



The Historical Present: Medievalism and Modernity

Walter Kudrycz

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Medievalism has become a central concern for those studying and teaching medieval history. It can be distinguished from traditional medieval history because it is not directly concerned with the study of the Middle Ages themselves, but rather it looks at how ideas about the medieval era operate in modern culture. This volume breaks new ground by moving beyond the arena of contemporary popular culture by interpreting modern academic attitudes towards the Middle Ages as themselves forms of medievalism. What is presented as refined historical truth is no more than a construction of truth derived from the larger philosophical and cultural trends of our own day. This volume argues that modernity's sense of the medieval past is the product of the dominant intellectual movements of the nineteenth century, Romanticism and Idealism, and that nineteenth century attitudes have continued to inform current understandings of the Middle Ages. This is a narrative that combines the main themes of modern scholarship on the medieval age with a subtly portrayed picture of the philosophical culture which produced them.

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