

***What is Public History Globally? Working with the Past in the Present* edited by Paul Ashton and Alex Trapeznik, xxi þ 356 pp.; notes, illustrations, index; clothbound, \$79.20, paperbound, \$24.67, eBook \$27.32.**

This edited volume offers a welcome pause from the rush of the global turn, asking readers to stop, take a breath, and reflect upon the state of public history globally. Edited by Paul Ashton and Alex Trapeznik, pioneers of public history in Australia and New Zealand respectively, this collection of short essays brings together twenty-four pieces by well-established scholars as well as by emerging academics and practitioners in the field. The book is in three parts: the first focuses on national contexts and histories of the development of the discipline across varied geographical areas; the second examines a range of current methodological approaches to the study and practices of public history; and the third, much shorter, section examines individual case studies. Written as a resource for students to understand different approaches to public history globally, this volume is also a call to arms, asking its reader to reflect on the social role of public history. Taken as a whole, this volume is a testimony to reach of public historians working across the globe.

The volume does not shy away from addressing tensions between different approaches, memory actors, and practitioners, and the volume has much to offer students who are encountering the idea of plural public histories for the first time. Indira Chowdhury and Srijan Mandal, for example, reject using Western terms to define how people are engaging with the past in India. Paul Ashton, Kresno Brahmantyo, and Jaya Keaney suggest that, in Indonesia, public history is likely to be a negotiation between state sanctioned ways of telling the past and more democratic endeavours. Writing about Scandanavia, Anne Brædder argues that people interact with the past to define present values. Chapters which detail the lack of acknowledgement of colonial history in South Africa (Julie Wells), the stateled control of memory in Indonesia (Ashton, Brahmantyo, and Keaney) and China (Na Li), and the recognition (or not) of Indigenous and first peoples in Canada (Mike Dove and Michelle Hamilton), Australia (Lisa Murray and Mark Dunn), and New Zealand (Alex Trapeznik) are contrasted with a distinct lack of discussion about the role of Britain as colonizer (Mark Donnelly), reflecting differences in the public acceptance of difficult national pasts.

The call for public historians to engage with difficult pasts is particularly notable in the final section of the book. Paul Ashton and Jaqueline Z. Wilson discuss the necessity of working with sites of conscience, arguing that public historians must engage with Australia's difficult past. Sue Hodges makes an impassioned plea to bring these nuanced understandings of the past to the interpretation of heritage sites. Writing about the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster in India, Amritha Ballal and Moulshri Joshi argue that the site needs to be reclaimed in order to democratize the public history of the tragedy. These concerns about the public visibility of certain events were echoed in chapters about the materiality of the past (Denis Byrne, Tracy Ireland, Keir Reeves and Jacqueline Z. Wilson, Christopher J. Castañeda), which urge us to think about physical traces of the past, or a lack thereof, and the role of affect in presenting these sites to the public. Several authors (Paula Hamilton, Anna Green, Ashton and Wilson, Castañeda) touched on the emotional link to public history more broadly, suggesting that the role of emotions within broader public history practice needs to be examined further.

Digitization, and the increasing availability of historical documents online, was called upon by several authors (Jeanette Bastian and Stephanie Krauss, Li, Hamilton, Green) as a way of

democratizing public history. The authors embed suggestions for the role of public historians within these discussions. Serge Noiret suggests that the role of the public historian should be to mediate public history projects and content on social media in a post-truth era. Thomas Cauvin makes demands on institutions, arguing for communicative skills (including digital ones) to be included in all history courses, to build cohorts of students ready to effectively translate the past for the public.

This concern with spaces of learning, and areas in which public history is done, is shared by many of the authors. Donnelly asks if public historians in Britain can move away from the controlling supervision of traditional academic historians, freeing themselves from draconian assumptions about how the past should be used and creating radical spaces. Tanya Evans and Green, in their respective chapters about the highly popular areas of local and family history, show how these areas of smaller focus can address wide social concerns, considering what public historians can bring to these areas of historical enquiry. Thorsten Logge and Nico Nolden make a different kind of demand, highlighting the precarious nature of public history in Germany, calling for it to be embedded into institutional frameworks, supported by tenured academic positions.

For those teaching undergraduate and postgraduate courses, this book is a well timed and necessary addition to reading lists. Due to the nature of this volume, there is some repetition of ideas and common areas of concern, however, this only serves to reinforce the significance of the questions asked. The rather touching introduction to Meg Foster's essay suggests that it is the constant reflexivity about the discipline's place in the present that makes it such an engaging area of study. Read as a whole, the collection offers a range of thoughts about the current strengths of public history as a discipline, as well as the challenges it faces, encouraging dialogue between those who are currently practicing and those who are students of the discipline. It is geared towards the academic market, yet offers an insight into how public history has developed at an institutional level, which can only foster understanding between practitioners, theorists, and those in between. The collection welcomes large scale discussions about the state of public history in the present, and seeks to engage in the sorts of meaningful discourse crucial to the future(s) of the discipline.

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