

Heading towards a new frontier? History on the Web, in films and TV series

Over the last few years, we have been witnessing two phenomena which are concurrent and yet apparently in contrast with each other. On one side, there is evidence of a marginalisation of history, in the sense of a crisis of identity and social function, which extends to the very role of historians. On the other side, there is a huge interest in history among the general public in the consumption of cultural products with a historical focus. Production, dissemination and reception of historical narratives takes place through an ever-increasing number of films and TV series, dedicated YouTube channels, podcasts and video lectures, which are also disseminated through social



networks attracting millions of views. Such cultural productions serve as mediators of history consumption and contribute to its dissemination, understood as a mediation process. Moreover, they certainly influence not only the historical knowledge of the public, but also their imaginations, memories and collective identities. Presented as time machines, these products take the audience on genuine journeys through history, very often characterised by mystery and suspense, and owing to the potential of digital technology - especially in the case of the more lavish productions - they make it possible for the audience to 'see' the past in ways that are more engaging and more realistic than they could have been a few years ago. The diffusion of these media raises some questions among historians. First of all, the reading of past events through the eyes of the present, which happens through these consumer products, carries the risk of public uses of history, amplified by the use of storytelling, dramatization and emotional appeal. Moreover, this diffusion seems to amplify the gap between these products, intended for the general public, and those of research, aimed instead at the scientific community, which are reduced to a restricted and sometimes closed circuit. To this should be added the fact that the growth of historians' presence in the mass media is counterbalanced by the need for their language to adapt to the specific ways of communication employed by each medium. With this in mind, we invite all interested scholars to submit proposals that may contribute to a discussion about the effects of the popularization of history through products of widespread use, trying to answer some of these questions:

- In what ways and through which instruments the processes of transferring historical knowledge take place and what effects they have.
- How does this consumption of history affect imaginaries, memories and collective identities, and how does it affect the historical common sense?
- What are the risks associated with the public use of history?
- What relationship is generated between history and historiographic metanarrative.
- What impact and consequences this may have on the role of the professional historian.

These questions and themes are not to be considered exclusive. We accept both theoretical and general reflections, as well as those related to specific case studies.

Interested authors should submit their proposals by sending an abstract of a maximum of 1500 characters to the editorial office (redazione.diacronie[at]studi storici.com) by **March 31 2022**. Submissions must be between 35000 and 50000 characters (including spaces and notes) and can be written in Italian, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese (submissions in the latter language will be translated by the editorial staff).

Editors

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