

Editorial

The beginning of the new decade brings with it important developments that are likely to impact significantly on anthropology in the UK, and perhaps more widely. A coalition Tory-Liberal UK government is radically shaking up higher education in England and Wales and debates abound in the British media about whether concern about government deficit reduction strategies, following the large-scale bail out of banks, is being utilised as a cover for ideologically driven reforms in the public sector. Alongside the recommendation to charge near full fees to higher education students, the government proposes to withdraw funding support from humanities and arts subjects. It is not clear to me where anthropology, as a discipline which has always bridged or crossed such boundaries, will sit in this new world of learning. There has also been increasing emphasis on enhancing and measuring the 'impact' of university-based research and curricula, although there is little consensus over what that means in practice. As ever, anthropology highlights the complexity of things.

The articles assembled in this and other journals demonstrate that anthropologists do research which continues to have relevance and impact beyond the academy. The fact that many students studying for degrees and postdoctoral programmes in anthropology go on to work in public and third sectors, and areas such as government, business, design or international development demonstrates the discipline's continuing impact, even if it is difficult to measure. Engaged anthropology challenges the assumptions which underlie policy decisions about which subjects should be publicly supported, cutting across the notion of 'two worlds' that was the focus of CP Snow's

much debated 1959 critique of the gulf between the sciences and the humanities in British intellectual life. Such a perceived gulf needs to be addressed by greater understanding, knowledge and integration of the sciences and the humanities, mutual communication and input into policy and government, rather than privileging one over the other.

The roots of this journal were in British networks developed to support anthropology in action – the Group for Anthropology in Policy and Practice (GAPP) and the British Association for Social Anthropology in Policy and Practice (BASAPP). In this 2011 Volume, we aim to add to the mix of peer reviewed articles on different anthropology-in-action themes, a set of invited articles on pragmatic aspects of engaged anthropology, to address the needs and experiences of those who use anthropology in policy and practice and in their everyday work. This year's volume commences with a set of articles on feminism and anthropology, guest edited and introduced by Pamela Downe and Robin Whitaker. In the spirit of critical anthropological engagement, we invite our readers to respond directly to these articles with their own thoughts, comments or critiques. We look forward to receiving your responses to these articles and to other major issues that are shaping our present – either as letters or as short replies.

Christine McCourt, for the Editorial Board

References

- C. P. Snow (1959) Rede lecture, Christ's College Cambridge *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*