

OPEN FORUM

As current *Folklore Forum* editor Matt Bradley suggested in issue 28.2 of this journal, "Open Forum" offers a space for discussion among folklorists and others interested in current debates and rising trends in folkloristics and related fields. Beginning with that issue, we launched a dialogue about the possible directions for study that folklorists find opening before them in a postmodern world filled with seemingly infinite potential but also fraught with "crises." Natalie Underberg and Gregory Hansen presented strong position papers in "Open Forum" that addressed concerns of both purpose and promise. Stephen Olbrys led readers on a lengthy but playful stroll through the dark wood of the discipline's discourse of crisis that ultimately brought us to an opening that offers clear ground for further conversation. It is such conversation, serious or playful, pleasant or polemical, that the "Open Forum" section seeks to foster on matters ideological, theoretical, and methodological.

We are pleased to offer in this issue responses to the dialogue commenced by the essayists noted above and ask readers to consider contributing to this ongoing confabulation. John Laudun seizes upon the misgivings about postmodernism expressed by some of the previous participants in this discussion and sets out to clarify in a serious and straightforward tone the benefits for folklore of exploring the postmodern project. Given the frequent but too often misguided talk about postmodernism in scholarship today, Laudun provides a valuable service in "mapping a new direction" in our debates over this theme.

Our other piece for this installment of "Open Forum" comes to us in the form of a letter to the editor from William Doty. Doty commends Olbrys's interrogation of folklore's disciplinarity and suggests that the author's engagement with postmodernism and the crisis talk of folkloristics not only offers a wise deconstruction of rigidities but also moves toward an appropriate model for tackling the future. We are elated to publish Professor Doty's letter of encouragement here both for its praise of our beloved colleague Stephen Olbrys and for the pride we have in keeping open the space for significant discussion which the founders of *Folklore Forum* intended thirty years ago. It is now for you, the reader, to continue the conversation as you respond to John Laudun or to any of the myriad other issues and challenges presented by the contemporary study and practice of folkloristics. Although *Folklore Forum* has moved the main portion of the journal to an edition-specific topical format, this section will always remain open.

Troy Boyer