

A NEW CONJUNCTURE: MEDIATIONS IN A POST-TRUTH ERA

*CFP for a book collection proposal edited by Brett Nicholls and Rosemary Overell
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Provocation:

Our contemporary moment is fixated on arbitrating and articulating 'realness'. With the spectre of buzzwords like fake news and post-truth we find a scramble to locate or fix some sort of universal, immovable 'real' beneath what is positioned as 'fake' articulations and discourse. Often the arbitration of 'reality' is placed in the hands of the media as well as academics. To be literate and savvy is to be able to ascertain the real from the fake. Nonetheless, media and, again, academia, are simultaneously blamed as producing the apparent retreat of realness. This edited collection tackles both everyday and theoretical understandings of the real and its intersection with contemporary media, communication and culture.

Hall's (1988) notion of a conjuncture provided a useful starting point for the Birmingham School's inventive engagement with the rise of Thatcherism and neoliberalism. We propose that the present fixation upon the real has emerged in a new conjuncture, which, like the Birmingham School in the 1980s, requires new approaches for engaging with our current mediated context. This collection thus asks: what does 'the real' now mean in media, communication, and cultural studies? How do we talk about the real? And why such a concern with the real today?

We invite submissions which engage in a dialogue with how notions of the 'real' are taken up, mediated, and made to work in particular ways. This dialogue asks how reality is brandished symbolically or produced through discourse and representation to mark specific modalities of power. But it might ask too how the desire for the real – as a signifier of a bedrock / universal 'truth' – is affective and works beyond the symbolic to produce fantasies of bearable, cognisant spaces and sites in which the election of Trump, the ubiquity of reality television and an ongoing preoccupation with realness in television, film, and social media.

Articles accepted for the collection thus far:

Laurie Ouellette (University of Minnesota) — 'Fake President: Telemorphosis and the Performance of Grotesque Sovereignty'.

Kim Toffoletti (Deakin University) — 'Sexy Surfers, Selfies, and Social Media – Encounters with Jean Baudrillard, Postfeminism and Post-truth'.

Keywords:

media, communication, conjuncture, real, post-truth, Lacan, Baudrillard, cultural studies

Timeline:

Abstracts of 250-500 words are due on January 31 2018

Full drafts of 6k-8k words will be due on July 31 2018

Proposed date for publication is December 31 2018

Send abstracts to:

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