



(dis)orienting media
and narrative mazes

conference | ruhr-university bochum

10.11.- 11.11.2011

www.disorienting-media.de

Call for Papers for the conference

(DIS)ORIENTATION

(dis)orienting media and narrative mazes

10.-11.11.2011 | Ruhr-University Bochum

From November 10th to November 11th 2011 the Ruhr-University Bochum will host a conference entitled “(DIS)ORIENTATION – (dis)orienting media and narrative mazes“. The focus of this conference will be on media as technologies and sites of orientation and disorientation as well as media narratives employing this (dis)orientation as theme and structure.

Google Maps, Google Street View, GPS and portable navigation devices – due to technical media spatial orientation in our world appears to be as easy as never before. But at the same time it seems that media technologies – with their abundance of information, references and functions – complicate orientation. Hypertext and databases, worldwide interconnectedness and diversity of programs open up virtual spaces in which orientation is only possible with the help of media (search engines, social networks, electronic program guides, etc.). The new spatial structures seem to disorient users only to (re-)position them through innate tools, classification systems and directories.

Interestingly, media themselves reflect their disorienting properties self-referentially by using them as an effect of entertainment: on the one hand this includes cinema’s non-linear, multiperspectival or unreliable narratives, which purposefully disorient the audience and which have experienced an increase in popularity since the 1990s (21 GRAMS, MEMENTO, THE SIXTH SENSE, MAGNOLIA, etc.); on the other hand this phenomenon is traceable in the complex narrative networks of recent TV-series (LOST, FLASHFORWARD, as well as THE WIRE, HEROES, etc.), which have constituted an experimental ground for temporal, spatial and personal disorientation. They transform being disoriented into an incentive, confusion into a pleasure and the solution of the puzzle (aka re-orientation) into the prevalent purpose.

But how can this challenge to our sense of (dis)orientation be assessed? Can the labyrinths of digital mediascapes be put in relation to the narrative mazes of contemporary film and television productions? Does fictional space show connections to “a spatiality of media” in a broader sense?

However, by focusing on the idea of (dis)orientation we do not only want to emphasize space itself, but also movements in space thus examining temporal aspects as well: we perambulate spaces in which we find our way or not, which allow us straight transit in the case of easy orientation, but which can also leave us restlessly searching or helplessly standing still.

The conference wants to encourage discussion about (dis)orientation in the visual, auditory, narrative, virtual and digital “space-time” of media. We are looking forward to receiving paper proposals (maximum length of one page, 20 minutes of speaking time, English or German language only). Please submit your proposals and a short vita

before **June 30th 2011** by sending them via mail to **disorienting-media@rub.de**. We are planning to publish the results of the conference in an edited volume.

Topics for papers may include, but are not limited to:

- (Dis)Orientation through images (mapping / graphical orientation, imaging methods, ...)
- (Dis)Orientation through sound (Dolby Surround, dubbing, radio plays, parking assistant systems, ...)
- (Dis)Orientation in space (localization, overview, theory of space, ...)
- (Dis)Orientation in time (non/linearity, flashback/flashforward, time travel, ...)
- (Dis)Orientation in film (perspective, camera angles, continuity editing, crossing the line, ...)
- (Dis)Orientation on TV ("flow", serial narration, remote control, TV guide, EPG, ...)
- (Dis)Orientation on the web / at the pc (navigation, interfaces, hypertext, orientation in games, ...)
- (Dis)Orientation in print media (arrangement, order, design & typography, orientation in the text, ...)
- Media of Orientation (portable navigation devices, mobile phones, google latitude, GPS, ...)
- Historical perspectives (learning orientation in "new" media like film, TV, ...)
- Narrative modes of disorientation (unreliable narration, non-chronological narration, incoherent, complex storytelling, puzzle films, mindgame movies, ...)
- Transmedia storytelling

Keynote-Speaker:

Jason Mittell – Associate Professor of American Studies and Film & Media Culture, Middlebury College (USA)

Rolf Nohr – Professor für Medienästhetik/Medienkultur, Institut für Medienforschung, HBK Braunschweig (D)

Nanna Verhoeff – Associate Professor for Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University (NL)

Conference information:

Organisation: Julia Eckel (M.A.)
Bernd Leiendecker (M.A.)
Daniela Olek (M.A.)
Christine Piepiorka (Dipl./M.A.)

In cooperation with
the Media Studies Department,
the Ruhr-University Research School
and the "Gesellschaft der Freunde der RUB e.V."

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Contact: disorienting-media@rub.de
Website: www.disorienting-media.de
