

11th ZAS SEMINAR

ISA INTERNATIONAL GUEST LECTURE

Uncomfortable Antinomies: Going Beyond Methodological Nationalism in Social and Cultural Anthropology

David Gellner

Thursday, 12th of January 2012, 4.00 p.m. [c.t.]

Centre for Studies in Asian Cultures and Social Anthropology

Seminar room 1, 1030 Vienna, Apostelgasse 23

This paper examines how anthropology has coped with the massive social and political changes since 1960 that have transformed its traditional subject matter and put into question its traditional methodology of participant observation. It considers George Marcus's well-known proposal for multi-sited ethnography and the research programme of global ethnography put forward by Michael Burawoy. Although the ideal of holism has been abandoned in some quarters, I argue that it should be retained, despite the fact that it is in tension with the equally necessary awareness of flux, flow, and transnational links.



David Gellner is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of All Souls College. He is currently also the Head of Department of the School of Anthropology and Museum of Ethnography. His doctoral research (1982-4) was on the social organization and religious life of the Buddhist Newars of the Kathmandu Valley. His research interests have expanded to include healing and spirit possession; the anthropology of activism, political violence, and the state; children and education; democratization; borders; and diaspora populations. He was a Visiting Professor at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (2003-4) and a Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellow for a project on the social history of activism in Nepal (2002-2005). From 2005 to 2008 he was one of the coordinators of the EU-funded MIDEA project on Governance, Conflict, and Civic Action in South Asia.

Recent Publications include:

- 2010 (ed.): *Varieties of Activist Experience: Civil Society in South Asia*, Sage: Delhi.
- 2009 The Awkward Social Science? Anthropology on Schools, Elections, and Revolution in Nepal, In: *JASO-online* (NS) 1(2): 115-40.
- 2009 The Uses of Max Weber: Legitimation and Amnesia in Buddhology, South Asian History, and Anthropological Practice Theory, In: Peter Clarke (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Oxford University Press: 48-62.