

The Year's Work in Medievalism
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Introduction

With this volume, for which I am merely the third editor following the work of Richard Utz and Karl Fugelso, *Year's Work* makes a serious foray into the contemporary project of bringing marginalized medievalism into the center of our vision. The essays herein come from recent presentations at the annual conference; we are a refereed journal and not a mere publisher of proceedings. I would like, therefore, to encourage submissions from beyond our conferences as well, especially since we intend to continue the project of something for which we need a better name than *inclusiveness*, which seems to me to have a whiff of condescension. Scholars should feel free to address whatever elements of the recapitulation of the Middle Ages they see fit, and they should have a forum in which to share their thoughts.

This volume includes diverse works from twelve scholars. Amy Kaufman addresses the need to draw medievalists and medievalismists into public discourse outside the academy. Valerie Johnson suggests the potential productivity of pairing medievalism with other “othered” critical strategies such as feminism, postcolonialism, and ecocriticism—should we see “medieval” and “modern” as a limiting and false binary? Helen Young calls out attention to “entanglements between race and medievalism.” Elena Levy-Navarro argues that medievalism can help lead to a “new relationality” between our literary passions and our pleasures—an idea we have marginalized in our criticism. Jesse Swan urges readers to relax fears of all sorts of critical queering to allow us to see many oddities of medievalism that we have tended to ignore. Richard Utz shows that religion is an essential yet surprisingly ignored topic in the study of medievalism. Karl Fugelso exhibits the fluidity of canonicity, even for a work as great as Dante’s *Commedia*. Carol Robinson finds that video-game medievalism provides an ideal medium for development of otherwise marginalized characters. Kevin and Brent Moberly discuss how the video game *Skyrim* raises concerns about unemployment and how we treat labor—here opens a new research topic, the idea of medievalism and *work*. My own essay casts a lens on Asian medievalism—another area with many options for additional research—through consideration of Hayao Miyazaki’s *Princess Mononoke*. Nick Haydock, in an essay drawn from his conference plenary lecture at the 28th International Conference on Medievalism at St. Norbert College, reflects on Raymond Chandler’s “noiresque distortion” of stained-glass Romance and Luc Besson’s exposé of the “sodomasochistic kernel” of courtly desire.

While in *The Year's Work in Medievalism* we value the traditional approaches to medievalism—if such a new field can claim to have traditions—we feel particularly eager to explore the diversity of medievalism(s) that expands every day in an increasing variety of media. The Middle Ages draws our curiosity and our imaginations no less than it ever has—perhaps more—and a great world of study and creation lies beyond as well as within the matter of Europe and the approaches of the Americas.

Best wishes, scholars, and keep on exploring. —ELR