



# Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture

By Jerome de Groot

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Non-academic history – ‘public history’ – is a complex, dynamic entity which impacts on the popular understanding of the past at all levels.

In *Consuming History*, Jerome de Groot examines how society consumes history and how a reading of this consumption can help us understand popular culture and issues of representation. This book analyzes a wide range of cultural entities – from computer games to daytime television, from blockbuster fictional narratives such as *Da Vinci Code* to DNA genealogical tools – to analyze how history works in contemporary popular culture.

Jerome de Groot probes how museums have responded to the heritage debate and the way in which new technologies have brought about a shift in access to history, from online game playing to internet genealogy. He discusses the often conflicted relationship between ‘public’ and academic history, and raises important questions about the theory and practice of history as a discipline.

Whilst mainly focussing on the UK, the book also compares the experiences of the USA, France and Germany. *Consuming History* is an important and engaging analysis of the social consumption of history and offers an essential path through the debates for readers interested in history, cultural studies and the media.

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## **Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture** By Jerome de Groot **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

**'Consuming History** is an excellent, a rich book, which draws our attention to the broad variety of ways in which contemporary culture engages with history (from re-enactments and museum experiences to computer games and TV-shows)?and “capital-H History.” - *Eva-Sabine Zehelein, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University*

**'He makes a compelling case that public historians need to grasp the passions and concerns of "popular" history devotees. The popular imagined past is vibrant and here to stay, and public historians ignore it at their own risk.'** – *National Centre for Public History, 2009 Book Awards*

**'De Groot's study ... serves as a manifesto for the re-engagement of scholars with public history. In his examinations of Horrible Histories, pseudo-‘medieval faires’, and Second World War ‘shoot ’em up’ computer games, de Groot serves up a truly varied table of food for thought ... Consuming History is both a useful analysis of the contemporary consumption of history, and a provocative argument about the need for professional historians to better engage with public history. De Groot's mastery of the former is clear.'** – *Twentieth Century British History*

**'The book's breadth of reference is impressive ... One can object that de Groot is apt to load any activity with historical meaning ... But his approach is consciously provocative, both in its populist content and uses of cultural theory ... De Groot notes how TV not only normalises but also reveals the otherness of even the everyday and recent past ... how ideas of post-nostalgia are shifting away from conservative romanticising of the past to something more disorderly; and how consuming history is simultaneously making history.'** – *Times Educational Supplement*

**‘Consuming History** is a timely and important book. Taken as a whole, it adds substantially to our understanding of non-academic forms of historical engagement and contemporary culture's ongoing fascination with the past. For this reason it ought to be compulsory reading for anyone interested in the boundaries between non-academic and academic history, and the relationship of culture to its past.’ – *Reviews in History*

#### About the Author

**Jerome de Groot** teaches at the University of Manchester. He is the author of *Royalist Identities* (2004) and numerous articles on popular history, manuscript culture and the English civil war.

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#### Paul Ring:

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