

Queer-phobic and Cultural Aphasia: Theoretical Discussions about Heterosexual Hegemony Suturing in the Textbook*

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Abstract

The focus in this paper is knowledge (re)production in the textbook industry, and particularly this paper focuses on these questions: what topics (like queer-related topics) shouldn't we or do we seldom read about in textbooks? What kinds of mechanisms dominate or produce this outcome? Is it possible to develop resistance strategies such as queer-friendly curricula and queer textbooks to work against these entrenched systems of educational production and belief? In line with these questions, this paper coins/uses the concepts of cultural aphasia and hegemonic suture to analyze and respond to these concerns. In conclusion, this paper asserts that cultural aphasia has two different types: the first is an avoidance of speaking and writing, which reflects the chilling effects of reinforced discourses between publishers and authors. The second type of cultural aphasia concerns the distortion of queer issues by negative terms, which are dominated by institutional powers rooted in both censorship and its institutional correlatives: editing, endorsement, and curricular

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standardizations. In other words, censorship as hegemonic suture is any act intended to keep students from reading, seeing or hearing any materials that some person deems objectionable or morally unsound. Finally, this paper suggests that to develop queer textbooks characterized by heteroglossia may be a possible strategy for going beyond the situation of cultural aphasia.

Keywords: Cultural aphasia, hegemonic suture, queer, textbook

I. Introduction

Materials used in the classroom include textbooks, supplementary readings, audio-visual aids, exam materials, decorations, instruction on material classroom practices, student-supplied and administration-maintained records, and so on, but there is no denying that textbooks play a centrally influential role in schooling. Currently, the feminist analysis of textbooks provides a crucial approach in questioning the relationship at work between gender and schooling. Some feminist works have been extremely important in documenting the biases and distortions of texts and the sexism that underlies such practices as separate courses for girls and boys. In addition, the process by which textbooks move from publishers to schools is exceedingly complex, leaving a number of interesting puzzles open for inquiry. In examining textbook issues, some researchers have focused on the books themselves, analyzing their quality of content, their role in cultural and social reproduction, their race and sex bias in presentation, and the effects of censorship on their forms. For example, aboriginal people have attacked books that encourage racism, and feminists have protested works that reinforce sexist stereotypes. For instance, Sadker et al (1989) propose certain gender biases such as linguistic bias, stereo type, invisibility, imbalance, unreality and fragmentation. Other analysts have focused attention on adoption procedures at the federal and state levels, the criteria employed in review and selection, and the influence of pressure groups on textbook adoption. For instance, what distinguishes DelFattore's research, *What Johnny Shouldn't Read: Textbook Censorship in America*, is her systematic analysis of federal textbook lawsuits and statewide textbook-adoption processes in which she assesses the effect of protesters on the production and selection of educational material (DelFattore, 1992). Her book examines objections to content both from fundamentalist groups who oppose profanity, non-Western

ideas, moral relativism, and reference to sexuality, and from ultraliberal groups who seek to eliminate images of women in traditional gender roles and statements unfavorable to minorities. DeFattore concludes that both of these groups (1) contribute to the exclusion of ideas and information and (2) will continue to exercise undue influence over nationally marketed schoolbooks unless groups with alternative opinions become actively involved in the textbook adoption process.

My interest in this topic does not exist in the vacuum. I am concerned with what is missing in textbooks, especially narrowed down to the scope of “queer”¹ issues. That is, I am not only curious as why queer issues are always missing or represented negatively, but also interested in how heterosexual ideology or power operates within textbook (re)production. However, we have to recognize that textbook production in Taiwan has to be in accordance with national standardized curricular guidelines, and publishers get certification through the censorship system. Then, schools adopt textbooks from certified lists. Thus, my past focus involves not only textbook content but also textbook production: that is, I am continually working to restore the text (the textbook’s content) into context (production of the textbook) through interviews with relevant members of the textbook industry, including authors and editors and censors, in order to map the functioning of mechanisms that, in the textbook industry, produce and reproduce cultural hegemony.

¹ The political and academic appropriation of the term *queer* in recent years has marked a shift in the study of sexuality from a focus on supposedly essential categories—such as those encapsulated by discourses of gay and lesbian people, and more recently bisexual and transgendered ones—to more fluid notions of sexual identity. In the Western culture today, the word queer is used to encompass the categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered in the narrow meanings, but queer is also used to challenge clear-cut notions of sexual identity in the broad meanings, an outcome that blurs the boundaries between identity categories. In this paper, I adopt the meaning of queer in the narrow way.

Let me use brief description to talk about what I found in this fieldwork. In order to understand what is missing in the textbook, a printing house offered me a number of complete textbooks to review and assess, from original manuscripts to final published copies, and I suddenly discovered—upon reading through them—that some authors and editors had already noticed the importance of queer issues as they relate to textbook content, but that these issues had become a sort of null or void curriculum in the final published version. This turn of events resulted from either censorship mechanisms or market forces in my finding (Chang, 2001). For instance, when I read their meeting record, I found that one author's feminist thinking challenged gender bias in their group discussions. Although all group members hypocritically agreed that this was an important issue in the textbook, this opinion did not, in the end, materialize in the final copy. In addition, when I compare the manuscript to the final copy, I feel that their logic of knowledge derives entirely from a heterosexual standpoint. According to the group member's structuring of gender relationships and ethics as outlined in one chapter in this textbook, a progression unfolds, starting from the meaning of gender equity, through heterosexual friendship, and finally to love, marriage, and sexual ethics. In particular, the group members use some threatening terms to tell students about the seriousness of sex before marriage and about the terrible consequences of pregnancy outside marriage. Initially, I came across their definition of sexual ethics in the meeting record. The term *sexual ethics* refers to acceptable sexual-social behavior, and the group members consider that, in the school period, sexual ethics should emphasize the health concept of sex. In addition, in the teaching guide, the group members design one activity about gender temperament after the teacher's lecture, but their guideline derives, again, from a purely heterosexual point of view.

This textbook is thus typical of queer-phobic textbooks in my eyes,

as the creators of these textbooks silence queer issues in order to meet with a so-called “purity principle.” A sort of perverse security is derived from not talking about it, denying it, and persecuting it when it does appear—as if a strange combination of uncomfortable silence and selective rage would make it go away. According to a censor’s opinion, as revealed in my fieldwork, there is a clear heterosexist and homophobic presumption that those who have any interest in homosexuality becomes a problem in textbooks when a society is forced to choose between, on the one hand, acknowledging the existence of homosexuality and, on the other, holding on to the heterosexist notion in curricula that homosexuals do not exist.

From this short description about background, we can get a clear picture of the first image of queerness that arises in most Taiwanese people’s thinking—a picture of trouble or a sense of forbiddenness attached to the textbook. That is, queer issues lack substantial legitimacy. Thus, some writers and censors operate under the weight of a moral panic toward gay and sexual minorities while producing textbooks: namely, that the topic is unspeakable and forbidden. In this paper, I will theorize relevant insights from my past fieldwork to coin / use two ideas: cultural aphasia and hegemonic suture. Compare with past research, the merit of these two concepts can help us to wholly analyze hegemonic (re)production in the textbook. In brief, cultural aphasia is the situation where one cannot speak and where it is best, in any case, to avoid vocalizing unacceptable or unrecognizable words from an excluded position.² Hegemonic suture (the idea originally comes from Laclau &

2 In my fieldwork of queer culture in the educational field during these years, I have noticed one culturally interesting and unspeakable manner of treating a taboo-like phenomenon: according to this manner, one ignores a taboo issue by avoiding both related discussions and related actions in everyday life (most people will choose silence to react to this taboo). In my mind, silence is an unspeakable and paradoxical language: we always conclude that the phenomenon of enforced quietude never exists explicitly, but this absence also refers to a hidden recognition

Mouffe, 1985) is a metaphor referring to power elites with professional knowledge works to constrict meanings so as to prevent something outside the doxa from infiltrating the ranks and scope of a relatively privileged group.

Here, the reader should be aware that I want to develop my own argument about the cultural aphasia and hegemonic suture through relevant theoretical sensitivity from psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, critical pedagogy, post-colonialism, and so on. That is, the real purpose is not to create grounded arguments from observations in a way that parallels the actions of qualitative methodologists. On the contrary, I attempt to develop—within a cultural studies approach³—a new

that exists implicitly. That is, one already knows that this phenomenon exists in proper society, but one cannot speak about it in public, in the classroom, or in school. If someone talks about it in any private location, he or she always struggles to find proper or polite words to describe it. In some specific situations, a prudent person keeps silent to avoid discussions of the topic. I call this situation *cultural aphasia* means the loss or impairment of the power to use words as symbols of ideas that result form one social mechanism (that is similar Broca's aphasia in the discipline of psychology—the understanding of spoken language in intact, but the vocabulary is lost or limited to a few words. Spontaneous speech and the repetition of words heard are both impossible). In a relevant review, I found the Freud proposed three types of aphasia: (1) purely verbal, (2) asymbolic, and (3) agnostic aphasia. He latter word complex from the object associations, and agnostic aphasia are a purely functional disorder of the speech apparatus (Freud, 1953: 103-104). For my purposes, keeping silent about queer issues is a type of asymbolic aphasia because the word is dissociated from its object. In addition, Jakobson discussed aphasia form a linguistic viewpoint. He advanced the recognition that an aphasic's speech includes losses and replacements. He said, "The changes in an aphasic's speech are not mere losses, but also replacements, and these replacements may be systematic, as for instance, the regularization of irregular verbs in the standard language" (Jakobson, 1980: 106). That is, aphasia is not merely an unspeakable and unimaginable language but also a distorted one. Although these definitions offer basic outlines for aphasia, I would like to turn toward a cultural dimension of definition. It could be hypothesized that professional knowledge is a mechanism of hegemonic control in this context.

³ In this approach, it is necessary to restore text to context as a groundwork for any effort to reveal ideological biases in textbooks. In order to get a sense of where knowledge is produced in its multiplicity, the analysis begins with an assessment of ideological production and reproduction in the textbook. This idea reflects some of du Gay's insights about the "Walkman," which is typical cultural artifact and medium of modern culture. Du Gay's focus is on the "articulation of a number of

theoretical discourse suited for the textbook study. In order to analyze the textbook in this manner, I would like to point out cultural analysis is the most useful approach. In particular, this paper will focus on the social relations and processes by which culture is produced. Thus, cultural analysis would include an examination of the production, selection, and institutionalization of discourses. Then, this paper will focus on these questions: What topics do we seldom read in textbooks, like those surrounding queer issues? What kinds of mechanisms dominate or produce this outcome? Is it possible to develop resistance strategies such as queer-friendly curricula and queer textbooks to work against these entrenched systems of educational production and belief?

II. The Interpretative Archeology of Silence: Cultural Aphasia

Let us move back to my major concern, now one level deeper: why is that, in textbooks, we seldom find queer voices or the positive appearance of queer issues? How do we analyze this phenomenon theoretically? In fact, it is not impossible to find any queer content in textbooks. I can see fractional evidence; for instance, it is a common fact that when most textbooks present queers, particularly homosexuals, they are frequently identified as high-risk groups for HIV or AIDS. In

distinct processes whose interaction can and does lead to variable and contingent outcomes” (du Gay, 1997: 3). He attempts to establish a framework for an analysis of this artifact by devising a model: the “circuit of culture.” This circuit has five nodes, each a significant cultural process: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. Furthermore, this circuit stresses the complex linkages between these processes and builds up a web of connections whereby each process is linked to every other in a two-way relationship. So, instead of a deterministic model of cause and effect, the circuit of culture is a model of the understanding that attaches itself to the ongoing and shifting interplay between these processes, which together produce the walkman as a cultural artifact. Of course, cultural hegemony in textbooks is similarly nuanced, not deterministic. Thus, the focus in this approach, on the one hand, is to explore the material conditions for the functioning of both power and hegemonic suture; on the other hand, it is to inquire into the possibility of going beyond this unspeakable situation, through resistance.

Taiwanese textbooks, the chapter following homosexuality is always about sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) (Chang, 2001).⁴ The other example comes from the discriminative definitions of *homosexual*, *transgender*, *sex industry workers*, and *AIDS* in the Chinese dictionary released by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan. This dictionary offers supplemental material to every school but is full of patriarchal and hegemonic attitudes. Some examples are quite ridiculous. For example, it defines *AIDS* as the most terrible infectious disease in this century spreading all over the world. There is no powerful medicine that heals this disease; thus, everyone is afraid of being infected with this virus. Moreover, this dictionary mentions that many people argue that we cannot regard homosexuality as a disease. We can say only that homosexuality is the phenomenon of “abnormal” sexuality or a “deviant” mind. This dictionary defines *sissy temper* as a lack of masculinity whose most distinctive characteristic is so-called womanish traits. Thus, mature men handle a task straightforwardly instead of dilatorily, as “sissy” guys would (from udn.com 2003-3-11). These queer (gender bias) narratives have within them a further political unconscious that can be deciphered in relation to the repression and oppression of queerness in education. In other words, queer issues are either located in the situation of a textbook “phantom” or given a negative and abstract portrayal in school curricula. The term *homosexuality* itself often seems an abusive construction when applied to a textbook’s content and, indeed, is an essentially abusive term,

⁴ This phenomenon, in my view, represents the idea proposed by Michael Apple and Rima Apple (2001). They mention that one of the ways in which dominant discourses operate at an unconscious level is through what may be called “mentioning.” That is, the holders of dominant interpretations are often perfectly include oppositional positions, but never enough to threaten the overall arguments of those that are already accepted. In addition, the textbook system in Taiwan has greatly changed since the policy of nine-year integrated curriculum (or 1st to 9th grade Curriculum Alignment), at which point textbook writing and editing became open to private publishers. Maybe the stigmatization of queerness produced by private publishers will be ameliorated, but after the new policy is implemented, it will be impossible to alter the epistemology of the queer closet in textbooks.

so far as it is recorded. Thus, education, as I see it, is still fundamentally anti-sex and involves only the “body and desire of nausea” and “homosexual nihilism.” This is the best evidence of a null curriculum, one that discounts the possible legitimacy of a queer genealogy of substance and culture.

This unspeakable/invisible or distorted situation recalls Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” As a result of the unspeakable situation, Spivak writes, “What is important in the work is what it does not say. This is not the same as the careless notation ‘what it refuses to say’, although that would in itself be interesting...But rather than this, what the work cannot say is important because there the elaboration of the journey is acted out, in a sort of journey to silence” (Spivak, 1987: 123). Spivak’s definition of *writing* or *work* hinges on a general meaning: the deliberate withholding of voice. I agree with her argument, and I believe that the unspeakable, in textbooks, is more crucial than something already mentionable or written. In reality, queer issues in Taiwan’s textbook are still both unspeakable and invisible, and are still full of implications of “compulsory heterosexuality.”⁵ Rich (1983: 182) identifies the social construction of what she calls compulsory heterosexuality as being so institutionalized in what is “natural” and “normal” through condoned

⁵ One fresh example concerns the Texas State Board of Education’s approval of new textbooks that define marriage as the union of a man and a woman. The Texas school board urged publishers to change the new health textbooks to reflect traditional marriage. The new, amended, health class textbooks will be used in Texas classrooms beginning next school year. Here are some of the changes in one textbook:

Old text: “When two people decide to marry...”

New text: “When a man and a woman decide to marry...”

Old text: “When two individuals understand that marriage is their individual goal...”

New text: “When a man and a woman understand that marriage is their individual goal...”

(NBC News 2004-11-5, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6418029/> accessed by Dec 8th, 2004)

social discourses, or was of framing and speaking about social life, that the “compulsory” part of heterosexuality is invisible. Thus, queer issues in textbooks are situated in an “epistemology of the closet.”⁶

Through certain description in the introduction, we can see how censor power makes queer issues as an unspeakable and paradoxical language. Characteristic of this language is that we only ever regard this phenomenon obliquely, but its absence also refers to a tacit recognition on an implicit level. This is a situation that one avoids talking about or acting on in everyday life, and most people will choose silence when faced with this phenomenon. That is, we already know this phenomenon exists in our society, but we are reluctant to speak about it in public, in the classroom, or in school. This situation where we cannot speak, or where it is best to avoid speaking, or where we speak with distorted attitudes, vividly exhibits the symptom I call “*cultural aphasia*.” The issue of queerness is the best example in the educational system of this kind of effacing and forgetful silence. As Foucault says, “silence itself—the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers—is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions” (Foucault, 1978: 27). In other words, cultural aphasia not only constitutes the avoidance of speaking but also represents the forbidden status of naming. Thus, voices from sexual minorities are mute in the textbook, and this also means that they are prohibited from being *in toto*. Moreover, Freire proposes the term “culture of silence,” which is a key reference to my use of cultural aphasia. He says, “[The] culture of silence is a superstructural expression that conditions a special form of consciousness. The culture of silence

⁶ Eve Sedgwick (1990: 73), who has coined the term to describe her theorization of male relationships, argues that binaries such as knowledge-ignorance, initiation-innocence, and, most significantly, secrecy-disclosure structure and underline the supposed binary opposition of homosexuality-heterosexuality.

over determines the infrastructure in which it originates. This culture is the result of the structural relations between the dominated and the dominators” (Freire, 1985: 72). Following Freire’s definition, within a culture of silence, this kind of textbook can never be an instrument for transforming the real world and is condemned just to produce and reproduce hegemonic ideology.

In my mind, language could be an object of collective knowledge as well as its means of expression. Tyler (1978: 5-6) states that speech, by which he means both speaking and writing, is the outer representation of an inner form of knowledge. Speech—both conscious and unconscious—represents knowledge of an abstract system of conventional signs and rules with which to construct sentences and meanings. Language is thus a phenomenon of social groups rather than the result of an individual expression from inner cognition. People who speak the same language have common phonology, grammar, and semantic because they are members of a group. Language is also a transcendental and conventional form, and speaking a language implies that one cannot speak in arbitrary ways uncommon to the group. In other words, speech, including both speaking and writing, is the outer representation of the inner form of language. As such, speaking or writing represents both the conscious and the unconscious knowledge of an abstract system of conventional signs and rules with which to construct sentences and construe meanings. Analogously, Barthes (1972: 109) argues that because everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed through discourse, myth is a type of speech. In Barthe’s definition, myth is defined not by the object of its message but by the way in which it utters this message: while there are formal limits to myth, there are no limits regarding content. In other words, every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society. As Barthes points out, mythical speech is made of a material

that has already been worked on, a status that renders the material suitable for communication. Thus, queer issues under this myth seem like a stolen language. In the same way, the absence of queer issues from textbook is the best example of cultural aphasia because the textbooks' authors lose the power of expression to use queer contents as educational texts.

Furthermore, the interpretative archaeology of silence takes different forms, including the “unwritten” or “unspeakable” forms that operate in visible or audible dimensions. For instance, to discover the “unwritten” is to reveal what might be best considered the implicit, as opposed to the explicit, elements of meanings. Like the scene of talking, the scene of writing is potentially transferential—a staging of interior negotiations between the desire to express and the need to repress that results in disguised speech, a repetition that signals the insistent return of the repressed, which the act of writing attempts to work through. Small (1998: 17-18) argues that to account for the unwritten is often to explain why and how it is that, in a particular culture, some works come to be labeled as literary, to be seen as possessing literary meanings. Those explanations have tended to focus on the role played by value judgments in the production of literary meanings. Similarly, when judged according to heterosexist values, queer issues are always excluded from textbooks whereas straight issues become sacred issues in textbooks. Put differently, silence is an imperative or fiat that contains within it the mark of a specific act of power. To read a text's silence is to raise questions concerning the agencies involved in this act: the biases and ideologies at stake, the state of knowledge and the assumptions about the world and the text that create the taxonomies of silence and articulation. Thus, the implications of silence are not limited to linguistics but have social implications.

To contextualize this discussion of power, one should note that power, as Foucault points out fundamentally, is exercised from

innumerable points. Contrary to structuralist-Marxist arguments, power, in Foucault's definition, is productive: relations of power are not in superstructural positions and do not function merely as elements of prohibition or accompaniment; they have a directly productive role, wherever they come into play (Foucault, 1978: 94). Power is multiplicitous, overlain, interactive, and complex and involves intentions, texts, interpretations, and reactions. For instance, heterosexual hegemony functioning in the textbook does not absolutely forbid sexual minorities from voicing concerns; on the contrary, the structure allows speaking but within the confines of a rigid steering principle. Foucault calls this an "incitement to discourse."⁷ He states that modern sexuality is organized not around a principle of repression, but through "the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about it, for having it be spoken about, for inducing it to speak of itself, for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said about it" (Foucault, 1978: 34). Thus, Foucault asserts that one cannot treat power simply as a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others. Instead, Foucault considers that power must be analyzed as something that circulates and is employed and exercised through a net-like organization (Foucault, 1988). Thus, if we want to inquire into what kinds of mechanisms result in cultural aphasia, we need to restore the mutilated text into its social context.

Following Foucault, I am more interested in asking how certain mechanisms (or technologies) of power come to be effectively incorporated into the social world, on the one hand, and how the inter-circulation of power-knowledge fabricates a regime of truth, on the

⁷ In addition, Foucault links this concept to the other important concept: confession. Foucault (1978: 61, 18, 35) demonstrates that "sex has been a privileged theme of confession"; in fact, "truth and sex are joined, through the obligatory and exhaustive expression of an individual secret." Thus, "what is peculiar to modern societies is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it and infinitum, while exploiting it as the secret."

other hand. Both outer and inner operations will stitch the relationship of power-knowledge together. If we follow Foucault's discussion of these issues, the following concerns probably could be focused on the "rituals of exclusion." The example of textbook production reveals this ritual's meaning: while production and censorship work throughout the textbook industry, there is an institutional mechanism that selects mainstream issues and excludes some marginal issues because of the ideology of heterosexual hegemony. Foucault (1989: 65) says, "It seemed to me interesting to try to understand our society and civilization in terms of its system of exclusion, of rejection, of refusal, in terms of what it does not want, its limits, the way it is obliged to suppress a certain number of things, people, processes, what it must let fall into oblivion, its repression-suppression system." In critical pedagogic discourse, Apple (2000: 64-65) defines these rituals of selection and exclusion as factors that facilitate official knowledge; that is, to select certain knowledge and to exclude opposite ones constitute a curriculum in schooling. Thus, the state acts as a re-contextualizing agent in the process of symbolic control because it enables the creation of knowledge—in the form of textualization—for everyone.⁸ In other words, a textbook's content is the text and becomes official knowledge in the process of textualization, which represents state control and cultural reproduction. Thus, knowledge cannot be separated from power and is designated by Foucault, therefore, as the complex of "power/knowledge." The production of any knowledge necessarily involves the foregrounding of certain categories and the muting of others. That is, knowledge is always situated, produced out of, and addressing specific locations and constituencies. To sum up, we never see any queer issue frame positively in textbooks because of official knowledge, and the reason why queer issues are always excluded

⁸ "Textualization" is Ricoeur's (1973) term for the process by which unwritten behavior, beliefs, values, rituals, oral traditions, and so forth become fixed, atomized, and classified as data of a certain sort.

from textbook content is the hidden knowledge.

The distinction between official and hidden knowledge represents certain theoretical frameworks, such as Durkheim's concept of the sacred and the profane, Mary Douglas's discussion of purity and pollution, and the idea of taboo in Freud's discussions. First, unspeakability is the clearest marker of taboo. For Freud (1950: 18), taboo indicates a sense of something unapproachable, and it is principally expressed in prohibitions and restrictions. In addition, Freud points out the relationship between taboo and punishment, saying, "The punishment for the violation of a taboo was no doubt originally left to an internal, automatic agency: the violated taboo itself took vengeance. In other words, the violation of a taboo makes the offender himself taboo. Thus, there is no denying that taboo has a connotation which includes alike 'sacred' and 'above the ordinary', as well as 'dangerous', 'unclean' and 'uncanny'" (Freud, 1950: 20-22). There are interesting parallels here with the study of deviance. This involves the investigation of idiosyncratic social practices, which happen to be defined as deviant in some societies. The assumption is that the investigation of deviance can reveal interesting and significant aspects of normal societies. Similarly, the logic underlying why the potential for varying content in textbooks is treated as deviant can illuminate how different societies operate. In other words, to consider how social groups construct their moral gaze is a good way to get at just what is happening in "normal" societies.

Taboo must be built on the premises of purity and pollution. For instance, queer issues become relatively silent in textbooks, which thus meet with the purity principle in the heterosexual hegemony. But the boundary between purity and pollution is relative depending on where queer issues are located. As Mary Douglas says,

It is a relative idea. Shoes are not dirty in themselves, but it is dirty to place them on the dining table..., and so on. In short, our pollution

behavior is the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications (Douglas, 1966: 35-36).

The topic of homosexuality or queerness has become the acceptable stuff of public discourse on TV and in film. For instance, although spoken epithets of derogation like *faggot*, *homo*, and *queer* are used by many people without hesitation in everyday life, sometimes these terms bear a number of funny implications not wholly negative or obscene. However, there is little to suggest that queer topics would ever appear in a textbook, given the relatively conservative fields in which textbooks' particular modes of meaning operate. Rarely do textbooks undertake to entertain, and they are certainly not the current locus of much counter-culture activity, except insofar as we might include reactionary moves underwritten by (often fundamentalist) minority factions. In my past fieldwork, I find that authorized sexual discourses censor, define, and judge what is safe, what is taboo, and what is to be silenced and absent. Censors have some internally legitimate concerns, such as the prevention of students' exposure to content that is immoral or outside the social norms, but this bias against discussions about sexuality, in fact, mis-educates both kids and teachers. The homosexual/queer has become the impure other of the pure heterosexual/straight. Designating the homosexual as "polluted" in a conservative educational field functions to defend both heterosexual privilege and a specific heterosexual gender order. Seidman (2002: 152-153) is concerned that the polluted homosexual serves to establish a clear, absolute moral boundary for legitimate sexual variation. That is, heterosexuality is the exclusive field of legitimate sexuality. Thus, the figure of the polluted homosexual serves as a cultural response to the sense of danger and disorder that surrounds the relaxation of sexual control.

In addition, emphasis and exclusion in textbooks also reflect a dichotomy between the sacred and profane. Durkheim (1995) maintains

that the acts of exclusion found in the categorizing activity of beliefs and rites emerge from a process of sacralization. Thus, sexual orientation becomes a matter of aesthetics—the heterosexual-homosexual split represents the complex of superiority-inferiority. When heterosexuality serves as a ticket to a human's legitimacy, the heterosexual status itself becomes a badge of superiority, and this feeds the already rampant homophobia and heterosexism. Under the distorted lens of this situation, straight is labeled as normal and queer stigmatized as pathological in advance. This labeling then results in the fact that sex-orientation differences, including this split between a straight "sacred" world and a queer "profane" world, become seen as natural and fundamental.

According to Foucault, discourse depends on practice; it needs a space or material condition. Thus, and most important of all, cultural aphasia needs certain institutional or material mechanisms to arrive at its purpose of "hegemonic suturing." In the next section, I will discuss the material condition of hegemonic suturing: censorship.

III. The Material Conditions of Hegemonic Suturing: Censorship

To follow Foucault's insight, I consider that cultural aphasia functions on the basis of material conditions to facilitate hegemonic suturing. The concept of the "suture" traces the relations of the subject back to the chain of its discourse. We shall see that suture figures as a dynamic junction of two subjects forming an immoveable articulation. For example, seldom can one find queer content in textbooks because this absence reflects power or hegemonic mechanisms. Suture, by extension, defines the general relations of lack to the structure of which it is an element, inasmuch as it implies the position of a taking-the-place-of. The other term relevant to suture is articulation. Articulation is the form of a connection between two or more previously unrelated elements, such as

ideologies, that make a temporary unity. Articulation refers to the organization of these elements in their articulated relationship and the process through which that connection and that organization are produced. At a second glance, according to the New Left's discourse, Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 89) assert that hegemonic practices are suturing insofar as their field of operation is determined by the openness of the social and by the ultimately unfixed character of every signifier. By contrast, however, I use suture as a metaphor to refer to power elites who possess professional knowledge and who work to constrict meanings so as to prevent something outside the doxa from infiltrating their ranks and scope. For instance, the surgeon stitches the patient's wound in order to prevent inflammation from dirt after cutting a tumor from the body; in the same way, the purpose of hegemonic suturing in education is also to prevent infection from polluted or muddy messages outside the schooling, and thus to maintain so-called pure teaching, pure knowledge, and morally righteous living in the school. In other words, the aftermath of both the reconstructive surgery and what might also be called hegemonic suturing is a kind of purification ritual.

Since hegemonic suturing requires material conditions, censorship in textbooks is the crucial stage in this cultural industry. In short, censorship is the suppression of information on the grounds that this information is objectionable in light of standards applied by the censor. For instance, censors play a gatekeeper's role in that they (1) evaluate textbook content and (2) arbitrate whether that content satisfies standardized curriculum guidelines. Thus, censorship results in textual repression, which also can reflect cultural and political oppression. However, the power to choose certain textbook content or instructional materials and to reject others according to standards appropriate to education's inculcating mission is central to the schooling enterprise, and is not inherently oppressive. The purpose of education is not only to communicate factual information but

also to develop the ability to discriminate and choose. Foucault writes,

Education may well be, as of right now, the instrument whereby every individual, in a society like our own, can gain access to any kind of discourse. But we all know that in its distribution, in what it permits and prevents, it follows the well-trodden battle lines of social conflicts. Every educational system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourse with the knowledge and powers it carries with it (Foucault, 1972: 227).

In other words, well-meant efforts to impose the orthodoxies of social conservatism on educational materials ultimately limit, rather than expand, the educational horizon. Where the censor seeks reasons to exclude materials, those engaged in the process of selection look for ways to include the widest possible variety of textbooks, instructional materials, and curricular supplements with the context of a well-defined curriculum.

In reality, it is a common fact that some censorship is disguised heterosexism, a counter-attack by ultra-orthodox heterosexuality unhappy with the current interest in queer culture. In the final analysis, some censors censor in order to maintain their so-called standards of purity. Consequently, textbooks implement hegemonic violence and, specifically, legitimate sexual taste, which perpetuates straight and queer stereotypes. For instance, in an empirical case, Boyer (2002: 279) details the earlier censorship of homosexual publications:

*Revisiting the censorship issue in 1962, the Supreme Court further narrowed its definition of the legally obscene in *Manual Enterprises V. Day*, a case arising from a ban by the postmaster in Alexandria, Virginia, on three magazines published for homosexuals. These three magazines, *MANual*, *Trim*, and *Grecian Guild Pictorial*, consisted mainly of artfully posed nude or semi-nude photographs of male models. The Supreme Court had cited “prurience” in its definition of the obscene, echoing older*

definitions in which works describing sexual pleasure, or seeking to arouse sexual desire, were banned for that reason alone.

Here, I would like to borrow the term *ensorship* and *displacement* from Freud and import them into the field of publishing. It is in *The Interpretation of Dreams* that Freud uses the term *ensorship* most extensively and systematically. In Freud's discussions, dream distortion is likened to the political writer who has disagreeable truths to tell to those in authority and who must consequently soften and distort the expression of his opinion. As Freud says, "The stricter the censorship, the more far-reaching will be the disguise and the more ingenious too may be the means employed for putting the reader on the scent of the true meaning" (qtd from Harrison, 1995: 102). In other words, Freud's story of the political writer shows how this silence may be a conscious decision, but as a metaphor, it is designed to indicate that even the unconscious responds to these values, being furthermore responsive to the conscious agency's ability to see them for what they are: an imposition of censorship. Freud's discussion offers some dynamic ideas about self-censorship, which results from a desire to avoid speaking about something. Thus, self-censorship is the first type of cultural aphasia—to avoid speaking in order to satisfy the conditions laid out in social conservatism. Of course, we also need to focus on the other concept of displacement. As Freud says, "...but we are already familiar with dream distortion. We traced it back to the censorship which is exercised by one psychical agency in the mind over another. Dream displacement is one of the chief methods by which that distortion is achieved... We may assume, then, that dream displacement comes about through the influence of the same censorship—that is, the censorship of endopsychic defense" (qtd from Levine, 1994: 30). Therefore, displacement is the second type of cultural aphasia—distorted speaking dominated by censoring institutions.

Although we know that censoring queerness is a breach of students'

academic freedom, textbook authors who select textbook content still feel a chill in the air, as I have found in my fieldwork. Operating within the dialectic of speech and silence, queer texts often reveal a conscious or unconscious pattern of negotiation and compromise between a revelation and a concealment of the forbidden. Friedman (1989) names this overall pattern the “textual unconscious” or “political unconscious.” She borrows this idea from Frederic Jameson’s argument that the “political unconscious” is the repressed narrative of class struggle, a story concealed within the narrative of history. Thus, the textbook content itself is a site of the textual unconscious. That is, the content may contain narrative elements that are repressed and transformed as the author revises the text by condensation, displacement, non-rational modes of representability, and secondary revision. In my theorization of this mechanism, the chilling situation also echoes market forces, as in DeFattore’s research entitled *What Johnny Shouldn’t Read: Textbook Censorship in America*. The chill may not destroy writers or publishers but has caused harm, both in chilling their spirits and in placing some taboo issues in deep freeze because the publishing industry needs to get certification for the market. Reichman points out some interesting examples in his research:

I’ve consciously made the decision, ‘No, this is risky,’ and I don’t use the material I think will produce phone calls...My main observation is that teachers, librarians, media personnel, and supervisors practice self-censorship: ‘Let’s do it for them before they do it to us,’ seems to be the prevailing attitude. Most of the time, the people doing the censoring do it out of fear and misinformation and they usually are very professional otherwise...I have concluded that most censorship occurs by [sic] the librarians themselves. They avoid buying materials that may be deemed questionable (Reichman, 1993: 18-19).

In addition, Wong and Loveless (1991: 32) expose the publishers’

self-censorship of potentially controversial content. They point out that publishers have to make judgments about the content of future texts on the basis of anticipated reactions from selectors and users. Put concretely, self-censorship by publishers is difficult for anyone outside the publishing industry to explore, particularly because it involves market factors. Clearly, textbook content is not determined solely on the basis of academic or educational considerations but heavily influenced by market forces. DeFattore (1992: 142) points out further that publishers occasionally produce Texas editions through self-censorship, but in the most instances, changes made to accommodate the Texas community appear in books sold nationwide. Ideology is embodied not only in discursive practices but also in the stories we tell both ourselves and those close to us, stories that are represented as “experience” or common sense. The materialization of these practices is preeminently embodied in apparatuses of the state, such as censorship institutions. So, why do we seldom see queer issues in textbooks? Obviously, one reason comes from the hegemonic power of censorship institutions, and the other reason involves self-censorship. However, the situation in the United States is quite different, as hegemonic power is not absolutely disseminated from a central state authority there. For instance, the 1990s brought no respite from grassroots efforts to compel librarians to remove titles or accept restrictive acquisition-and-access guidelines. Boyer (2002: 326) describes some new policies in U.S. society, including parental access to children’s borrowing records, restrictions on children’s access to “anti-family” books, and increased library holdings of “pro-family” works.⁹ That is, a

⁹ Boyer (2002: 36) mentions one example: “In 1997, shown a page from a book of children’s poems that pictured two men in bed together, with the rhyme ‘Robin and Richard were two pretty men, /They lay in the bed till the clock struck ten,’ censorship declares that this depiction is outside the norm of a child’s book. That is definitely the kind of book that we (*social conservatism*, author emphasized) would ask to be moved.”

library could acquire a children's book like *Daddy's Roommate* or *Heather Has Two Mommies*, dealing with children who have a gay or lesbian parent, but it could not permit children to read them, and would be required to balance them with titles like *You Don't Have to Be Gay*, which treats homosexuality as a curable psychological disorder. Be they from Taiwan or the United States, these descriptions exhibit a chilling of the educational atmosphere, and given that the United States is more lenient in places than in Taiwan, the parallel is stark.

IV. If textbooks were Queer Romances: Heteroglossia in the Textbook

How can we go beyond this situation of cultural aphasia? On the one hand, from a Gramscian perspective,¹⁰ I believe that hegemony contains within its normative systems contradictions that fuel resistance and change. On the other hand, I also agree with Freire's proposal for the solution to the culture of silence: radical structural changes must be put into effect by the silenced people in order for them to win the right to speak: "Only when the people of a dependent society break out of the culture of silence and win their right to speak—only, that is, when radical structural changes transform the dependent society—can such a society as a whole cease to be silent toward the director society" (Freire, 1985: 73). As a facilitator of radical structural change, the strategy here is to create conditions that teachers and students as subjects are prepared to admit into discourse to resist cultural aphasia in the textbook; then, these

¹⁰ Gramsci's theory of hegemony becomes the framework for analyzing the role of cultural processes in the securing of people's consent to existing social arrangements and as a source of opposition. For Gramsci, *hegemony* refers to the variety of ways in which dominant social groups achieve and maintain power and control within a society. Gramsci (1971) singles out culture, especially the popular cultures of the working class, as a key element in this struggle for rule by consent. In his view, these cultures are not only aspects of class affirmation and good sense, but also the site where the ruling class seeks to win favor.

subjects will be likelier to grant other subjects “equal rights.” Teachers play important roles in this subject-creation, particularly with an emphasis on the critical pedagogical tradition, but the subject would not be admitted to any discourse at all; instead, the subject would propose any performative contradiction and negotiate it under the situation of cultural aphasia. In other words, we need to be concerned with the performative dimension of queer discourse in the textbook and how these discourses function.¹¹ Thus, we need to think about how textbooks are moments of performance, and what that means for silence and resistance.

As an ideal set of principles, textbooks should have to shift from universal standardization to considerations about particular minority issues; that is, a shift from the voice of authority to populist heteroglossia. This process would queer a textbook. To *queer*, used here as an active verb, refers to a process that defines a project of contestation, or in Butler’s words that generates “a contestation of the terms of sexual legitimacy.” It works through the hyperbolic appropriation and reversal of the delegitimization signified by the term *queer*, transforming it into a site of opposition. “The hyperbolic gesture is crucial to the exposure of the homophobic law that can no longer control the terms of its own objecting strategies” (Butler, 1993: 232). In addition, Sedgwick states that queering is a performance that exploits and exposes “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made to signify monolithically” (Sedgwick, 1993: 8).

¹¹ Sedgwick also proposes a parallel notion. Her formulation of queer theory and sexuality as an axis of difference enacts the dialogic of difference and sameness by advocating a negotiation between a “minoritizing” discourse about homosexuality (emphasizing the difference between heterosexual and gay and lesbian sexualities, advocating rights for marginalized and despised minorities) and a “universalizing” discourse (stressing the constructedness of all sexualities, opening up a spectrum of transgressively queer subjectivities to everyone), namely, queer performativity (Sedgwick, 1990)

Seidman (1996) also views queering as deconstructive—that is, as a discursive strategy involving the displacement or the placing into doubt of foundational assumptions for the purpose of opening up new possibilities for critical social analysis and political practice. In sum, queering a textbook carries with it some dialogical and contestatory characteristics. If we want to go beyond the dilemma of cultural aphasia in the textbook culture of silence, we also need to create a performative structure for queer discourse in textbooks. Of course, this kind of textbook is a long way from standardized knowledge—ways of talking and writing within which the hegemony of the single lens beings to break down.

Although the idea of queer textbooks is still utopian, some steps can be taken immediately. First, following the classic feminist movement slogan “the personal is political,” real life experiences such as personal stories or collective oral histories merit a place in textbooks, which should not be composed of official text that are, themselves, based on abstract and indifferent knowledge. For instance, sex minorities may use novels to context unequal relations of power in their schools and everyday lives. Queer romance fiction or autobiographies and biographies should, in this sense, be explored. In spite of the fact that most romance in popular culture stand by heterosexism in constructing an image of queerness that provides an echo for conservative ideologies, a number of feminists have argued that to read a romance or an autobiography or biography in general plays a particularly important role in bringing out the possibility of resistance. Christian-Smith (1990: 3) considers the possibility that the act of reading romance novels might become a form of mind protest against a repressive and ideologically conservative patriarchy. As McRobbie (1978) points out, romance may soften the too-often sexist attitudes of boyfriends, and this softening provides girls with some measure of negotiation for power and control. Similarly,

public materials like films and novels in schooling offer us an opportunity to understand more about the situation of queerness through the process of reading. Then, both teachers and students may construct alternative or oppositional meanings from these materials. In other words, the act of reading and interpreting the meaning of a text is a form of cultural politics.

Second, I propose that education itself may be unseen body and desire, and thus potential resistance is equally applicable to the lived experience of the body and its desires. Butler suggests that while “the body is a legacy of sedimented act” (Butler, 1997: 406), it “is not passively scripted with cultural codes, as if it were a lifeless recipient of wholly pre-given cultural relations. But neither do embodied selves pre-exist the cultural conventions which essentially signify bodies” (Butler, 1997: 410). In my thinking, textbooks need to split open the disciplined body rather than reinforce its repetitive behaviors and beliefs. Textbooks need not be composed of intellectual remnants, nor need they be dreadfully sterile. Instead, they may be challenging, provocative, and antagonistic. To analyze the dialogic of the oppressed is to examine signs as instances of struggle, subversion, and transformational possibilities. In other words, the objective state of language’s plurality of accentuation is what Bakhtin calls heteroglossia. *Heteroglossia* refers to the situation of coexistence of many different language varieties with a single national language. For Bakhtin, *heteroglossia* is the normal state of affairs in language, and meanings are constructed by the various regional, social, professional, or generational groups (Bakhtin, 1981). Textbooks may indeed come to reflect the very heteroglossal process that conditions their production—the negotiations of their meanings would in this sense be thrown into a classroom with open doors, open arms, open minds.

V. Conclusion

In this paper, we have restored a mutilated text to its social contexts and, consequently, can see a clear distinction between cultural narrative (said/straight issues) and cultural aphasia (unsaid/queer issues) in textbooks. Cultural narratives are representative of collective social norms or values that occupy previously legitimated positions. For instance, content that is printed in textbooks can be regarded as cultural narratives of similarly straight issues. On the contrary, cultural aphasia is the unsaid language, the queer issues excluded from the compilation of endorsed materials. Through a symptomatic reading, I have argued here that cultural aphasia takes two different forms: the first form of cultural aphasia prompts people to avoid speaking and writing, a prohibitive effect that reflects the chilling effects of reinforced discourses between publishers and authors. The second form of cultural aphasia hinges on negative terms that distort queer issues and that are dominated by institutional powers, which are typically focused on censorship and its institutional correlatives, including editing, endorsement, and curricular standardization. In other words, censorship includes any act intended to keep students from reading, seeing, or hearing any materials that some person deems objectionable. It is also the most forward and bald-faced attempt to rid schools of courses, teaching methods, and ideas that challenge students to develop into autonomous and volitional thinkers in a critical setting. Censorship always has a chilling effect on the academic atmosphere but is especially drastic when it figures into textbook production. Lastly, then, I maintain that something crucial is missing in the textbook. This absence stems from conscious or unconscious acts, surfaces throughout the production process, and results in censorship. We can draw on the idea of hegemonic suturing and ask, what wounds do the sutures cover over, and what scars will they leave behind as the youth emerge from their shaky academic convalescence?

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酷兒恐懼與文化失語：異性戀霸權縫合 機制的理論分析/以教科書為例

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摘要

本文的焦點在於教科書中的知識生產與再生產體系，並且把焦點放在以下的三個問題：什麼樣的主題(像是酷兒相關的議題)是我們鮮少可以在教科書裡面所讀到的？是什麼樣的機制宰制或生產了這樣的結果？是否有可能發展抗拒的策略，像是對酷兒友善的課程或酷兒教科書等，用以對抗異性戀霸權體制下的教育信念與生產體系？基於這樣的關切，本文主修正創兩個理論的概念——文化失語與霸權縫合——來分析本文的關切。在結論部分，本文指出文化失語症有兩種不同的類型：其一是避免言說與書寫，最典型的例子是教科書出版商與作者避免審查的問題，所反應出來的寒蟬效應。其二就是每當酷兒議題出現的場合，必然給予負面的扭曲與糾正，主要反應於審查這樣的制度性的權力。因此，我們可以說審查制度扮演著霸權縫合的角色，主要是避免學生讀到、看到或聽到任何文化與道德政治上不正確的東西。最後，本文認為具有批判意識的教育工作者，當面對這樣的壓迫下，勢必需要發展兼具眾聲喧嘩的酷兒教科書，這正是超越文化失語的可能性解放之路。

關鍵字：文化失語、霸權縫合、酷兒、教科書