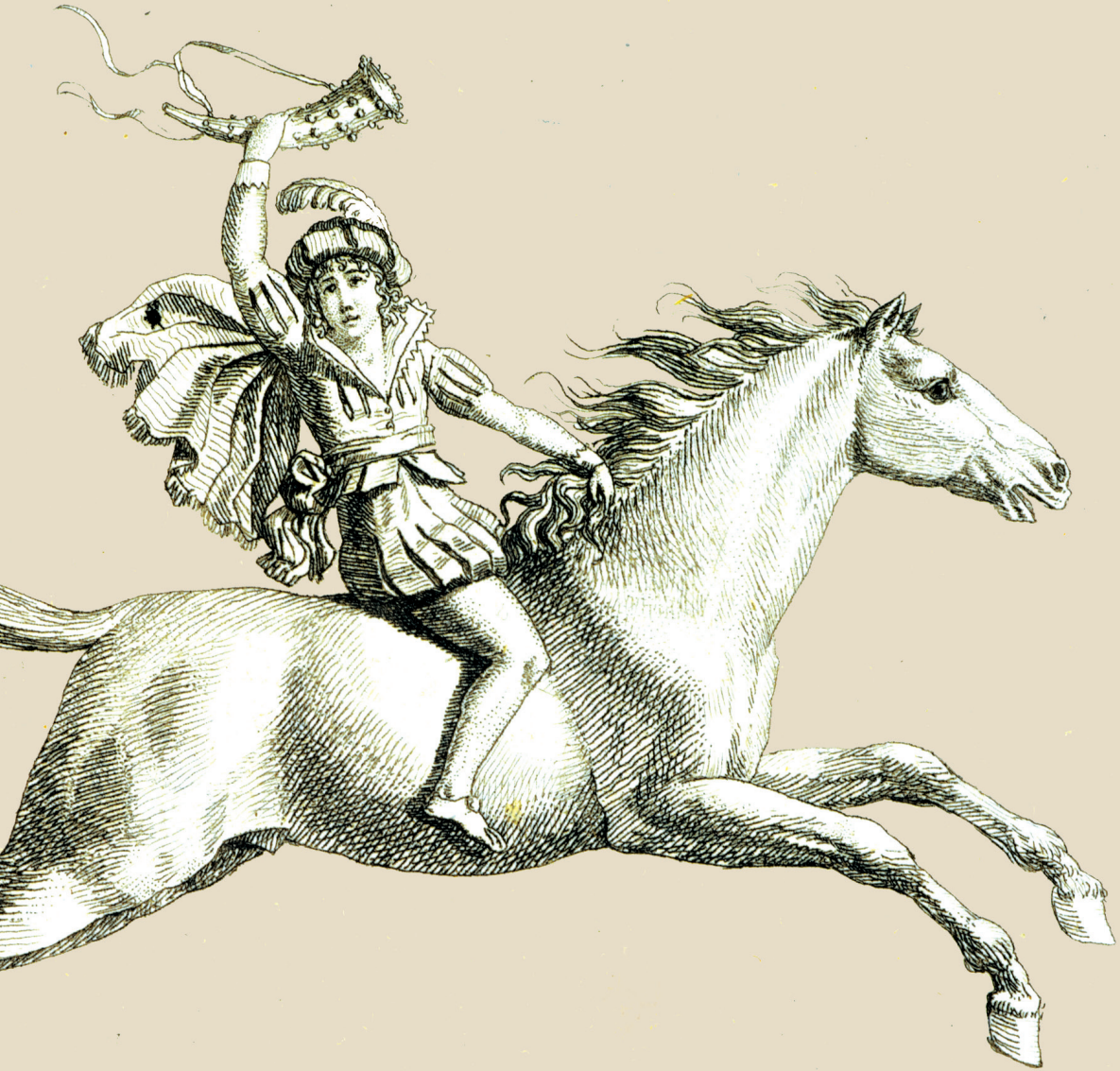Editor : KARL FUGELSO

Studies in Medievalism

XIX: Defining Neomedievalism(s)

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Studies in Medievalism XIX

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Founded by Leslie J. Workman

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Studies in Medievalism

Acknowledgments

Studies in Medievalism

Two great principles divide the world, and contend for the mastery, antiquity and the middle ages. These are the two civilizations that have preceded us, the two elements of which ours is composed. All political as well as religious questions reduce themselves practically to this. This is the great dualism that runs through our society.

<div align="right">Lord Acton</div>

Editorial Note

In the previous volume of this series, one of the essays defining medievalism dwells on the relationship of that field to a budding new area of interest – neomedievalism.[1] The authors, Carol L. Robinson and Pamela Clements, claim that much of what is often categorized as medievalism is in fact part of a new field related to the latter but characterized by a "complexity of ideologies" that is "further independent" and "further detached" from the Middle Ages. Indeed, according to Robinson and Clements, this new field is "consciously, purposefully, and perhaps even laughingly reshaping itself into an alternate universe of medievalisms, a fantasy of medievalisms, a meta-medievalism."

It is also expanding faster than perhaps any other area of academia. Many recent or forthcoming publications are completely devoted to it, most notably Robinson and Clements' anthology *The Medieval in Motion: Neomedievalism in Film, Television and Electronic Games*; an increasing number of sessions at the Annual International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan, have revolved around it, as in the panels last May on "Neomedievalist Communities" and "Gaming Neomedievally"; in 2007 it was the official focus of the entire 22nd Annual International Conference on Medievalism, "Neomedievalisms"; and it has been increasingly referenced by our contributors, particularly in the definitions of medievalism for the last two volumes of *SiM*.[2]

Moreover, as has been evident in all of those venues, it has inspired extraordinary passion. Indeed, in my five years of editing *SiM* and many more years of studying (neo)medievalism, I have rarely seen the degree of emotion that was on display during the 2007 conference, in and around the Kalamazoo sessions, and from the readers of Robinson and Clements' essay. Whether for or against the latter, virtually every one of our reviewers expressed themselves in unusually colorful language wrapped around an exceptionally polar position.

Which naturally spurred us to invite some of those scholars, as well as others who have weighed in on the debate, to define neomedievalism, particularly with regard to medievalism and in light of Robinson and Clements' remarks. Since the respondents did not have any official or, apparently, unofficial contact with each other, there is some overlap in their positions. But perhaps for that very reason, there is also much originality and diversity among them. Amy S. Kaufman celebrates aspects of Robinson and

Clements' definition, while insisting that, as neomedievalism treats the Middle Ages as "an ahistorical historical state to which it is possible to return," it is characterized by repetition, refraction, and a tendency to look forward. Brent and Kevin Moberly build on Baudrillard as they argue that neomedievalism "ultimately functions as a 'deterrence machine set up to rejuvenate the fiction of the real in the opposite camp.'" Lesley Coote sees parallels between medievalism and neomedievalism in their historiographic impulse, as well as in their presentation and re-presentation of the Middle Ages to deliver at least the feel of history, but she also insists that neomedievalism is distinct in its unending efforts "to escape from the parameters that '-isms' impose." Cory Lowell Grewell claims that neomedievalism is developing along the early lines of medievalism and is not (yet) so different from the latter or so strong that it should risk disassociating itself from the field that gave birth to it. M. J. Toswell proposes that neomedievalism invokes a simulacrum of, rather than a "genuine link" to, the medieval. E. L. Risden claims that neomedievalism "does not so much contribute new matter to the growing body of creative and scholarly endeavor of medievalism as it borrows creatively from the old matter; almost inevitably [reshaping] the metaphors and conventions of medievalism for new means of conveyance and for audiences more savvy with and interested in alternative media than in the Middle Ages and its more scholarly offshoots." And Lauryn S. Mayer suggests we should shift our discussions of neomedievalism from what it is to what it is doing, for she sees it as so nascent and dynamic as to resist classification at this point in time.

Of course, none of these contributions is the final word on its particular subject or on (neo)medievalism in general. But they have hopefully refined our discussion and perhaps even opened new approaches to such issues as the manner in which medium and format affect history and historiography, the role of self-referentiality, or at least self-consciousness, in our field(s), and the degree to which we can in fact define what we as academics think, do, and feel.

We also hope our readers will consider the essays in light of the articles in the second section of this volume, even as the essays provide new perspectives on one or more of those articles. Though none of the latter fulfills every criterion our essayists apply to neomedievalism, many of the articles qualify in at least one regard for this new area, and even those that do not may serve as informative foils to it. In "Utopia and Heterotopia: Byzantine Modernisms in America," Glenn Peers refracts modern echoes of the Eastern Roman Empire through Michel Foucault's contrast of utopia as a perfected form of society that does not exist and heterotopia as a counter-site "simultaneously represented, contested and inverted." In "Queer Crusading, Military Masculinity, and Allegories of Vietnam in Richard Lester's *Robin and Marian*,"

Tison Pugh examines how recent American foreign policy is critiqued by a 1976 film that expands and supplements non-heterosexual implications in a landmark of Anglo-American literature. In "Getting Reel with Grendel's Mother: The Abject Maternal and Social Critique," David W. Marshall argues that some recent film adaptations of *Beowulf* resonate with Julia Kristeva's notion of *abjection*, as they interpret Grendel's mother to be a threat to masculine social structures. In "False Memories: The Dream of Chaucer and Chaucer's Dream in the Medieval Revival," Richard H. Osberg looks at nineteenth-century distillations of a national(ist) myth. And in "The Colony Writes Back: F. N. Robinson's *Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* and the *Translatio* of Chaucer Studies to the United States," Richard Utz looks at nationalist reactions to twentieth-century scholarship about the works behind that myth.

In other words, even as our authors demonstrate the extraordinary range and vivacity of medievalism as it has been traditionally defined, they challenge its boundaries, particularly with regard to neomedievalism. Though they completed their papers before seeing our essays on the latter, they build on much of the work that led to those essays, and they provide important tests for them. They join the essayists in an extraordinarily fruitful debate that is only beginning and will keep pressing us to refine our identities as (neo)medievalists.

NOTES

1. Carol L. Robinson and Pamela Clements, "Living with Neomedievalism," *Studies in Medievalism* 18 (2009): 55–75.
2. *The Medieval in Motion* is forthcoming from the Edwin Mellen Press.

Medieval Unmoored

Amy S. Kaufman

At the end of a fruitful conference on Neomedievalisms in London, Ontario, in October 2007, I found myself in the audience of a Dante panel in which participants launched into an unexpected debate over the title of the conference itself. Why, some wondered, do we even need the word neomedievalism? After all, we have a perfectly sound word, medievalism, that encompasses all manner of interaction with the Middle Ages. Strong arguments have been raised before, during, and after the conference against the use of the new term, including the objections of Leslie Workman, the founder of medievalism as a field of study.[1]

Defenses of neomedievalism at the 2007 conference revolved tentatively around technology, refraction, theory, postmodernism, and Umberto Eco, but more compelling cases for distinguishing medievalism from neomedievalism have been evolving since then.[2] Carol L. Robinson and Pamela Clements deliver the most comprehensive explanation in their 2009 essay "Living with Neomedievalism," in which they argue that "neomedievalism is further independent, further detached, and thus consciously, purposefully, and perhaps even laughingly reshaping itself into an alternate universe of medievalisms, a fantasy of medievalisms, a meta-medievalism."[3] This corresponds to the definition posted on the website for the Medieval Electronic Multimedia Organization (MEMO), which adds that "this vision lacks the nostalgia of earlier medievalisms in that it denies history."[4]

Robinson, Clements, and MEMO provide a definition of neomedievalism that is giddy and joyful, one that implies growth and progress along with the wisdom of self-conscious irony. As a result, it is an extremely attractive definition, although perhaps not to

everyone. The implicit progress narrative that seems to lurk in such an account, one in which neomedievalism abandons its stodgy old parent, is sure to raise eyebrows, for though neomedievalism may do a fine job of abandoning the Middle Ages as a historical period, it fails to leave medievalism itself entirely behind. In other words, neomedievalists may deny history, but that certainly does not stop them from repeating it.

It is what continues to link neomedievalism to medievalism that concerns this essay, not with the intention of conflating the two, but with the hopes of complicating the notion of neomedievalism as progress while still relying on the diligent and, on the whole, I think, valid definition provided by Robinson and Clements. Workman's primary objection to the term, according to Kathleen Verduin, is that neomedievalism "tacitly limited the broader range of implications on which he insisted."[5] This might be remedied if neomedievalism is conceived of as functioning within particular limitations, not as a companion to or evolution of medievalism, but a functional subset of it, one of the multiple medievalisms argued for by Tom Shippey, Nils Holger Petersen, and Elizabeth Emery in the first of two *Defining Medievalism(s)* volumes of *Studies in Medievalism*.[6] Neomedievalism is one way of doing medievalism, one that requires certain philosophical and technological shifts in order to exist at all. Yet while medievalism can exist perfectly independently at any point in time, neo-medievalism, despite its seeming ahistoricity, is historically contingent upon both medievalism itself and the postmodern condition.

Neomedievalism is new because it is vexed in new ways. If medievalism can be said to work within a framework of distance (reverential or otherwise), then neomedievalism obliterates distance in an intensified combination of love and loathing, its desire for the past torn asunder between the denial of history and a longing for return. Kathleen Biddick has provocatively suggested that medieval studies is traumatized by its artificial separation from "non-academic" medievalism in the nineteenth century, at which time academic medievalism insisted on the radical alterity of the Middle Ages, one that would make them impossible to "know" through non-academic means. She thus calls for a new medieval studies that can do "the work of mourning."[7] While neomedievalism might seem to fit the bill at first, given that the mourning Biddick calls for "[…] does not find the lost object; it acknowledges its loss, thus suffering the lost object to be

lost while maintaining a narrative connection to it," it ultimately fails at the goal of mourning: to "unfuse past, present, and future" and "return to the narrative relation of temporality."[8] Neomedievalism's denial of history, its anachronisms, distortions, and fragmentation, sound less like "mourning" and more like what Biddick describes as the manifestations of trauma:

> Since its content is not grasped when it occurs, a traumatic loss has no present and therefore resists conventional contextualization based on either diachrony or synchrony. Trauma also resists representation since its traces recur *fragmentarily* in flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitious phenomena. *Past and present symbolically fuse in such repetition*, and, in so doing, the possibility of futurity – change – is foreclosed. Such fusing is typical of melancholy.[9]

Biddick's account of melancholy relies on remarkably similar descriptors to the definition of neomedievalism offered by Robinson, Clements, and MEMO, in which "Histories are purposely *fragmented*" and in which history itself is denied. If the schism between medievalism and medieval studies resulted in trauma, then neomedievalism may be a new symptom, one that appeared when postmodernism further separated medievalism from its desired object. The medieval past as an object, in other words, has been lost twice: first, when nineteenth-century medieval studies insisted on the radical alterity of the Middle Ages, and then again, when we all learned that history was relative and were asked to reject the very positivism that caused the traumatic split. Neomedievalism finds a way of clinging to the past by rejecting the "history," the alterity, the time and space that separated it from its desired object and bringing it into the present. But what initially appears to be neomedievalism's denial of history may, instead, be a desire for history alongside the uncomfortable suspicion that there is no such thing. Neomedievalism consumes the Middle Ages in fragmented, repetitive tropes as a way of ensuring against loss. And as we shall see, in many of neomedievalism's manifestations, futurity is foreclosed, for the future leads only to the past.

Through a (Cracked) Glass, Darkly

Repetition and refraction are generally acknowledged to be key facets of neomedievalism.[10] The neomedieval idea of the Middle Ages is gained not through contact with the Middle Ages, but through a medievalist intermediary: Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* series, T. H. White's *Once and Future King*, or even books by medieval scholars, such as Linda Malcor and C. Scott Littleton's *From Scythia to Camelot*, which heavily influenced the 2004 film *King Arthur*. Neomedievalism is thus not a dream of the Middle Ages, but a dream of someone else's medievalism. It is medievalism doubled up upon itself.

Refraction, however, is inadequate for categorizing a "new" medievalism. First, the prefix of the term, *neo*, implies that there is something specifically new, specifically different, about this brand of medievalism, and there is nothing new about accusations that medievalism in any of its forms is a distortion. Secondly, such a definition too closely echoes the academic's "medievalism as error" fallacy.[11] But as Robinson and Clements argue, "it is not just the distortion of the medieval that makes a work neomedieval *but the nature of that distortion*."[12] The distortion is not error, but choice, owing in part to a postmodern vision of malleable and impermanent history in which error is simultaneously impossible and inevitable.

Live Action Role Players, colloquially "LARPers," are a fine example of this facet of neomedievalism. LARPers deck themselves in homemade leather leggings and chainmail, arm themselves with foam-padded weapons and bags of birdseed meant to represent magic spells, and venture together into the wooded areas surrounding such unlikely locales as Atlanta, Georgia, in order to collectively suspend disbelief in modernity. Despite the homemade chainmail and their otherwise vivid imaginations, they are not really trying to replicate the Middle Ages, and few of them imagine that they are.[13] LARPers, instead, immerse themselves in the products of medievalism: games like the wildly popular *Dungeons & Dragons* world, both the pen-and-paper version and its many virtual offshoots, as well as the fantasy environs of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Thus, when the stockbroker hits the trial lawyer over the head with a well-padded steel pipe, she imagines herself in Lothlórien or Waterdeep rather than Tintagel or Brocéliande.

Here, suspended in the image of a leather-clad stockbroker and her foam pipe, is where my definition of neomedievalism deviates slightly from "Living with Neomedievalism." In their definition of neomedievalism, Robinson and Clements argue that "'medieval' equals simply 'other.' "[14] Yet it seems likely that to our stockbroker, this refracted version of the Middle Ages is not necessarily other, but self. In her created world, the Middle Ages as she imagines them both belong to her and include her. However she acquired it, this is the only medieval that matters. Neomedievalism is not as interested in creating or recreating the Middle Ages as it is in assimilating and consuming it. The danger of assimilation, of course, is that the essence and the beauty of difference can be lost.

Before we fall back on familiar accusations of anachronism, however, we must consider for a moment how medieval scholars are complicit in this rendering. Most of us teach within a system that is increasingly insistent on both the practical application of classroom knowledge and on making sure students can "relate" to material. Such an environment makes professors of medieval studies eager to enlist the aid of popular medievalisms, which enable us to drag students into the past without hearing any complaints against its uselessness and its distance. What medieval studies professor these days has not put Arthurian films on the syllabus (or even designed a whole course around them), passed around a medieval-themed graphic novel, or let students do their homework on the Xbox in order to make their classes more timely, more relevant, or more exciting? This has served us well as teachers and even given some of us a surprising cachet among colleagues who, just a few short years ago, probably felt sorry for us most of the time. Do our classrooms aggravate the suspension of time, the irreverence for history, by manipulating popular neomedievalisms, or are they merely the products of them? Either way, they are exemplary of an increased tendency both academically and culturally to drag the Middle Ages *out* of the past and transport it to the present. Possessing the Middle Ages in this way is one solution to overcoming the double trauma of what some scholars have called the "hard-edged alterity" of the past, one that renders it unknowable, as well as the loss of the past instigated by postmodernism, which renders it disparate and imagined.[15] One of neomedievalism's defining features is therefore its exceptional, sometimes insufferable presentism. Despite its desire to erase time, neomedievalism is situated in time: it

just happens to be our time. Neomedievalism's dreams, however, extend far beyond the present.

Back to the Future

The prefix *neo* has a second implication that I take to refer to its vision: it suggests looking forward rather than backward. Neomedievalism dreams of an impending, inevitable new Middle Ages in the future. The most obvious manifestations of this dream appear in the post-apocalyptic neomedievalisms of science fiction and fantasy. For instance, Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series seems from all early appearances to take place in a thoroughly medievalist universe; it even contains characters with names like *Nynaeve* al'Meara and Thom *Merrilin*. And yet, in the fourth book, *The Shadow Rising*, the reader learns with some alarm that the castles, forests, and sword-and-sorcery state of affairs is, in fact, a reversion: Once there were cars. Once there were airplanes. The past even held skyscrapers, democracy, and feminism, all of which ended with the explosion of a mysterious weapon that wiped out everything, including an entire species of tree.[16] The "new" Middle Ages of the *Wheel of Time* is the logical conclusion of an excess of progress. A similar neomedievalism is the premise of S. M. Stirling's *Dies the Fire*, in which a mysterious event wipes out all technological innovations, and before you know it, hyper-masculine airplane pilots are building crossbows while self-styled warlords lead lingerie-clad women around in chains.[17] In both texts, the fantasy of the medieval, though full of pain, fear, suffering, evil, and self-indulgent gender discrimination (even Jordan's feistiest female characters exhibit an incongruous fondness for being spanked), is clearly a preferable state of affairs to the dangerous indeterminacy of the present. If we are reconciled to the idea that we can never "have" the past, even in the past, then we shall make due by transporting it forward, either to the here and now, or better yet, into the future.

Neomedievalism sees the possibility of the Middle Ages as a cycle, an ahistorical historical state to which it is possible to return. The fantasy of return also brings us to the dismal neomedieval forecasts of scholars in political science, economics, and international relations, which warn that, in the words of Stephen J. Kobrin, "The modern era may be a window which is about to slam shut."[18] Surveys of such approaches and their implications from a humanist's perspective have

been treated elsewhere; my concern here is the neomedievalist praxis of the theorists themselves.[19] They, too, assimilate a particular set of "medieval" tropes, refracted through medievalism, into the present, and thus read everything from gated communities, private security, and the European Union to Bill Gates (whom one imaginative writer labels a "postmodern Medici") as neomedieval.[20] That such readings are exercises in neomedievalism as much as studies of them is clear both from their free-play of symbolism and from accounts such as Stephen J. Kobrin's article "Back to the Future: Neomedievalism and the Postmodern Digital World Economy," which argues that increasingly globalized trade and the disappearing nation state represent a "detour" toward a new Middle Ages.[21] In order to help us imagine what this looks like, Kobrin proceeds down what at first seems like a logical path, until it takes a rather startling turn:

> A closer look at medieval Europe, the "immediate" past, can help us imagine our postmodern global future. In the *Star Wars Trilogy*, Darth Vader is clad in the armor of the traditional villain of medieval epics – the Black Knight – and he and Luke Skywalker duel with laser sabers in a fight that, but for the weapons, would be at home in *Henry IV*. Similarly, the costumes in the futuristic *Waterworld* have been described as neomedieval iron and kelp. In politics and economics, as in science fiction movies, it may help to attempt to visualize the unknown future in terms of the known past.[22]

The easy leap from medieval Europe to battle scenes on the Death Star is especially telling: Kobrin's examples are not thoughtful examinations of the Middle Ages that help us to understand our past and future, but indiscriminate assimilations of medieval tropes into neomedieval, futuristic settings. Hence, Kobrin's essay on neomedievalism is, perhaps, one of the best examples *of* neomedievalism that a humanities scholar could hope to find. It is, like its cinematic analogues, an exercise in consumption.

The consumable Middle Ages are themselves deeply limited. When social scientists wring their hands and warn of return, they imagine one kind of Middle Age: the Western European one. The specter of "return" denies the reality that there have always been Middle Ages in the plural. Medievalism and neomedievalism in the humanities are no different. M. J. Toswell notes that, "Incidentally,

the Middle Ages under discussion by way of the term 'medievalism' denote only the Western, more specifically the European and North American, approach to the years 500–1500."[23] But why, one wonders, should this be the case with neomedievalism, which has an irreverence for convention and a spirit of free play, not to mention the postmodern recognition that Western culture was not isolated, autonomous, or uninfluenced by the civilizations thriving around it?

Despite its scattered and inclusive surface, neomedievalism tends to be homogenizing in what it selects from the past. If neomedievalism wants to erase the unknowable, erase distance, then it must also erase difference. Its rejection of history, its spirit of integrating past and present, often cause *all* of the Middle Ages to be absorbed completely into a Western notion of the medieval: knights, European castles, court ladies, Christian spirituality. The dark side of neomedievalism's lingering attachment to medievalism is that it inherited a school of thought that developed at the height of Eurocentricism and cultural oppression, along with its tendencies to ignore, to demonize, or to assimilate the "other." Thus, neomedievalism sometimes borrows tropes from feudal Japan, the landscape of *One Thousand and One Nights*, or Native American spirituality, but it tends to absorb and redefine these symbols, stripping them of their cultural baggage and leaving only essentialized incarnations of the Western imagination. A minor case in point is virtual *Dungeons & Dragons* games in which a wide array of weapons is available for the player to purchase or loot, including the katana, the kukri, and the shuriken. These three are labeled "exotic" weapons and hence require special proficiencies. Nor are these weapons attached in any way to the cultures that formed them. Instead, characters wield such "exotic" weapons while wearing "traditional" Western armor and prancing through remarkably proto-European landscapes.[24] Non-European game worlds are rare, and when they do exist (such as the jungles of Chult in *Storm of Zehir*, an expansion game for *Neverwinter Nights 2*), the locals and the landscape are markedly prehistoric, not medieval. Chult, for instance, is even plagued by dinosaurs.[25] Thus non-Western cultures, if not absorbed into the European Middle Ages, are generally excluded from the cultural fantasy of the medieval. Neomedievalism, despite its lofty promises, is in danger of colonizing the past as effectively as Renaissance, Restoration, and Victorian Europe colonized the rest of the world.

MEMO's website optimistically notes that neomedievalism is dominated by contemporary values, which "rewrite the traditional perceptions of the European Middle Ages, even infusing other medieval cultures, such as that of Japan."[26] If infusion is on the way to transforming into recognition, then neomedievalism may eventually recognize a multiplicity of Middle Ages. This, too, would take it down the path of healing trauma, of unfusing past, present, and future, for acknowledging history is essential to imagining true diversity. Perhaps we might even dream of multiple, global Middle Ages interacting within an inclusive, dynamic cultural fantasy. Now *that* would be a new medievalism.

NOTES

1. As Kathleen Verduin writes of Leslie Workman, "'neo-medievalism,' suggestive of intentional (and hence usually fatuous) efforts at regeneration, was a coinage he abhorred, since it tacitly limited the broader range of implications on which he insisted. […] Instead, medievalism involved any engagement with the Middle Ages, conscious or unconscious, from the lunatic fringe of medievalist kitsch to the most solemn scholarship and from approximately 1500 to the present and beyond." Kathleen Verduin, "The Founding and the Founder," *Studies in Medievalism* 17 (2009): 23–24.

2. Umberto Eco coins the term "neomedievalism" in "Dreaming of the Middle Ages," *Travels in Hyperreality*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 1986). He does so in such a way, however, as to make it difficult to distinguish from Leslie Workman's definition. For further discussion of the similarities between the two terms, see Elizabeth Emery, "Medievalism and the Middle Ages," *Studies in Medievalism* 17 (2009): 68–76 (83); and Carol L. Robinson and Pamela Clements, "Living with Neomedievalism," *Studies in Medievalism* 18 (2009): 55–75 (59).

3. Robinson and Clements, "Living with Neomedievalism," 56. Additional definitions include M. J. Toswell's, who argues that "new medievalism(s) […] appears to mean new approaches to the study of the medieval period (and particularly approaches using new theoretical paradigms)," in "The Tropes of Medievalism," *Studies in Medievalism* 17 (2009): 68–76 (68–69). Emery also argues that Eco's term might be useful to define a sub-category of medievalism of "those who create a vision filtered through previous examples of medievalism" ("Medievalism and the Middle Ages," 83).

4. <http://medievalelectronicmultimedia.org/definitions.html>.

5. Verduin, "The Founding and the Founder," 23.

6. Tom Shippey, "Medievalisms and Why They Matter," *Studies in Medievalism* 17 (2009): 45–54 (48); Nils Holger Peterson, "Medievalism and Medieval Reception: A Terminological Question," *Studies in Medievalism* 17 (2009): 36–44; Emery, "Medievalism and the Middle Ages," 83–84.

7. Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 1–15. Biddick explains that "In order to separate and elevate themselves from popular studies of medieval culture, the new academic medievalists of the nineteenth century designated their practices, influenced by positivism, as scientific and eschewed what they regarded as less-positivist, 'nonscientific' practices, labeling them *medievalism*" (1).

8. Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, 10.

9. Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, 10 (emphasis mine).

10. For instance, Robinson and Clements argue that neomedievalism "does not look to the Middle Ages to use, to study, to copy, or even to learn; the perception of the Middle Ages is more filtered, perceptions of perceptions (and of distortions), done without a concern for facts of reality, such as the fact that The Knights Who Say 'Ni' never existed," "Living with Neomedievalism," 62. See also Emery, "Medievalism and the Middle Ages," 83–84; and Verduin, "The Founding and the Founder," 23.

11. See Gwendolyn A. Morgan, "Medievalism, Authority, and the Academy," *Studies in Medievalism* 17 (2009): 55–67 (56); and Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, 4.

12. Robinson and Clements, "Living with Neomedievalism," 64.

13. As a result, academic analyses of Live Action Role Playing rarely even mention the word "medieval," and LARPers tend to emphasize the fantasy dimensions of their created universe when they are interviewed; they do not consider themselves historical re-enactors. See, for instance, Marinka Copier, "Connecting Worlds. Fantasy Role-Playing Games, Ritual Acts and the Magic Circle," *Proceedings of DiGRA 2005 Conference: Changing Views – Worlds in Play*, <http://www.digra.org/dl/db/06278.50594.pdf> and an interview with LARPers at <http://people.howstuffworks.com/larp.htm>.

14. Robinson and Clements, "Living with Neomedievalism," 63.

15. For the phrase "hard-edged alterity," see *The New Medievalism*, ed. Marina S. Brownlee, Kevin Brownlee, and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 12; and Stephen G. Nichols, "Modernism and the Politics of Medieval Studies," in *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, ed. R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 25–56 (49). However, see Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, 4, for the deconstruction of this term.

16. See Robert Jordan, *The Shadow Rising* (New York: Tor Books,