answer sessions following an academic paper in the center are "strictly oriented toward the content of the paper." There is greater "civic consciousness" in periphery institutions (a point that Larry's teaching and service-oriented appointment contradicts). Academic meetings at center institutions, unlike those in the periphery, are "strictly functional, well-focused, [and] impersonal." A "grave seriousness" marks the halls of the center institution, where academics "enter a colleague's office/cubicle for mostly functional purposes." These are the most unrecognizable descriptions for me, but there are many others that cause me to doubt the explanatory adequacy of Canagarajah's center/periphery schema.

The final two chapters prepare for and then propose remedies to global inequalities in knowledge construction. These proposals are a pleasure to read and to contemplate, and many should be enacted. They include, for example, the suggestion that center journals stop requiring multiple copies of manuscripts, often burdening writers in the periphery; a call for center institutions to continue their support of periphery scholars once these scholars have returned home; and the recommendation that center journals accept more articles in languages other than English and in periphery varieties of English. This is a work that needs to be read by those in centers and peripheries—wherever they are—who can act to democratize scholarly publication and redress inequalities that inhibit knowledge construction.


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Many years back I recall reading in \textit{Time Magazine} an article about Stalin's conversation with his wife in the middle of the night in the Kremlin. The implied author in the article took the role of an omniscient narrator. I was so outraged on reading it that I suspended my reading and subscription to \textit{Time}. Surely there is no better index of fiction than an omniscient narrator. Unfortunately, as I listen to the news media these days omniscient narrators are back in fashion.

Of course, if the story told about Stalin had been at the time
acknowledged to be fanciful, the story would have had some truth to it in
demonizing Stalin. As Bruner points out, stories that we know to be fables
can give us cultural understanding of human affairs. For him, fictive
stories are imaginative constructs of meaning that can give us cultural
understanding. They create ways of making sense of things in the world.
They provide us with imaginative constructed possibilities in thinking
about the future. Bruner, using the semantic distinctions of Gottlob Frege,
says that fictive stories have "sense" without a "referent"; the former is
connotational the latter denotational. As subjunctive constructions, fic­
tive stories are counterfactual conditionals that explore suppositions
about what could have happened in the past, about what could be
happening now in human affairs, or about what could be possible in the
future.

Our suspicions about the stories that people tell are not always simply
about whether they are true or not. In some ways whether they are true or
false is not an important matter. What is important, though, is why anyone
would want to tell you a story that is not true. There are obviously serious
epistemic questions about truth in fiction. At times the truth in autobiog­
raphy is not much different from that found in autobiographical fiction.
Fictive storytelling in a way is very much like metaphor. We speak of both
as being literally false. What stories, either fictive or actual, do is to get
you to look at things from perspectives different from those with which
you are familiar. Stories are ways of directing your attention to things not
noted in experience or to affairs that possibly have run amuck. Storytelling
as Bruner would say is the vicar of our culture.

Bruner's Making Stories is a revision of a series of four lectures given
at the University of Bologna. The constraints of just four lectures make
the book brief. It is a condensed summary of Bruner's work on narrative.
His work on narrative in the past has been quite extensive, threading
through most of his books. In the last dozen years, Bruner has been
working with Anthony Amsterdam at the New York University Law
School on the uses of the narrative in case law. The two together have just
recently published a substantial study, Minding the Law (Harvard Uni­
versity Press, 2002), where they try to show rhetorically how storytelling
tactics by attorneys using mythic and literary stories help shape court
decisions.

In Making Stories, what strikes me is that not only is Bruner offering
a propaedeutic for future narrative studies, but he is also providing us with
a map of disciplines engaged in narrative studies in the last twenty five
years. In the first footnote in the first chapter, Bruner gives us a pocket
history of recent narrative studies. According to Bruner the modern beginning of narrative studies is in the work of the Russian folklorist, Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktale* (Texas Press, 1968). Important in the early modern development of narratives studies is the work of Kenneth Burke in books such as the *Grammar of Motives*. And readily available on the internet is the classic article “Narrative Analysis” by social linguist and ethnologist William Labov.

Another milestone listed is the work of Hayden White on the tropic styles in narrative history. Additionally Bruner lists works on autobiography, especially that of literary critic Walter Spengemann, *Forms of Autobiography* (Yale University Press, 1980). Narrative interpretation and analysis is also key to the work of anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz. And finally there is a landmark book on what Bruner calls the “narrative turn,” *On Narrative*, edited by W.T.J. Mitchell (U of Chicago P, 1981). It is a collection of articles by leading figures in a number of important disciplines.

In *The Culture of Education* (Harvard University Press, 1996), Bruner advocates that students should take control over their own mental activity and they should strive through narrative in reaching understanding in a collaboration with other minds. One thesis guiding Bruner about the importance of narrative in education is to be found in his preface. “It is through our own narratives we principally construct a version of ourselves in the world, and it is through its narrative that a culture provides models of identity and agency to its members.”

Bruner’s Jerusalem-Harvard Lectures *Acts of Meaning* (Harvard University Press, 1990) is a summation and delineation of the methods of what he calls folk psychology, where narratives and their interpretation are crucial to understanding the processes of cognitive development in psychology. In opposition to information processing and computation, Bruner claims narrative is the key in “meaning construction,” especially as we find it taking place in autobiography and in the processes of “self making.”

Susan Weisser and Bruner did a joint study entitled *In Search of Mind: Essays in Autobiography* (Harvard UP) that he sketches in *Acts of Meaning*. The study consists of interviews with members of a close family and with a follow up family session to rectify differences in how each member perceives himself or herself and others in the family quite differently. The study utilizes literary interpretive methods to discuss meaning construction in shaping self concepts in the processes of self making. Their work uses literary critical method to examine what goes on
in the construction of self concepts in a mutually supportive cultural context where there is cultural dissonance.

Bruner’s *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Harvard University Press, 1986) is the place to start any serious study of what Bruner has to say on the importance of narrative in cognitive studies. I found *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* exceptionally insightful about what he delineates as two modes of thought, two ways of ordering experience or two ways of constructing reality. They are storytelling and propositional reasoning. As he says, “A good story and a well formed argument are two natural kinds [of thinking].” And both can be used rhetorically for convincing us about the other. In saying this Bruner rejects his past views on the ascendancy of analytic cognition over the left brain intuitions found in his early work, *On Knowing: Essay on the Left Hand* (Harvard University Press, 1979).

In *Making Stories*, Bruner reminds us just how much storytelling is such a pervasive mode of everyday communication. We hear and tell stories the live long day. Stories are as pervasive as the air we breathe. He goes on to speculate on how instrumentally important storytelling is in a child’s learning language and how important it is in the development of an emerging concept of self in children. After Bruner recognized in the sixties that educational failures in schools were a result of cultural deprivation and a lack of self esteem, he was the prominent proponent and major architect planning Head Start.

In *Making Stories*, Bruner speculates that story grammar has been basic to the evolution of linguistic syntax and “case grammar,” which grammar he says takes note of such narrative distinctions as who did what to whom with what intent, and with what results, in what setting, in what course of time, and by what means. And in this respect he relates narrative grammar to Kenneth Burke’s dramatism, which he claims captures the fundamental grammar and nature of stories both actual and fictive. What drives a story, according to Burke and Bruner, is Trouble, the misfit and tensions between elements of Burke’s Pentad.

Storytelling for Bruner is more than just a chronicle of events. It involves accounts of moving from the ordinary and the expected to complications that involve episodes and plots that challenge the commonplaces of culture and the normal expectations that we have in our cultural experiences. According to Bruner story structure involves 1) a prologue of familiar action, 2) a breach in cultural canonicity and expectation, and 3) a reconciliation, a restitution of initial legitimacy, or sometimes a revolutionary change to a new order of cultural legitimacy.
In essence, the structure of narrative for Bruner is Aristotle's plot structure with discovery and peripeteia creating crisis and dramatic tension as outlined in the *Poetics* in which there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to an action.

But the narrator sometimes adds a coda to a story, which is outside the narrative. Codas as expository interpretive commentary are always external to a story. They are interpretive standpoints external to stories that give us interesting additional principled or propositional perspectives with which to re-look at or re-interpret a story. Note how differently a coda would be if it were stated not after, but before the telling of a story. I am reminded of William Bennett's *Book of Virtues*. Such a preface of an Aesop type moral before the telling of a story would act in the beginning very much like a title of a painting which structures the perception of how we look at that painting. Too many people like Bennett tell you how to read the stories they tell.

An original interpretive commentary can have novel effects on how we look at a story. We now see it like the duck-rabbit in one aspect then in another as discussed by Wittgenstein in the *Investigations*. As Bruner would say stories make sense under different interpretations. Importantly, then, commentary and storytelling interact with each other in good old hermeneutic circles. According to Bruner the fact that there are multiple interpretive perspectives in stories merely reflects the complexity, the ambiguities, and incompleteness in our knowledge of human affairs that is the subject of our stories.

Narrators in telling stories intrude into the text of storytelling with commentary on the story told, as Thackeray does in *Vanity Fair*. It is this interacting dialectic and intrusive commentary that seems so typical of a great deal of writing in composition classes. What strikes me about this interaction between commentary and storytelling is how much of student writing involves the personal telling of stories either as illustrations or as modes of persuasion for explicitly stated contentions.

Obviously, the question of importance in assessing the quality of such writing is whether it is the story or is it the extensive commentary that gives quality and worth to such writing. It may be the striking insights in the commentary that are of most value, or again it may be the richness of the insights in the story itself that gives the writing its worth. As Bruner would emphasize, there are two modes of thought, each giving us cognitive validity. And surely as Bruner would want to remind us, we cannot ignore the pervasiveness of stories in student writing. For many students, it is easier to tell stories than to write persuasive argument.