

NSF workshop 2020

three sessions

first: me. availability of data

susan sterett chair, UMBaltimore

me

David Mellor Center for Open Science

discussant: Natasha Maulthner

discrete characteristics availability, discreteness

Mellor: pre-registration for qualitative inferences

availability of qualitative data

counter intuitive to one I might normally make

rather than have david talk about open science, think abot how thinkgs might not be available

for me,

5 page double space text in advance

neo-positivist

kinds of data we might use as maximally difficult to make available

Feb 21 for final

the depositivist style foregrounds that availability is never neutral; you make data available to make claims (Thomas 2013). it's not until Michael Faraday gets hold of it that availability starts to become more of a simple measure or index of presence.

AND the depositivist style exceeds simple utility, need, and purpose

available (adj.)

mid-15c., "beneficial," also "valid, effective, capable of producing the desired effect,"

from **avail** + **-able**. Meaning "at one's disposal, capable of being made use of" is recorded from 1827.

avail (v.)

c. 1300, *availen*, "to help (someone), assist; benefit, be profitable to; be for the advantage of; have force or efficacy, serve for a purpose," apparently an Anglo-French compound of Old

French *a-* "to" (see **ad-**) + *vail-*, present stem of *valoir* "be worth," from Latin *valere* "be strong, be worth" (from PIE root ***wal-** "to be strong").

I. That may avail. archaic.

1.

a. Capable of producing a desired result; of avail, effectual, efficacious. archaic or Obsolete except as in 1b.

1502 tr. Ordynarye of Crysten Men (de Worde) iii. v. sig. q.iiiiv That wyll make his prayers auaylable.

1585 Abp. E. Sandys Serm. iii. 56 That the masse is a sacrifice auailable for quicke and dead.

1605 T. Tymme tr. J. Du Chesne Pract. Chymicall & Hermeticall Physicke i. iii. 63 That oyle..being as available against the falling sicknesse as vitriol.

a1699 A. Halkett Autobiogr. (1875) 32 Nothing I could do could be available.

b. in Law. Valid.

1451 Scotch Hom. in T. Rymer Fœdera (1710) XI. 291 Most advaylable in the Law.

1528–30 tr. T. Littleton Tenures (new ed.) f. xliiv A reles is not auaylable to the tenaunt..but where a pryuytye is bytwene hym & hym that releseth.

1622 G. de Malynes Consuetudo 453 After which the bill is held as confessed and au [a] ileable.

1768 W. Blackstone Comm. Laws Eng. II. 275 And all charges by him lawfully made..shall be good and available in law.

1875 K. E. Digby Introd. Hist. Law Real Prop. v. 169 Leasehold interests became rights of property (or rights available not only against the lessor, but also against all the world).

2. Of advantage; serviceable, beneficial, profitable (to, unto). archaic. (The last quotation passes into 3a.)

1474 W. Caxton tr. Game & Playe of Chesse (1883) ii. v. 61 To be pietous in herte..is available to all thinge.

1598 R. Barret Theorike & Pract. Mod. Warres i. 13 It shall be wonderfull auailable for him to reade Histories.

1614 W. Raleigh Hist. World i. iv. vii. §1. 294 His Mother Veturia, and Volumnia his wife..were more auailable to Rome, then was any force of armes.

1836 Recoll. Ho. Lords xvi. 389 Where fair argument is available to his side of the question..he does not have recourse to sophistry.

3a. Capable of being employed with advantage or turned to account; hence, capable of being made use of, at one's disposal, within one's reach.

1827 M. Faraday Exper. Res. xli. §12. 226 This quantity is..wholly available in the liquid when used as a bleaching agent.

1833 I. Taylor Fanaticism x. 476 The epistle to the Romans..is available as proof.

1860 J. Tyndall Glaciers of Alps i. §12. 86 We spent every available hour upon the ice.

so when we say we want data to be available, it's not just "at one's disposal" wanting data to be available means wanting to serve a purpose. we want to share our data, not out of some dream of totality or drive to holism, or not only these things, but also because we want to serve a purpose. what does it mean that both are true?

anthropologist of science doesn't foreground the issue enough. if i say im an anthropologist of the knowledge systems and cultures of the sciences, then" what knowledge system

anthro of the truth making practices of science, what are my truth making practices that allows me to claim truth, which we all share. sharing and reflexivity. trying to pattern

reading as the foundational act, the atom of meaning

holism as limit, the aporia we all share

perversion as play at the limit, fucking with and at borders

so we are always trying to read the limits of our systems anew, to figure out what's happening there, what effects they exert, how they produce blindness along with their insight

what is the "data" that goes along with that? And what is the relationship of that data to

limits of sharing, or the ideology of sharing. I don't even have enough time to read my own data and now I have to read yours? the drive toward totality, and holism, haunts us. we cannot not want it.

positivism and its limits

the positivist style, and its aporias



Teresa De Lauretis, *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire* Indiana University Press, 1994. p. 25 (quoting Jonathan Dollimore):

not structured) ambiguity, finds itself strengthened. And it finds support in Dollimore's discussion of "Freud's Theory of Sexual **Perversion**," a chapter of his recently published *Sexual Dissidence*. After tracing the discursive history of **perversion** from twentieth-century homosexual writers (Wilde, Gide) back through modern England to Augustine, he proposes that a "perverse dynamic" is at work in Freud's theory and writings as it is in earlier, religious, metaphysical, or non-sexual notions of **perversion**. In all of them, "the shattering effect of **perversion** arises from the fact that it is integral to just those things it threatens" (172). It is because of this constitutive paradox—which Freud reactivates at the theoretical level in his attempt to subvert traditional metaphysics—that "the challenge of the perverse remains inscribed irreducibly within psychoanalysis, as within metaphysics" (173).

Thus **perversion**, and homosexuality in particular, has a peculiarly paradoxical status in Freud: both central and yet disruptive; necessary and yet objectionable; a "deviation" from the norm and yet more compatible with positive social goals; degrading of human relationship and yet more pleasurable than "civilized" sexuality; regressive or involuntary and yet expressive of an original intensity of being. For, if it can be said that "the pervert expends unsocialized

reproducibility — or its more androidy version, replicability — is the norm, and I would even say THE norm that founds "normal science." The heteronorm for what was for the longest time the heteronormal knowledge system par excellence. On this particular score we (cultural anthropologists) are unrepentantly perverse. It hasn't always been that way — we wouldn't have had the Margaret Mead-Derek Freeman event, or its continued re-telling as morality tale (and one with deeply heteronormative axes of its own) were that not the case. And the so-called "postmodern" corner of anthropology from which I hail is in many ways still regarded as a minority, and a somewhat perverse one at that.

so its ironic that we, of all anthropologists, the "postmodernists," the coming of professional age in the 80s deconstructive wave, would so commit to the structures and discourses and data ideologies of the sciences. in part that's because there's widespread misunderstanding and misinformation about what postmodernists say about science and truth, as if we are not completely committed to the science and truths that we also, like everyone so committed, critique.

my entire argument is true. i believe that, i swear to that, i promise you that. I am as confident

in it as the most normal scientists are confident about their statements that, for example, PM2.5 kills an excess of XXX of people globally and lowering the levels in the airs of megacities in particular by XX amount will lower that number. We believe it in enough that, perversely, we built a system to systematically make what we gladly call our data available, as much as we can as openly as we can, etc etc

the sciences will never be done with the reproducibility, because reproducibility is its limit and not its failure, absence, or negation, for the same reason or logics that sexuality as we know it will never be without its perversions,

empirical humanities

our first perverse move is to embrace the structures themselves. our lives would be a lot easier if we were simply your vanilla digital humanities type. we'd be building a cool website.

And to be sure, sadly, even many of my close colleagues think we are doing nothing more than that. We wouldn't be learning about metadata workflows, we wouldn't be writing grant applications to fund a Drupal programmer too add elements to our data model and and, etc. etc. It's only because we are perversely committed to experimenting with what availability and re-iterability mean and how they work in the human sciences, or the emmpirical humanities, that we have gone to such great and relatively unrewarded lengths to develop and run PECE and its research projects. And moreover: do it all until the Martian invasion. that's what makes an already kind of crazy venture truly perverse.

why perverse? because this availability and transparency is in service of — because avilability is always in service of something — in service of a kind of democratic process and goal that is more or less impossible to achieve. Who is really going to do all this re-iterating? What member of the community really needs this level of transparency in order to be convinced of the truths we are confidently putting out?

HRAF is the norm.

normalized perversion: ho hum, another data fetishist.

depositivism is a style of knowing, research, doing “qualitative analysis” . welve learned to name this by observing our own style in PECE and TAF. also from RDA. we also try to be attentive to its limits and its aporias, some of which it shares with other positivist sciences

HRAF: lets just sat its the greatest, ok? a wonderful example of the—how to sign this?-- (de)positivist style in anthropology. What youre doing isn't so new or foreign or even just marginal to anthro. Yes, and yes. I give it all to you. BUT that hardly means we;re done with the question, is it? “well, we have one solution, guess that about wraps it up!” No — we would still want to other ways. that's our avowed experimentalism (and that of others too): let's just try wiggling this part here and see what that does.

with a number of elements to its pattern:

1. Depositivism is proleptic. A commitment to prolepsis: archiving excess and archiving

excessively is a matter of faith, in other words, a risk and a gamble or in Nietzschean terms a roll of the dice. we don't really know what will do with, what we will get from, say, having 7 researchers from 7 different intellectual and cultural genealogies responding to the same analytic prompt about a 30 second video clip from an interview. We have to get those 7 people to do it first, not knowing whether it will in fact be worth it — we think it will and we have reasons for thinking that, but it's a gambit, a play, and you need people who are prepared to play along.

on the other hand: the martian invasion

2. it's a sickness: archive fever. Or rather it's a pharmakon, sickness and cure. depositivism as a perverse form of positivism

I can;t even et through the stuff I've stuffed digitally into my own folders

it's excessive wants excess, generates excess. anthro is particularly prone to this, I think, but i see it in genomicists too, for whom there is never enough data. I didn't always, but I've come to admire that about them.

3. depositivism is positivism from below, positivism with its ground mined under. Positivist is a loose translation for what we would otherwise call logocentrism. We cannot not be positivist. perverse positivists.

Who is the subject who needs to have data available to him/her although I think her unlikely ? Nietzsche s question. One is Lamar Smith — audit culture but weaponized audit culture or maybe that's redundant.

what mike heard: something something something perversion something something.

I recently revised a syllabus for our Proseminar first year course for anthropology grad student, that had almost always begun for the past fifteen years with a week heavy with Weber. I took him out, not without some small pang of regret and, caught in Germanophilia, substituted in Nietzsche. Let's not get into my reasons for the difference, or my failure in enacting decolonialist sensibilities. I only want to say that we PECE archivist architects think such differences make a difference in our selection of what counts as data to be archived, and to how different users analytically interpret that data. We want to make that transparent, open those intellectual genealogies to visibility and reflection and critique. That's a metadata problem, and we don;t as yet have the metadata structures or the metadata workflow processes that would help make that a reality.

We also understand that that degree of archivization is sick in its healthiness, that commitment to transparency may be a metadata bridge too far. It's a bit perverse, in other words.

this is our response to a double argument in anthropology. one of the differences, i think, although this will get me into trouble, between anthropologists and sociologists is that in anthropology the discourse of "the self as research instrument" is much stronger or more central. as Sherry Ortner puts it, a minimal definition of ethnography would be that "it has always

meant the attempt to understand another life world using the self—as much of it as possible—as the instrument of knowing" (2006: 42)

definite article

There is no way to establish fully secured, neat protocol statements as starting points of the sciences. There is no *tabula rasa*. We are like sailors who have to rebuild their ship on the open sea, without ever being able to dismantle it in dry-dock and reconstruct it from its best components. Only metaphysics can disappear without a trace. Imprecise ‘verbal clusters’ [*Ballungen*] are somehow always part of the ship. If imprecision is diminished at one place, it may well re-appear at another place to a stronger degree. (Neurath 1932/1983, 92)

much we owe to James, but, on the other hand, he introduced this term, speaking of “the substance of reality” as other people perhaps speak of the “area of New York.” James is also a supporter of a very Bergsonian attitude, which is foreign to empiricism. I succeeded in getting the word “radical” dropped entirely, as far as I can see; but I have been less successful in promoting “Logical Empiricism” instead of “Logical Positivism,” a term much liked by many friends and critics. Not being a pedant I can bear that. But I think from a pedagogical and Kallenian point of view we should solemnly cut the strings which connect us with the positivism of the past. Comte and some of his followers, in their arguing and in their social approach tried to create a definite system of universal morality not based on the consensus of mankind, but on the deductions brought forward by the positivists. Their praise of medieval Catholicism is connected with what Kallen would call an imperialist attitude, which led them to create a kind of positivist church, of which something has remained in Great Britain. Their anti-pluralist attitude induced me to drop, wherever possible, the term “positivism.” I know that this endangers von Mises’ witty remarks on “positive” and “negative” attitudes, but I hope he will not object to my not very powerful action.

Neurath, Otto. “The Orchestration of the Sciences by the Encyclopedism of Logical Empiricism.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 6, no. 4 (1946): 496–508. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2103098>. p501