

From the Editor

Initiated by a contest honoring the late Warren E. Roberts—a distinguished Indiana University professor intimately acquainted with things both traditional and local—this special issue on “place” has evolved into a forum that draws on a range of subject matter, disciplinary perspectives, and presentation styles.

Lisa Gabbert, winner of the Warren Roberts Prize, begins this discussion by investigating the relationship between material objects, cultural performances, and the concept of place. Drawing on her experience with a snow-sculpting team in McCall, Idaho, Gabbert argues that the snow sculptures order attention to social, physical, and idealist dimensions of place—to activities that define and alter relationships among people, landscape, and history. Aiming to “circumvent an assumption of isomorphism between place and culture,” Gabbert combines narrative and analysis to reveal the complexities of “placemaking activity in a festival context.”

Like any good title, “99721: The Place of Many Caribou Droppings” both predicts and demonstrates the ideas that will follow. This essay by Margaret B. Blackman suggests the lenses and symbols through which geographic locations are perceived, known, and designated. By juxtaposing numbers and names, official and unofficial, Native and introduced, story and report, Blackman gives a sense of the complex assumptions and associations that permeate discussions of place—in this case, Anaktuvuk, Alaska.

The difference between “place” and “space” has been a foundational issue in studies of cultural geography and “the local,” and it is one that the authors of this volume continue to explore. Nikki Bado-Fralick’s contribution, “Circles of Transformation,” focuses on the idea of space—in particular, it reconsiders the distinction between sacred and profane space. By tracing the ways in which space is manipulated throughout a particular Wiccan initiation ritual, Bado-Fralick demonstrates how the theological significance of space shifts depending on human action. Her analysis of how transformation of

space is tied to transformation of person affirms a conception of space as dynamic and processual.

Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt and Isaac Jack Lévy collaborate in "Making Atlanta Home: Recollections of Place through Narrative." In this dialogically structured essay, they recount stories—their own experiences and those of their mothers—to explore how places come to feel familiar, like "home." The two argue that narratives (and the experiences that narratives index) combine to cushion one's entry into the unfamiliar by enabling people to transport place through space.

"La Casa del Padre Román" returns this volume to its opening topic: tangible objects and their relation to place. Here, instead of considering ephemeral snow sculptures, Gustavo Ponce looks at vernacular architecture in the Los Altos region of Mexico. Ponce embarks on a close study of an abandoned home, searching for architectural clues to one man's life and purposes. But this priest's house has also become the locus of and inspiration for stories told in the broader community. Ponce concludes that Father Román's colonial revival home, firmly rooted in place, serves as a monument to both an individual and a town's history.

Ray Cashman's article also explores connections between structures on the landscape and local identity. However, "Politics and the Sense of Place in Northern Ireland" focuses on the ways in which place—landscape, memory, and narrative—can be shaped to create an alternative future, rather than mobilized to reinforce past patterns of interpretation and interaction. Cashman describes how Catholic and Protestant neighbors formed the Killeter and District Historical Society, then set about selecting and preserving local sites that might further the group's goal of surmounting entrenched social divisions.

The connection between place and narrative is central to many of the articles presented in this issue; we thought it only fitting, then, to include a selection of narratives from Oaxaca, Mexico, in the Collectanea section. One of the tales, in fact, is a local legend, incorporating historical details and the narrator's belief in supernatural powers; the legend both explains local place names and is authenticated by them. The other narratives are folktales; "Las Tres Preguntas" is an example of Aarne-Thompson type 922, *The King and the Abbot*, while "Macario el Curandero" combines both AT 332, *Godfather Death*, and AT 332B, *Death and Luck*. Delightful narratives

in themselves, the tales are also interesting because of the process they represent. Originally told in Zapotec, then retold in Spanish or translated into written Spanish by another Zapotec speaker, the narratives were then translated into English by Hans Ternes, a professor of Romance languages at Lawrence University. Both Spanish and English translations are presented here, materials intended to prompt further discussion about collecting, presenting, and analyzing oral materials.

Taken together, the articles in this special issue of *Folklore Forum* reveal the myriad ways in which location is created and reinterpreted through cultural expression; in addition, they demonstrate how a sense of place can provide a warrant for expressive culture itself. For those wishing to explore the interrelationships between place and forms of cultural expression in more detail, the references cited by each author should provide a fruitful starting point.

—Danille Christensen Lindquist