RAINBOW LACES AND SAFE SPACES!
QUEER EYES ON ABSENCES, ERASURES AND DISTORTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

12 FEBRUARY 2020

Agenda.
This presentation will explore key arguments by those who are opposed to sexual and gender equalities and base their activism on centralising heteronormativity (what we have termed heteroactivism). It will firstly show how heteroactivists push back against, and reconfigure accusations of bigotry, homophobia and transphobia. However, rather than seeking vilification or a methodology, perhaps a praxis, of condemnation, this talk will seek to provoke a discussion around engagement beyond opposition.

This presentation comprises speculative reflections on the experience of our work in universities as queer academics. Queer scholarship and praxis are explored as a kind of ‘under-commons’, a presence that might surface in some places but which functions otherwise also, as an ‘academy within’ – oft repudiated even as it takes shape. The presentation considers ways in which different epistemological perspectives may be employed to elucidate the multiplicity of queer experience in the university, including anthropological and ‘queer monster’ theories. We take up examples from our work in the UK and India, including reflections on the role of queer students in current citizenship activism in Kolkata and Delhi.

**Welcome Remarks**

This event seeks to answer the overarching questions: What do we know so far about queer in academy? What needs to change? It will include panel presentations by academics and social policy practitioners working on LGBTQIA+ inclusion issues and audience discussion, with a view to constructing a Manifesto for Change.

**Session 1: Researching Beyond Opposition**

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**Session 2: The University Within: The already queer academy (denied)**

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**QUESTIONS**

**COFFEE BREAK**
An overview of union action including the trans position statement, focused on the need to expand action for trans and non-binary representation and inclusion.

**Session 3: Policy : Imagining Inclusivity - Exacting Exclusivity**

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**QUESTIONS**

**Session 4: Allying with the university: challenges and prospects?**

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The aim of this panel discussion is to showcase perspectives from academic staff and students on the role of university as LGBTQIA+ ally. The discussion will tackle the over-arching question; what can universities do to foster ‘safer’ spaces for academic staff and students?

**QUESTIONS**

**Concluding Remarks and Confirming the Manifesto for Change**

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