

Call for Papers

The European Network for Queer Anthropology (European Association of Social Anthropologists) invites submissions for a Workshop

“Writing difference, Writing differently”

European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)/Germany, September 9-10th, 2019.

Anthropology suffers from a long-standing paradox. While we seek to understand and make space in the world for diversity and non-normative subjects, orders and cultures (non-Western or divergent cultures), the vocabulary and tools we use to do so often produce exoticising renderings of difference. Within the long-established traditions of anthropology, questions of writing with, and against, culture (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Abu-Lughod 1991, Behar 1996) have been central to debates on representation; anthropology's role as a form of cultural critique has also instigated new forms of scholarship that move beyond structural-functionalist understandings of 'the other'. Feminist and queer methodologies (Visweswaran 1994; Browne and Nash 2010) and reflexive praxis (Hurstun 1935, 2018) have further contributed to non-normative interpretations of culture and writings. Yet there are still aspects of anthropology which bear the scars of imperial and colonial histories. Drawing on Harrison's early call to decolonise the discipline (1991), indigenous and anthropologists of colour have taken deliberate action to challenge the structures and conventions that reinforce normative and exclusionary understandings of the other (Tallbear 2016; Todd 2018; Shankar 2018). While certain aspects of difference can be strategically leveraged to establish an identity politics, we risk essentialising difference when we write difference as deviance. For queer anthropology, the risk is that trans becomes transgression and queer becomes queer, freaky, and perverse.

In this two-day workshop we discuss how a queer anthropology can offer ways of queering the representation of bodies, identities and ways of being, and what it can contribute to writing differently. What are the consequences of writing 'queerly' - for our notions of 'queerness' and its embodiments and textualities? How do we relate to traditional writing genres and categories of anthropology? How have pioneers in queer and feminist anthropology built upon and challenged these traditions and their claims to privilege and authority? What are the promises, privileges, and perils - personal and social, theoretical and political - of queer anthropology's engagements with questions of writing and representation? We take our inspiration from both a decolonialised anthropology and recent efforts to experiment with the form anthropological texts take (Panadian & McLean 2017), to redraw and reform ethnographic writing with a queer agenda.

In order to emphasise conversation and discussion among participants, and to trouble the canonical structures of scholarship, we envision a Workshop which avoids traditional, long-paper focused panels, and instead includes alternative, dynamic, and innovative venues of presentation (e.g. roundtables, writing/reading exercises, workshoping of texts/works in progress, and engagements with writing as an embodied activity).

Two keynote presentations: TBA.

Please apply with an abstract (and suggested presentation mode) of 300-500 words before March 15th, 2019 to enqaeasa@gmail.com

Some travel funding will be available for attendees based on need and availability of other funding.