Collegium Helveticum

Transdisciplinarity

Prof.
Mary S. Morgan

Tuesday, May 7, 2019, 18:15–20:00

Creating Coherence: The Role of Narratives in Science

In cooperation with the London School of Economics and Political Science and the project "Narrative Science".





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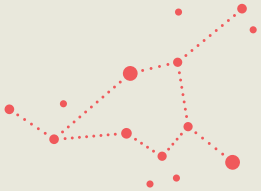

Recent arguments have suggested that an important role for narratives in the sciences lies in their potential to create coherent accounts out of a mixture of bits of evidence, elements of theory, concepts, unresolved puzzles, and so forth. This is a practical problem often faced by scientists, but the narrative threads that bind those elements together have so far gained little attention. Narrative scholars assume that the thread of narrative is time: they claim that narratives are essentially time-based, which provides a very strong recipe for creating coherence. But not all science narratives privilege time, which opens up the interesting, and awkward question of how narrative coherence is built when time offers little by way of recipe or constraint.

Mary S. Morgan is the Albert O. Hirschman Professor of History and Philosophy of Economics at the London School of Economics; she is an elected Fellow of the British Academy, and an Overseas Fellow of the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her past research has focussed on practical aspects of economic science (questions about models, measurements, observation, experiments) and on broader topics in history and philosophy of science (such as the role of case studies, and use of factual knowledge), with most recent books: *The World in the Model* (CUP 2012) and *How Well Do Facts Travel?* (CUP 2011). She is currently working on projects on poverty measurement and how those numbers are used to change things in the world; and on the explanatory roles that narratives play across the sciences with a team of post-docs (funded by the European Research Council): https://www.narrative-science.org/

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Speaker
Prof. Mary S. Morgan
(Albert O. Hirschman Professor of History and Philosophy of Economics, LSE)

Venue
Collegium Helveticum
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