

Contents

Preface	vii
Introduction	1
<i>Modernism narrowed the conception that economists had of their science.</i>	
1 Telling Stories Economically	10
<i>Economics in fact uses metaphors, which is to say, models. But it also uses stories—stylized facts—about the weight of taxes or the rise of industry.</i>	
2 Plot and Genre in Economics	24
<i>The analogy of economics with the writing of stories can be pushed far, from genre to the implied author.</i>	
3 The Politics of Stories in Historical Economics	40
<i>If economists are storytellers they are historians. The stories of economics show in historical economics, such as that surrounding England's decline from Number One.</i>	
4 Economic Rhetoric in Aid of the Story Line	56
<i>Every element of rhetoric supports the expert's story.</i>	
5 The Scholar's Story	70
<i>A great historical economist told his story more self-consciously than most economists. One can unveil a rhetoric without invariably finding badness.</i>	

6	Metaphor Against the Story: Chaos and Counterfactuals	83
	<i>Metaphors and stories can get in each other's way, as in the hypothesis contrary to fact and in the telling of stories about explosive times.</i>	
7	The Poetics and Economics of Magic	97
	<i>The story uncriticized by a metaphor or the metaphor uncriticized by a story is magic, against which economics warns.</i>	
8	The American Question: If You're So Smart Why Ain't You Rich?	111
	<i>Get-rich-quick schemes, for example, with their reversal of status, are stories. But they are defective, magical. The mere critic cannot advise so well.</i>	
9	The Limits of Criticism	123
	<i>Such criticism of criticism applies beyond economics. Economists and other social experts can tell wise stories of the past, but cannot profitably predict.</i>	
10	Keeping the Company of Economists	135
	<i>Storytelling by an economic expert affects his character, and then his economics.</i>	
11	The Common Weal and Economic Stories	150
	<i>The stories told well or ill govern policy. The story of American economic "failure" (a replay of the British story) is a dangerous example. Humans need stories, but they need them to be watched. A humanistic and interpretive economics, which keeps the mathematics but is aware of its stories, can do the watching.</i>	
	Works Cited	165
	Index	177