

Call for papers

Disruption, Voice and Listening (flipped) Conference – October 2022

Abstracts Deadline 1 June 2022

Organised by the Cultural Theory Cluster at the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research, at Birmingham City University, 'Disruption, Voice and Listening' is a 2-day online 'flipped conference' in October 2022, exploring the interplay between 'disruption', 'voice' and 'listening'.

Disruption, Voice, and Listening invites proposals that consider the critical role of disruption in shaping our contemporaneity, and its relationship to the politics of voice and listening. Through a range of contributions that will include presentations, articles, podcasts, or vlogs, we want to explore the narratives of continuity and disruption. Sited within a department whose research activities have been disrupted like those of many universities, the flipped conference will serve as a platform to consider issues including the breakdown of authority exposed by the pandemic, polarising 'culture war' tactics, the 'crises' of migration, rights and social movements. How does these relate to neoliberal ideologies and practices, and neoliberalism's heroisation of 'innovative disruptors'? Throughout, we want to pay attention to whose voices make up both the status quo and its interruption. Can we now think of the seismic events of the past two years as disrupting a set of otherwise continuous narratives? Who controls such rifts, and how? Whose voices are enabled by recent disruptions, and whose are silenced?

Bringing together 'disruption' and 'listening', our key questions include:

- How can an ethics of listening be cultivated that is itself disruptive to conventions of authorized political discourse?
- How can techniques of collective listening disrupt processes of mediating the public sphere determined by power?
- Can listening as a political process challenge 'culture war' tactics which push people into taking one side or another?
- How might we learn from activist and artistic practices, movements, and campaigns that have tried to create spaces for unheard, marginalised voices?
- How do forms of disruption create space for marginalised voices, or alternatively, shut them down?

As a 'flipped conference', the speaker will deliver a 10-15 minute presentation (video and audio formats also welcome) complemented by a 'position statement'. The position statement can be read by participants as a 'conversation starter', enabling a more dialogic presentation format. The 'position statement' can take the form of a classic blog post, a short podcast, or vlog (equivalent to 800-1000 words). These will be hosted on the BCMCR website (bcmcr.org), and the Post Pandemic University website (<https://postpandemicuniversity.net/>). Delegates will be encouraged to read 'position statements' before the event.

We also welcome alternative formats for presentation, including performances, artworks and poetry.

Subthemes

Disruption and politics

- Disruption as intrinsic to neoliberalism and authoritarian populism: 'innovative disruption', spectacle, and 'disaster capitalism' (Klein 2008); states of exception' (Agamben 2005).
- Disruption as catalysing new ways of thinking: as 'natality' (Arendt 2004) and 'acts' (Isin 2012).
- Forms of disruption (for example caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate emergency) that are tolerated by the state and capital.
- Disruption as a performed narrative. The intended and unintended audiences for such narratives.

Disruption, voice, scales and social movements

- Acts that emerge as a disruption (for example, protests, industrial action, etc).
- The disruption of forcing issues into public debate
- Disrupting the global North/South hierarchies.
- Disruptions which create enabling spaces to marginalised groups to share their experiences and voice.

Disruption and temporality

- Forms of 'rhythmic unconscious' (Alhadeff-Jones 2019) which the liminal space-time of a crisis/disruption conjure up.
- The tempo and temporality of crisis.
- The beginnings and ends of disruption, and its framing and narration.
- Disruption as creating liminal spaces (Turner 1969) and the emergence of new possibilities but also as potentially shutting these spaces down.

Activist and art disruptions, disruptions in urban space

- Interventions within urban spaces.
- The potential for 'innovation' in disruptive artistic practices in the age of institutionally-sanctioned socially engaged arts practice.
- The institutional response/absorption/neutralisation of disruptive art practices (Charnley 2021).

Disruption, migration, and citizenship

- How migration disrupts imperial legacies.
- How migrant solidarities and migrant voices disrupt an anti-immigrant *habitus* and consensus.
- How transversal solidarities (Yuval-Davis 1999) disrupt and transform authorized scripts of how to act as a liberal national citizen, and what 'performative citizenship' (Isin 2017) offers as a conceptual frame for examining this issue.

Disruption and the neoliberal university

- The disrupted university (for example, teaching/learning during the pandemic) and attempts to learn from these or alternatively impose 'business as usual'.
- The fetishization of "disruptive innovators" within neoliberal academic cultures.
- The emergence of alternative/para-academic institutions, disruptions of hierarchies within academic cultures.

Timescales

- **1 June CFP deadline; responses by mid-June 2022**
- **12 Sept deadline for blog posts, podcasts and vlogs**
- **5 and 13 October: Provisional online event dates**

Proposal submissions

Please send submissions, including title, 250-word abstract and contact information to disruptionvoicelistening@gmail.com.