INTRODUCTION

This number of the FOLKLORE FORUM, like Sebeok's Myth; A Symposium, represents rather a mixed bag of ideas. The subjects treated range from methodology in the undergraduate classroom and the image of the discipline in the liberal arts curriculum to ghetto education and tiny tots mass media programming. The writers are involved with philosophy and methodology and even pedagogical public relations. As diverse in outlook as these articles are, we hope that they mark an awareness of the fact that virtually all professional folklorists are educators as well as scholars.

There has for some time been a marked bias on the part of many professors against the academic discipline of Education. This bias has of course been by no means limited to scholars and teachers of folklore and has principally been directed against the presumed inanities of "methods courses." The classic cliché has perhaps been: "They try to teach you how to teach without teaching you what to teach." Such criticism has perhaps often been justified, but there is the danger that such sentiments can mask an attitude hostile to legitimate reflection on educational processes and problems. The scholar, in his skepticism for "Education," finds a convenient excuse for ignoring the philosophy, psychology, and aims of his teaching duties and rarely arrives at any structed conception of education. Needless to say, such a scholar makes a poor educator.

The results of such an attitude may range from an inability on the part of individual scholars to cope with educational reform to the disillusion of hordes of undergraduates baffled by the demands of a discipline that seems to lack a rationale. The discipline of folklore, as little understood as it is in the United States, needs particularly inspired interpreters in the competitive American academic arena. Unlike better established branches of study, folklore can ill afford to become entangled in the minutiae of scholarship in the classroom. We ought to give concerted attention to the question of what folklore uniquely offers to a "well rounded" education and how it can best be presented to students who may start out with a minimal interest in its goals. There must be a "why" of it all beyond our various personal hobbies and the vaguely articulated idea that folklore is somehow crucial to human interaction.

In the collection of essays at hand, Ellen Stekert begins to deal with the broad questions of folklore in the context of the general learning experience. Her concern is the ability of the folklore teacher to make the student's contact with our subject intellectually rewarding, even exciting. Although the term "relevance" has lately been a bit overused ("relevant to what?"), we can say that she makes a good case for establishing the relevance of folklore teaching, in the sense that it should tie in folk materials with other humanistic and social scientific concerns. Ray Browne is likewise concerned with the need for the academic community to meet the student's need to understand the world around him. He emphasizes the necessity for grappling with the totality of culture and for going beyond the elitist bias of many commentators to a notion of popular culture, which should be accorded increasing attention as it

increases in importance in modern mass society. Browne proceeds to describe the interesting developments at the Center for Popular Culture, Bowling Green University, where a new awareness of cultural forms is being translated into teaching and other means of reaching students and the general public.

If these two articles sketch in the background, Tom Burns jumps into the problems of the actual methodology of undergraduate teaching and gives us a detailed treatment of how a collecting project might profitably be handled. His suggestions should prove influential indeed, for they set forth a sound, even exciting procedure which promises to yield much for the student and the professor alike. Carter Craigie's contribution, highly amusing as well as informative, also offers self-help advice for the folklorist who would spread the word. The audience he has dealt with, however, is rather younger than the average undergraduate and his educational medium has not been the classroom but the television tube.

Jan Brunvand and Linda Dégh both write about folklore in the context of the university structure. Mrs. Dégh's article should prove useful in this age of academic reform, for we can mine it for the ideas of our European colleagues as we search for new types of departmental structures. Because fieldwork adds a unique dimension to folklore education, perhaps we can learn a good lesson from the more highly developed field training programs in Europe. Brunvand surveys the status of folklore with English departments in the American system. Although we hesitate to characterize in brief his entertaining combination of whimsy and common sense, he is essentially concerned with the misunderstanding of our discipline and the need to "missionize" not colleagues but students. In the end we must rely heavily upon our ability to teach.

Finally, Thomas Green, who has recently been employed, along with Roger D. Abrahams and Américo Paredes, as a consultant in folklore and culture by the Texas Education Agency, moves more into the area of "applied folklore." He notes with justification that professional education has too often walled itself off from "life" and proposes the value of folklore as a means of breaking down ethnocentricity and connecting the book with the street.

Thus, the articles are diverse indeed. Yet they represent only a few points of view and we hope they are the catalysts for rejoinders and other articles presenting other ideas. The editors of the FOLKLORE FORUM have in the past published several articles on pedagogy , by Robert Adams, Rosan Jordan and Matt Salo, in the pages of the regular series. Our pages continue to be open to ideas on folklore education, and we look forward to continuing the discussion in this area.