



Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe

By Hayden White

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Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe By Hayden White

Since its initial publication in 1973, Hayden White's *Metahistory* has remained an essential book for understanding the nature of historical writing. In this classic work, White argues that a deep structural content lies beyond the surface level of historical texts. This latent poetic and linguistic content—which White dubs the "metahistorical element"—essentially serves as a paradigm for what an "appropriate" historical explanation should be.

To support his thesis, White analyzes the complex writing styles of historians like Michelet, Ranke, Tocqueville, and Burckhardt, and philosophers of history such as Marx, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Croce. The first work in the history of historiography to concentrate on historical writing *as writing*, *Metahistory* sets out to deprive history of its status as a bedrock of factual truth, to redeem narrative as the substance of historicity, and to identify the extent to which any distinction between history and ideology on the basis of the presumed scientificity of the former is spurious.

This fortieth-anniversary edition includes a new preface in which White explains his motivation for writing *Metahistory* and discusses how reactions to the book informed his later writing. In a new foreword, Michael S. Roth, a former student of White's and the current president of Wesleyan University, reflects on the significance of the book across a broad range of fields, including history, literary theory, and philosophy. This book will be of interest to anyone—in any discipline—who takes the past as a serious object of study.

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Editorial Review

Review

Metahistory is something more than a study of philosophies of history (although it is that too, and no doubt the most important work in the field since Collingwood): it is also a methodological manifesto, a more sustained argument for a deep-figural hermeneutic than has been worked out anywhere before now.

(*Diacritics*)

This is a daring, ingenious... tour de force. White has produced a profoundly original 'critique of historical reason.'

(*American Historical Review*)

A book that will simply have to be reckoned with by all historians who have the slightest interest in the genesis and forms of historical narrative.

(*Journal of Modern History*)

About the Author

Hayden White is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, professor emeritus of comparative literature at Stanford University, and professor emeritus of the history of consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is the author of a number of books published by Johns Hopkins, including *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, and *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Henderson:

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Lisa Gregory:

Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe can be one of your starter books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort to get every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* although doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource details that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information could drawn you into completely new stage of crucial considering.

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