Queer Code

Written by Dylan Paré
To be used with the
Flocking QT Stories simulation
at flocking.queercode.org

Flocking QT Stories Reflection Questions

Emergent Patterns and Behaviours
• What kinds of patterns do you see emerging amongst the agents (boids and institutions) in the simulation?
• What happens when a non-normative boid experiences one instance of harm compared to many instances of harm?
• How do the patterns change as you change the ratio slider to increase or decrease the ratio of normative to non-normative boids? How do these ratios translate to real life?

People
• What do the stories in the simulation tell us about what makes someone a normative or non-normative person?
• The description of the simulation says that the stories include people who are cisgender and heterosexual. How might people with these identities fit into the category of non-normative boids?
• Do you see any groups/clusters of only normative; only non-normative; or a mix of normative and non-normative boids? Where might you see these kinds of group patterns in real life?

Institutions
• What do the stories tell us about the experiences non-normative people might have with normative and non-normative institutions?
• What are normative and non-normative institutions in the simulation?
• What are some other examples of normative and non-normative institutions from your knowledge or experience?

Interactions
• How does harm and support work in the simulation? What are the rules (the algorithms) that the agents (boids and institutions) follow?
• What do the stories tell us about what harm and support look like in people's lives?
• If you would like to share, what has harm or support looked like in your own life?

Symbolism
• Why might the non-normative boids be pink triangles?
• What might QT stand for in the title "Flocking QT Stories"?
• Why would a harmed boid become slower and faded in colour?
• When all the non-normative boids flock according to frequencies of a single story, what might this symbolize about harm and resistance?

Emotions
• How does watching the simulation or listening to the stories make you feel?
• What stories resonated for you and your life experiences?
• Did you have any emotional reactions (e.g. excitement, dismay, sadness) to the boids actions or the emergent patterns amongst the groups of boids?

Queer Code

Flocking QT Stories Background Terms

The following definitions of identities are limited and cannot define everyone because terms will mean different things to different people. Terms and definitions also change over time (history) and place (geography). What is meaningful today may not be tomorrow, and likely won't be meaningful to all people everywhere in the world. I offer these terms to provide context for the existing stories and framework of the simulation, but I encourage you to not get too hung up on them and focus on how each speaker talks about themselves and their lives.

Transgender: When a person's gender is different from the gender they were assigned at birth. This might include people who physically transition with hormones and/or surgery, or legally or socially transition –such as a name change, or other forms of changes in social expression (clothing, hair, pronouns) that differ from normative gender expression in their society. Transgender is used as both a personal identity and a larger category encompassing many kinds of identities that do not fit into cisnormative (see below) worldviews.

Cisgender: When a person's gender is the same as the gender they were assigned at birth.

Heterosexual: When a person's sexual attraction is to someone of a different gender.

Queer: Often used as an umbrella term for sexualities that are not heterosexual. This term has been used as a slur for many years and still holds negative meaning for some gay/lesbian/bisexual people, while others feel that the term can be reclaimed by non-heterosexual people and holds positive meaning. Neither stance is correct, but rather, is personal.

Heteronormative & Cisnormative: A worldview which assumes that heterosexuality and cisgender identity are the normal and preferred ways of being. Heteronormative and cisnormative behaviours are those which normalize and perpetuate societal expectations of heterosexuality and a gender binary. (e.g. "women are like this", "men should do that", being trans/bisexual/gay/lesbian … requires coming out – identifying yourself publicly –because people are assumed to be cisgender and straight.

Complex Systems: Systems in which interactions between smaller individual components of the system give rise to collective, system-level behaviours that are often difficult, counter-intuitive or even impossible to predict simply by thinking about the behaviour of each individual component. These are found throughout the social and biological world.

Emergent Behaviour: Emergent behaviors are new behaviors (or patterns) that are not planned but rather arise from a simple set of rules.