**Project title:** The politics of relatedness: queer kinship and assisted reproductive technologies

**Description**

Recent anthological research on ARTs have destabilized historic notions of biology, family-making and kinship, drawing science and technology into dialogue with queer theory, and particularly queer kinship. When first introduced in the 1980s, ARTs prompted energetic discussion and debate on the ethical, social and legal implications of these technologies. Rich ethnographic research and theoretical critique has followed the introduction and development of ARTs over the last three decades. However, there remains a palpable absence in anthropological studies around the intimacies of queer grief linked to ARTs and reproduction. The project will explore on ethnographic research that moves traces a global assemblage of ART, reproductive discourses, clinics, homes and bodies, with a focus on two interlinked aspects of queer grief entailed in this assemblage. The first facet looks at the work of translation entailed in navigating (hetero)normative discourses that govern access to ARTs and reproductive spaces. The project will explore how access to ARTs and reproductive spaces reflect a predominantly (hetero)normative production of kinship. In order to access these technologies and spaces, queer-identified people are required to perform the work of translation to bend these heteronormative discourses and practices around ARTs into a shape that can better fit their own bodies and lives. This project hypothesizes that the work of translation is an unrecognized form of labour that also generates a grief at not seeing one’s own body and desires reflected in reproductive praxis. The second facet explores some of the outcomes of accessing ARTs and reproductive spaces. It explores various forms of grief linked to struggles to conceive. Extending the discussion on translation, this second facet will explore how the grief entailed in loss (of eggs, sperm, embryos, pregnancy, possibility) is compounded by the (often partial) provision of institutional ‘after-care’ that, in policy and practice, is almost entirely heteronormative. By placing the onus of translation on queer people, and by relying on the pain of grief to sustain silence, reproductive policies and institutions maintain and reproduce hegemonic heteronormativity. Further, the ethnographic accounts will trace the ways in which queer grief, when surfaced and seen in (re)productive spaces, is often uncomfortable and ugly – even obstreperous. And in this way, queer grief may also contain the productive potential for disruption and, even, transformation. The student’s involvement in this project will be facilitated through the Centre for Cultures of Reproduction, Technologies and Health (CORTH) at Sussex University, and they will be encouraged to participate in any events taking place through CORTH in the duration of their involvement in this project.

**Method**

The student working on this project would work with me to go through and organise ethnographic material and academic literature on queer kinship and assisted reproductive technologies. I would work closely with the student, and I would discuss the nature and scope of the work required for this project with them in advance. We would work to clear deadlines, and the student would learn about various research methods, methods for analysing research data, and literature spanning science and technology studies, queer theory, public health and medical anthropology. The student who joins this project would work in collaboration with me, and I would acknowledge their work and support in the manuscript.

**Skills / experience required**

- Strong writing skills
- A basic knowledge of queer theory
- A basic knowledge of science and technology studies
- Ability to conduct academic literature searches
- Ability to do basic analysis of literature
### Key readings


### Learning Outcomes

The student will:

- Enhance their understanding of queer theory as it relates to reproductive practices and policies.
- Further develop an understanding of the relationship between public health, science and technology studies and queer theory.
- Learn to conduct comprehensive literature searches.
- Learn to compile annotated bibliographies.
- Develop writing and analytical skills, and apply these skills to written work including – potentially – a co-authored article.

### Supervisor: Dr. Elizabeth Mills

**Department:** Social Anthropology/International Development  
**Centre for Cultures of Reproduction, Technologies and Health (CORTH)**