



Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind (MIT Press)

By David Herman

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Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind (MIT Press) By David Herman

With *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind*, David Herman proposes a cross-fertilization between the study of narrative and research on intelligent behavior. This cross-fertilization goes beyond the simple importing of ideas from the sciences of mind into scholarship on narrative and instead aims for convergence between work in narrative studies and research in the cognitive sciences. The book as a whole centers on two questions: How do people make sense of stories? And: How do people use stories to make sense of the world? Examining narratives from different periods and across multiple media and genres, Herman shows how traditions of narrative research can help shape ways of formulating and addressing questions about intelligent activity, and vice versa.

Using case studies that range from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* to sequences from *The Incredible Hulk* comics to narratives told in everyday interaction, Herman considers storytelling both as a target for interpretation and as a resource for making sense of experience itself. In doing so, he puts ideas from narrative scholarship into dialogue with such fields as psycholinguistics, philosophy of mind, and cognitive, social, and ecological psychology. After exploring ways in which interpreters of stories can use textual cues to build narrative worlds, or storyworlds, Herman investigates how this process of narrative worldmaking in turn supports efforts to understand -- and engage with -- the conduct of persons, among other aspects of lived experience.

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Editorial Review

Review

In *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind*, David Herman pioneers a transdisciplinary approach in which, rather than simply importing concepts from cognitive science and neuroscience, he brings research from narrative and science together to illuminate a common problem. A must-read not only for specialists in narrative but for anyone interested in the mutual actions of 'worlding a story' and 'storying a world.'

(N. Katherine Hayles, Professor of Literature, Duke University; author of *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis*)

In a dazzling integration of 'storying the world' and 'worlding the story,' David Herman brings into contact the ideas and methods of literary narratology, structuralist study of texts, cognitive neuroscience, and the philosophical and psychological means by which human beings absorb and interpret stories. He calls his method transdisciplinary. I disagree. I think it is infradisciplinary. This brilliant book gets under the distinctions that separate our disciplines from one another, reaching the substratum from which we all spring, the magma of human interconnection. As a result, he sees the erstwhile invisible; he says the until, now unsaid.

(Rita Charon, Program in Narrative Medicine, Columbia University)

A rich and illuminating transdisciplinary synthesis that contributes valuable resources and guidance for further work in narrative inquiry. Herman argues for an approach that treats narrative, dialectically, as both a complex object of interpretation and a crucial resource for making sense of the world. And he demonstrates how that enterprise should draw on and promote fruitful interchange between narratology and the sciences of mind and culture. This ambitious and stimulating book deserves a wide readership.

(Ageliki Nicolopoulou, Professor and Chair of Psychology, Lehigh University)

In yet another cutting-edge study of narrative, David Herman bears witness in his *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind* to the expanding role of narrative studies in transdisciplinary research. With a masterful overview of recent pathbreaking innovations, some of them authored by Herman himself, this systematically argued and richly documented work sets a new standard for a truly transdisciplinary dialogue in the social and human sciences.

(John Pier, University of Tours and CNRS (Paris))

Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind is an important attempt to bridge the gap between several (sub)disciplinary approaches while avoiding the pitfalls of the promotion of one master discipline....David Herman proves an excellent guide, both by the richness of the information he provides and by the clever positions he takes toward them.

(Leonardo)

About the Author

David Herman is Arts and Humanities Distinguished Professor in the Department of English at The Ohio State University. He is the author of *Basic Elements of Narrative* and other books.

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