

Issue 1, Winter 2011: 'Connected Communities'

Editorial

Welcome to the winter 2011 edition of *Track Changes*, the Postgraduate Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Sheffield. The quality and diversity of scholarship within the pages of this journal are indicative of the depth and breadth of research work which is being undertaken by M.A. and Ph.D. students throughout the Faculty. The purpose of this Journal is firstly to provide a vehicle for the dissemination of this scholarship within the academic community and beyond, and secondly to provide post-graduate students with training and hands-on experience of academic publishing. *Track Changes* is a peer-reviewed journal that will be published bi-annually on a free to access online basis.

The title of this second issue, 'Connected Communities', brings together four articles and one interview from a variety of disciplines, each of which addresses the question of community. As the title of the major Arts and Humanities Research Council programme theme, 'Connected Communities' is designed to reach out to and connect the various disciplines that make up the Arts and Humanities Faculty. The notion of community is central to the spirit of the Arts and Humanities: an increasing emphasis on inter-disciplinarity within the academy is intended to foster a sense of intellectual community within and beyond the Faculty, while community in all its guises is a theme that connects the concerns of individual Arts and Humanities disciplines. Yet the controversy around the programme and its relation to the government's 'big society' concept also revealed the ambiguities associated with the idea of community, which, when approached uncritically, can be invoked to support any number of concrete policies, ideologies and actions. The papers in this issue of *Track Changes* therefore aim to engage

critically with the ‘Connected Communities’ theme from a variety of perspectives, in an attempt to explore and analyse this rich, if sometimes problematic, constellation of ideas.

The theme is certainly appropriate to the objectives of this journal, namely to bring together high-quality research by post-graduates from the diverse yet interconnected departments within the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Sheffield. Since its inception only last year, *Track Changes* has already become a successful community of authors and editors with a shared aim to promote outstanding research and cooperation within the Faculty. The contributions in this second issue reflect the variety of research throughout the Faculty while also highlighting commonalities. From the analysis of oral communication in medieval French literature to community interpretation in modern-day multilingual school environments; from contemporary postcolonial Dutch literature to female community in eighteenth-century English periodicals and bilingualism in post-Soviet Russia, the contributions challenge conventional understandings of what constitutes a connected community using a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches. The depth of analysis and range of perspectives in this issue continues the strong start *Track Changes* made last year and as editors we are extremely proud to be able to present such high-quality and original scholarship from postgraduates across the Faculty.

We are delighted to be able to offer postgraduates both the opportunity to refine and publish their work in a friendly, supportive environment and to become a member of the *Track Changes* editorial board, where they can participate in the processes of peer review, editing and proof reading, the kind of practical experience of the academic publishing industry that is notoriously difficult to obtain as an early-career researcher. Thanks must be given to all who have contributed their time and expertise to the preparation of this issue. The next issue of *Track Changes* is already underway: long may the growth and success of *Track Changes* continue.

The Editors