

Department of Literature and History of Ideas
Stockholm University

Guest Lecture
by
Marie-Laure Ryan
Independent Scholar, U.S.A.

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15:00
Auditorium

Space, Maps and Narrative in the Digital Age

Maps have a long history of being connected to narrative: as sources of inspiration, as representations of the geography of the storyworld and as diagrams of the structure of the narrative text. Thanks to digital technology, maps have acquired new properties: they are now easily updated, interactive, customizable, dynamic, and responsive to live data. In this presentation I will discuss a number of artistic projects in which, thanks to one or the other of these properties, maps take an active part in the process of narration, rather than being used to illustrate an independently conceived storyworld. Building on a contrast between emotional and strategic space, as well as on the familiar contrast between space and place, I will discuss these projects as the manifestation of different experiences of space.

Marie-Laure Ryan, an independent scholar, was most recently (2010-2011) Johannes Gutenberg Fellow at the University of Mainz, Germany, where she researched the phenomenon of narrative distributed across various media. She is the author of Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory (1991), Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media (2001), and Avatars of Story (2006). She has also edited Cyberspace Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory (1999), Narrative Across Media: The Languages of Storytelling (2004), Intermediality and Storytelling, with Marina Grishakova (2010), and together with David Herman and Manfred Jahn, The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory (2005). She is presently editing The Johns Hopkins Guide to New Media and Digital Textuality with Lori Emerson and Benjamin Robertson. Her scholarly work has earned her the Prize for Independent Scholars and the Jeanne and Aldo Scaglione Prize for Comparative Literature, both from the Modern Language Association, and she has been the recipient of Guggenheim and NEA fellowships.

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