
Section Two: Story as Theory

Stories seem to have generated almost as many theories as they have audiences, especially in the academic world. Three presenters at the conference spun their own theories on different aspects of storytelling and audience. Joseph Sobol analyzed the development of the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee, as a twentieth-century turning point in the “profession” of storytelling—a movement beginning as down-home discovery and ending as organized stardom. Betsy Hearne made an analogy between women undervalued as midwives delivering babies, and women undervalued as midwives delivering stories and children’s books. She also examined the role of midwife/storyteller characters in juvenile literature, who seem to reflect some of the same characteristics of professionals in the field of juvenile literature. Malore Brown described the intensely varied responses of a multicultural classroom to her storytelling course assignment on *Little Black Sambo*, emphasized how important is professional educators’ awareness of ethnically diverse folktales, and told about discovering the background of her own African-American family lore.

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