

Culture & History Digital Journal, blurring boundaries for the study of History

As historians we have found ourselves for decades in the crossroads since the space of human action was profoundly questioned by the main schools of thought during the past century and, especially, by the latest trends in postmodern theory and criticism. European history, in particular, seems to be reaching what may be the end of a long period of crisis coinciding with the terrible economic situation and the unravelling of social and political structures that are shaking the foundations of the continental order. The self-fashioning narrative of a “Western civilization” inherited from the Ancient Greeks and the very belief in “Progress” are increasingly unable to appropriately address pressing questions of race, class, gender, culture, or even post-national possibilities of socio-political organization. *Culture & History Digital Journal* will cover the ever wider and integrated field of studies that is emerging from the crisis of conventional discourse by exploring, among many other sites of knowledge, the space of the individual and the body, language, feelings, cultural practices and the environment.

The aim of *Culture & History Digital Journal* is to contribute to debates currently underway in the Humanities and Social Sciences. We are convinced that its inter and trans-disciplinary approach will ensure it a niche in current global critical practices and that the digital format and publication in English will further enrich its reach.

Focusing on studies of the past, in a dialogue with the needs of the present, putting aside interpretative models attached to chronology and classical forms of document analysis, we want not to bring in only subjects subordinate to history – recovered today by the many different approaches to its study – but also contribute to overcoming the barriers that hinder practical communication between historians due to the artificial divisions resulting from specialisation in particular fields and periods. We also hope to encourage collaboration between different areas of the social sciences so as to blur the boundaries that persist as a result of adherence to fragmented modes of doing history, compartmentalised into the major categories (social, economic, political or cultural) that are the legacy of the great historiographical battles of the 20th century.

Many aspects of the field are currently receiving particular attention. The scope of *Culture & History Digital Journal* will accommodate topics as diverse as the history of emotions, travel, violence, or the creation and dissemination of knowledge, opening up space for a variety of theoretical approaches. A critical reflection on approaches to the past and ideas about it, the rich production on the uses and implications of historical knowledge, will also fall within the Journal’s purview.

Two special thematic issues a year are planned for the digital forum we are launching, and these will be managed in an open way, starting with a review of the state of play of the complex and growing interaction between the two parameters from which it draws its name, which will be the subject of the first issue. This will be followed up by open calls for original unpublished papers on topics of a general and trans-disciplinary nature to form the basis of subsequent monographic issues intended to show the rich variety of creative activity in progress. Papers will be selected for publication by anonymous peer review.

The incorporation of a digital journal of such characteristics into the publications of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) is an important step forward in the pursuit of a broader role for historical studies in a new inter-disciplinary, transcultural and internationalized world, securing access to the debates as well as to an ever-growing readership on a global scale. The advantages of the digital platform, with its direct links to references and sources, will be enhanced by the presentation of the most varied works and with the most dynamic integration of sounds and images. We wish to contribute in this way to enhance the offerings of the CSIC beyond the limitations of paper-based media, engaging the current debates on cultural history, and on the history of cultures, with all the potential of its new trans-disciplinary and globalized field of action.

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