

Call for Papers: Anglistentag 2016

Engaging with the Past: Reinventing the Middle Ages

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The medieval period polarises: the notorious but remarkably persistent image of the 'dark ages' continues to be used to cement the boundaries between the Renaissance as well as modernity. In parallel, romanticised notions of brave knights and damsels in distress have been cultivated throughout the centuries, and the supposed alterity of the Middle Ages has attracted critics and admirers alike. In the eighteenth century, for instance, the antiquarian movement sought to reconstruct and preserve the medieval past. In the nineteenth century, when Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* was reprinted for the first time after almost two hundred years, writers such as Alfred Tennyson and William Morris were heavily influenced by what they conceived of as the medieval heritage, and the monarchy also actively used and promoted medieval ideals to strengthen Queen Victoria's rule. More recently, accounts of a (pseudo-)medieval past – from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy to *Game of Thrones* – have become deeply entrenched in popular culture. Today's image of the Middle Ages is multimedia and interactive, comprising fantasy literature, historical novels, blockbusters, and TV series, conventions, fan fiction, computer games, re-enactment societies, and medieval fairs.

This section invites papers on the topic of postmedievalism, that is, the study of responses to the Middle Ages in later periods and the relevance of contemporary issues and ideas for critically investigating the Middle Ages. Hence the purpose of this section is two-fold: it brings together medieval studies, modern literary studies and cultural studies in order to explore (1) how the Middle Ages are reimagined and instrumentalised in later periods, and (2) how modern critical theories can be fruitfully brought into dialogue with medieval texts and concepts. Our aim is to start a cross-period discussion on critical theory, reception theory, and literary history.

We explicitly invite interdisciplinary papers, which may address but are not limited to the following topics:

- The reception of the Middle Ages in postmedieval literatures and cultures
- Multimedia and the Middle Ages
- Postmodern approaches to medieval literature
- Orientalism and medieval literature
- Gender, race, and the Middle Ages
- Medieval literature and the post-human
- Ecocriticism and the Middle Ages
- Modern science and the Middle Ages
- The Middle Ages in contemporary politics
- ...

Please send your abstracts (max. 300 words) to the organisers by **November 15, 2015**:

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