection," by which the reader is able to feel her way through the text (18).

### 0.7.5 Critique of Underwood's "sensitivity"

Underwood overlooks the ways that distant reading can be a prosthesis. Claims that Quantitative are not as "sensitive" or "exacting" as close reading, and are mostly useful for long views. How can we approach distant reading as multiplying alternative readings? Rightly points out that human attention guides the scale of analysis. So we have to be very careful at the question we are posing, and the way that we interact with the computer.

- "Critics who want to sensitively describe the merits of a single work usually have no need for statistics... Computational analysis of a text is more flexible than it used to be, but it is still quite crude compared to human reading; it helps mainly with questions where evidence is simple too big to fit in a single reader's memory" (xxi).

- Repeatedly stresses that the point of quantitative methods is to discover new scales of analysis, but he seems to be looking for an overarching theory that will encapsulate literary history. Quantitative methods seek to overcome a problem of attention, of memory, in order to gain a large view. Here, human memory is a hindrance, rather than a drive. The goal is rather to multiply alternative readings.
  - Attention determines analysis, analysis determines knowledge, knowledge determines disciplines, periodization (8).
  - "The challenge is to find a perspective that makes the descriptions preferred by eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century scholars all congruent with each other" (32).

## 0.8 Vantanges

### 0.8.1 Klein, Mandell, Caughie, Gaboury

### 0.8.2 Against totalization

### 0.8.3 The visible and the invisible, opting out

## 0.9 Provisionality

### 0.9.1 Susan Brown's provisionality

### 0.9.2 Julia Flander's work on Orlando

### 0.9.3 Against stability

## 0.10 Digital projects based on text manipulation:

I find that the haptic and exploratory activity of working with these tools enlivens the reading process by allowing the reader to play, experiment, and imagine new connections to the textual object.

### 0.10.1 *Voyant-Tools*

Jerome McGann "prosthetic extensions" Potential texts: Woolf's *Orlando*.

- Interweave a narrative about touch. Taking new materialist ideas but

placing them within context of QPOC critiqe. Anzaldua and Bennet on touch and severing. Sarah Ahmed too.

### 0.10.2 *These Waves of Girls*

Following narrative desire. The click of the mouse allows readers to move with the text, based on their own paths.

### 0.10.3 what are some print texts that enact these principles of movement?

- Alison Bechdel's "Are You My Mother": where every page is vibrating

with reference.

## 0.11 MISC

### 0.11.1 within our bodies

This point bears repeating—we are always stuck within the bodies of our thinking. As such, we might as well turn to ourselves, to explore (rather than how things are in the world) how things are *to us*. Sedgwick points out that the problem is not one of knowledge, but one of movement. We can try to in-*corporate*, as much as possible, alternative reading methods that get at the unique experience of being a thinking/feeling human that is fiddling with these tools. We can, in other words, examine the possibilities of *touching* what we read. And we can do so with digital tools for text analysis and machine learning. However, there still exists a view that distant reading lacks the sensitivity of close reading. "Critics who want to sensitively describe the merits of a single work usually have no need for statistics" (xxi).

### 0.11.2 data reduction / queer assimilation

For those that would argue that negative feelings are no longer relevant in today's world, Heather Love responds that the advent of assimilation, of popular acceptance, only creates more problems for a group that has come into being as abject. *(the corrolary for digital studies is the proliferation of data, of information, digitization)* Queer assimilation and apparent rise in acceptance across popular culture and mass media contradicts the reality of shame and stigma that everyday queers experience, a contradiction that breeds ever more shame: "Of course, same-sex desire is not as impossible as it used to be; as a result, the survival of feelings such as shame, isolation, and self-hatred into the post-Stonewall era is often the occasion for further feelings of shame. The embarrassment of owning such feelings, out of place

as they are in a movement that takes pride as its watchword, is acute" (4). What do we do with these residual feelings of shame?

How should queer criticism orient itself? Love shows that critics face a contradiction, brought on by the reality of negative feelings and psychic costs of being queer in a homophobic society. The narrative trajectory of queer progress runs counter to the residual pain of being queer. Criticism is stuck in the middle of this ambivalence, between affirming its pride and bemoaning its suffering: "We are not sure if we should explore the link between homosexuality and loss, or set about proving that it does not exist" (Love 3).

### 0.11.3 Misc Quotes

"how might activating emotion – leveraging it, rather than resisting emotion in data visualization – help us learn, remember, and communicate with data?" (Klein and D'Ignazio, *Data Feminism*, chapter 2)

# 1 Works Cited

Caldwell, Kelly. "The Torment of Queer Literature," *The Rumpus*. 2018.
Love, Heather. *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*. 2009.