



Queer-Feminist
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F O R U M

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Queer-Feminist Science & Technology Studies Forum

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Queer Science
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Editorial

This second Queer-Feminist Science and Technology Studies Forum is based on inputs, thoughts and discussions rooted in a workshop about "Make Kin Not Babies": Discussing queer-feminist, non-natalist perspectives and pro-kin utopias, and their STS implications" during the STS Conference 2016 in Graz. With this workshop our working group Queer STS aimed not just at "queering STS conferences" methodologically, but we also chose a topic which was rather new to all invited speakers and participants equally.

Anita first stumbled upon the topic when in November 2015 Donna Haraway, Adele E. Clarke, Michelle Murphy, Alondra Nelson, Kim TallBear, and Chia-Ling Wu presented their points of view to a panel discussion with the title "Make Kin Not Babies: Toward Feminist STS Pro-Kin and Non-Natalist Politics of Population and Environment" at the 4S (Society for Social Studies of Science) meeting in Denver, Colorado. In their abstract they stated:

"Can we develop anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, STS-informed feminist politics of peopling the earth in current times, when babies should be rare yet precious and real pro-family and community politics for young and old remain rare yet urgently needed?" (quoting abstract,¹ session nr. 27).

Inspired by this quite provocative panel discussion, we read some more of Donna Haraway's articles on the very issue, and we want to share here some of her ideas as an introduction and frame to the very diverse and queer papers presented in this second edition Forum.

¹ The full abstract (ibid., p.28 f.) was: "Feminist STS scholarship has long and richly addressed biogenetic reproduction, focusing on race, region, sexuality, class, gender, and more. However, feminist STS has also largely been silent about reducing the human burden on earth while strengthening ecojustice for people and other critters as means and not ends. Can we develop anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, STS-informed feminist politics of peopling the earth in current times, when babies should be rare yet precious and real pro-family and community politics for young and old remain rare yet urgently needed? How can we develop collaborative politics recognizing that peoples subjected to (ongoing) genocides may need more children? How can we intervene in the relentless glut of attention devoted to problematic, costly 'rights' and 'needs' for (mainly richer) women to have babies as an individual 'choice'? Questions: How to nurture durable multi-generational non-biological kin-making, while humans everywhere transition to vastly less reproduction? What alternative ways of flourishing can be nurtured across generations and across cultures, religions, nations? How to deter on-going anti-feminist population control efforts while generating innovative discourses that legitimate non-natalist policies and choices? How to promote research on forms of contraception women and men want (and can use under diverse circumstances) and reproductive services that actually serve? How to build non-natalist kin-making technologies and sciences in housing, travel, urban design, food growing, environmental rehabilitation, etc.? Where are the feminist utopian, collaborative, risky imaginings and actions for earthlings in a mortal, damaged, human-heavy world? Why hasn't feminist STS taken the lead in such fundamental endeavors?", (http://4sonline.org/ee/files/program_w_abstracts.pdf,2017-04-13)

The Anthropocene (or Capitalocene, Plantationocene, or Chthulucene, as Haraway 2015 discusses it) can be seen as a boundary event rather than an epoch, where life on earth for everybody changes and nothing will be the way it was before. Haraway (2015, p. 159) refers to more than climate change, but "... extraordinary burdens of toxic chemistry, mining, depletion of lakes and rivers under and above ground, ecosystem simplification, vast genocides of people and other critters, etc. ..." Thus, she argues, the reserves and resources of the earth have come to an end, and we have to think about new ways of dealing with a "major system collapse after major system collapse after major system collapse" (ibid. p. 159).

One factor of the problem are the estimated 11 billion people at the end of 21st century, because already: "Right now, the earth is full of refugees, human and not, without refuge." (Haraway 2015, p. 160). So Haraway created the slogan "Make Kin Not Babies!" (ibid. p. 161), and explicitly asks feminists to think about theories and actions "to unravel the ties of both genealogy and kin, kin and species. ... My purpose is to make 'kin' mean something other/more than entities tied by ancestry or genealogy." (ibid. p. 161; see more about the rejection of biological reproduction as the ultimate prerequisite for kinship and alternative cultural models of kinship: Read 2001).

Some ideas Haraway proposes (2015, p. 164):

- to celebrate young people who decide not to have children,
- to create new cultural norms, like having three lifetime committed parents per child,
- to live in multi-child and multi-generational households,
- to establish adoption practices for elder people (and by elderly people),
- to acknowledge (and discuss) that nations who are "worried about low birth rates" actually engage in "racial purity projects" (need for "non-racist immigration"),

To sum up, we are to find ways to innovate enduring kin: to "kinnovate".

We invited friends and colleagues to "kinnovate" with us in this edition of Forum:

Birgit Hofstätter opens the discussion with a personal reflection on what making kin by taking care of others could mean in everyday life and how non-biological aunt*hood or uncle*hood could be a model for that.

Boka En, Michael En, David Griffiths, and Mercedes Pölland take us deeper into the topic and focus on the aspect of intimacy. They make us witnesses of a discussion on what it means to live non-monogamous and queer relationships and thereby seem to look for visions of a 'good life' without creating a morality of how to be a "good queer".

Daniela Jauk is inspired by both Donna Haraway's text "Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene" and "The Thirteen Original Clan Mothers" by self-identified Indigenous writer Jamie Sams. She reflects on this inspiration in regard to queer kinship and how her choice of sources taught her (and us) an important lesson.

Kirk John Fiereck approaches the topic from a different direction, takes a step back from kinship and starts by questioning personhood as something restricted to humans. He explores the political implications of non-human personhood by taking a look into the consequences of considering corporations persons in the USA and by tracing the story of a transgender creek in Australia.

Zoltán Bajmócy reflects with **Boglárka Méreiné Berki, Judit Gébert, György Málóvics, and Barbara Mihók** on a joint project with a Roma community in Hungary. They propose a queer perspective on kinship as possibility to breach the gap between social classes and a differentiated understanding of poverty.

References:

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