

Call for Papers
Whose Anthropology is it Anyway?
Connections in the modern world

4th Royal Anthropological Institute Post-Graduate Conference,

Brunel University,

3rd– 4th September 2014

When delivering the 1967 Reith lectures, Edmund Leach recalled a phrase from novelist E.M. Forster, *Only connect...*, drawing attention to the anthropological engagement in terms of the relations between its components. In recent times, the flexibility and ever-changing nature of human sociality has been progressively shaped by new systems of communications that have affected greatly the nexus on which Leach focused his lecture.

This conference seeks to explore the realities of ethnographic research, investigating the ways through which anthropology and its practices are affected by an increasing 'connectedness' between researchers and informants. In particular, the event will bring together PhD candidates and early career researchers endeavouring to highlight their experiences of anthropology-making within contexts of co-positioning of the “professional” anthropologists and their collaborators in the field.

After all, the entire anthropological endeavour is constructed around the ethnographic encounter between the anthropologist and the field – but where (thus, perhaps more importantly, what) is the field exactly? In a more "connected" world, can we ever truly leave the field? To what extent is separation from the field an arbitrary construct in the first place? General awareness of the social sciences and anthropology has transformed relations between the anthropologist and the social actors involved in their access to the field. To mention but a few 'new' ethnographic issues, an informant with the requisite internet access could look up a researcher through social media, and anthropologists could be instrumentally used by participants in ways that question the nature of authorship or ownership over the data.

Where is the anthropologist in this modern world of connectedness? Is it possible to argue that those who were once ‘informants’ have transformed themselves into anthropologists, equally capable of reflecting and documenting their lives through new media technologies? Perhaps the future of anthropology would involve a far deeper collaboration between the ethnographer and the field, with greater input from informants through the means of various reflexive narratives such as photography, social media accounts, online blogs and so on.

After all, whose anthropology is it anyway?

We invite papers from PhD candidates and early career researchers that engage with fieldwork realities and ethnographic experiences. These papers can draw on, but should by no means be limited to, one or more of the following themes:

- the relationship with field-actors, focusing particularly on the processes that make us ethnographers and them informants;
- the position that researcher and informants acquire in the field in order to mediate, for example, ideological or cultural conflict;
- the ways in which we make anthropology understandable to key-informants;
- according to what boundaries the field is defined;
- the ethical constraints of fields where the role of the ethnographer can be ambiguously

- perceived;
- innovative approaches that challenge taken for granted boundaries of the field (such as a focus on diasporic communities or cyber ethnography);
- the contention of research ownership within the institutional structures of post-graduate courses, as particularly related to departments, funding and publishing bodies.

The call for papers is now open and it will close on April 30th, 2014.

Proposals should consist of:

- a paper title
- authors/co-authors, affiliation, email and telephone contacts
- a short abstract of fewer than 300 characters
- a long abstract of fewer than 250 words

and should be sent to raipgconference2014[at]gmail.com with “RAI Conference Abstract” as the subject.

Notifications of acceptance/rejection will be delivered by May 31st, 2014. Registration opening dates will be announced in due course.