

From the Editor

This issue marks a change in submission guidelines. Please find them on the inside front cover. The original editors intended *Folklore Forum* to serve as an organ of communication in which folklore graduate students would explore and find ideas, suggestions, information, and opinions more often exchanged over a cup of coffee. The current editors and staff changed the guidelines in the desire to bolster that tradition. As a graduate student publication, *Folklore Forum* possesses a spirit and ability to contribute to the study of folklore in a manner not possible at other journals by supporting the efforts of fellow students. Guidelines and good intentions, however, mean little by themselves. A true graduate student forum depends upon receiving excellent articles, stimulating ideas, and boss responses to articles and essays. We are dependent upon our skilled contributors. With that in mind, we would like to revive a traditional staff position, corresponding editors, and to invite our colleagues studying folklore elsewhere to join us in this capacity. To run the journal to its full potential it is necessary to communicate with graduate students outside of the Indiana community and to publish more of their work. Corresponding editors would greatly facilitate these goals, helping to bring quality writing to print. Again we invite you to contact and join us.

The new guidelines stipulate a variety of genres for encasing ideas, objects, and opinions. I call your attention to the encouragement for submissions that cross and join these conventions, and to the categories of "Collectanea" and "Reviews." The decision to publish folkloric materials themselves in "Collectanea" follows precedent from past issues of *Folklore Forum* and is a logical one since it is the materials that have enticed and fueled much of our passion for the discipline. The section "Reviews" expands to encompass all manner of texts, media, and events, again in the spirit of conversation. It is important for folklore scholars to engage with discernment the cacophony of data and opinion seen and heard in this over-rich age of information. I look forward to reading submissions on a wide range of topics, and consequently, to having my eyes opened.

The three articles in this issue do encompass that range and insight. In the first article Liz Locke clearly intends to pry open some eyes. She links the myth of Orpheus with the rites of Orphism through the prism of feminist scholarship, and brings the implications to bear on the position of women in Western civilization. The second article, by Chaibou Elhadji Oumarou, reminds that ethnographers are not immune to blindness even when examining photographs. Context, he boldly asserts, is as necessary as text in understanding culture. The third article, by Stephen Olbrys, is more a bridge

between the articles and the “Open Forum” essays. Instead of a brief essay intended for “Open Forum,” Olbrys submitted a long hybrid of intellectual history, speculation, and postmodern deconstruction. He charts out the notion of crisis in the discipline of folklore, arguing that the current pallor over the discipline is part of a cyclical pattern running throughout the history of folklore as a discipline in the United States. He then takes a leisurely and twisted stroll through current folklore scholarship, wider trends in academia, and the role of his own generation of folklorists. The varied responses to his essay from readers here prompts me to leave the success of his postmodern approach to your judgment.

“A Response to ‘What’s There to Fear from a Crisis Anyway?’” from *Folklore Forum* staff member Troy Boyer follows and challenges Olbrys’s essay. Boyer’s brief comments are the journal’s first venture in reader response to an article in some years. I hope it will encourage further responses, from not just our staff but from our readers, to Olbrys’s and other articles, and lead to a regular feature of responses and author replies. In the same vein, “Open Forum,” a venue designed solely for dialogue and debate, appears in this issue after a hiatus of a couple years.

I would like to thank the authors for their patience and enthusiasm in bringing their work to print. Liz Locke will soon return to *Folklore Forum* as a guest editor for a special issue dedicated to Mythology. I would also like to thank the staff of *Folklore Forum* for the long hours they have put into this issue. The most thanks, however, goes to Lisa Gilman for her unflagging commitment and efforts as editor of the journal for the last three years. Her dedication helped to forge a strong staff and publication. I have benefited greatly from her advice and support in the past three months as I have taken over as editor. Our next issue will be a special issue dedicated to the folklore of death. Let us hope that does not include the demise of conversation.

JOHN ROLEKE