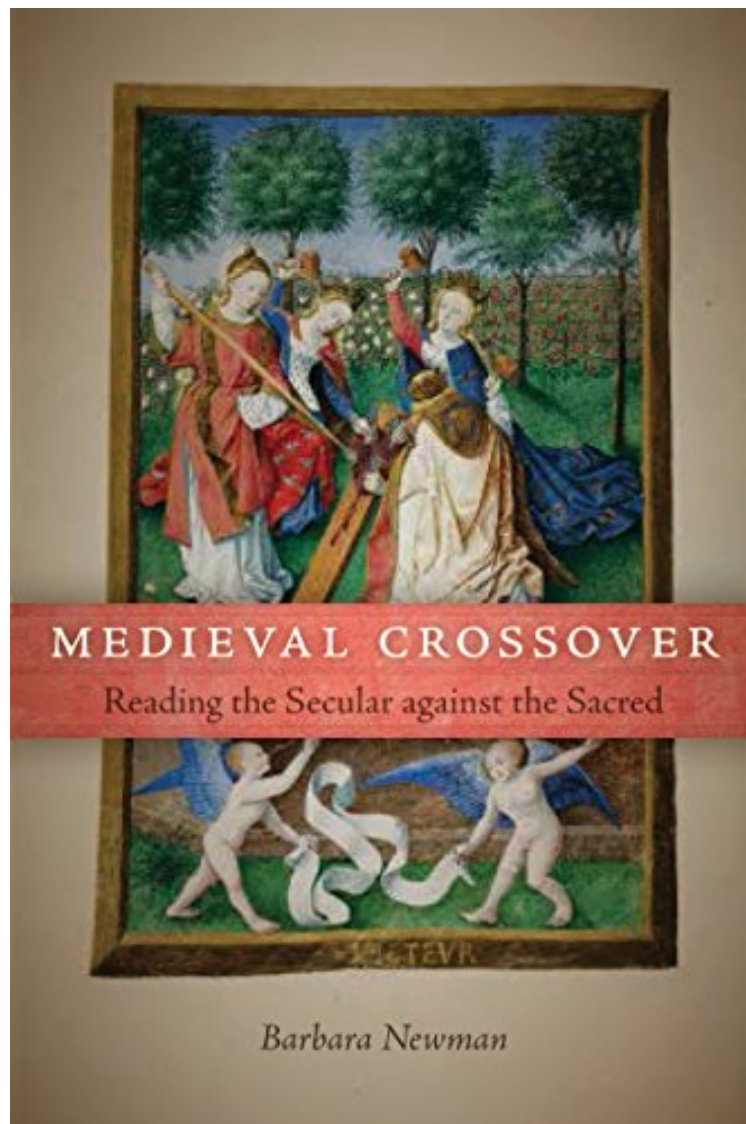


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## Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred (The Conway Lectures in Medieval Studies)

*Barbara Newman*

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**Barbara Newman : Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred (The Conway Lectures in Medieval Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred (The Conway Lectures in Medieval Studies):

In *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred*, Barbara Newman offers a new approach to the many ways that sacred and secular interact in medieval literature, arguing that the sacred was the normative, unmarked default category against which the secular always had to define itself and establish its niche. Newman refers to this dialectical relationship as "crossover"—which is not a genre in itself, but a mode of interaction, an openness to the meeting or even merger of sacred and secular in a wide variety of forms. Newman sketches a few of the principles that shape their interaction: the hermeneutics of "both/and," the principle of double judgment, the confluence of pagan material and Christian meaning in Arthurian romance, the rule of convergent idealism in hagiographic romance, and the double-edged sword in parody. *Medieval Crossover* explores a wealth of case studies in French, English, and Latin texts that concentrate on instances of paradox, collision, and convergence. Newman convincingly and with great clarity demonstrates the widespread applicability of the crossover concept as an analytical tool, examining some very disparate works.

"In *Medieval Crossover*, Barbara Newman highlights the ways in which the premodern reader understood 'sacred' and 'secular' not as opposing points on a continuum but as what Newman calls a state of 'double judgment,' where transcendent truths could be understood through paradox or hermeneutic inversion. Exquisitely written, grounded in thoughtful readings of some of the most enigmatic texts of the Middle Ages, *Medieval Crossover* charts a new course in our understanding of premodern modes of interpretation." —Suzanne Conklin Akbari, University of Toronto