

3rd POLITICAL IMAGINATION LABORATORY

What Can and Can't Be Said: Fieldwork as Witnessing?

06-07 December 2019, University of Perugia, Italy

CALL FOR PAPERS AND VISUAL PROJECTS

DEADLINE: 15 SEPTEMBER 2019

For those who engage with questions of social justice in their fieldwork and/or qualitative research, questions related to the identity and the role of the researcher remain inescapable. Recently, the figure of the witness has been presented as one of the possible solutions to the dilemmas of knowledge, power and ontology in ethnographic and qualitative fieldwork. Compared to other possible identities - such as “expert” or “reporter” - the witness preserves independence and entails authority. The witness aims to be a truthful observer, while being conscious about its own limits of knowledge, its own positioning and its own responsibilities.

The third Political Imagination Laboratory invites those who carry out fieldwork related to questions of social justice and/or activism (anthropologists, filmmakers, social scientists) to focus on methodological and ontological aspects of their research: What can be understood? What not? What can be said? What not? When should we intervene? In how far do we have an obligation to our interlocutors and other actors in as well as outside the field? How do we situate ourselves with regard to moral positions (between cultural relativism and universalism)? How does the relation with our field partners and possible resulting emotional entanglements (e.g., the negotiation of empathy vs. sympathy) influence our way of representing them and of acting in the field?

Presentations can be based on a wide range of research related to questions of social justice and activism broadly defined, but each contribution should highlight and discuss one or more aspects of methodological and/or ontological challenges, based on first-hand fieldwork experiences as witness.

We invite both **papers** and **visual projects** (completed documentaries or projects in progress).

PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Please submit your abstract (max. 300 words) for a paper of about 20 minutes before the deadline to: info@peasantproject.org. The abstract should also include your academic affiliation and role.

VISUAL PROJECTS: Please submit your (audio-)visual project (completed documentaries or works in progress) with a short description (max. 300 words) before the deadline. In order to stimulate debate, videos of ca. 30 minutes will be preferred; for longer completed documentaries, a short version accompanied by a presentation would be more adequate. Please upload your video to a cloud drive with the link to: info@peasantproject.org (or send a DVD by surface mail to: *Political Imagination Laboratory, Antropologia- Dipartimento di Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione (FISSUF), Piazza Morlachi 30, 06123 Perugia, Italy*).

Notification of accepted presentations: 30th September 2019.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Our Political Imagination Laboratory alternates paper presentations with film screenings, roundtable discussions, and work-in-progress visual expositions, emphasizing the participatory and horizontal spirit of workshops and providing an open space for academic debate, personal interactions and socializing as interconnected elements. This 2-day workshop will take place at the *Dipartimento di Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione* (FISSUF), University of Perugia, Italy. It is organized by the research network “Peasant Activism Project”, in cooperation with the network “Anthropology and Social Movements” of the European Association of Social Movements (EASA) and the Centre for Documentary Research at Queen’s University Belfast. Some meals will be covered, but you need to arrange transportation and accommodation by yourself.

Further Information:

“Peasant Activism Project”: www.peasantproject.org; info@peasantproject.org