



## **Actual Minds, Possible Worlds**

*Jerome Bruner*

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## **Actual Minds, Possible Worlds** Jerome Bruner

In this characteristically graceful and provocative book, Jerome Bruner, one of the principal architects of the cognitive revolution, sets forth nothing less than a new agenda for the study of mind. According to Professor Bruner, cognitive science has set its sights too narrowly on the logical, systematic aspects of mental life--those thought processes we use to solve puzzles, test hypotheses, and advance explanations. There is obviously another side to the mind--a side devoted to the irrepressibly human acts of imagination that allow us to make experience meaningful. This is the side of the mind that leads to good stories, gripping drama, primitive myths and rituals, and plausible historical accounts. Bruner calls it the "narrative mode," and his book makes important advances in the effort to unravel its nature.

Drawing on recent work in literary theory, linguistics, and symbolic anthropology, as well as cognitive and developmental psychology, Professor Bruner examines the mental acts that enter into the imaginative creation of possible worlds, and he shows how the activity of imaginary world making undergirds human science, literature, and philosophy, as well as everyday thinking, and even our sense of self.

Over twenty years ago, Jerome Bruner first sketched his ideas about the mind's other side in his justly admired book, *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand*. *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* can be read as a sequel to this earlier work, but it is a sequel that goes well beyond its predecessor by providing rich examples of just how the mind's narrative mode can be successfully studied. The collective force of these examples points the way toward a more humane and subtle approach to the investigation of how the mind works.

## **Actual Minds, Possible Worlds Details**

Date : Published October 15th 1987 by Harvard University Press (first published 1985)

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## **From Reader Review Actual Minds, Possible Worlds for online ebook**

### **Steve says**

This book is highlighted in a Brain Pickings review on the psychology of what makes a great story.

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### **Danshade says**

I'm still on page 5.

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### **Doni says**

Too limited.

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### **Erin Reilly-Sanders says**

Dry to the point of unnecessarily unreadable, poorly organized with occasional little gems of thought. Probably a good book to read about rather than actually try to read. Might be a lot better if you're reading it as from a literary perspective rather than educator trying to learn about learning.

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### **Eliezer Sneiderman says**

Chapter 9 is one of the best descriptions of constructionism that I have seen.

"There is no aboriginal world that exists apart from our understanding".

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### **Mark says**

Cited in Telling Our Own Story: The Role of Narrative in Racial Healing  
<http://perception.org/wp-content/upl...>

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### **Kathrina says**

Narrative constructs how we view and make sense of the world and who we are in that (infinite varieties of) the world. Constructivist.

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## **David Schaafsma says**

Accessible and lucid, psychologist Bruner's text focused on the power of narrative to imagine possible worlds. The one thing I found problematic that he later corrected in his approach to the mind is that he saw thinking as essentially divided into two categories, analytical and narrative, not an original idea, but binary, limited. My view is that narrative permeates all thinking, it is fundamental in constructing reality, and this is something he came to agree with me about, eventually. :)

For readers of fiction, Bruner saw all narrative as important to life, including fictions, in the process of imagining possible futures. Important work as part of the late seventies and eighties "narrative turn" in the disciplines worldwide.

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## **Janet says**

Another book for class. Less scientific than all the others I've read so far, so I have a much greater understanding of the book!

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