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The term neomedievalism is often attributed to the writings of the English political theorist Hedley Bull who, in 1977, published *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. Writing at the tail end of détente, Bull used a medieval analogy to build a theoretical model “for the future structure of world politics that could replace the system of sovereign states”. Bull was one of the first prominent theorists to argue for the emerging influence of non-state actors, such as the United Nations and private transnational corporations, in global policy making. Prior to the development of the Westphalian systems of territorial sovereignty and nation
building, he argued, Europe was organised by multiple, asymmetric layers of authority, each of which shared sovereignty with the others. These layers of sovereignty were overlapping and were not supreme; authority was shared among rulers, the vassals beneath them, and the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor above. He argued that “if modern states were to come to share their authority over their citizens, and their ability to command their loyalties, on the one hand with regional and world authorities and on the other with sub-state or sub-national authorities, to such an extent that the concept of sovereignty ceased to be applicable, then a neo-mediaeval form of universal political order might be said to have emerged”.

Bull, like Arnold Wolfers before him\(^3\), ultimately rejected the notion of neomedievalism as mere supposition lacking any real empirical basis, particularly during a time dominated by superpower competition and before the establishment of the World Wide Web. The idea may have seemed obscure, even slightly eccentric at the time, but it has proved to be remarkably prescient.\(^4\) Greater foresight was demonstrated by Yehezkel Dror who, in the early 1970s, was hypothesising ways in which foreign policy makers needed to generate

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\(^4\) “With hindsight of half a century, we can see that Wolfers was writing at the absolute apex of the CW [Clausewitzian-Westphalian] system, and while it is completely understandable that he abandoned neomedievalism at that point, history has subsequently developed in the directions he speculated upon”: Philip A. Schrodt, “Neo-medievalism in the Twenty-first Century: Warlords, Gangs and Transnational Militarized Actors as a Challenge to Sovereign Pre-eminence,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 17-20, 2010: 10.
“countercraziness strategies” to engage with what would later become commonly known as “rogue states”. From NATO’s perspective, “crazy states” included Cuba, Libya and Iran, while the Warsaw Pact began to grown increasingly concerned with Afghanistan and Iran towards the end of the 1970s. While Dror specifically addressed the international relations of sovereign states, his concept of multi-actors could be applied to the then contemporary development of neomedieval non-state/state conflicts such as that, for example, between the IRA and the United Kingdom or between ETA and Spain. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979—officially to prevent Islamic revolutionaries forming another “crazy state” on the Soviet border—helped to fuel an escalation of the Cold War. This, in turn, enabled neorealism to rise in prominence in International Relations theory. So long as the NATO/Warsaw Pact balance of power was the major empirical preoccupation, neomedievalism remained mere supposition. The neomedievalist insight of Dror’s hypothesis would not become apparent until the early 1990s. The rapid development of information and communication technologies, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Balkanisation of central and eastern Europe, and the rise in number of transnational organisations—from regulatory bodies and multinational corporations to environmental pressure groups and terrorist organisations—added fuel to the medieval analogy in international relations theory in the 1990s. It rapidly evolved into fully-fledged and highly visible geo-political debate, even finding its way into government think tanks on the future of America’s global hegemony and national security after 9/11.

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6 After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Serbia and Montenegro, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan and North Korea were added to NATO’s unofficial list of rogue states, while the concept became a component of the Clinton Administration’s foreign policy. While the Clinton Administration abandoned the concept in 2000, the “crazy state” con-
In 2001, Jörg Freidrichs revised and refined Bull’s original proposition in an attempt to break the deadlock of what he called the “triple dilemma of current International Relations theory”. Here the author outlined the inadequacy of contemporary theoretical models to deal with the simultaneous globalisation and fragmentation of a modern state system that nevertheless remained a dominant organisational force. He argued that while the challenges to national sovereignty were very real, the state system was not in danger of disappearing altogether; on the contrary, its continued existence was vital in the maintenance of political, social and, as witnessed most notably during the 2008 financial crisis, economic stability both within and without national borders. Despite this continued hold on legitimate political action, the discourses of International Relations still fixed resolutely the nation-state’s gradual erosion both from above, by transnational, liberalised economies and cross-cutting communication technologies, and below, by sub-national communities realigning along ethnic, cultural and religious lines. By the early 21st century, it had become increasingly difficult to imagine a possible future in which states continued to exist as partial actors within an extended multilateral web of complex and fluid power relations. As prominent International Relations professor Andrew Linklater put it, such a possibility received “too little attention from political theorists who are, with some exceptions, firmly wedded to reflections on the modern state, and from mainstream students of International Relations who, by analysing relations between bounded communities, have often ignored questions about how alternative forms of political community and new principals of world organisation might

cept rebounded when Iran, North Korea and Iraq were infamously singled out as a “Axis of Evil” in President George Bush’s 2002 State of the Union Address following in the wake of 9/11.

Conventional wisdom in the ’00s, then, supposed that the nation-state was in its death-throes; it would either break down into parochial enclaves, be consumed by economic processes of standardisation, or react by aggressively reaffirming political, social and economic boundaries. To illustrate the impasse reached by International Relations discourse, Freidrichs quoted at length from French scholar Pierre Hassner who, significantly, imparted his message in a deliberately “medieval” language, both in its ecclesiastical, apocalyptic overtones (ruins of Empire/rupturing heavens) and in its adoption of Tolkienesque protagonists (princes, monsters and fairies):  

Peace or War? Utopia or nightmare? Global solidarity or tribal conflict? Nationalism triumphant or the crisis of the nation-state? Progress on civil rights or persecution of minorities? New world order or new anarchy? There seems to be no end to the fundamental dilemmas and anguished questions provoked by the post-Cold War world. One is almost tempted to turn to the language of myth and fairy tale. Perhaps we should blame the witches and bad fairies who made their wishes over the cradle of the latest born of the international systems. Perhaps the Prince has been turned into a monster and will never recover his original form. Perhaps the fall of the Soviet empire has torn a hole in the heavens and in the ground underfoot, allowing us to glimpse through the ruins of the postwar structures both the shining prospect of a

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9 For example, in the case of the European Union, consolidation into a federal superstate.
10 This recourse to fuzzy irrationalism was perhaps an attempt to communicate something incommensurable to post-enlightenment discourse. Neomedievalism in International Relations can be read as a de-rationalisation of political theory.
global community and the swarming menace of unrestrained violence. Hassner suggested that a juncture had been reached where the secular analytical languages of political science no longer sufficed to adequately impart the rapidly morphing complexities of globalisation. Freidrichs asserted that this “dilemma” came from a particularly modern desire to unify the dual processes of fragmentation and globalisation onto a single ontological narrative of international transformation. It is as though we were “still captive to the modern a priori that a coherent order cannot be organised if not from exactly one organising principal”. It was instead proposed that Bull’s neomedievalism be adapted to allow these multiple, conflicting theories to coexist within a relatively stable and holistic framework. It was necessary to expand upon Bull’s oft-cited definition of neomedievalism as “a system of overlapping authority and multiple loyalty”. In this definition, Freidrichs read a narrow pejorative caricature of the late Middle Ages as instable, anarchic and barbarous. Bull himself noted the apocalyptic implications of a post-Westphalian world that would “contain more ubiquitous and continuous violence and insecurity than does the modern states system”. To shift the emphasis towards a more sustainable equilibrium, Freidrichs reminded us that—while the late medieval period was undoubtedly plagued by inter-ethnic conflict, social inequality, outlawry and religious sectarianism—the social fragmentation of Western Europe was held in check for centuries by both Christian universalism, and the hegemonic claims of the Holy Roman Empire. Within this social constellation the

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12 Freidrichs, “The Meaning of New Medievalism”, 479.
Catholic clergy and the feudal nobility “formed trans-territorial classes that preserved a considerable degree of uniformity”.\textsuperscript{15} According to the neomedieval paradigm, global stability is managed by the conflicting yet interdependent universalisms of the neoliberal world market economy and the liberal nation state system. As principal actors within this world order, the clergy have been replaced by the global managerial class of bankers, corporate CEOs and scientists and the feudal aristocracy by politicians, policy makers and bureaucrats.\textsuperscript{16} Like the ecclesiastical and monarchial powers of medieval Europe, these groups are “characterised by an extraordinary degree of spatial and social mobility” that is denied to most ordinary subjects.\textsuperscript{17} Accordingly, Bull’s neo-medievalism is revised as: “a system of overlapping and authority and multiple loyalty—held together by a duality of competing universalistic claims”.\textsuperscript{18}

Within this expanded definition three main overlapping realms are in evidence and remain stable only within a continual flux between antagonism and cooperation. For a neomedieval order to function, no one sphere can claim total legitimacy over another. Societal actors constantly operate through networks of resistance and re-focused loyalties to promote “life-world” values—be they political, religious, environmental, etc.—in resistance to both the totalitarian

\textsuperscript{15} Freidrichs, “The Meaning of New Medievalism”, 486.
\textsuperscript{16} Of course, it might make as much, if not more, sense to equate medieval ecclesiastical powers with those of contemporary elected political authorities that, at least, maintain the illusion of counsel with commoners through regular surgeries and congregations. Such authorities claim to hold the will of unaccountable monarchial forces in check, forces that we might today equate with the global neoliberal economy. Both seek universal legitimation in the limited choices offered to individuals to elect (democracy) and to consume (neoliberalism). Since they emanate from different cultures, ecclesiastical and monarchial “choices” are often conflicting.
\textsuperscript{17} Freidrichs, “The Meaning of New Medievalism”, 492.
\textsuperscript{18} Freidrichs, “The Meaning of New Medievalism”, 490.
claims of the liberal democratic state and the colonising forces of the neo-liberal global economy. Economic realms must resist political interference and adapt to societal values at odds with the autonomous logic of market efficiency. In the realm of politics, collective sovereignty must be maintained, at national and international levels, despite the particular claims of societal actors and organising forces of the global economy.

Freidrichs acknowledged that the symmetry of the above model was problematic. A balance was inferred that ignored the fact that the universalising claims of the transnational economy continued to colonise both politics and society, ensuring that there was little prospect of opposition to neoliberalism. Questions also arose regarding where individuals turned in matters requiring democratic resolution. If the state was no longer primarily accountable for upholding and policing values such as social inclusiveness or even basic human rights, how would individuals determine which organisations should serve as the focus of their loyalties?\footnote{I will engage some of these issues in more detail later in this chapter by discussing where other commentators took Bull’s embryonic hypothesis, as well as by looking at specific examples where it was applied (sometimes irresponsibly) to world events.}

Despite these issues, Freidrichs’s neomedievalism offered, at least, a historical meta-narrative in nucleo, providing a framework that allowed simultaneous discussion of globalisation, fragmentation and sovereign states. His was an ameliorative interpretation based on a (fantasy of a) Middle Ages of relatively sustainable order.\footnote{Which is simply to say that the interpretation required the construction of a medievalism.} By this analogy, “apocalyptic fears of an imminent new world disorder can be smoothed. At least in principle, cultural pluralism is not necessarily linked with anarchy, nor is universalism with a global super-Leviathan”.\footnote{Freidrichs, “The Meaning of New Medievalism”, 494.}

Along with Freidrichs, Phillip G. Cerny and Stephen J.
Kobrin also made significant contributions to the formulation and promotion of neomedievalism as a geopolitical metaphor or “inter-temporal analog of comparative political analysis”. Both built their theses from a broad range of disciplines, ranging from economics and history to cultural studies and political science. Kobrin focused on the role of digital technology in the dematerialisation of territorially-defined economies and political identities, while Cerny centred his analogy on the obsolescence of the “security dilemma”—a neorealist term describing how the state system was maintained through cyclic and reciprocal responses, such as an arms-race or strategic alliances, to perceived external threats.

To varying degrees, all three authors followed up on groundwork prepared by Gerrard Ruggie in his 1993 article, “Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations,” in which he traced the transition from medieval to modern to postmodern Europe in an attempt to find a language apposite to the exploration of contemporary international transformation. In the same article he drew upon a number of sources to extrapolate a history of the medieval period central to all subsequent neomedieval discourse:


The archetype of nonexclusive territorial rule, of course, is medieval Europe, with its "patchwork of overlapping and incomplete rights of government", which were "inextricably superimposed and tangled," and in which "different juridical instances were geographically interwoven and stratified, and plural allegiances, asymmetrical suzerainties and anomalous enclaves abounded". . . . The spatial extension of the medieval system of rule was structured by a nonexclusive form of territoriality, in which authority was both personalized and parcelized within and across territorial formations and for which inclusive bases of legitimation prevailed. The notion of firm boundary lines between the major territorial formations did not take hold until the thirteenth century; prior to that date, there were only "frontiers," or large zones of transition. The medieval ruling class was mobile in a manner not dreamed of since, able to assume governance from one end of the continent to the other without hesitation or difficulty because "public territories formed a continuum with private estates".24

The proceeding centuries witnessed a gradual consolidation or "bundling" together of both secular and spiritual social groups and institutions under territorial based sovereignty. The emergence of modern macro-nation-states was far more complex than a shift from fluid overlapping structures to rigid hierarchies inside and anarchy outside—as inferred by neorealism. Ruggie argued that a partial "unbundling" of territory had always been a prerequisite to the success of mutually exclusive sovereign states in that it provided a fictitious "extraterritorial space" where diplomacy could be carried out. Chapel embassies, for example, provided visiting dignitaries a patch of homeland where a Protestant service could be carried out on Catholic soil and vice versa. These small pockets of alien sovereignty developed over time to

24 Ruggie, "Territoriality and Beyond", 149–150.
include a variety of functional regimes such as international fairs, common markets and political communities spanning across multiple borders. Unbundled territory, then, acted as a pressure valve, loosening the grip of what Ruggie termed the “paradox of absolute individuation”.\textsuperscript{25} The processes of globalisation accelerated the unbundling of territoriarity, a condition necessitated by increasing transnational interdependences. The negation of exclusivity provided a means for dealing with “those dimensions of collective existence that territorial rulers recognize to be irreducibly transterritorial in character. Nonterritorial functional space is the place wherein international society is anchored”.\textsuperscript{26} Ruggie concluded that unbundled territoriality is the site from which all attempts at rearticulating international social and political space should propagate.

For Kobrin, the proliferation of extraterritorial space was exemplified by information and communication technologies. The rapid expansion of the Internet marked a fundamental rupture between geographic space (a space of place) and cyberspace (a space of flows).\textsuperscript{27} This allowed simultaneous information exchange between transnational corporations, culture and media centres and government bureaucra-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ruggie, “Territoriality and Beyond”, 164.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ruggie, “Territoriality and Beyond”, 165.
\item \textsuperscript{27} “Space of place” and “space of flows” are terms borrowed from Manuel Castells, The Rise of the Network Society (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 412: “Our societies are constructed around flows: flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interactions, flows of images, sounds and symbols. Flows are not just one element of social organization: they are the expression of the processes dominating our economic, political, and symbolic life. . . . Thus, I propose the idea that there is a new spatial form characteristic of social practices that dominate and shape the network society: the space of flows. The space of flows is the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows. By flows I understand purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors.”
\end{itemize}
cies to operate in nebulous realms outside the jurisdiction of national borders, rendering space “once again relational and symbolic, or metaphysical. External reality seen through the World Wide Web may be closer to medieval Christian representations of the world than to a modern atlas.”

Similarly, mobile populations or diasporic societies with internet access became less culturally dependent on economies of scale that arise in communities of place. The ability to network electronically, to establish “scale-free” communities of practice based on ethnicity, religion, political identity, sexual preference, cultural interests, economic class, celebrity ranking etc., made modern practices of nationhood more portable, or even, in some cases, irrelevant. At the same time, access to physical transterritorial mobility and to virtual information networks remained rigidly divided between those who had and those who had not. Clusters of privilege, capital innovation and property rights (citadels) formed that were “surrounded by a vast and impenetrable forest” (barbarian camps and ghettos).

According to Cerny, the collapse of the Soviet Union was not solely a result of power-shifts in relation to the United States but, more accurately, its passing was brought about by new configurations of internal and transnational pressures arising from increased economic interdependences, heightened public exposure to social and cultural alternatives via communications technologies, and a general expansion of consumerism that the USSR was increasingly unable to control in an ever more interconnected world. International relations, therefore, were no longer to be dominated by indivisible nationalist concerns but by “divisible benefits pursued by pluralistic, often cross-national networks of individu-

28 Kobrin, “Back to the Future”, 11.
29 Kobrin, “Back to the Future”, 10.
In general, it could be said that citizens became less concerned with the institutional benefits of “belonging” to (or opposing) the particularised, cultural and sociopolitical values embedded within their state of citizenship. As well as negotiating over issues directly involved with the home state, many social causes or interest groups focused more on “cross-cutting transnational issues such as the environment, women’s issues, the international banning of land mines, opposition to the holding of political prisoners worldwide, promotion of sustainable development and the like”. Consequently, the processes of states were progressively transformed into “transmission belts” or “enforcement mechanisms” for political and cultural exchanges occurring across an evermore diverse and complex global stage “increasingly characterized by attributes that echo features of the medieval world”.

Despite differing angles of approach, these authors offered a systematic breakdown of International Relations neo-medievalism in the early 21st century as summarised by Cerny at the 2004 Annual Convention of the International Studies Association in Montréal, Québec:

1. Competing institutions with overlapping jurisdictions (states, regimes, transgovernmental networks, private interest governments, etc.).

2. More fluid territorial boundaries (both within and across states).

3. A growing alienation between global innovation, communication and resource nodes (global cities) on the one hand and disfavoured, fragmented hinterlands on the other, along with increased inequalities and isolation of

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permanent sub-castes (the underclass).

4. Multiple and/or fragmented loyalties and identities (ethnic conflict and multiculturalism).

5. Contested property rights and legal boundaries (e.g., disregard for rules and dispute resolution procedures, attempts to extend extraterritorial jurisdiction, etc.)

6. The spread of what Alain Minc has called “zones grises”,\(^{34}\) or geographical areas and social contexts where the rule of law does not run (both localized ghettos and international criminal activities).\(^{35}\)

These points typified the consolidated idioms of International Relations neomedievalism of which there were a growing number of exponents.

The analogy developed here was inherently and dangerously double-edged. Invoking the medieval, as Bull feared, conjured firmly embedded popular images of Empires in ruin, barbarian hoards, crusades, jihads, fortresses, outlawry, misogyny, superstition and fear—not to mention plague and famine. The neomedieval rhetoric carried a prophetic or millenarianist trope, an anticipation of cataclysmic events, which IR scholars tempered through selective historical sourcing and particular emphasis on the ‘high’ or ‘late’ period of the Middle Ages. This very duplicity made the transhistorical

\(^{34}\) Cerny is quoting from Alain Minc’s best selling book *Le Nouveau Moyen Age* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993). In a 1994 interview for the BBC2 television series *The New Middle Ages*, Minc explained, “We are already seeing the emergence of ‘grey zones’ in which any kind of power does not exist any more, rather like the Middle Ages with its vast abandoned areas. For three centuries, we have been establishing the State to create order. Today, we are seeing areas developing without any kind of order or any kind of State”: *The New Middle Ages*, BBC2, November 28, 1994.

model conducive to creative analysis while remaining precariously fuzzy and open to political misappropriation. Cerny juggled the hot potato deftly in his conference paper. The central thrust of his argument posited a new neomedieval world order in which

a new sense of generalised insecurity has emerged represented not only ‘from above’ by the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but also ‘from below’, by the rise of civil wars, tribal and religious conflicts, terrorism, civil violence in developed countries, the international drugs trade, etc. This sense of insecurity reflects the fact that the provision of security itself as a public good—the very raison d’être of the states system—can no longer be guaranteed by that system.  

And yet Cerny asserted, as did Freidrichs, that such a volatile “system need not imply global chaos, since the medieval order was a highly flexible one that created a wide range of spaces that could accommodate quite extensive social, economic and political innovations,” to be compared to a future world order which “similarly provides manifold opportunities . . . . In the world of global finance, multinational firms, multilateral regimes, and private authority, therefore, the emerging neomedieval world order, reflecting its medieval predecessor, is most likely to be a kind of durable—yet fertile—disorder”.  

Not all commentators shared such a benign view. For some, neomedievalism served as a warning from the past. Just as the Roman Empire collapsed in a gradual “death by a thousand cuts”, resulting in the so-called “Dark Age”, so at the dawn of the second millennium, Western imperial hegemony (territorially embedded or globally diffuse) was threatened by the barbarians knocking again at the door.

Cerny’s silver lining of “extensive innovation” and “manifold opportunities” applied not only to those operating within legitimate, state-sanctioned spheres of global influence but also to an increasing number of proxy or state-seceded, semi-autonomous organisations for whom the continued opulence and future comfort of the Pax Americana was not on the agenda.

At “Globalisation and Governance in the Pacific Islands”, a conference held in Australia in 2005, John Rapley delivered a keynote address, entitled “From Neo-Liberalism to the New Medievalism,” sketching a potted history of the rapid, worldwide adoption of neo-liberal reform strategies over the past thirty years. He outlined how the shift from state-led development to free market economies, coupled with the hyper-growth of urban regions or “global cities”, particularly within the Third World, led to a marked withdrawal of state-level governance. To compete internationally, both rich and poor states alike, were forced to reduce taxes on production, cut down on public expenditure and deliver an increasing number of services via private or semi-private contractors. In the developing world—where urbanisation was at its most acute and governments struggled to meet basic demands for public goods such as water, housing, roads and security—Rapley argued that sovereignty, rather than being merely decentralised, was being negotiated with those who could “deliver the goods”. In cities across the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and Africa, where neo-liberal policies created pockets of vast wealth beside sprawling slum districts, new political patrons “ranging from criminal gangs to Islamist civil-society networks have assumed many of the functions that states have abandoned, funding their operations through informal taxes as well as proceeds from the

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drug trade, human trafficking and money laundering”. By way of example, Rapley recalled the lamentation of the US sponsored “war on drugs” by a senior Jamaican police officer who declared it “unwinnable” because much of downtown Kingston’s food, clothing and education was funded by gang-controlled drug money. This “rudimentary welfare” was provided in conjunction with an informal law-and-order programme complete with chicken-coop holding cells and private judicial hearings, in many cases with cooperation from local police who tolerated the dons’ drug activities in return for relatively peaceful streets. The system operated well enough in the vacuum left by official retreat, and gang-controlled communities, Robert Kaplan argued, were amongst the safest in the country.

This complex symbiotic relationship between state and “statelet” was undoubtedly a global trend, a reconfiguration of power relations not just confined to impoverished sectors of the urban environment. Within the global cities of the developing world, it was not just marginalised groups who managed their affairs and competed for resources independent of state regulation. An increasing number of the urban elite, those firmly “plugged-in” to the international marketplace, were living in segregated enclaves walled-off from the poorer communities who constituted the vast majority of the megalopolis demographic. As Nezar Alsayyad and Ananaya Roy explained in their thesis on “medieval modernity”, the gated enclave was the most common paradigm of spatial organisation in the early 21st century’s splintering urbanism. The “secession of the successful” was not simply a residential phenomenon, but part of a “network of exclusion” taking in urban restoration projects, art and media centres, leisure complexes, and even semi-private toll roads and skyways. In São Paulo, for example, the world’s largest

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fleet of private helicopters, one of which cost ninety times the average resident’s annual salary, regularly bypassed the city’s crippled transport network. Alsayyad and Roy described gated communities as a new kind of “spatial governmentality” with reciprocal rights and obligations managed by common interest developments (CIDs) and external threats controlled through surveillance technology, private security firms and crenellated architecture.

Alsayyad and Roy’s medieval analogy was partially based on a model of 11th- and 12th-century city-states as “honeycombs of jurisdiction” where certain freedoms (from serfdom for example) were granted in exchange for loyalty to a diverse and overlapping set of competing institutional bodies. Their comparative analysis took in three distinct yet interdependent modes of urban spatial formation: the gated enclave, the squatter settlement and the camp—the natures of which, they argued, could be better articulated through an engagement with their pre-modern counterparts:

First, if modern citizenship was constituted through a set of abstract individual rights embedded in the concept of the nation-state, then now there is the emergence of forms of citizenship that are located in urban enclaves. As in medieval times, this citizenship is linked to either patronage (as in the bishop) or to associational membership (as in the guild) and in both cases it is fundamentally about protection. Secondly, such forms of citizenship substitute for or are even hostile to the state. From the private home-owners’ associations to the neighbourhood-level Islamic republics being declared by religious fundamentalist groups, these are private systems of governance that operate as medieval fiefdoms, imposing

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truths and norms that are often contrary to national law.  

The analogy broadened discussion around the emergence of informally governed territories within the neo-liberal city by complicating the polarised notion of clear delimitations between the (plugged-in) global elite and the (switched-off) impoverished masses. In the medieval city, the “logic of rule is never singular; the terrain is always that of uneasy alliances and shifting sovereignties”.  

As Rapley attested, power was negotiated through complex webs of association and patronage between state, NGO, religious organisation, ethnic tribes, gang leaders and corporate body. The competition over resources was fiercely contested and resolved through a “politics of fiefdoms negotiated through modes of visible and invisible regulations”.  

It was not so much the sharpened divisions between rich and poor that led Rapley, in his conference address, to propose “that the symbolic date on which the neo-liberal empire ended was September 11, 2001, the date the command structure of history’s most powerful empire was temporarily decapitated by a handful of men armed with box cutters”; rather, it was the close proximity and labyrinthine interconnect between local and transnational concerns that confounded Western projects of global democratisation. In the wake of the neo-liberal age, Rapley argued that the neomedieval analogy, as set out by International Relations scholars, was a valid one. However, he noted that this debate tended to cluster around the political reconfigurations of Europe rather than the burgeoning cities of the Third World, rapidly evolving nodes “integrated into the global economy, standing often in the vanguard of global trends”. The legitimate vectors of communication established between these nodes

45 Rapley, “From Neo-liberalism to the New Medievalism”, 15.
46 Rapley, “From Neo-liberalism to the New Medievalism”, 18.
and those of the First World allow state seceded, criminal organisations such as terrorist groups and drug traffickers (or alliances between both) to operate at a global scale free from detection. Even if individual members could be identified, shelter could be sought in communities where the state no longer has adequate jurisdiction. Moreover, manifestations of violence were no longer confined to specific geographic territories as “gang warfare or apparently random murders in Toronto or London that seem senseless and anarchic within the context of those societies take on a brutally rational meaning when analysed within the context of gangs back in Jamaica or Nigeria”.47

With the attacks on the World Trade Centre by al Qaeda, “the metonym for the amorphous global network”, 48 and the subsequent retaliatory wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, came the slow dawning realisation that conventional rules of warfare no longer apply. Violent conflicts can no longer be seen as legitimate acts between states, wars transcend borders to follow subnational and supranational fault-lines of deep-rooted religious or tribal resentments and the distinction between war and crime is increasingly hard to officially classify. The so-called “enemy” is nomadic: a hybrid, globalised and stateless wanderer with one foot in each world, able to deftly manipulate the available resources and technologies of both.

As Chris Berzins and Patrick Cullens speculated in their contribution to the anthology, Neo-Medievalism and Civil Wars, the 9/11 hijackers’ lives “were more or less ambiguously divided between the pull of the Western cities where they lived, studied and travelled, and the radical factions within the mosques, where they worshiped and were recruited. These men were seemingly equally at ease, or more accurately at unease with modern technology and dress as they were with the traditions of the Muslim faith. They exist-

47 Rapley, “From Neo-liberalism to the New Medievalism”, 19.
48 Rapley, “From Neo-liberalism to the New Medievalism”, 17.
ed as foreigners, within an increasingly fragmented and alienating social, cultural and economic space while at the same time pushed up against the universalising influence of religion, and ultimately fanaticism”.

Within this medievalising rhetoric lay the crux of Cerny’s “generalised insecurity” from below. An abstracted fear of the irrational pre-modern “other”, a living fossil of the “dark ages” infiltrating the networks of modern secular society. This led Rapley and many other advocates of neomediaevalism to speak of a “new Rome” and “new barbarian tribes” gnawing at the edges of the Empire until eventually toppling its core. For the new medievalism had an omnipresent and troubling subtext, “just as the original medievalism was built atop the triumph of the triumph of Germanic tribes over the Roman Empire, the new medievalism can itself degenerate into a cold ruthless struggle over resources . . . happening in a context where abundance has never been greater, but relative scarcities never more acute”. Rapley made the additional point that, in allowing greater experience of how “the other half lives”, the Internet ensured that the “notion that worlds really are apart begins to tumble. Resentment grows. It festers”. Rapley warned that the “new Romans, like the old, might not enjoy the consequences”.

Such apocalyptic hyperbole utilised a woefully inaccurate, yet highly popular vision of the early Middle Ages, one hastily qualified as an exercise in “what if?”-style speculation. This was a powerful and compelling trope feeding the spectacular apocalyptic narratives that saturated Western cinema at the turn of the 21st century. Retro-futuristic imaginings of Vandals and Visigoths, astride hover-bikes sporting

50 Rapley, “From Neo-liberalism to the New Medievalism”, 19.
51 Rapley, “From Neo-liberalism to the New Medievalism”, 20.
high-tech weaponry, terrorising the remaining inhabitants of post-apocalyptic cities, demonstrated the primitivising tendency in Western consciousness towards allegedly “pre-modern” societies. The most influential political journalism tended to be that which explicitly delineated and exploited the neo-medieval “heart of darkness”.

In 1994, Kaplan wrote an article entitled “The Coming Anarchy” for *The Atlantic* magazine, drawing on his experiences of extensive travel in West Africa and the Middle East to formulate a report on how “to remap the political earth the way it will be in a few decades hence”. On his tour through the adjoining counties of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Senegal and Nigeria, he witnessed mass displacement of populations driven to urban coastal areas due to deforestation and desertification. The communalism and polygamy of peasant life, when translated into an urban social context, ceased to function: food and shelter were not given freely and loose family structures led to the world’s highest birth rate and the proliferation of the HIV virus. Further displacement was caused by rebel uprisings and tribal conflicts characterised by a “pre-modern form-

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53 The title of Kaplan’s article echoed computer engineer Roberto Vacca’s 1974 book *The Coming Dark Age*, which hypothesised a technological apocalypse leading to a new dark age between 1985 and 1995. Following in the speculative wake of science fiction writer and futurist Isaac Asimov’s popular book and TV series *Future Shock* (1970), Vacca imagined the pre-modern other being held at bay by technological advances. The overload of the technologically determinist “great systems” that could “start a catastrophic process that would paralyse the most developed societies and lead to the deaths of millions of people”: Roberto Vacca, “The Beginning and Duration of the Dark Age”, *The Coming Dark Age* (Granada: Frogmore, 1974), 9. While Vacca fantasised that “the imminent dark age” would begin in the United States and sweep rapidly across the world’s most technologically advanced states, Kaplan’s neomedievalism inverts this scenario, identifying the ungoverned spaces of developing sub-Saharan Africa as a bulwark of future anarchy.

lessness . . . evoking the wars in medieval Europe prior to the 1648 Peace of Westphalia”. \footnote{Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy”, 46.} Kaplan was struck by the superficiality of a political cartography imposed by former colonists that had become “largely meaningless”. \footnote{Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy”, 48.} The fragmentation of West African states Kaplan described clearly fitted the parameters set out in neomedievalist International Relations theory, establishing the sub-Saharan as a paradigm for future developments in the rest of the world:

West Africa is becoming the symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real ‘strategic’ danger. Disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a West African prism. West Africa provides an appropriate introduction to the issues, often extremely unpleasant to discuss, that will soon confront our civilization. \footnote{Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy”, 46.}

The plight of West Africa may have seemed at a far remove from the privileged interests of Western society, yet, in an evermore interconnected world, there was one inescapable issue of global import which could not be ignored—the environment. Kaplan argued that the political and strategic impact of rapid population growth, pandemic outbreaks, deforestation and soil erosion, water scarcity, pollution and rising sea levels would be at the very centre of early twenty-first century foreign policy, plugging the “crisis management” gap left by the Cold War. Concern over the stability of the planet’s ecosystems and its diminishing resources was undoubtedly an issue of monolithic scope at the forefront of
public interest. While Kaplan, obviously, could not have predicted 9/11 and its worldwide repercussions on foreign policy and security protocols, he argued that international terrorism and civil violence, defined in his article as a “transformation of war”, would intensify in correlation with the abovementioned factors. His bleak prognosis for a century in which “the classificatory grid of nation states was going to be replaced by a jagged-glass pattern of city states, shanty-states, nebulous and anarchic regionalisms”, was derived from two key concepts: a revised understanding of both warfare and mapmaking.

Kaplan argued that while the minority of the global population found shelter in a “post-historical realm”, living in “cities and suburbs where the environment has been mastered and ethnic animosities have been quelled by bourgeois prosperity”, the vast majority of the surging population would remain “stuck in history, living in shantytowns where attempts to rise above poverty, cultural dysfunction, and ethnic strife will be doomed by a lack of water to drink, soil to till, and space to survive in.” Here he borrowed an analogy from Thomas Homer-Dixon, then the head of the Peace and Conflict Studies programme at the University of Toronto, of a stretch limo travelling through the homeless streets of New York. Inside the limo is Fukuyama’s “Last Man”, healthy, well fed, and pampered by technology, an inhabitant of the “air conditioned post-industrial regions . . . with their trade summitry and computer information highways. Outside is the rest of mankind going in a completely opposite direction”.

The metaphor may be poignant, yet, as we have seen, such notions of a completely bifurcated world were reductive and unsustainable, especially considering increasing

demographic shifts and cultural interaction. Kaplan pointed to Samuel P. Huntington’s equally controversial Clash of Civilisations thesis, claiming that, following the economic and ideologically driven international wars of the previous century, conflict would increasingly occur along cultural fault-lines at a sub-national level.\(^{62}\) His thesis was widely criticised for superficially homogenising civilisations into self-enclosed territories and ignoring the shifting interdependencies, mutual affiliations and internal partisanship that constitute the hybridism of cultural identity. Nevertheless, Kaplan added that, “as refugee flows increase and as peasants continue migrating to cities around the world—turning them into sprawling villages—national borders will mean less, even as more power will fall into the hands of less educated, less sophisticated groups”.\(^{63}\) Considering the fundamental impact of environmental scarcity, he proposed a world more dangerous than the one Huntington envisioned, “a run-down, crowded planet of skinhead Cossacks and juju warriors, influenced by the worst refuse of Western pop culture and ancient tribal hatreds, and battling over scraps of over-used earth in guerrilla conflicts that ripple across continents and intersect in no discernible pattern—meaning there’s no easy-to-define threat”.\(^{64}\)

Kaplan concluded with an examination of military historian Martin van Creveld’s assertions that the conglomerate military machines of the nation-state were dinosaurs on the brink of extinction. The threefold division into government, army and people no longer held. To see the future one must “look back to the past immediately prior to the birth of modernism—the wars in medieval Europe which began during the Reformation and reached their culmination in the Thirty Years' War”.\(^{65}\) In this type of warfare, armies were

63 Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy”, 60.
64 Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy”, 60.
comprised of mercenaries and “swarms of military entrepreneurs” whose allegiances and motives were entangled along political, economic, religious and social lines. If states were losing their legal monopoly on armed conflict, then the distinction between war and crime would be more ambiguous. As governments lost their ability to protect citizens from eruptions of small-scale violence, armies would be “gradually replaced by a booming private security business, as in West Africa, and by urban mafias, especially in the former communist world, who may be better equipped than municipal police forces to grant physical protection to local inhabitants”.

At the heart of Kaplan’s argument lay a fundamental criticism of the enlightenment impulse of European colonists to measure, categorise and format the world in terms of a totalising classificatory grid. His visit to Africa brought home the damaging legacy of an “artificial reality” legitimised and universalised through the invention of print technology, and still staggering on today in elite geographic and travel publications. A more appropriate representation of the multi-actors involved in territorialisation, he asserted, requires a hyper-cultural map:

Imagine cartography in three dimensions, as if in a hologram. In this hologram would be the overlapping sediments of group and other identities atop the merely two-dimensional color markings of city-states and the remaining nations, themselves confused in places by shadowy tentacles, hovering overhead, indicating the power of drug cartels, mafias, and private security agencies. Instead of

68 Dror called this the “Everyone Wants What We Want” fallacy, the foreign policy delusion that “those who do not want, as yet, what the United States wants will change their minds once they become developed”: Dror, “Common Fallacies in American Strategic Studies”, in Crazy States, 14.
borders, there would be moving ‘centers’ of power, as in the Middle Ages. Many of these layers would be in motion. . . . To this protean cartographic hologram one must add other factors, such as migrations of populations, explosions of birth rates, vectors of disease. Henceforward the map of the world will never be static. This future map—in a sense, the “Last Map”—will be an ever-mutating representation of chaos.69

Long gone, then, was the grand theory of post-war international relations, the humanist generalisations inspired by classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau.70 In its place Kaplan proposed a real-time rolling account of shifting patterns of current events, of fading and emerging ideologies, multi-scalar maps of unpredictable, system-less neomedieval state and non-state relations. The Coming Anarchy differed from other neomedievalisms not just in its orientation towards the developing world, but also in the highly emotive and subjective tone of Kaplan’s writing. Kaplan’s work was persuasive in its dense mix of anecdotal on-the-ground reportage, academic referencing and statistical analysis, a literary style that resonated with audiences beyond academia. Kaplan enjoyed wide readership at government level; his 1993 book Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History was said to have directly influenced President Bill Clinton’s decision against intervention in Bosnia. It is also significant that John Rapley’s later article The New Middle Ages was published in Foreign Affairs—a “Beano read” in the circuits of the international political classes. It is not too surprising then, to find, the neomedieval model was considered in US government-sanctioned studies on national defence. This was where the dangers of drawing comparisons with such a lengthy and misunderstood period as the Middle Ages became most apparent.

69 Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy”, 75.
In 2008 the Strategic Studies Institute at United States Army War College published a monograph by Dr. Phil Williams entitled *From the New Middle Ages to a New Dark Age: The Decline of the State and U.S. Strategy*. The paper used the neomedieval school of thought to propose that America reassess its state-centric approach to foreign policy if it was to avoid being helmed in or overcome by a “tsunami of chaos”. While Williams cited examples from all major neomedievalist International Relations scholars, taking on board the emphasis on metaphoric rather than actual return to pre-existing socio-political structures, he nevertheless managed to reintroduce the terrifying prospect of imminent apocalypse. His report urged government policy makers and strategists to utilise Cerny’s concept of a “durable, yet fertile, disorder” characterised by the late Middle Ages to develop more holistic, “transagency organisational structures” to manage “forces of global disorder”. Yet he warned that failure in this regard would lead further back in history to a “New Dark Age” characterised by “wicked problems” of which “we haven’t seen anything yet”. Within this anticipation of modernity’s total collapse we find echoes of Rapley and Kaplan’s stark prognosis and the analogy began to hypothesise.

In the months following the events of 9/11, the medievalist Bruce Holsinger was bemused by a newspaper article describing the war being waged “between the modernists and the medievalists”. In suddenly finding himself sharing the professional title of “medievalist” with Osama bin Laden, he was encouraged to follow the “medievalist” rhetoric employed among the USA’s political classes over the next few years in their battles with fundamentalist Islam. While his

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71 Phil Williams, “From the New Middle Ages to a New Dark Age: The Decline of the State and U.S. Strategy”, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, June 2008, 41.
72 Williams, “From the New Middle Ages to the New Dark Ages”, 39, 41, 42.
73 That is, a scholar of the middle ages.
peers published corrective papers admonishing inchoate historical appropriations, most notably regarding the “crusade” infamously pursued by President George Bush, Holsinger found himself engaged in a deeper and more troubling investigation into the adoption of neomedieval International Relations theory by the Bush administration and its use to justify the torture of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

Holsinger’s publication *Neomedievalism, Neoconservatism and the War on Terror* highlighted the perennial mining, exploitation and distortion of the Middle Ages to promote, sanction and maintain cultural beliefs and support political actions in the early 21st century. Holsinger began his essay with a quote from the opening paragraph of Joseph Strayer’s *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State*; “In the world of today, the worst fate that can befall a human being is to be stateless”. 74

This statement captured the plight of Guantanamo detainee Salim Ahmed Hamdan who, in admitting to his affiliation with al Qaeda, and despite being a citizen of Yemen, was qualified by US law as a “non-state actor” or “enemy combatant” and therefore not party to the rights and privileges set out by international law. Bound up within the “historical autism” of the Bush administration, Hamdan became a “medieval man . . . not simply for his barbarism, his backwardness, his allegiance to a ruthlessly violent conjunction of theological fundamentalism and mass murder,” but because “he is to be feared, imprisoned and, most importantly of all learned from, precisely for his perceived ability to render irrelevant the authority, territorial integrity, and jurisdictions of modern nations—nations that are the raison d’être of the neoconservative worldview”. 75 Holsinger concluded by amending Strayer’s aphorism to: “one of the worst fates that

can befall a man today is to be rendered medieval”.76

Holsinger’s book was dense with quotations framing a phenomenon he termed “the 9/11 premodern”. Huntington’s Clash of Civilisations had suddenly become a “clash of millennia”, a political form of opportunistic periodising, dividing the world “along an axis of both history and geography”.77 Holsinger demonstrated the use of medievalist tropes in the various pronouncements and fatwahs of Osama bin Laden pre- and post-9/11 and in statements and interviews with the then Deputy Secretary of Defence, Paul D. Wolfowitz in the months of 9/11’s aftermath. The quotations highlighted the absurd notion of a war between the modern, rational enlightened world and an allegedly archaic, irrational, and “medieval” universe. “Fukuyama’s ‘Last Man’, healthy, well fed, and pampered by technology”, guarded the frontiers of Liberal Democracy against Thomas Hobbes’s “‘First Man’, condemned to a life that is ‘poor, nasty, brutish, and short’”.78

Yet, it was the neoconservative casting of Islamic terrorist organisations such as al Qaeda as neomedieval rather than medieval that Holsinger found more ominous. He quoted at length from a testimony delivered by Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld before the Senate Appropriations Committee in 2005. In his preamble Rumsfeld stressed the modern characteristics of the enemy:

To the seeming surprise of some, our enemies have brains. They are constantly adapting and adjusting to what we’re doing. They combine medieval sensibilities with modern technologies and media savvy to find new ways to exploit perceived weaknesses and to weaken the civilised world.

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76 Holsinger, Neomedi evalism, i–iv.
77 Holsinger, Neomedi evalism, 7.
78 Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy”, 60.
In the rest of his speech, Rumsfeld outlined the changes undergone in the U.S. security apparatus to face the challenges of “agile and networked foes” in an increasingly complex, globalised world. His words betrayed an obvious reading of neomedieval International Relations theory in which “the enemy’s medievalism is inseparable from its character as an agile, adaptable, transnational, multimedia organization”.

It was within this interpretive framework that Holsinger examined the so-called “torture memos”, the series of high-level conversations between officials at Justice, the Department of State, the Department of Defence, and the White House that resulted in the decision that the 1949 Geneva Convention III, relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (GPW), did not apply to prisoners taken by U.S. soldiers during the Afghan War against the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Holsinger followed and dissected the memos through extensive quotation. The entire debate is well documented and concludes that al Qaeda and the Taliban, or more precisely, the blurring of the two, constitute a new kind of enemy, a fusion of “sub-national feudal formations” and “transnational organisations working against and across national boundaries”. We clearly see the neomedieval International Relations paradigm at work here. The enemy was rendered medieval, barbaric and clearly operated within Ruggie’s “unbundled territory”, a disjointed space at odds with modern conceptions of both history and geography and therefore exempt from international legal jurisdiction. It was a twisted and cynical logic that allowed modern humanitarian politics to be abandoned when faced with an enemy whose tactics, strategy and entire ideology hailed from a period before their instigation.

Holsinger concluded that neomedievalism was an “intellectual paradigm” or “global idiom of the non-state actor”

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79 Holsinger, Neomedievalism, 53.
80 Holsinger, Neomedievalism, 73.
that was hijacked and reified by the Bush administration, who employed a hodgepodge “medieval” rhetoric of outlawry, feudalism, failed-state or pre-state primitivism, crusades and barbarism to help justify both the War on Terror and the torture of “enemy combatants”. From its inception as a metaphorical elucidation of global developments that are fundamentally “new”, the neomedievalism of IR “gives us a frightening lens on to the ultimate co-optability of academic theorising into a regressive and destructive political culture”.  

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81 Holsinger, Neomedievalism, 81.
Following the collapse of the USSR in 1991, a number of former Soviet Republics gained their sovereignty, many for the first time. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 had already generated the first wave of post-Soviet Balkanisation in Europe as competing groups sought to establish sovereign nations based on territorial and cultural allegiances that pre-existed the rise of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and German Empires. The break up of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia were achieved by very different means, signalling that, in Europe at least, the neomedieval dimensions of unbundling involved stirring up complex and unpredictable vernaculars. Many minority groups in this region of Europe did not occupy a unified territory. For example, the Aromanians were particularly “unbundled”, scattered across Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia and Romania, precluding the establishment of a unified territorial Vlach nation-state. Kaplan’s speculative multi-scalar political map would quickly become an obligatory accessory for navigating the Europes that emerged from the Cold War.
Some post-Cold War European Union member states did not restrict themselves to enforcing control over resources within their own borders (as they had during the Westphalian system), they often operated an ethnic conception of statehood that extended to their perceived diaspora born in other states. For example, at the 2004 Annual Convention of the International Studies Association in Montréal, Stephen Deets delivered a paper regarding the 2001 Hungarian Status Law, which was passed under what he termed “the spectre of neomedievalism”. The law allowed “ethnic Hungarians” who were citizens of the bordering states of Romania, Slovakia, the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, and Ukraine to apply for a certificate that would make them eligible for particular benefits within the Hungarian state. While similar “law of return” legislations concerning national minorities and their “kin-states” had been passed before and accepted as part of a generally anticipated movement towards a new integrated Europe-without-borders, the Status Law differed in that it extended the benefits and regulatory laws of Hungarian nationality to those permanently residing beyond state borders.

Hungarian NGOs, initially set up to look after the social and political concerns of minorities in neighbouring host countries, would now have legal powers to process status claims, provide ID cards and distribute welfare and education grants. In this, Deets argued, the Hungarian government was seeking a neomedieval form of extraterritorial, diasporic governance that permitted Hungarian sovereignty to intervene across multiple state territories. The law was obviously controversial, immensely complicated to implement, and required radical revision after multi-fold objections were taken to regulatory bodies such as the EU and the Venice Commission.

Deets suggested that the reaction to the law from European states and their collective institutions, plus its subsequent redrafting, was evidence of a “pulling back from neomedievalism”, concluding that the “shadow of Westphalia
still looms too large”\textsuperscript{82} to permit a precedence for the legal creation of trans-sovereign nations. Again, here there was a focus on the unrelenting protection of state borders and binding legal norms, but perhaps more essential to the medieval analogy (as outlined so far) was the stasis or balance resulting from multilateral negotiations or “multiperspectival polity”\textsuperscript{83} occurring, both horizontally and vertically, between sub-state minority groups, localised NGOs, national governments, and various intergovernmental organisations and regulatory coalitions.

Another example of European multilateralism can be found in Scotland’s relationships with the nation of Québec\textsuperscript{84} and federal Canada. When Québec’s sovereigntist Premier Pauline Marois visited Scotland in January 2013 to meet with Alex Salmond, Scotland’s sovereigntist First Minister maintained a friendly distance, treating the encounter as no more than a “courtesy call”.\textsuperscript{85} In spite of their common commitment to self-determination, Salmond was careful not to alienate over five million self-proclaimed Scot-Canadians (of which 200,000 resided in Québec alone) by holding a “nationalist summit”. Ever the pragmatic economist, Salmond had a bigger prize in mind. Due to be ratified the same year, the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic & Trade Agreement (CETA)


\textsuperscript{83} Ruggie, “Territoriality and Beyond”, 172.

\textsuperscript{84} The “Québecois Nation Motion”, approved in the Canadian House of Commons in Ottawa in 2006, set a precedent of recognising the intra-nationality of non-territorial micro-nations within a sovereign state. In this case, the Québécois were officially recognised as a nation by the state of Canada. As a self-identifying ethnic group, Québécois remain distinct from Quebeckers (territorialised inhabitants of the province of Québec), albeit that they may often be identical.

would eliminate tariffs on almost all European goods imported into Canada. To capitalise on this important transnational neoliberal economic directive, the Scottish Premier could not be seen to overtly support Québécois secession from Canada for fear that it might equally alienate Scot-Canadians and Anglophone Canada. The Scottish Nationalists were thus willing to undermine the universalism of their Claim of Right to national sovereignty. In terms of loyalty—avoiding solidarity, favouring no single sphere or network—this was a canny neo-medieval tactic. It would seem that the quest for Scottish sovereignty was best served, in this instance, by pursuing an opportunity to win the support of its Diaspora and establish new international markets for Scottish exports.

This brings us back to Freidrichs’ assertion that the neo-medieval analogy only works via the negation of “undisputed supremacy” and the associated implication that modern conceptions of linear progress no longer apply. As James Anderson suggested, the EU represented a kind of “arrested federalisation” (a self-abrogating process of both Balkanisation and confederation). Reaffirming Bull’s statement that “the disintegration of states would be theoretically important only if it were to remain transfixed in an intermediate stage,”86 in which substate nationalisms or regionalisms substantially undermined but did not succeed in replicating existing state sovereignty. Full success for regional separatisms or the creation of a United States of Europe would simply increase or decrease the number of states, a merely quantitative change rather than qualitatively changing the nature of states and politics.”87 Neomediaevalism, then, lay somewhere in the middle: a multiplicity of tangled political, economic and cultural relations, confounding teleological as-

sumptions and suspending future anticipations of either global solidarity or apocalyptic disintegration.

As the 2001 Treaty of Nice allowed the EU to absorb much of the former Eastern Bloc into political and economic union, the emphasis remained on achieving a stable “Pax Europa” by expanding the EU to engulf as much of the European continent as possible. From 2004, the EU expanded into the East, consolidating Europe’s new borders, enabling stability through “Hollandisation”.88 There was little consideration that the EU’s founding members had themselves long been subject to devolutionary and independence movements, comparable to those that flourished in former Socialist Republics such as the USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. All it would take to precipitate these tendencies was a political and economic upheaval comparable to the fall of Communism. In the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, neomedieval International Relations quickly spiralled off from playing a rhetorical role in the war on terror to precipitating and analysing the (re)emergence of sovereign, neomedieval nations from within the EU’s existing member states. Following the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon, Europe’s established bureaucratic macro-states—Spain, Belgium, France, Germany and the UK—rapidly began to break up into the nations, länder and regions from which they were constituted. To ensure that this intra-national instability did not threaten the European Union, the EU developed a “flat” approach to sovereignty, allowing its constituent nationalities and cultures to multiply, federalise and overlap within the EU’s supranational borders.

While these emerging neomedieval nations appeared, in the short term, to have formed spontaneously as populist political “solutions” to an ongoing economic crisis, they were, in fact, the fruits of geopolitical struggles that have informed Europe’s myriad revolutionary movements from

1789 onwards. They may not have been casting off Communist rule, but they were, nevertheless, seeking to emerge from highly centralised “empire states”. While consolidating the post-war drive towards an integrated Europe, implementation of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 enshrined the principle of subsidiarity, providing succour for regional and local geopolitics to flourish within its member states. Read as a commitment to the right to self-determination for all European peoples, European subsidiarity triggered the decolonisation of Europe. To dissolve European imperialism, and the two world wars it started, meant dismantling its foundations in the Clausewitzian-Westphalian system of militarised colonial competition between European macronations over the world’s resources. Progressive, post-colonialism in Europe can, in part, therefore be identified with the unfurling of the Clausewitzian-Westphalian system through the rise of federalisation, devolution and independence movements across the continent.

In their break with Europe’s “old” macro-nationalism, these movements were energised by a spirit of “national exceptionalism” that paralleled the foundation of the federal republic of the United States, a nation that combined a pooling and devolution of sovereignty. However, while the United States consciously severed its ties with European medievalism (past) in favour of an enlightenment bias towards ancient Greco-Roman democracies (past-future), new Europeans imagined their democratic emancipation prefiguring and following their colonisation into the continent’s macronations. This wave of “New Europe” was predicated on the imaginary of an older, and allegedly, more egalitarian Europe.

Such imaginaries had thrived in nineteenth-century Ro-

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89 The “tabula rasa” of the American continent was never an option for post-colonial Europe. During the economic crisis, European party politics were increasingly wedded to the complex geopolitics of ethnic and linguistic identity and the distribution of “territorial” resources.
romanticism\textsuperscript{90} and in Germanic idealist philosophies that stressed the importance of shared language, culture and ethics. The new Europeans, however, only dabbled in Romantic imaginaries of national continuity since the very awareness of such histories revealed the absolutist nation-state to be a myth, and a pernicious one at that.\textsuperscript{91} Romanticism invented mediævalisms of national unity in the ideological service of 19th-century macro-nationalism and its attendant colonialist ambitions. As we have seen, however, the more fractured, regionalised, medieval Europe was less state-centric and less nationalistic than Europe became following the rise of capitalism and industrialism in the 19th century. According to Ernst Gellner, European nationalisms developed at different speeds and under different conditions, generating five European time zones: Atlantic (early 14th-century onward), Roman (1789-), Central (1914-) and Post-Soviet (1991-). For example, as Philip A. Schrodt pointed out, not only was 19th-century “Atlantic” and “Roman” Europe more concerned with colonial than national competition, Germany and Italy failed to consolidate into united states until towards the end of the century. “There were and are almost no “nation-states”, instead the multi-ethnic state is the norm”, concluded Schrodt.\textsuperscript{92} To establish territorial sovereignty based on romantic invocations of “national spirit”, therefore, carried very little weight in the multicultural Europe of the early

\textsuperscript{90} A peculiar manifestation of medievalism developed in the 19th century that was central to the rise of nationalism and the concept of the sovereign nation-state.

\textsuperscript{91} “The aforementioned textbook version of the impact of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648)—typically presented as the miraculous birth, with Hugo Grotius as the midwife, of a stable system of absolutist states out of the chaos of the Thirty Years War—is a myth”: Philip A. Schrodt, “Neomedievalism in the Twenty-first Century: Warlords, Gangs and Transnational Militarized Actors as a Challenge to Sovereign Preeminence”, paper presented at International Studies Association conference, New Orleans, February 17-20, 2010, 3.

\textsuperscript{92} Schrodt, “Neomedievalism in the Twenty-first Century”, 3.
21st century, a continent scarred by a century of industrialised “ethnic cleansing”.

Gellner’s time-zone classification is particularly apposite to understanding neomedieval Europe, demonstrating “that nation states do not all proceed through similar stages to the vanishing of national identity and national frontiers.” Gellner’s classification invites the addition of a sixth “neomedieval” zone, consolidating during the global economic crisis that followed shortly after the 2004 expansion of the EU. Unlike its predecessors, this neomedieval zone had no geography, and it could emerge from within communities of any European Union member states. Communities that perceived themselves to be micro-nations suffering from a democratic deficit within their host macro-nation-states could invoke the principal of subsidiarity and petition for official recognition within the EU. In many cases, this would facilitate “independence”, the transfer of fealty directly to the EU. The EU’s federalist strategy of “pragmatic engagement” was designed to ensure that the EU’s future as Europe’s supranational overlord, even if this meant challenging the sovereignty of its established macrostates.

Those micronations seeking to establish neomedieval states, spurned the historicism, Romanticism and idealism of Europe’s previous waves of nationalism in favour of emphasising the futurity of medievalist narratives, focusing on their unique proto-democratic contributions to the contemporary telos of the greater European project. Understanding the vernacular, grasping the struggles of Peoples’ Histories in the formation of specific territorial rights, was central to securing and maintaining European civil rights and gaining

94 For example, following the example of the Québecois nation motion, the Aromanians were represented within the 11th European Parliament as a “micro-nation”—people subject to EU law and the local laws of the states in which they lived, but guaranteed special status as a micro-nation officially recognised by the EU.
greater economic, environmental and political powers for current citizens of Europe’s states-in-waiting. They also stressed the importance of understanding and diffusing peripheral tensions in establishing Pax Europa. Micronations had been subdued and absorbed by their overlord macronations, their identities suppressed, their peculiar political and economic needs and proclivities ignored in favour of the desires of the perceived centre. The EU’s “pragmatic engagement” with the peripheralisation of politics, where possible, would help to reduce hostility and tension by removing Europe’s centres of Clausewitzian-Westphalian power.

As post-Communist Europe had discovered, the EU offered a very different type of overlordship to those nations that could legally call themselves states. Sovereignty would enable emancipation and the (return of the) bespoke governmental apparatus that Europe’s many nations desired. As such, emerging neomedieval micro-nations were the antithesis of the mythical, pre-lapsarian, monocultural, nation-state. They explicitly followed in the footsteps of the French Revolution, their primary goal being to establish a modern united Europe of republics of free and equal citizens.

The neomediteval character of these discourses, then, is evident in the following tendencies:

1. The Westphalian macro-nation-states were an obstacle to a peaceful and harmonious European Union of the regions. Pre-Westphalian Europe, therefore was a recurring metaphor for Pax Europae. This practice of metaphorical medievalism drew directly on neomedeival International Relations theory.

2. Following this metaphor, (re)emerging states used evidence of their formation and consolidation as medieval nations as justification for their re-emergence in an idealised neomedeival European Union of the regions.

3. (Re)-emerging states were predicated on the persis-
tence, or reinvention, of pre-Westphalian cultural and political practices specific to a region.

4. Emerging neomedieval states—Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Friesland, Lappland, Flanders, Kashubia, Livonia, Wallonia, Brittany, Alsace, Occitaine, Catalonia, Galicia, Andalucia, Valenciana, Basque Country, Ladins, Trentino South Tyrol, Friuli, Corsica and Sardinia in particular—were predominately, albeit not exclusively, pro-European Union.

5. The European Union played the role of overlord, enfranchising and safeguarding the sovereignty of micronations through the principal of subsidiarity, building “ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen”.95

To emerge as an independent state from the remains of an imperialist macro-nation, to achieve national and cultural self-determination, was a goal enshrined by the UN and the European Union.96 In spite of this, the “new” neomedieval states had to negotiate entry into the EU, since governance of the EU was dominated by the larger, more populous, macro-nations from which they aspired to secede (i.e., France, Spain, the UK, Germany and Italy). Since the post-Westphalian macro-nations dominated the EU parliament, it was in their interests to block the disintegration of their own territorial sovereignty by blocking all attempts to create new states from existing EU members. Support for such stalling tactics came from Euro blocks as disparate as the National Conservatives, the far right European National Movements and Eurosceptics. However, Europe’s broader tapestry of centre and centre-left political blocks had more to gain from

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95 Treaty of Rome, Article 151; see also Article 308, 1957.
96 The EU enabled subsidiarity by encouraging European regions, rather than member-states, to compete for Community funding.
unbundling the territorialisation of European politics. A neo-medieval Europe would be one less dominated by coercive macronation-states, a Europe more ready to move on from tactical political coalitions—volatile alliances designed to achieve an improbable balance of macronational power\(^\text{97}\) and pan-European political goals—to formalised strategic Europarties that united across the continent.

A corollary of the negotiations over the EU’s “new” neo-medieval member states was adoption of the Euro and tight neoliberal controls over public spending. In effect, these limitations restricted many of the sovereign powers that normally accompany self-governance, effectively dissolving state-control internally. New EU member states were given the narrowest windows for manoeuvre in gathering and distributing their own taxes. The de facto neoliberalisation of these hollowed-out states forced them to either devolve, privatise or abandon many of the functions of social democracies. This neoliberalisation had an impact at the level of local government, now tasked with greater responsibility for the delivery of public services. While some wealthier European cities attempted to recover their medieval city-state status by levying taxes and running monopolistic local services, others were faced with no option other than the race to the bottom, outsourcing and privatising local services to the point of dissolving local government.

While rescinding many of their downward responsibilities for social security, Europe’s new neo-medieval members were transferring their fealty from their respective Westphalian macro-nations to that of a much larger European state. They would remain in union with their former overlords, albeit that they would now share a common overlord in the EU. Their new overlord would play an equal role in determining how far they would all determine their own futures.\(^\text{98}\)

\(^{97}\) As in, continuing to follow an obsolete Clausewitzian-Westphalian paradigm.

\(^{98}\) It’s worth emphasising that the EU’s overlordship was predicated
While the geopolitics of fealty were often caricatured as primarily cultural, they made cold economic sense. The European Union offered greater social and economic opportunities and support for the peoples of Europe than smaller Westphallian macro-nations could, and they did so without the attendant threat of coercive nation-statehood. The EU offered the promise of easy access to European and global markets without overshadowing vernacular mobilisation.

Where Europe’s imperialist macro-nations had once competed with each other in exercises of Clausewitzian military power, Europe’s neomedieval states were eager to cooperate economically. In dismantling the Westphalian macronations and encouraging more culturally sensitive, vernacular localised governance, it was hoped, the neomedieval European Union would be able to focus on its wider goals of political and economic unity through Hollandisation.

Scotland’s secession to EU overlordship provided a poster boy for the development of European “pragmatic engagement” with neomedievalism. Elements of this secession were, notably, prophesied in Bull’s new medievalism:

We may envisage a situation in which, say, a Scottish authority in Edinburgh, a British authority in London, and a European authority in Brussels were all actors in world politics and enjoyed representation in world political organizations, together with rights and duties of various kinds in world law, but in which no one of them claimed sovereignty or supremacy over the others, and a person living in Glasgow had no exclusive or overriding loyalty to any one of them. Such an outcome would take us truly “beyond the sovereign state” and is by no means im-
plausible, but it is striking how little interest has been displayed in it by either the regional integrationists or the subnational “disintegrationists”.  

Bull’s example of Scotland as a prospective neomedieval territory was prescient in the wake of the 1997 devolution referendum, which belatedly established the conditions for the neomedieval sovereignty that he hypothesised. After the reopening of Holyrood, the Scottish Parliament, in 1999, however, Scotland remained a devolved nation within the UK macro-national state. As overlord, the UK negotiated with international organisations such as the EU and UN on Scotland’s behalf. Holyrood’s limited powers were, effectively, “leased” from the UK and could be returned to Westminster by future UK governments. The 2014 referendum pursued by the governing Scottish National Party sought to end to this international arrangement and allow Scotland to negotiate its own sovereign terms with other nations and international NGOs. The terms of secession proposed by the Scottish National Party were neomedieval in Bull’s formulation, generating a new system of overlapping loyalties for the average Glaswegian.

After 2014, Scotland was to retain the Pound Sterling, remain in a personal union of crowns with England, remain in the European Union and become a full member of the UN. Following Scottish independence, Bull’s Glaswegian would pledge fealty to a British monarch, have their interest rates set by the Bank of England, their fishing quotas set by the European Union and their income taxes imposed by Holyrood. Political authority was to be a neomedieval overlapping mixture of European/Scottish democratically accountable governance and British autocratic overlordship. This

99 Bull, The Anarchical Society, 266.
100 Bull would, presumably, have been speculating on a potential outcome of the 1979 devolution referendum, a plebiscite that failed to achieve devolution.
seemingly unlikely neomedieval prospect was upset by events. In the run up to the Scottish referendum, right-wing protest-voting in English local elections\(^{101}\) led to the unforeseen rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), a right-wing fringe party who aimed to restrict immigration and restore UK sovereignty by leaving the European Union. Since the prospect of leaving the EU was not popular in Scotland, UKIP’s victories in 2013 increased the gulf between Scottish and English politics. Scottish voters were faced with the choice of remaining in the EU by voting Yes to independence, or being dragged out of the EU against their will by a UK plebiscite that would, prospectively at least, be held in 2015. One of the choices, then, that faced Scottish voters was between an expansive European neomedieval model of sovereignty or a retreat into the “Splendid Isolation” pursued by the British Empire in the late 19th century.

The debates that raged in 2013-14 over Scottish and UK sovereignty were dominated by the neomedieval turn. The Scottish and British nationalisms officially competing in the 2014 referendum (“Yes Scotland” vs. “Better Together”) were not neat binary oppositions. The debate featured multilateral and overlapping narratives of cultural emergence. However, ostensibly, two competing, and equally selective, medievalisms were mobilised in the debate over Scotland’s future.

“Scottish” medievalisms were a hodgepodge of disparate imaginaries, drawing as heavily upon the history of pre-Union Scotland (c. 410-1707) as on post-Union medievalisms. Histories of Scotland, from its formation to its political unification with England and Wales in 1707, were central to establishing the legal case for the nation’s re-emergence as a sovereign state. The legal issues, however, were difficult to disentangle from Romanticism’s influential fixation with Scotland as the epitome of Europe’s lost “pre-modern”. Roman-

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\(^{101}\) The Isle of Anglesey in Wales also voted in the council elections of May 2013.
tic perceptions of Scotland as a distinct, wild, uninhabited and ungovernable place on the very edge of the known world, were nothing new; they were shared by the Romans, widely held in medieval European and Arab nations and even by Scotland’s 12th-century Scoto-Norman monarchs. “Scotland-as-Other” was a powerful ideology long promulgated inside and beyond Scotland itself. The Scottish medievalisms that mattered, therefore, were those that foregrounded contemporary principles of “Scottish national unity in alterity” and “Europeanisation”. Much of the emphasis here was placed on narratives that engaged with the foundation of Scottish nationhood and its struggle to remain a sovereign European state. Restoring continuity with pre-Union Scotland was key to the articulation of a post-British imaginary. Medievalist chronicles of Scottish underdogs suppressed by English overlords provided the backstory to Scotland’s disproportionate contributions to the British Empire and global culture, science and industry.

“British” medievalisms were, equally, a smörgåsbord of

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102 While it aspired to be a macro-nation, the UK was never a unitary state. The 1707 union of Scotland, England and Wales legally preserved the cornerstones of Scottish identity: Scots law, Scottish generalist education and the Kirk. In these matters and more, Scotland remained Other to England and Wales.

103 The Scoto-Norman monarchs clearly implemented this process. Europeanisation, however, was stalled by the growth of the British Empire.

104 A shift from a British to Scottish bias in these terms was evident in the Curriculum for Excellence for school children aged 3-18. The new curriculum involved studying Scotland, providing learning resources for teaching Scottish history as well as focusing on Scotland’s people, languages, environment, culture and global influence. While the new curriculum proposed examining “5,000 Years of Scotland’s History”, the new Scottish Higher focused mainly on events after the succession problem following Alexander III’s death in 1286, medievalising the formation of Scotland in the wars of independence at the expense of reading histories of Northern Britain’s multi-ethnicities before the political formation of Scotland.
disparate identities, fabulous chronicles written in the middle ages mixed together with modern medieval legends and imperialist histories of the British Isles. Much favoured were medieval chronicles mythologising the fortitude of plucky and virtuous tribes of aboriginal Britons suppressed in Roman Britain. The modern mythology of native British sovereignty was largely a product of the medieval era itself, when monarchs employed historians to legitimate their claim to the throne by inventing their aboriginal kinship. Related medievalisms were born of the Romantic and pre-Raphaelite movements implicated in the invention of pre-Roman and early medieval “British” traditions. Medieval, Romantic and pre-Raphaelite medievalisms were allied to the post-Union Britology of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in which the telos of “British national unity in diversity” was produced to legitimise the image of empire. Britology—maintaining the Anglo-British self-image of a benign empire respecting the vernacular while coercively imposing its version of civilisation over much of the world—was rooted in a centralising 19th-century view of the British Isles and Ireland. Since the 1603 personal union of the crowns of Scotland and England in James the VI and I, Britology was tasked with constructing British-ness, a tall order since “Britain” was not, and never has been, a nation.

In theory, Britology required a different form of historical imagination to replace competing Scotocentric and Anglo-centric perspectives. For example, from the perspective of Britology, the Kingdom of Scotland (c. 410-843) that formed out of Gaelic speaking Alba—but one of many possible Scotlands that might have been—was a stepping stone towards the inevitable unification of Great Britain and Ireland

105 In sharp contradiction, historians were also employed to trace regal ancestry back to Genesis, to create the illusion that the ruling class were, somehow, more direct descendants of the original ancestor. Medieval histories generated a double duplicity, at once rooting the monarchy in a particular place while placing them in an evolutionary fast-track.
into a macro-nation. During the period in which Scotland was emerging as a nation, north Britain was home to numerous different linguistic and ethnic groups, as was typical in Europe at the time. Following Scotland’s union with England and Wales, the island of Great Britain again became the mongrel nation it allegedly was before the arrival of the Romans. In practice, however, since England was by far the largest nation in the UK, Britology was overtly Anglocentric. Britology articulated the status quo of perceived English overlordship of Britain and Ireland; it was the ideology of the unitary force of a centralising nation-state over minorities within its borders. Since it was the voice of the Anglo majority, Britology survived the collapse of the British Empire and the devolution of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the 21st century.

While British and Scottish sovereigntists were, literally, competing over the same terrain, it was not surprising to find many correspondences between British and Scottish medievalisms. In each discourse, premodern events and myths were used to legitimate the very different political realities of a post-industrial economy. For example, the image of the native underdog and the (largely 19th century) concept of the inevitability of national unity was one shared by both medievalisms. Where, then, did British and Scottish medievalisms differ? For one, Scottish nationalists, bolstered by the powerful mythologies imagined by Victorian Romanticism, had a longer historical period of Scots sovereignty (843-1707) from which to win support for their post-colonial narratives of oppression and emergence. This, however, did not represent a unifying intra-national narrative for Scottish Nationalists. On the contrary, this period incorporated post-medieval Scotland and included the Scots Renascence and

106 Albeit that the image of the Scottish underdog, emerging from a small peripheral nation, was more persuasive than the image of the British underdog, emerging from the largest empire the world has known.
the Scottish Reformation. As such, the historical era of absolute Scottish sovereignty unfolds competing medievalist (“Auld Alliance”) and overtly “anti-medievalist” (predominantly anti-Catholic) movements among the Scottish peoples.

Disentangling “Scottish” from “British” medievalisms was a tricky business, as the fortunes of the UK’s monarchy attested. The British monarchy was a surviving medieval institution par excellence, the legacy of power hungry warlords battling over territory and resources after the retreat of the Roman Empire. The unification of Scotland’s nations, of England’s nations, England’s annexation of Wales and England’s later unification with Scotland are testimony to the aristocracy’s adoption of the Norman feudal system of absolute territorial authority. Europe’s predominately French-speaking, inter-bred transnational monarchy were anathema to the modern nationalism that began to emerge in the 17th century. The aristocracy had only their own interests, rather than the wider interests of their host nations, at heart. However, the post-medieval figurehead of the monarch had a different function to fulfill: to provide a substitute for the Pope in European nations that revolted against Rome’s religious overlordship or an advocate of Catholicism in those that remained faithful to the old religion.

For example, support for the 1603 personal union of crowns was elected among the peoples of Scotland on the religious affinities of the monarchy, support that varied within Scotland. Catholic British monarchs were squarely rejected by lowland Protestant Scots while more likely to be embraced by those Highland Gaels who remained Catholic. While post-medieval Scotland retained many of its medievalist practices (in terms of its monarchy, law and superstitions),

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Feudalism’s overriding concern with expansionism was key to the personal union of the crowns in 1603 and remained a mainstay in the international outlook of modern European nations until the end of WWII.
its Protestant national church was vehemently anti-medievalist in matters of religion, education and politics. These were the cultural politics that came to dominate Scotland’s philosophical outlook and, in turn, completely transform its identity. Anti-medievalism was the root of the Scottish Enlightenment—pervading new attitudes to art, politics and economics. Herein lay modern Scottish nationalism’s major claim to futurity, an intellectual futurity that would emerge autonomously (albeit exploiting opportunities provided under the yoke of British imperialism). The fact that this intellectual futurity was inherently anti-medievalist did not prevent the “Yes Scotland” independence campaign from simultaneously mobilising the rabble-rousing medievalisms of Victorian Romanticism in its cause. This opportunistic neomedievalism explains, for example, the Scottish National Party retaining the British Monarch as non-executive Head of State following independence, albeit in a vernacular neomedievalist form, reprising her role as “Elizabeth I, Queen of Scots”.

Meanwhile, early 21st-century British sovereigntists sought to mobilise the period 843-1707 in their favour, imagining Scotland pursuing a canny military-industrial union with England, disparate partners uniting to pursue the “greater good” of global colonial expansion. In these terms, the union was overtly post-medieval, for it was concerned, primarily with enabling Scotland’s colonial expansion into North America, Africa, India and beyond. This was a military-industrial future-

108 The Protestant Reformation, which emerged across Scotland and England in different measures, was upheld by Unionists as a unifying religious belief system distancing the nations of the British Isles from former allies in Catholic Europe.

109 In Scotland, trade in tobacco and textiles with British colonies in North America and, later, shipbuilding for the Empire’s fleets, had the greatest economic impact, leading to the depopulation of the Highlands to serve the rapid industrialisation of west central Scotland. In generating an industrial working class and Anglicising Gaeldom, West Central Scotland became a proving ground for fealty to the British Empire.
past, one based on the perceived benefits of a long-gone colonialism and industrialism, the bedfellows of an imperialistic phase of nationalism that excelled in Europe until the end of WWII.

In spite of British nationalism’s propounded military-industrial futurity, Victorian Romanticism, the foremost purveyor of post-Union Scottish identity, exploited the medieval to such an extent that it might be credited with having invented the cultural practice of “medievalism”.

The military-industrial futurity of the British Empire of the late 19th century was exonerated by its “civilized” celebration of the anti-modern cultural vernacular, whether this be in the form of the pastoral, “Scottish” medievalisms, or the “native”.

Herein we can perceive Scottish Unionism’s practice of neo-medieval opportunism.

Clearly, there were many significant overlaps here, zones of transition that were being contested as well as histories that were neither “British” nor “Scottish”. Understandably, British and Scottish sovereignists of the early 21st century both sought to mobilise readings of Scotland’s medieval history in their favour, despite “Scotland” and “Britain” being equally meaningless to most inhabitants of the British Isles for much of the middle ages. The medievalisms that relate to Scotland between 410 and 1701 demarcate a “Balkanised” terrain torn by religious, ethnic and linguistic divi-

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111 This may appear counterintuitive, but the realities of the industrial-militarism pursued by the British Empire required a foil in the form of vernacular mobilisation. The corporate plan of the British Empire required that it absorb and promote the local vernacular as part of its “benign” acts of colonisation.
sions, Europe located on the cusp of the pre-modern and post-medieval. And yet, there remain some important distinctions between the Scottish and British nationalisms in terms of territorialisation.

Anti-medievalist hysteria served the rise of Protestantism and Enlightenment in post-medieval Scotland, establishing the Scots international reputation for intellectual futurity. These qualities were associated specifically with Scotland, rather than Britain, even following the Act of Union. In Scotland, Walter Scotticisms, the Romanticised medievalism that became fashionable in 19th century Britology, were regarded as an alien preserve of the British landed gentry for whom Scotland was a playground. For most Scots, Victorian medievalism was the antithesis of their cultural values; it was little more than cultural tourism, a fabrication of Scotland created for external consumption. However, in the 20th century, Britology industrialised Scottish-identity-as-Romantic-fiction and sold it back as a sop to Scotland’s industrialised urbanites, by then wholly alienated from their cultural origins. Britology’s territorialisation of Scotland, in this sense, performed a devious infinite loop, the tease of a promised premodern land to which Scots could never return. Of course, considered from the perspective of Scotland’s booming military-industrial destiny as a full board member of the British Empire, this fictional premodern held little ap-

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112 Qualities that made it particularly attractive to Romanticism.
113 Scotland’s intellectual futurity played a key role in the British Empire’s military-industrial futurity establishing many of the key advantages in engineering, finance and politics that served the expansion of British colonial rule. Equally, and most notably in the case of the United States of America, Scots intellectual futurity contained the seeds of the downfall of the British Empire in its radical brand of “democratic intellect”.
114 The UK’s military-industrial barons, the nouveau riche who benefited most from the economic fruits of union, preferred the profane qualities of “realism” and the decorative arts.
peal as a destination.\textsuperscript{115} Herein lay the long-time appeal and success of Britology’s story of Scotland.

In post-industrial Scotland, Britology’s infinite loop broke. Britology made its own albatross, a vision of Scotland reliant upon the continuity of an imperialist UK that no longer existed. Once the British Empire collapsed and its military-industrial economy vanished, the Scottish premodern that it romanticised became far more appealing. Britology’s own ghosts of redcoats and absentee landlords past came back to haunt it, the “British” playing scapegoat to Scotland’s postcolonial and postindustrial woes. Britology’s narrative of progress that had made Scotland’s premodern so unpalatable, was now that of the unimaginative status quo failing to face up to economic realities. The landed neome-dievalism of the UK’s military-industrial future was now firmly stuck in the future-past.\textsuperscript{116}

In stark contrast, the intellectual futurity promised by Scottish Nationalism promised a commons of participation, a reconnection with depopulated Scotland’s terra firma as a regenerative economic resource, and repatriation of Scotland’s culture and economy to the context of an embryonic united Europe. Scotland’s cosmopolitan, European, agrarian,

\textsuperscript{115} For pre-Union Scotland, fortunes and reputations were primarily to be made in trade with Northern Europe. Post-Union, Scotland opened up its markets to England’s colonies in North America and, in time, much of the rest of the world, drawing Scotland’s attention away from Europe towards its “Splendid Isolation” in a growing British Empire. West central Scotland mushroomed in population as commerce shifted from the European-facing east coast to the American-facing west coast in the service of the British Empire. Pre-union Scotland had been divided into Highland and Lowland cultures. Industrialisation that followed in the wake of union generated the “Tartan Curtain”, an East/West divide in Scotland that remained discernible into the early 21st century.

\textsuperscript{116} England, Wales and Northern Ireland continued to pursue a Clauswitzian-Westphalian vision consistent with Britology’s narrative of “Splendid Isolation”, a solo world player disintegrated from larger political unions.
medieval past would inform its past-future. Scotology combined the Scottish fantasy of rootless diasporic intellectual adventure with frugal and stoic historical accounts of the legal battle for resources and territorial rights in Scotland. The dispute over Scotland’s pre-Union borders remained relevant; most of Scotland’s riches in the early 21st century were seen to be, literally, terra firma, tied up in farming, fishing, North Sea oil and gas, in water and in renewable energy. However, since the fossil fuel riches of the North Sea were a depleting resource, futurity had to primarily concern the battle for terra nova, for the cultivation and taxation of intellectual property. Both were battles worth fighting, but one held the greater prize.

When Scotland’s postindustrial stakes are considered in these ways, we might conclude that the British and Scottish nationalists of the early 21st century actually had very little to gain from staking out allegiances and analogies with pre-modern Scotland. The battle over Scotland’s future really lay in the interpretation of the post-medieval era. The choice was between the remnants and possibilities of an intellectual futurity that promised an end to ethnic unrest via the Hollandisation of Scotland and a Clausewitzian military-industrial future-past that promised more of the same. As state of becoming, Scotland’s garden of forking paths in 2014 was a series of criss-crossing desire lines worn out by Scottish and British medievalisms, anti-medievalisms and European neomedieval futurities.

In the event, Bull’s premonition of the neomedieval Glas-

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117 In a bid to reduce operating costs and quickly raise tax revenue, the Scottish Parliament voted to lease land and sea operated by Scotland’s energy industries to non-state actors. Corporations bid to manage the fields, pursuing their own forms of economic union and law enforcement in Orkney and Shetland. Scottish Enterprise licensed the Norwegian-owned Company of Scotway to trade North Sea resources exclusively in Krone. Over a ten-year leasehold, the Company of Scotway replaced the Scottish Government as the legitimate form of authority in Orkney, Shetland and their off-shore fields.
wegian did not come to fruition in its entirety. Following September 2014 independence referendum, two states emerged: the United Kingdom and the secessionist EWNI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). With Scotland no longer returning Labour, Liberal-Democrat and Scottish Nationalist MPs to Westminster, and given England’s lurch to the far Right, the Conservatives seemed guaranteed to win an outright victory in the 2015 EWNI General Election. Following a hung parliament, to remain in government, the Conservatives entered into a coalition with the UK Independence Party (UKIP). UKIP’s conditions were that EWNI immediately hold an “in-or-out” referendum on its continued membership of the EU. EWNI’s swift and acrimonious departure from Europe allowed a beleaguered EU not only to recognise Scotland’s Claim of Right, but to accept it as the UK’s successor state. While the United Kingdom of Scotland retained the British monarch in a personal union with England, the unexpected outcome of the 2015 General Election forced it to abandon pre-election promises to retain the Pound Sterling. Scotland signed up to the European Social Charter, Schengen the Euro and began the lengthy process of transferring its fealty entirely to the EU.

118 While assumed prior to the 2014 Scottish Referendum, it is debatable that EWNI would have been recognised by the EU as the continuing “UK” state as, like Scotland, it was, effectively, a single kingdom (England), albeit one combined with two annexed provinces (Wales and NI). Scotland’s treatment as the successor UK state was opportunistic, had EWNI not left the EU, Scotland would have applied for entry as a new member.