Abundance: Queer Worldings in Anthropology

Date: 8-9 March 2023
Locations: Freie Universität Berlin & Schwules Museum Berlin
Organizers: Omar Kasmani, Max Schnepf & Claudia Liebelt
Keynote: Prof. Anjali Arondekar (University of California Santa Cruz)

Workshop by the Working Group “Gender & Sexualities | Queer Anthropology” (German Anthropological Association) in cooperation with the Research Area “Gender, Body, Sexuality” (Freie Universität Berlin)

As forays into the archive or the field, both ethnographers and historians of sexuality continue to seek evidence for queer existence. Whether as “recuperative hermeneutics” (Arondekar 2009) in service of the past or as “ethnocartographies” (Weston 1993) of the contemporary non-West, such expeditions operate on the idea that queer life is a secret, whose proof is not readily available – or that it takes some digging to uncover and recover alterities of gender and sexuality. The figure of an impoverished present is also at work in much of queer utopian thinking which turns to the future for repair and redemption. In fact, loss remains paramount in current Euro-American thinking on sexuality, a point that Anjali Arondekar raises in her forthcoming book: forms and figurations of failure, languages of lack and paucity, even utopia turn sticky devices that return us, if not also keep us attached to, sites, scenes and stories of negativity. This workshop invites a thinking against such “narrative economies of loss” (Arondekar 2023, forthcoming) and towards an epistemological privileging of abundance.

Seeking, discovering, and locating queerness in other places and times can be purposefully mobilized into a politics of rights and representation. Yet, this recuperative logic also invites a critical questioning of extractive modes of knowledge production so long as we operate in post- and still colonial worlds shaped by power inequalities. Abundance: Queer Worldings in Anthropology foregrounds the dialectics of loss and repair, restraint and excess, paucity and abundance. It queries the ambivalent attachments we form to notions of ethnographic evidence and historical proof as we study gender and sexuality in various geographies.

We encourage participants to imagine what kind of queer worldings emerge, transform or crumble, when research projects are approached from the vantage point of abundance. In epistemological terms, what do abundance’s adjacent notions like wealth, fullness, affluence, opulence, richness, prosperity, thriving, growth, multiplicity, plurality bring to our projects? Set against ideas of scarcity, abandonment, and lack, how can abundance help to move projects towards a more capacious notion of queer that embraces embodied, sensorial and aesthetic worldings? How might an appreciation of abundance contribute to critical efforts to decolonize knowledge production? Furthermore, how can we incorporate abundance in methodological terms, for instance, through multimodal storytelling, collaborative design, fragmented forms, and engaged practices of research? Also, if we conceptualize abundance in relation to ‘mess’ (Manalansan 2018), how might such coupling trouble scientific attachments to order and coherence? Moreover, does such embrace of incommensurability through abundance allow for a comfort with what Naisargi Dave has termed as the “willingness to acknowledge some things as unknowable” (Dave 2011)? Last but not least, in what ways does the figure of abundance open up distinct grammars for intersectional and transdisciplinary work?
We invite contributions from anthropology and related disciplines that engage with gender, sexuality and queerness in various geographic settings and historical periods. Contributions can be conceptual or empirical, comprise multiple formats or discuss methodological and ethical aspects of research.

To participate in the workshop, you can register as either speaker or attendee. Please indicate in which capacity you would like to join.

- **Speaker**: Please submit an abstract of your contribution (max. 300 words) and a short bio note (max. 150 words).
- **Attendee**: Please submit a short bio note, outlining your research interest and motivation to participate in the workshop (max. 300 words).

We have limited funds to provide subsidies for train travel and accommodation. Please indicate in your application if you would like to be considered for a subsidy. We will prioritize speakers and early-career scholars lacking support from their home institutions.

**Deadline: February 5, 2023**
**Mail to:** queeranthro.dgska@gmail.com

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**References**


