

• *Editor's Note* •

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Dear Colleagues,

*New Directions in Folklore* began twenty years ago, seeking to explore uncharted territory, challenge disciplinary imperatives, and pursue the entanglements of folklore in the modern world. Revived in 2010 after a half-decade recess, the current issue marks the eighth volume in the new initiative. As I reflect back on 2016—and my what a year it has been—the mission of *New Directions in Folklore* proves more relevant than ever. Has digital culture, new media, and the internet ever been more important in our day-to-day lives? And has it ever been more folkloric?

This volume of *New Directions in Folklore* features four stellar articles by a diverse group of scholars. Three of those authors take on issues related to folklore and the internet, investigating blogs, Facebook, and Twitter for their folkloric and vernacular qualities. In her essay, “‘I Want to be a Witness’: Blogging for Urban Authenticity and Cultural Authority in the East Village,” Andrea Glass examines blogging as a folkloric practice and its relation to New York City’s gentrification debates. In his article “Digital Thunderdome: Performing Identity and Creating Community in a Facebook World,” John Price discusses an exclusive Facebook group and its implications for the modern study of folklore. Finally, in her article, “‘The Superman in a Turban’: Jokes in the Iranian Social Media,” Afsane Rezaei analyzes the “Thanks, Rouhani” joke cycle that proliferated on social media following Iran’s election of President Hassan Rouhani in 2013.

In addition, *New Directions in Folklore* has always been interested in pushing the boundaries of folklore scholarship by highlighting new, controversial, and experimental areas of inquiry. Sandra Posey and Megan Fowler pursue this line of

research in their article “More Different than the Same: Customary Characterization of Alternative Relationship Groups and Types,” arguing that the classification of alternative relationship groupings, such as polyamory, non-monogamy, and the swinger lifestyle, is itself a folkloric practice.

If you have research in the works that pushes the boundaries of folklore scholarship, we want you to be involved with *New Directions in Folklore*. You can also take part through notes and book reviews. At the American Folklore Society’s annual conference, you can visit our annual section meeting, currently presided over by conveners John Price and Andrew Peck. If you would like to join officially, membership is only \$5. The funds support *New Directions in Folklore*’s many exciting endeavors, including the Bill Ellis Prize, the section’s annual student award for the best essay that combines research and analysis of folklore, broadly construed, and digital culture, popular culture, and new media. Two past winners are featured in this very volume.

The mission continues. Thank you to everyone who has supported *New Directions in Folklore*—editors, contributors, reviewers, and readers. Let us continue to encourage new areas of inquiry and to prove the perennial importance of folklore in our modern world.

**David J. Puglia**

Editor, *New Directions in Folklore*