

from theology. The dominant theology of our country is Judeo-Christianity and this doctrine defines the standards" (p. 167). This leads the author to posit *Thom's Theorem*: "[that] conscience drives behavior in mature individuals" (p. 168). Why this simple statement is dubbed a theorem is not explicated. The reference to Judeo-Christian theology is not merely offered as an exemplar of moral leadership. Thom clearly intends that Judeo-Christian theology be reasserted as the explicit ideology of public schools. Rejecting the principles of pluralism and multiculturalism, Thom laments the decline of Christian influence in society and argues that "Christians are willing to accept other religions, and educators who are Christian still are best attuned to our society's fabric" (p. 169).

Thom's model represents a retrograde step in the attempts to promote pluralism and multiculturalism in Canadian society, in general, and in education, in particular. Rather than moving toward a celebration of diversity, Thom suggests that we endorse a mono-cultural core which is merely tolerant of other cultures and beliefs. Although Thom asserts that "flexibility in interpretation of scriptures is required to accommodate such things as archaic views of the universe, sexist and racist inferences. . ." (p. 170), one is still left wondering just how much **deviance** will be tolerated in Thom's just society.

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**Anne Haas Dyson & Celia Genishi (Eds.).**  
**THE NEED FOR STORY:**  
**CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN CLASSROOM AND COMMUNITY.**  
Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English (1994).  
259 pp. \$19.95 (NCTE members \$14.95) ISBN 0-8141-3300-2.

*The Need for Story* is a collection of 16 essays, only three of which have been published elsewhere, that focuses on the role of stories and story-telling in the construction of the individual. Essays such as these, which argue for the importance of stories in the shaping of knowledge, inevitably face paradoxes of genre: their case is for narration but such cases are traditionally made in the alternative genres of exposition and argument. Some of the essays face this paradox squarely – none more so than Jerome Bruner's. He concludes the initial expository section of his "Life as Narrative" by saying: "And that, I now want to assure you, is the end of the omniscient auctorial voice. For our task now is to sample the texts, the narratives of these four lives. . ." But of course, this is not the end of the "auctorial voice" (and in here renouncing claims to the "omniscient" he mockingly abandons more territory than he ever occupied). His sampling of the narratives is in the context of an analysis which

draws insightfully from such conceptual material as Burke's *Pentad* and Rorty's theory of personality. Shirley Brice Heath, in a fascinating essay in the final section of the book, takes a different tack around the same problem by arguing explicitly that stories can constitute a kind of nonconceptual theory.

In making the selections for this book, the editors too have nicely walked the line between the exposition of conceptual theory and the retelling of significant stories. The three articles which make up the first section are weighted towards narrative. In the first, Maxine Green makes the case for a multicultural curriculum, largely by telling us the story of her classroom experience in teaching literature. The second is the article by Bruner (already mentioned); and the third, an essay on the power of personal storytelling, is presented in a similarly narrative mode. The thematic focus of the book's second section is on issues of gender and culture – "whose stories are told." The section is largely conceptual and dominated by research studies. A highlight for me is Pam Gilbert's argument that the proficiency which young women gain in school writing programs may, in fact, operate to keep women in subordinate positions. The final section is made up of articles on a variety of sites in which story-telling functions. These include a range of formal educational sites – from preschool to teacher's college – as well as places like the inner city boys' and girls' clubs which are the subject of Shirley Brice Heath's essay.

Not surprising, given that this is an NCTE publication, the book is addressed to teachers. Its dominant tone is hortatory, with most essays presenting and many explicitly concluding with an argument for personal storytelling, gender inclusivity, or multicultural literature in the curriculum. This form of address may make some readers feel uncomfortably cast in the role of unredeemed (or at least "undecided") when they already see themselves among the converted on these issues. Some Canadian readers may be put off by the exclusively American focus when the pedagogical implications are drawn, but surely most are like me and used to consoling themselves that "it is not likely much different in Canada." Still, it might have been tactful (not to mention good marketing?) to have included a piece reflecting the Canadian experience of official multiculturalism. Certainly the editors have assembled material which makes a compelling case for the need for story, and their own introductory and concluding essays set up and summarize that case well.

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