Explaining Discord Reading Groups on Philosophy

Based on the Deleuze and Guattari Quarantine Collective

How to participate in an online Reading Group on Discord servers to Read your favorite Philosophical Books with others from around the World

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Old: DiscordReadingGroups_01_20200611kdp01a
Started 2020.06.11; Draft Version 01
Old: DiscordReadingGroups_01_20200612kdp02a
Appendices added 2020.06.12; Draft Version 02
New: DiscordReadingGroups_01_20200614kdp03a
New statistics 2020.06.14; Draft Version 03
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Abstract: Explanation of Discord Reading Groups on Philosophy

Key Words: Discord, Reading Group, Philosophy, Deleuze, Guattari, Continental Philosophy

At the beginning of the Corona Virus Quarantine period I saw a post on Reddit.com that invited me to be part of a Reading Group dedicated to reading Anti-Oedipus by Deleuze and Guattari. This seemed to me the perfect way to spend the time I was going to be cooped up at home. And I had always tried to find ways to connect with others about Philosophy over the internet, and mostly failing at that effort. Locally it has always been hard to find others who wanted to discuss Continental Philosophy which was one of my interests. But it is difficult to find others on the Internet as well. However, I managed to find a small group of people who wanted to have a local in

1 http://independent.academia.edu/KentPalmer See also http://kentpalmer.name
person philosophy reading group and it has gone on for seven years reading the classics of Continental Philosophy and discussing them. But I had always wanted to try to start another reading group to read other philosophy texts but could not figure out how to make that happen. Then I was introduced to Discord which is a gaming platform that allows gamers to carry on conversations with each other while playing their games. On the Deleuze and Guattari Quarantine Collective discord site they are using this platform to support a philosophy reading group aimed primarily at reading and understanding Anti-Oedipus started by two people whose monikers are Brooks and Craig. I went to the first reading and saw that it was very interesting and they asked for Admins to help them so I volunteered. And that has been the beginning of a journey that I hope to capture the essence of here. Here I plan to explain what is happening on the D&G QC discord server, and how they go about reading and discussing one particular philosophy book which is hard to read called Anti-Oedipus. But the important point is that this opens up the possibility of doing the same thing with myriad other books not just in philosophy but in literature or other disciplines.

The basic idea is that someone decided that they want to offer a book reading group and so they set up a discord server by logging into Discord.com and then spawning a server. This server needs to be configured to support that reading groups activities. The Discord server has text channels for chat that can be configured into categories within the server architecture. But more importantly it has voice channels and on these voice channels it is possible to have meetings like you would have on Zoom.com or Google Meet and other platforms. You can use Video in Discord and also do Screen shares. But we do not normally use video in connection with the audio because it would be a distraction. What has to happen is that a time must be set up when people come together online in the discord environment to speak to each other over the voice channels about the book, and then when they meet they can record that conversation about the book for others to listen to later. It is this audio conversation that is at the core of this experience because you can get people from around the world in a single meeting to talk about an assigned portion of a book that they have agreed to read and study together. And this is where the magic happens. There you are talking to a group of anonymous people all you know about them is their selected iconic image and their moniker they have chosen, but they have self-selected to talk about the esoteric book you have chosen together to discuss because of their mutual interest in that author and specifically about that book. And if things go right then intelligent conversation ensues which might last for a couple of hours which is then recorded so that others can listen to it later, or if you thought you said something particularly brilliant you can listen to it yourself say it again. What is good about recording the conversation is that people who become members later or cannot attend can listen to the discussion to catch up with the conversation that transpired earlier within the group. Not only do you have the conversation that is significant about one of the authors you are interested in, but it is even recorded for posterity and to give the long

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The result is that you have ongoing interesting conversations with a diverse group of people who decide to read and try to understand together some difficult and esoteric book when normally you cannot find anyone to talk about these philosophers in general; less well read books carefully together as a group. *Heaven* to any lonely philosopher wanting to have significant conversations about philosophy, who for ecological reasons cannot find anyone locally that shares their passion for philosophy. The key is that these people find each other on reddit.com where they advertise their reading groups on different philosophy specific reddit channels. The person who sees those advertisements clicks on an invite and is taken to Discord where they create an account and then they are taken to the specific Discord server where the reading is taking place. When they look around the server they find an announcement as to when the reading group will meet, normally at a set day and time each week, and then all they have to do is join the conversation that day and at that time then they can listen and if they want speak up and join the conversation.

Now here I want to go into exactly how this works for all those who would like to join in but need help navigating this new territory. Here is an example of the advertisement of the D&G QC reading group meeting:

![Example Advertisement](https://miloszkrasinski.com/the-long-tail-effect-theory-in-practise-explained/#:%7E:text=The%20long%20tail%20is%20away%20from%20the%20mean%20value.)

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4 [https://miloszkrasinski.com/the-long-tail-effect-theory-in-practise-explained/#:%7E:text=The%20long%20tail%20is%20away%20from%20the%20mean%20value](https://miloszkrasinski.com/the-long-tail-effect-theory-in-practise-explained/#:%7E:text=The%20long%20tail%20is%20away%20from%20the%20mean%20value)
Hi Everyone,

Join us for the wrap up of chapter 2 Section 5 tomorrow:

Discord: https://discord.gg/qNspEx
SoundCloud: https://soundcloud.com/quarantine_collective

Permanent D&G QC invite link: https://discord.gg/pjDG9wF
D&G QC SoundCloud link: https://soundcloud.com/quarantine_collective

In this case the link to the Discord is in the comment to the Reddit post. You click the Discord invite link and you will be taken to the Discord Website:

You click on the login button and that takes you to a page where you can create an account on Discord.com
Once you have created that account then Discord takes you to the server whose invite you have followed. If you are a new member you would find yourself in the waiting room of the D&G QC server. And it would look like this:

![Start Here](image1)

When you follow the instructions then a friendly Admin will let you in and it will then look like this:

![Start Here](image2)
Then you are free as a member to explore the text chat channels in which the members interact. One of those channels is my blog on D&G QC so this is what an individual text channel might look like:

Currently the available text channels on the D&G QC are as follows:

The channel #start-here is where you come in. You will want to check out #announcements to see when the upcoming meetings might be.
There is also a rolling schedule where you can see the standing meetings and their times.
In #previous-talks recordings of the reading group sessions that have already happened are available.
Under the category Collective Discussion is where the voice meetings occur. In the voice channel at the bottom with the little speaker. The other text chat channels are places for ongoing text chat during or between online voice meetings. The channel #discusion-chat-live is where the text messages posted by members during the meeting are posted.

There are then other text channels that are available for interaction through text messages in the rest of the categories that exist within the Discord Server.

This section for general discussion is meant to be the main text channels on the D&G QC server.
We also have a separate text chat for discussion of the different books of Deleuze and Guattari, plus the books of major critics written against Deleuze by Zizek and Badiou.

There is a separate channel for user blogs. I wrote a tutorial on Anti-Oedipus and so my blog here is for feedback from readers of that tutorial.

- [https://www.academia.edu/42313760/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_1_Introduction_to_studying_Anti-Oedipus_by_Deleuze_and_Guattari](https://www.academia.edu/42313760/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_1_Introduction_to_studying_Anti-Oedipus_by_Deleuze_and_Guattari)
- [https://www.academia.edu/42335902/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_2_Projecting_an_Interpretative_Hypothesis](https://www.academia.edu/42335902/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_2_Projecting_an_Interpretative_Hypothesis)
- [https://www.academia.edu/42424348/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_3_Anti-Oedipus_Passive_Syntheses_and_Foundational_Mathematical_Categories](https://www.academia.edu/42424348/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_3_Anti-Oedipus_Passive_Syntheses_and_Foundational_Mathematical_Categories)
- [https://www.academia.edu/42506830/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_4_Juxtapositional_Logic_of_Nonsense_and_the_Emergent_Meta_system](https://www.academia.edu/42506830/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_4_Juxtapositional_Logic_of_Nonsense_and_the_Emergent_Meta_system)
- [https://www.academia.edu/42606489/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_5_Mathematical_Category_Theory_and_Anti-Oedipus_Passive_Syntheses](https://www.academia.edu/42606489/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_5_Mathematical_Category_Theory_and_Anti-Oedipus_Passive_Syntheses)
- [https://www.academia.edu/42685434/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_7_Unearthing_the_Unconscious_Passive_Syntheses_in_Oedipus_Rex_by_Sophocles](https://www.academia.edu/42685434/Anti-Oedipus_Tutorial_Part_7_Unearthing_the_Unconscious_Passive_Syntheses_in_Oedipus_Rex_by_Sophocles)
There is a category for other topics that are adjacent to the interest in Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy. And also, a category for other associated resources, for instance invites to other reading groups.
The Socius is the administration of the D&G QC discord discussion board. It is run by a collective of people interested in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari who work for free to keep this server running and support the programs that the server presents to the members. You can become a moderator by volunteering if there is a slot open if you want to get more involved.

Then there is a category where old channels are kept because they have content in them but they were displaced by one of the reorganizations of the server.

At the bottom of the listing of channels you can see the current member statistics.
So that is a quick tour of the D&G QC server as it stands today. Of course, it is continually evolving so that structure may change at any time.

But now I would like to give you more information you might need to actually connect to the voice discussion on the server at one of the scheduled meetings. The current format is to have a Reading of a given section of Anti-Oedipus on Monday Noon PDT. This entails the members actually reading the book paragraph at a time and then discussing it together over the voice channel. Then on Tuesday Noon PDT there is a smaller gathering to go into more details about the text in a Review session. This is led by various Admins who may be more knowledgeable about the text.

When you join a Reading session you will see a group of Icons that look like this:

![Group of Icons](image)

These are the various members with their icons and monikers that are gathered together in a voice channel. You can see craigbot which is the automaton that does the recording of the meetings at the top of the list of participants. A review session would be a similar group with fewer names in the list.
A meeting will last about two hours usually and we try to make it possible for as many people to speak as we can. But also going on in tandem is a text chat in the text channel that is used during the meeting.

There are really two conversations going on at the same time, one voice and the other in text chat. And for me it is impossible to pay attention to both at the same time.
The agenda of a reading group meeting if one existed might look like this:

*Agenda for next week’s reading group meeting:*

- **Sign-on at Noon PM PDT by participants**
- **open discussion of reading group activities**
- **mic check**
- **-> start of recording**
- **Discussion of D&G AO section ... interweaved with . . .**
- **Reading selections from &G AO section ... interweaved with . . .**
- **Questions about &G AO section discussed by group**
- **Then open discussion of text concerning any issues it raises**
- **-> end of recording**
- **unrecorded comments and discussion of anything members would like to talk about together**
- **feedback on how the reading group is going for its members**
- **planning for the next weeks meeting**
- **end of session**

**The actual recording will not be more than 2 hours and will stop when discussion ceases to move forward productively.**

So those are the main points you need to understand in order to become a member and get involved and participate in our reading group meetings.

Now I would like to get a bit more specific about things you might want to know to make the experience better for you and the others. You should know that your microphone matters and if you do not have a decent microphone then the recordings of your voice may not turn out very well, as well as others might not be able to hear you during the meetings. So the thing to do is to check how your microphone sounds prior to the meeting and then do a sound check before the meeting to make sure you are being heard.

The place on the board where the discussion occurs looks like this:

![discussion-chat-live](image)

The talk voice channel with speaker symbol will probably be renamed with the Section Name from the Anti-Oedipus book we are reading that week. If you look at the lower left corner of your screen you will see your user name.
That Gear on the right is where you check your audio speakers and microphone.

You need to set your input and output devices here. And then press Let’s Check to hear what you are saying in your mike though your headphones. It is best to use headphones because otherwise you can create a feedback loop that is very annoying and if you do that the Admin will probably mute you at the server level. You want to have Voice activity activate your ability to talk if possible. And if your voice is clipped then you will want to turn off automatic determination of input sensitivity and to set that yourself.

Then to talk you will want to click your headphones and microphone so that the red slash vanishes and then you can make yourself heard.
As people speak in the meeting their icon will turn white so you can associate their image and moniker with the sound of their voice during the meeting.

When you arrive in the D&G QC discord server you will want to check out the other servers that are also holding Reading Groups.

I have created two such servers myself dedicated to Continental Philosophy over all and one dedicated to exploring the philosophies of Zizek, Badiou and Lacan as well as Speculative Realism.
The instructions that have been given here applies to those other severs as well. These other servers I founded are associated with the D&G QC with some of the same administrators. They attempt to cover more philosophers in the same way as D&G QC is covering Deleuze, Guattari, and also Foucault and other associated philosophers.

D&G QC has many other reading opportunities that they sponsor such as a reading group dedicated to relevant literary authors, and to the commentator on Deleuze named Manuel DeLanda as well as other authors like Simondon who are closely associated with Deleuze. After Anti-Oedipus the group may go on to read other books by Deleuze such as *Thousand Plateaus*, or perhaps *What is Philosophy*, or maybe they will go back to read *Logic of Sense* or *Difference and Repetition* or perhaps one of the books Guattari wrote alone. The culture of D&G QC is quite vibrant and there is a lot of member engagement on the platform with many new projects underway such as a Zine.

On the spawned servers that I have founded there are other new reading groups recently formed. On the Continental Philosophy server there is a group tackling *Being and Time* by Heidegger and another working through *Madness and Civilization* by Foucault. On the Zizek/Badiou/Lacan server there is a reading of Zizek’s *Looking Awry* just started.

The talks that are recorded on D&G QC are also posted on SoundCloud.com at [https://soundcloud.com/quarantine_collective](https://soundcloud.com/quarantine_collective)
So, you can listen to the reading group sessions without entering D&G QC server. The other servers that I mentioned instead archive their recorded sessions only internally.

I hope you will come join us and experience these philosophy discussions for yourself. Or create your own discord and offer your own reading groups of other philosophical texts. This is just to let you know that there is a new way to enjoy philosophy with others on the internet. And we hope you will make the most of this new opportunity.

Appendix – History of the D&G QC

With the onset of COVID19, the videogame industry had seen some of its most important events get cancelled. For large companies this was painful, but for contractors this was devastating. As with most media development, you only hire fulltime those people you need during the entirety of production, which means that any specialized roles fall on people who come in for only a few months, and the only way they get found is by networking on the streets of San Francisco. With GDC gone the contractors looked at SXSW, a massive convention in Austin, to be their backup. Multiple events were scheduled around this, most importantly for this story the Audio Developers group made of sound designers, audio programmers, and more. Soon SXSW was cancelled, but the audio gang kept their events on, hoping to salvage something. Soon it became clear that everything in Austin was going to shut down and they needed a online-only place to have their get together. Aaron Brown, one of the organizers, contacted his older brother Brooks for help. Brooks had built online communities for Lucasfilm around Star Wars and for James Cameron around Avatar and its sequels, so he jumped at the chance. The requirements were simple:

- Once a day the group needed to host 100+ people at once to have a ‘lunchtime chat’
- Over the course of 4 days they were set to have a virtual conference and need to have one person lead while others asked questions
- All needed to be recorded for those who couldn’t attend
- Text channels were needed for everyone to have ongoing chatter

Brooks Brown settled on using Discord, a tool used more commonly for keeping videogame guilds organized and gave gamers the ability to have voicechat outside of any game safely. Over a day or two Brooks built out the rules for the server and set it up with Bots (automation), roles, and rooms. The server launched to much success, with a few hundred audio people using it to network.
This first Virtual Audio Conference server is still live and you can see, if you follow the link in this announcement.

Meanwhile Brooks was spending the first day or two of the Quarantine on Reddit when he saw a post by Sereptle, who would become Craig, one of the first hosts of the DGQC. Craig was asking about starting a reading group, looking for interest. The difficulty he wrote about was figuring out how to do it with everyone scattered around the globe. As the DGQC has come to learn quickly, Deleuze readers are not all settled in California, with everyone seemingly scattered evenly across the globe. Brooks offered to build a Discord server around this new endeavor, and started on it quickly, making a copy of the Audio Conference server, and shared it on Reddit. Within a day a few hundred joined, and within a month the server crossed 1500 users.
Eventually Craig left the D&G QC Server for his own Project called Acid Horizon. He had been the main presenter at the weekly Readings meeting. But the team pulled together around Brooks leadership and continued the original mission of the D&G QC project of reading Anti-Oedipus and related books by Deleuze and Guattari. When this change happened kentpalmer was forced into the role of ‘resident expert’ and began leading the review sessions that occurred on Tuesday after the reading sessions on Monday that were lead by Brooks as well as piping up with esoteric references in the reading sessions. Many other members stepped up in a team effort to prepare prior to the Reading sessions by meeting and going over the text the day prior to the weekly Reading sessions. The expertise of all involved has improved in this process as we read the text together. Our ideal is to learn things together that we would not have realized separately in isolated readings (as we would normally read our philosophy books alone if we are not taking a course in school) and benefit from the valuable interchange we have with each other concerning not just the text but all the other authors and the tradition it is connected to as well as its use in cultural criticism.
Acid Horizon is a theory podcast which confronts global crisis and the specter of a world that could be free. One of the many goals of Acid Horizon is to enrich discourses of liberation through a non-sectarian approach to reading theory. In the spirit of thinkers like Deleuze and Guattari, we endeavor to provide a space which values theory as a creative force, not just as the topic of debate. We also connect theory to the pervasive political challenges faced by global citizens. On the podcast, we cover a variety of new, historic, and lesser-known texts of political philosophy.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/acidhorizonpodcast

Patreon: https://www.patreon.com/user?u=34558188&fan_landing=true&fbclid=IwAR3AmnNLmifOS2GuI1oyqdiJF4W12UgM0sRHzuHd6hzo9jsjBPP9TRaqSxk
The D&G QC Twitter Account https://twitter.com/dandgqc?lang=en
Patreon: https://www.patreon.com/join/DGQC?
Here is our discussion of Mark Fisher’s ‘Capitalist Realism’.

A Discussion on Capitalist Realism by Mark Fisher - Deleuze and Guattari Quarantine Collective
soundcloud.com

Tomorrow join the Quarantine Collective in our continued Reading of Deleuze & Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus on our Discord.

discord.gg/h4h9gnH

Tomorrow at 12:00 Noon PST, Los Angeles time!
Our discussions on Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus starts on our server in 30 minutes! Please click to join, and type anything in the welcome channel! We will get you into the chat!

discord.gg/h4h9gnH

#Deleuze #Quarantine
Please join us tomorrow as we continue our reading of Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus! We are continuing our reading of Chapt2Sec5.

Discord: discord.gg/h4h9gnH

Please take part! #QuarantineLife
WHERE WE GO THROUGH THE TEXT AND WE TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WAS REALLY SAID BY THE AUTHORS AND WTF THIS MEANS I MEAN JESUS CHRIST THIS WHOLE THING IS WAY TOO MUCH TO PROCESS WHAT ARE WE DOING
Statistics

New Users per Week

New User Count per Day

Reading Session Count
### Review Session Count

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