

Frandy

Culture Work

Folklore for the Public Good

The work folklorists do on the ground and in communities can make a concrete difference in quality of life. While the field is not immune to extractive, racist, colonial, heteronormative, and misogynistic practices, it can counter and combat these same forces in society. Culture Work presents case studies of public-oriented work that define the Wisconsin Idea of folklore in all its complexities, challenges, and potentialities. This Wisconsin method focuses on doing folklore work of the community, for the community, and with the community, and explores the vast numbers of creative possibilities that such processes and products entail for culture workers. Featuring contributions from top folklorists and public humanists, the volume asks, what is the value of public folklore to the public? What are we actually doing when we engage in culture work? And how can we build better cultural agendas, initiatives, and representations? Thematically arranged chapters represent interconnected aspects of culture work, from amplifying local voices to galvanizing community from within to reflecting on how we might use folklore to build the world we want to live in. Together, the collection presents a cross-section of the many innovative and essential culture works occurring today in the field of folklore and the humanities more generally. These inventive projects provide concrete examples and accessible theory grounded in practice, encourage readers to embark on their own public culture work, and create new forward-looking inspiration for community leaders and scholars in the field.



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