

Call for Papers

The Doors of Perception: Viewing Anthropology through the eyes of children

VU University Amsterdam
30 September & 1 October 2010

Social science theory has traditionally represented children as adults-to-be, and childhood as a phase of innocence, immaturity, and dependence on adult care and protection. The 1920s marked an increase in anthropological interest in the cultural variations of childhood across the globe. Notably Margaret Mead (1928) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1929) set the stage for an unremitting critique of universalist, psychological explanations of childhood, drawing on evidence of wide cross-cultural variations in experiences of childhood. Despite this anchoring of anthropological theory in children, they continued to be neglected as focus of study until the 1990s, when scholars like James and Prout, Hirschfeld, LeVine and Lancy argued for a renewed attention to research of children and its potential contribution to the understanding of humanity. Simultaneously, researchers increasingly pleaded in favour of an anthropology of children, underlining the intrinsic, epistemological value of children's voices, perceptions and realities in research and the theoretical potential of a child-oriented approach viewing children as active agents who contribute to culture making concurrently with peers and adults.

This conference aims to bring together anthropologists who work with children as well as researchers from other disciplines to provide a platform for intellectual discussion, exchange of ideas, networking, and to offer opportunities for collaboration.

The primary goal of the conference is to examine current developments in the study of children and to develop perspectives on how research with children can contribute to anthropological epistemology and theory.

Central questions to such a reflection are:

- 1) What can child-oriented research offer to current epistemological debates and theory in anthropology?
- 2) How can anthropological research with children benefit from insights from other disciplines?
- 3) How can an anthropological, child-oriented approach contribute to the research of children in other disciplines?

The conference welcomes proposals not merely from anthropologists but also from scholars representing other disciplines (including but not limited to geography, psychology, sociology, history, and education). We invite such scholars to reflect on the possible cross-fertilization that does or can take place in these interdisciplinary encounters.

Proposals for presentations in the following formats are welcome:

- Individual Paper Presentations
- Poster Presentations

A selection of papers will be invited for a joint publication.

Important dates:

- 15 May 2010: deadline for abstract submission of individual papers and poster presentations (max. 400 words) including brief CV of author(s) (max. 100 words);
- 15 June 2010: results of the selected proposals by Scientific Committee of the Conference;
- 15 August 2010: deadline for submission of selected papers (max. 8.000 words)

Abstracts and papers should be written in English or French. The conference language is English but French sessions are envisaged.

Please forward your submission to:

Conference Organising Committee:

E-mail: childrenconference2010@hotmail.com

Website: www.anthropologyofchildren.net

Conference fee (lunch and coffee/tea included):

- 40 Euros for students (two days) and 25 Euros per day;
- 80 Euros for non-students (two days) and 45 Euros per day;

Any further queries or requests for information on the conference should be sent to the above e-mail address.