

In Memoriam Jerome Bruner (1915-2016)

In Memoriam Jerome Bruner (1915-2016)

Walter L. Arias Gallegos

Universidad Católica San Pablo, Arequipa, Perú

Received on 11-10-16

Aproved on 25-10-16


Corresponding author

Email: walterlizandro@hotmail.com

How to cite:

Arias, W. (2016). In Memoriam Jerome Bruner (1915-2016). *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 4(2), 427-436. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20511/pyr2016.v4n2.127>

© Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola, Vicerrectorado de Investigación y Desarrollo, 2016.

 This article is distributed under license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 Internacional (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).



On the past June 5, Jerome Bruner died in New York unexpectedly, but at the same time painlessly and calmly. Bruner has been one of the most influential psychologist of the 20th century thanks to his academic work in the fields of educational psychology and narrative psychology, where he became famous. He has also worked in military psychology, cultural psychology and, more recently, forensic psychology (Arias, 2015).

Jerome Bruner was born on October 1, 1915 in New York. He turned 100 years old last year. He studied psychology at Duke University. Then, he worked in Harvard University, where he did an outstanding work in promoting the development of cognitive psychology (Arias, 2005). Thus, the publication of his book *A study of thinking* marked the beginning of the cognitive movement in 1956 (Bruner, Goodnow and Austin, 2003). Moreover, he established with George Miller the *Center for Cognitive Studies*, which served to do cognitive research on various subjects (Greenwood, 2011). This prestigious center was visited by important celebrities, who had strong influence in the psychology of their time, such as Noam Chomsky, Jean Piaget, Alexander Luria, John von Newman, Norbert Wiener (Temporetti, 2010).

Among the subjects studied by Bruner throughout his life are perception, concept formation (Bruner et al., 2003), protolanguage (Bruner, 2002), cognitive structure (Bruner, 1973), scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976), and so on. His work had a very big impact in education through the U.S. educational reform with the conferences *Woods Hole* of 1959 (Bruner, 1968) and the program *Head Start*, in which he collaborated with Urie Bronfenbrenner (Guilar, 2009). He advocated for a solid teaching theory that lies in active pedagogy and approach of students to the world of science (Bruner, 1987).

A good part of his work rests on the ideas of Piaget, Luria and Vigotsky in terms of aspects such as the stages of development: enactive, iconic and symbolic, as well as the narrative construction of identity. His cognitive orientation, constructivist approach and cultural position have given shape to his multiple ideas, that he has known to express with originality, such as the theory of the “New Look” (Bruner and Goodman, 1947), the theory of discovery learning (Bruner, 1961) and the evolutionary model of cognitive growth (Bruner, 1966).

Additionally, he has been responsible for the cognitive revolution and cultural revolution. In that sense, he was devoted, for more than four decades, to analyzing how language allows us to construct new realities as our own selves (Bruner, 2004). Narrative is, according to him, the door of culture and a psychological window of our interior world (Bruner, 2003).

Among his most widespread works are: *The process of education, Toward a theory of instruction, The relevance of education, Process of cognitive growth, Actual minds and possible worlds, Acts of meaning, Minding the law, Making stories*, etc. His research articles are published in the best psychology journals such as *American Psychologist, Child Development, Harvard Educational Review, Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Social Research*, etc.

Bruner was president of the APA in 1964 and was awarded with the CIBA medal in 1974. Moreover, he won the International Balzan Prize in 1987. He was granted the Honoris Causa Doctorate by the Yale University, Columbia University, Paris-Sobornne University, Autonomous University of Madrid, University of Berlin and University of Rome, among others.

Furthermore, his life has been an example of struggle to defend the noblest ideals of the human being, enduring and innovative academic work, as well as creative and profound lucidity, which characterized him until the last moments of his existence. Here we say goodbye to him and reaffirm our commitment to continue spreading his work and to follow his steps on the path of academic psychology. Rest in peace, Jerome Bruner.

References

- Arias, W. L. (2005). *Psicólogos hombres de ciencia*. Arequipa: Editorial Faraday.
- Arias, W. L. (2015). Jerome Bruner: 100 años dedicados a la psicología, la educación y la cultura. *Revista Peruana de Historia de la Psicología*, 1, 59-79.
- Bruner, J. S. (1961). The act of discovery. *Harvard Educational Review*, 4, 21-32.
- Bruner, J. S. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. S. (1968). *El proceso de la educación*. México: Unión Tipográfica Editorial Hispano Americana.
- Bruner, J. S. (1973). *Beyond the information given*. New York: Norton.
- Bruner, J. S. (2002). *Acción, pensamiento y lenguaje*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Bruner, J. S. (1987). *La importancia de la educación*. Barcelona: Paidós educador.
- Bruner, J. S. (2003). *La fábrica de historias. Derecho, literatura y vida*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Bruner, J. S. (2004). Life as narrative. *Social Research*, 71(3), 691-710.
- Bruner, J. S. & Goodman, C. C. (1947). Value and need as organizing factors in perception. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 42(1), 33-44.
- Bruner, J. S.; Goodnow, J. J. & Austin, G. (2003). *El proceso mental en el aprendizaje*. Madrid: Narcea.
- Greenwood, J. D. (2011). *Historia de la psicología. Un enfoque conceptual*. México, D. F.: McGraw-Hill.
- Guilar, M. E. (2009). Las ideas de Bruner: de la revolución cognitiva a la revolución cultural. *Educere*, 13(44), 235-241.
- Temporetti, F. (2010). La psicología en construcción... y una pedagogía también. *Psyberia*, 2(3), 7-40.
- Wood, D.; Bruner, J. S. y Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17, 89-100.