

Seminar IRH-ICUB

Consciousness and Cognition: An Interdisciplinary Approach

<https://irhunibuc.wordpress.com/2016/04/05/new-seminar-consciousness-in-philosophy-and-neuroscience/>

convenor Dr. Diana Stanciu

<https://irhunibuc.wordpress.com/associated-members/>

Date: Tuesday, 4 April 2017, 17h

Place: IRH-ICUB (1 D. Brandza Str.), conference room

Dr. Miruna Doicaru

Lecturer and researcher at the NHTV Academy of Digital Entertainment (www.nhtv.nl)

Miruna Doicaru is a lecturer in research methods and a researcher at the NHTV, the Academy of Digital Entertainment (www.nhtv.nl), under the professorship of Digital Media Concepts. Her main research area is the understanding of narrative absorbing experiences and of their determinants (media related, narrative, ultimately aiming to reveal what makes a story engaging and entertaining). Since she started working for the NHTV she took her research towards the area of VR narratives, putting her focus on understanding how story-telling can be adapted to VR in order not only to attract users into the VR environment but also to keep them hooked and entertained. Miruna Doicaru is also interested in exploring more objective forms of measurement for VR narrative experiences and enjoyment. So far she worked on projects focused on VR film, VR journalism and VR and rehabilitation tool.

Thoughts on Possible Applications and Future of Immersive Journalism

(Report on a Study Exploring the Impact of Virtual Reality on the Europeans' Attitudes towards Refugees)

Media plays a crucial role in the way audiences engage with news stories and consequently shape attitudes towards groups that are new to us. To give a concrete example, media may have a great impact on the way Europeans regard the great influx of refugees – as we get most of the information about this group of people we do not have direct contact with and form attitudes towards them from the news. Historically, high levels of migration are strongly associated with negative attitudes towards the newcomers.

VR is regarded as a potential medium that may manage to bring diverse groups of people together, and eventually enhance intergroup cooperation. However, while some researches managed to show that VR has the power to enhance empathy, the applications used in these studies did not consist of actual news footage, but constructed VR environments.

During my presentation I will refer to a study we conducted in order to determine to what extent the VR 360-degree film has the potential to engage audiences differently than traditional forms of media, as well as positively influence audience attitudes towards the out-group depicted (refugees). A quasi-experimental study was conducted and a total of 90 participants were exposed to a refugee news story in one of the three different media formats (e.g. only text; text with pictures; VR 360-degree film). The three media formats were compared in terms of their

capacity to generate spatial presence, narrative engagement, and positive attitudes towards the portrayed out-group. The obtained results are compatible with most of our expectations, confirming that a VR 360-degree film format creates higher levels of spatial presence and narrative engagement as compared to more traditional forms of media. With regard to attitudes towards refugees, more positive attitudes towards the out-group were recorded in the VR 360-degree film condition as compared to the text condition. No difference in attitudes towards refugees was captured between the VR 360-degree film condition and the text + pictures condition. During my presentation I will discuss possible explanations for and consequences of our findings in the context of the high interest VR is receiving in the world of journalism.

(Laila Lopes and Marnix van Gisbergen contributed to the design and data collection for the reported study)