



Workshop Invitation

Loss & Hope: Contemporary debates in Environmental Anthropology 18th-19th October 2018 in Tübingen

A networking meeting hosted by the working group on environmental anthropology of the German Association of Social and Cultural Anthropologists (DGSKA), Kiel University and the University of Tübingen

Diagnoses of environmental loss – i.e. loss of biodiversity and extinction of species, of soil and crop nutrients, loss through sea-level rise, the pollution of oceans and waterways, or the penetration of living forms by industrially produced chemical compounds – abound and inform much scholarly debate.

This networking meeting for researchers focusing on environmental anthropology takes a productive tension between such recent diagnoses of loss and persistent hopes in betterment as starting point to open up our discussions: What does taking loss in relation to the environment seriously imply for anthropologists and how does this relate to projects that try to instill hope? To what extent are these undertakings desirable or risky? What affective attachments to hope or loss prevail in our fields of inquiry?

We plan to explore the intellectual spaces between loss and hope through a series of short input papers and group discussions, covering topics such as dreams of unlimited growth, extinction and species diversity, affectivity and environmental threats, care and other modes of engaging with a more-than-human world.

The main goals of this meeting are twofold:

1) to open a space for the discussion of key current issues in the broader field of environmental anthropology, and 2) to enable networking among members and scouting for interest for writing joint funding proposals (e.g. DFG Netzwerk) and other academic collaborations.

Relating to the question what hopes some of us may vest in anthropology and its political impact, on the second day of the meeting we will organize an excursion into a field of practice closely related to what some of us may investigate ethnographically. Main questions will concern the relations of environmental anthropology to those disciplines traditionally furnishing solid knowledge about the environment. What does it mean for anthropologists to grapple with the research of natural scientists (geology, molecular biology, virology, entomology, etc.) and their knowledge claims? What are possibilities and challenges of these proximities?

The workshop organizers will cover food and excursion expenses. We cannot offer travel or accommodation funding, though we will of course help find beds in Tübingen. To attend, please send your personal contact details and a short CV by 15th April 2018 to giorgitsivtsivadze1@gmail.com. We hope to see you all in Tübingen and look forward to thinking together.

With best wishes,

Heribert Beckmann (Tübingen)
Sandra Calkins (Halle)
Jeanne Féaux de la Croix (Tübingen)
Silja Klepp (Kiel)