

## **Film and Media Reviews and Review Essays**

All questions regarding review proposals, submissions, editing, and publication should be directed to the Assistant Reviews Editor at [publichistory@history.ucsc.edu](mailto:publichistory@history.ucsc.edu).

### **BACKGROUND**

The film and media review section of *The Public Historian* was established to report on and evaluate current historical feature films, documentaries, radio programs, and television productions. The journal will review materials that receive wide public attention (i.e., nationally available films) along with works with a smaller audience and distribution. This section contains a mix of single-item reviews and multi-item review essays. We encourage our reviewers and other interested historians to suggest items for review; suggested films will be assigned to reviewers by *TPH* staff.

### **CONTENT**

In reviewing media materials, it is especially important that reviewers understand the intended purposes and audience of the work and the context in which it was produced (e.g., large or limited budget, time constraints). As in reviews of history in other forms, film and media reviewers should briefly report on the subject matter and main themes presented in addition to evaluating the work itself. Evaluation should take into consideration accuracy of content and setting and the effectiveness of presentation (e.g., visual quality, conveyance of text, use of sound, and the meshing of these components).

Reviewers should also pay attention to other aspects of the work, such as experimentation, the part played by historians in the production, and the constraints of the medium. (For example, audio and video materials have less opportunity for exposition and documentation than books. Does the project stand alone without these? Is further information needed/handled through a website or companion volume?) Only in this way can a fair evaluation of a historical film, video, or radio project be made.

Reviewers should also ask these questions:

- What can you do in the film or radio medium that you cannot do in traditional history presentation?
- Does the public history presentation in this film/video/radio program move scholarship to a new plane?
- Is the historian involved enhancing public debate on the subject area covered?
- What might other professionals learn from this effort?

Please avoid passive-voice constructions, overly complex sentences, jargon, and redundancies. We may return for revision any review in need of severe editing, and we reserve the right to reject any review submitted for publication.

All reviews are edited to conform to *TPH* house style and standard literary usage to achieve greater economy of space and clarity of meaning. Please consult *The Chicago Manual of Style* for guidance.

### **NUTS AND BOLTS**

1. Please submit your review as an MS WORD document, and please use 12-pt. font and double space the review.
2. Unless otherwise agreed upon between reviewer and editor, media reviews should be 750–900 words long. We will shorten, or return for revision, any review of excessive length. Length restrictions vary in the case of review essays (essays in which two or more distinct films/programs treating the relevant subject are discusses), to which we apply the standards of articles.
3. Please provide the following information in your introductory heading: title of film or media production; writer and director; producers; production date; run time; and any further information that would help to identify or credit responsible parties.

**Sample Heading:**

*White Wash. Ted Woods, Writer and Director; David Woods, Executive Producer; Airrion Copeland, Dan Munger, and Ted Woods, Producers; Harmony Lucas and Meg Bernardo, Co-Producers. Produced by Trespass Productions LLC., 2011; [please fill in run time]*

4. **Illustrations, photographic or drawn**, are encouraged, and will be included whenever possible. Please supply images as electronic tiff or jpg files sized at 4" wide, with a minimum 300 dpi. Place large files in a Dropbox and invite the assistant reviews editor to share. All photos and other artwork must be accompanied by captions, credits, and a letter (or e-mail message) of permission from the holder of the copyright.
5. Please keep quotations short. If you quote from a source other than the program, please provide a full footnote citation adhering to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. If you mention another work but do not quote from it, please indicate, in parentheses, the full name of the author, the full title, and the year of publication.
6. *The Public Historian* uses the footnote style, spelling, and punctuation format of *The Chicago Manual of Style* and *The American Heritage Dictionary*.
7. Your name and institutional affiliation should appear on separate lines at the end of your review.
8. Email your completed manuscript as an MS WORD document to [publichistory@history.ucsb.edu](mailto:publichistory@history.ucsb.edu).

Once your manuscript has been submitted, you will receive an acknowledgement, then later a copy-edited version of the review and/or galley proofs. Please promptly approve or request changes in the typescript and/or galleys. You will receive one copy of the journal issue containing the review.

**NOTE: Please keep TPH informed of any changes of address so that edited reviews and future requests may reach you promptly.**

**Thank you for your contribution to *The Public Historian*.**

**SAMPLE REVIEWS:**

Rachel Sommerstein, [Review of \*The Roosevelts: An Intimate History\*](#), May 2015

Liz Ševčenko, [Review of \*The Act of Killing\*](#), August 2014

**SAMPLE REVIEW ESSAY:**

Hendrik Henrichs, [“A Children’s Book and a Soap Opera as Public History? Two Dutch Films on Slavery,”](#)  
May 2014