

FACULTY OF LAW, HUMANITIES AND THE ARTS

2015 PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

Making Sense of Ourselves and Others: Narratives not Theories **Presented by Daniel D. Hutto**

Professor of Philosophical Psychology and Head of Philosophy
University of Wollongong

Date: 5.30pm, Wednesday 23 September 2015
Location: LHA Research Hub, Building 19 Room 2072
University of Wollongong
Register: [Online](#)



Making sense of each other's reasons is a cornerstone of human social life. It involves attributing beliefs, desires and hopes - in complex ways. Our capacity to do this is unique. It is so deeply ingrained in our daily existence that we tend only to notice it, and its critical importance, when it is damaged or absent altogether - as it is for individuals with severe autisms. What is the basis of this competence? How do we come by it?

In this lecture Professor Hutto introduces the idea that this remarkable ability is essentially a skill in producing and consuming a special sort of narrative, acquired by engaging in storytelling practices. Narrative practices have been at the heart of human society throughout our history. This lecture defends the stronger claim that storytelling might be absolutely central for enabling our capacity to understand ourselves and others. This crucial ability is not, as some suppose, simply built-in to our species. Our understanding of storytelling decides as to which therapies are the most promising and appropriate for treating certain mental health disorders and which sorts of educational opportunities should be provided for younger children. Equally, it matters when thinking about whether and how we, as adults, might improve abilities to understand ourselves and others.

Biography

Daniel D. Hutto is Professor of Philosophical Psychology at the University of Wollongong. His most recent books, include: *Wittgenstein and the End of Philosophy* (Palgrave, 2006), *Folk Psychological Narratives* (MIT, 2008). He is co-author of the award-winning *Radicalizing Enactivism* (MIT, 2013) and editor of *Narrative and Understanding Persons* (CUP, 2007) and *Narrative and Folk Psychology* (Imprint Academic, 2009). He regularly speaks at conferences and expert meetings for anthropologists, clinical psychiatrists, educationalists, narratologists, neuroscientists and psychologists.

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