Too often, museums exploit the stories and labor of marginalized people to craft their own reputations. *Exhibitions for Social Justice* endorses wokewashing in lieu of real change. The text is littered with puzzling stylistic choices, such as the capitalization of white in order to "call attention to it as a social construction [and] a racial category rather than an unmarked 'normal' state from which other races diverge" (14n39). This intent could have been carried over into the actual analysis and arguments presented within the text—such as more explicit acknowledgement of demographics when discussing dynamics between curators, constituents, and "subjects."

After reading this book, I am reminded of writer Arielle Iniko Newton's wisdom—"Think of all the possibilities that exist should we invest in one another and divest entirely from the practice of curating white 'empathy.'"[3] Exhibitions can discuss social justice, but can they truly *work for* social justice? Not if they are produced under exploitative conditions, for the benefit of select audiences. Readers are asked to believe that building empathy will lead to solidarity which, in turn, will lead to action and, ultimately, social justice. As such, the book overstates its purpose and might be better served by a title like "Exhibitions for Empathy."

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Interpreting Religion at Museums and Historic Sites by Gretchen Buggeln and Barbara Franco. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018. xvi + 223 pp.; illustrations, notes, bibliography, index; clothbound, $101.00, paperback, $45.00.

The American Association for State and Local History has published a series of edited volumes geared to provide guidance for public historians working at museums and historic sites. *Interpreting Religion* is the sixteenth title in this admirable collection. Although other volumes certainly include references to religious America, this book fully embraces the goal of helping history professionals consider both the practical and theoretical challenges of displaying religion. The editors and the article authors acknowledge the critical role that religion has played in the United States while admitting that "rare is the interpreter who goes about this work without some trepidation" (xi). What *Interpreting Religion* offers is reassurance that yes, religion is complex and often controversial, but it can be successfully integrated into historic sites and museums. In addition, for scholars of religion, the essays provide provocative case studies of what public historians have come to understand, represent, and value in religion.

The bulk of the book is made up of case studies written by museum and historic site professionals. Buggeln and Franco divide thirty articles into the sections of

3 Arielle Iniko Newton, "The Stories of Our Struggles Are Not for White People to Consume in an Effort to 'Do Better,'" *Black Youth Project*, April 4, 2018, http://blackyouthproject.com/the-stories-of-our-struggles-are-not-for-white-people-to-consume-in-an-effort-to-do-better.

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religious sites, historic sites, and museum exhibitions. The range of the institutions is impressive—from the monumental National Museum of American History to the highly local Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum. The essays deal with a range of American religions, but the content of religious history, belief, and practice is secondary. What the authors are exploring is a particular problem faced by their museum or historic site and what specific strategies they used to overcome that concern. The essays are short and the most successful ones are those that are specific in defining a problem and its solution.

For instance, the staff at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum had determined that one entry into Jewish rituals and customs would be to have historical reenactors negotiate a death in the family by sitting *shiva* (72). However, they found that, while visitors could relate to such a life experience, the introduction of mourning practices shut down conversations and questions. The topic was too serious to discuss with strangers. The staff changed the focus to Sabbath practices, which offered a less intense but equally salient portrait of Jewish life. Visitors could relate to the question of how to integrate work life with religious practices. The best essays recognize the preconceptions visitors bring to the site, admit that tensions are unavoidable, and describe their experiments with positively engaging complicated ideas and practices.

Embedded within the case studies are serious theoretical issues that circle around questions such as: What is religion? How is religion constructed? Where is the line between practicing *religion* and understanding *religions*? The second half of *Interpreting Religion* uses the case studies to explore such wider questions. The essays written by the two editors are tightly written and wide ranging. Gretchen Buggeln, for instance, lays out recent methodological trends in American religious history that has moved scholarship away from the theology of the elite to the material and sensual world of the average believer. Barbara Franco tackles the church/state issue, stressing that there is no legal barrier to secular museums and historic sites telling "nonpartisan stories of the role religion has played, and still plays, in American life" (152).

Using the case studies as evidence, the editors make important observations about how religion "works" in public history. For example, Franco notes that those religions that seem the most alien—like the traditions of the Hmong—can be "less problematic" for both museum professionals and visitors than the more familiar religions to which they themselves might belong (154). While this trend might explain the popularity of exhibitions on the Shakers or the Rappites, it also functions as a warning to those exhibiting evangelical Protestantism or Catholicism to be especially aware of how these traditions are represented. In her essay on "Religion in Museum Spaces and Places," Gretchen Buggeln unpacks the knotty issue of the museum *itself* being a sacred space. Although she does not elaborate, public historians need to understand that they, too, are creators of religion. Even if unintentional, religious behaviors represented in museums and historic sites become authoritative in constructing and asserting—not simply reflecting—religion.

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The final two essays move away from the theoretical and provide practical steps to more efficaciously integrate religion into "tours, artifact exhibitions, and public presentation[s]" (169). The suggestions follow smoothly from the case studies and range from the obvious (identify goals) to the controversial (promote honest dialogue) (169, 177). The strategies evolve out of the assumption that the modern audience—not merely the material culture—should be the focus of museums and historic sites. Still, in the final essay, the editors again stress the importance of representing the complexity of religious belief and practice by taking advantage of recent historical scholarship. The editors point out the various functions of religion, from motiving change to instilling social control to helping people navigate through the cycle of life. Even as Americans become increasingly secular there still is a "hunger for spiritual experiences," which museums and historic sites can address (189).

There is an assumption in *Interpreting Religion* that learning about religions by entering into the worldview of someone else will generate positive results. In this the public historian's goal is almost a religious one—to create a more tolerant, respectful, and empathic America. Not all scholars of religion would agree that studying religion or understanding religious difference promotes civil behavior. Even if knowledge does not set us free, the case studies indicate that representing religion will not embroil institutions in never-ending culture wars. By being sensitive to those whose religion one intends to represent (by inviting them into the planning and exhibiting process) and by monitoring audience reaction (and making adjustments), public historians can tap into Americans' curiosity about religions and explore the impact of this cultural expression. *Interpreting Religion* is an essential starting point for those who seek to represent religion to the public. It not only will generate ideas for curators and educators, it will serve to stimulate reflection on the slippery beast we name "religion."

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Digital Community Engagement: Partnering Communities with the Academy edited by Rebecca S. Wingo, Jason A. Heppler, and Paul Schadewald. Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati Press, 2020. x + 245 pp.; illustrations, notes, works cited, index; paperback, $32.96; eBook, $31.30, open access eBook.

It is a rare thing for a book to greet you upon opening it. But page 1 of Rebecca S. Wingo, Jason A. Heppler, and Paul Schadewald's new book opens with a "Hello and welcome!" (1). The salutation sets the tone for the rest of the volume, which is a collection of case studies that consider how public history, digital humanities, and community engagement can symbiotically work together. The editors call this overlapping trinity of activities "Digital Community Engagement," or "DiCE," and the volume seeks to elucidate the "cohesive practice" (7) of this emerging field of work. But in many respects, the editors might be illuminating public history's future.

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