

While McDowell attempts to accurately portray the narratives through ethnopoetic and performance theory, he provides little introductory information to Kamsá society. He lets the tales speak for themselves, and instead refers interested readers to his previous works. McDowell could have drawn from his own experience and knowledge of Kamsá culture to provide more commentary and analysis. He hesitated to draw broader sociological or anthropological implications, yet even a brief portrayal of present-day Kamsá life would have better illustrated the manner in which these stories function within Kamsá society today. In its entirety, however, *So Wise Were our Elders* contributes significantly to the study of both Kamsá culture and mythic traditions. As McDowell notes, these myths are not a comprehensive portrayal of Sibundoy civilization, but instead provide a keyhole glimpse of Kamsá social, political, linguistic, and religious structures. Additionally, his linguistic observations will greatly help future scholars interested in further analyzing the language. McDowell's collection, therefore, is a major addition to the study of both South American Indian mythology and Kamsá linguistics.

Mary Hufford, ed. **Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage.** Published for the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994. Pp. 264, photographs, notes, index. \$37.50 cloth, \$14.95 paper. A Publication of the American Folklore Society.

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An academic tradition which merits critical examination is the convention of dismissing early theories as old-fashioned or irrelevant. Thomas Kuhn's philosophy of science provides one such dated but useful approach for reading Mary Hufford's *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*. Kuhn argued that scholars construct knowledge according to paradigms which are continually defined, redefined, negotiated and renegotiated by brokers of information. When an old paradigm is proven inadequate, a period of chaos develops within an academic discipline, and a new approach may emerge which is offered as a competing perspective. Whether folklore is in a period of chaos is open to debate, but it is productive to consider Hufford's volume as offering an alternative paradigm for cultural work within the discipline.

While fully identifying an existing paradigm is a problematic exercise within any academic discipline, it is fairly easy to identify elements of earlier scholarship which have fallen out of fashion. Vestiges of the dated academic

interests come to be regarded as quaint curiosities at best and dangerous occupational hazards at their worst. Folklorists, for example, who romanticize folklore, bemoan the loss of traditions, and celebrate life within folk communities are often regarded as suspect. But what if a new approach to folklore is developed that is based on carefully examining implications involved in preserving a community's cultural heritage? What if this approach asks that individuals and policy makers consider the place of folklore in the development of an ecology of time and space? The essays in *Conserving Culture* address such issues, the writers suggesting that a folkloric approach based solely on the analysis and interpretation of culture needs to be called into question. An argument issued directly within Archie Green's afterword to the volume avers that folklorists should examine the pretense of being disinterested social scientists and accept the responsibility of working as cultural conservationists within the communities they study.

The sixteen essays were compiled from a conference entitled "Cultural Conservation: Reconfiguring the Cultural Mission" which was held at the Library of Congress in May of 1990. The vision of cultural conservation which emerges in this collection becomes much more complex than merely a plea for the documentation of oral traditions before they are lost. Instead, the argument for cultural conservation is one based on systematic cultural intervention for a range of purposes, including the preservation of cultural resources and the social and economic empowerment of communities at a grassroots level. Mary Hufford explains the evolution of thought concerning cultural conservation, and she provides a fine introduction to the range of issues addressed in the essays. Essentially, the cultural conservation mission she and the other writers offer involves interdisciplinary collaborations, integration of cultural resources into designs for public policy, and a responsiveness to community concerns and community involvement.

The book is organized into three parts. Classified under the heading "Conserving History," the first six essays deal with historic preservation concerns in relation to environmental conservation, urban revitalization, and the politics of heritage discourse. The five essays in the second section, "Protecting Biocultural Diversity," explore connections between cultural and environmental issues within interventionist programs. Particularly striking is Dale Rosengarten's discussion of the efforts of South Carolina sweetgrass basket makers to challenge local, state, and federal policies and economic interests that threaten the existence of the folk art in the coastal low country. A section entitled "Encouraging Folklife" features five additional essays, and Archie Green's afterword completes the volume. In essays more programmatic than theoretical, folklorists outline cultural conservation efforts within rural and urban communities as they use these case studies to argue

that legislators must include consideration of folklife resources within historic preservation legislation and environmental impact policy.

Conserving Culture is one of the recent excellent publications within the developing literature on public folklore. While the analyses of the various topics are limited by the constraints inherent within the essay format, the writers present insightful, conscientious treatments of topics germane to the concerns of folklorists working in applied programs. While the development of a comprehensive theory of public folklore programming is perhaps an unrealistic goal beyond the province of any study, this volume shows the breadth and complexity of issues involved in preserving traditional culture and presenting folklife back to the public. The book's strength lies in how the writers suggest that folklorists can develop new perspectives by carefully considering what is involved in old folkloristic concerns.

Karen M. Booker. **Languages of the Aboriginal Southeast: An Annotated Bibliography.** Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press. 1991. Pp. 241, foreword, acknowledgements, introduction, addenda, index. \$32.50 cloth.

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Of the diverse culture areas of native North America, only California exceeds the Southeast in linguistic diversity. Karen Booker, a central participant in the current revitalization of language study in this region, has produced, in *Languages of the Aboriginal Southeast*, an extensive scholarly bibliography that brings together the wide body of research conducted over the past century in descriptive, comparative, and anthropological linguistics.

Professor Booker, an adjunct professor of linguistics at the University of Kansas, has conducted extensive research in the region, particularly on the languages of the Muskogean family. Her work on comparative problems has brought her into collaboration with a considerable number of currently active scholars. This fact, combined with the bibliographic challenges brought on by such research, has caused Professor Booker to master the scattered and sometimes ephemeral literature on the region's languages.

The past decade has seen an impressive increase in the amount of research being conducted by linguists among the Native societies of the Southeast. While a large number of Southern languages have become moribund over the last 400 years, a considerable number continue to be spoken