

## INTRODUCTION

Two years ago, when a graduate seminar in Folklore and Literature was conducted at the Folklore Institute of Indiana University, the graduate students involved despaired over the item-picking approach of contemporary folklore and literature scholarship. Well versed in the 1957 Journal of American Folklore symposium on folklore and literature and in Dundes' extension of the folklore-literature controversy in 1964, we were disillusioned; we wondered whether theories and methods for folklore and literature could be fully developed and, moreover, whether the chasms between the two disciplines could be breached. Alternatives were sought, and besides attempting to redefine folklore from a narrow to a broader perspective, we were looking for sound methodological answers other than identifying folklore tidbits and plugging them into standard literary works. As the search for method continued, questions arose: Should we redefine folklore for our purposes? Why study folklore and literature at all? How could we reevaluate such standard critics of oral narrative as Olrik, Wesselski, or von Sydow? Were these critics outdated or should we look seriously at them once more? Could we be "revisionist" in the sense that folklore and literature had passed its initiation rites in the fifties and sixties and had now entered a new stage of maturation?

With a resurgent interest in folklore and literature, evidenced by the ever-increasing folklore and literature panels at the Modern Language Association and the American Folklore Society meetings, enthusiasm for a special issue of the Folklore Forum developed. Humanities-grounded folklorists and folklore students with literary backgrounds wanted to utilize their knowledge in a newly interpretative way; another look at folklore and literature was under way with a call for papers with this special issue.

The following collection of essays represents one effort to expand on the earlier work in folklore and literature scholarship. The essays achieve a balance between the standard literary approach of investigating novels containing an author's purposeful use of folklore as well as exemplifying ways of enlarging methodology.

These articles are presented as a springboard for discussion; hopefully they will be used in both literature and folklore and literature classes, by students who wish to explore the avenues of folklore and literature, and by those students who feel compelled to find sound methodological ways to enhance folkloristics, as these contributors have.

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