

Workshop

What is Narrative? Epistemic and Ethical Insights

Wednesday 20th March 2019, 15:15-18:00
University of Lausanne, Anthropole Building, Room 3068

Hosted by the Centre for Linguistics and Language Sciences
Organizers: Lazare Benaroyo and Gilles Merminod

The workshop is devoted to the epistemic and ethical issues raised by the use of narratives as a method of inquiry, and aims at exploring the relevance of (what one means by) narratives in such contexts. In narrative medicine for instance, what is narrative? And what is the kind of knowledge it provides?

Narratives and ethics (Pr. Lazare Benaroyo, University of Lausanne)

Narratives as epistemic tools (Dr. Marie Jean Walker, Monash University, Australia)

Narrative has been claimed to be a valuable tool for understanding various phenomena, including for clinicians seeking to understand patients during the clinical encounter. Critics argue, however, that if narrative is conceptualized narrowly, these claims are implausible, while if it is conceptualized broadly claims about its uses are trivial. In this talk I examine the questions of what narrative is, and what knowledge narratives offer, to develop a conception of narrative that responds to these criticisms. I argue for a pluralist view on which a narrative is any depiction of events in which the description of each event is influenced by the description of the other events. The view aims to resolve the criticisms by locating the distinctive epistemic strength of narrative precisely in its breadth.

Narrative as a fickle notion (Dr. Gilles Merminod, UNIL/CHUV)

Please contact the workshop organizers with any queries: gilles.merminod@unil.ch