

Lebenswelt

Ann-Carolyn Hartwig

Teile und Zusammenhang
 Längst wieder anders
 Eben noch so
 Wechselnde Modi
 Sichtbar?
 Nirgends fest.
 Ergiebig bis zur (Un)möglichkeit
 Bald und bereits
 Erstreckt sich die virtuelle Verwirrung, die
 Lakonisch daherkommt.

Media, social

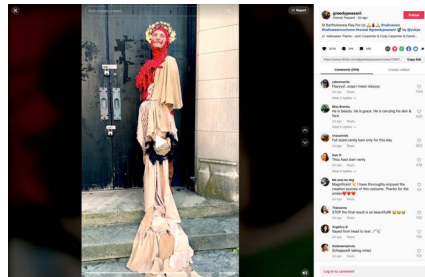
Herausgeber:innen

Social Media sind unter anderem Orte spekulativer Vergangenheit (→ Medieval TikTok), Orte der Verurteilung (→ Tribunal) und Orte virtueller Urlaubsbilder (→ Foto, virtuelles). Gehören auch webbasierte Instant-Messaging-Dienste zu Social Media? (→ Kommunikationskanäle).

Medieval TikTok

Suzette van Haaren

Fig. 1: St Bartholomew Flay For Us 🙏💧🙏, screenshot of Greedy Peasant, TikTok, 31 October 2023



When it comes to the TikTok content of creator @greedypeasant (Tyler Gunther), his own words say it best: it is »a queer medieval fever dream«. Populated with phantasmagorical creations, brightly coloured costume design with bold sleeves and tassels and chatty side aisle reliquaries—Greedy Peasant's short influencer-style TikTok videos are a vibrant and campy portrayal of an undefined late Middle Ages. This contemporary form of medievalism complicates the modern notion of

time, entangling medieval sensibilities with the distinctly and blatantly current.

Medievalism (auf Deutsch: *Mediävalismus*) also referred to as *neomedievalism*, is the reception, interpretation, and re-creation of the European Middle Ages in post-medieval cultures (D'Arcens 2016: 1). Famous examples in the arts and popular culture include Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, John William Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shalott*, Castle Neuschwanstein, J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, *Age of Empires II*, Medieval Cat's Spotify album *Medieval Lofi Study Session Vol. 1*.

As Umberto Eco asserts in his eponymous essay, we have long been dreaming of the Middle Ages. Medievalism can be described as a collective yearning to a culture lost to time (cf. Eco 1998: 64). It is the Middle Ages as us moderns create them, where our ideas of the medieval period are a prism through which modern emotions, fantasies, technologies and trends are refracted. These creative re-imaginings are products, acts and gestures that draw together the past, the present and the future. History is, by definition, a narrative that is curated and shaped through modern eyes: an account of possibilities rather than of realities. History is a virtual realm that is shaped by scholarly rigour and guarded by academic conduct, but at the same time in conversation with larger culture. Popular medievalisms affect and produce historical virtualities by stepping out of sync with notions of linear time and by entangling different temporalities in new and unexpected ways (→ Virtualität).

In his dreaming of the Middle Ages, Greedy Peasant creates a feverishly off-beat experience that invites viewers into his joyful medievalism. It is a small example of medievalism in a fragmented digital landscape. He presents a queer

imagination of the medieval period, where the bricolage of cultural elements reigns supreme (Greedy Peasant: About). In his virtual world, a self-identified queer peasant makes a living as a pageant planner, narrating his medieval life in the manner of a modern-day influencer. Greedy Peasant challenges prevailing ideas of the dark and dirty Middle Ages through his delight in colourful clothing and dramatic art and architecture (cf. Olmstead 2022). This subversion is evident in his unabashed queer pride: »As a queer medieval peasant, I am proud, this Pride Month, to partner with an industry I am deeply suspicious off: the reliquary trade 🗿🗿« (greedypeasant, 10.6.2022).

Greedy Peasant's TikTok videos disrupt our entrenched perceptions of the Middle Ages, revealing a world filled with colourful, campy pageantry, all the while engaging with modern implications. He is not the overly masculine, sword-fighting, rough man that we often encounter in portrayals of the Middle Ages. Instead Greedy Peasant presents himself in the aesthetics of late medieval and early modern extravagance, designing and dressing himself in flamboyant outfits that would not be misplaced in a 15th century manuscript image (see also his video on »bringing back manly Christians« [greedypeasant, 13.5.2021]). While living his life as a queer influencer to the fullest, Greedy Peasant grapples with questions that would have been central to medieval religious life: »Is purgatory manageable? And if so, for how long? Because I know it's not supposed to be, like, super bad. And then: Am I going to hell for real? How bad will it be? Because based off of the present data, I will be going to 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥 Based off of... you know... Catholicism. And it does sound bad« (greedypeasant, 11.12.2021). He brings together the alterity of medieval

culture with his own queerness, ostensibly doubling the cultural remoteness that characterises our relationship with the Middle Ages (cf. Jauss/Bahti 1979).

Queerness invokes notions of ›otherness‹, asynchrony, and being of sync with the ordinary—›the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning« (Sedgwick 2013: 8). Carolyne Dinshaw hears the queer voice as calling for another kind of time, one beyond modern understanding linearity and homogeneity, and filled with enthusiasm and amateurism (cf. Dinshaw 2012: 4–5). It is precisely Greedy Peasant's enthusiasm for otherness and for the over-the-top that draws the viewer into his medieval world. This is clear, for example, in his fondness for medieval sleeve design reminiscent of medieval fashion, such as the often flaring sleeves of the late medieval *houppelande*. In his video ›Medieval Barbie now with Changeable Sleeves‹ (greedy peasant, 08.06.2023) he shows many self-designed sleeves that play important roles in earlier videos. Though tapping into the homemade aesthetic, Tyler Gunther is not an amateur content creator: he has a background as professional costume designer (Tyler Gunther Art: About) and his Patreon seems to reveal that his online presence provides a steady stream of income (Greedy Peasant Patreon).

Absurd at times, engaging with Greedy Peasant's content is by no means an othering experience. The effect of this doubling of alterities brings the viewer closer to the medieval peasant, in both his medievalness and his queerness. Simultaneously, his distortion of the contemporary TikTok influencer-style video reminds the viewer back of their own place in time. Time and temporality, important terms for thinking about medievalism, are sub-

verted in Greedy Peasant's medievalism. It distinctly ignores matters of historicity and temporal consistency: medievalism is not just a matter of bringing the past into the present; it is a matter of temporalities converging. A bricolage of cultural phenomena entangles a nostalgia for a lost or imagined past with the exploration of contemporary issues, technologies and trends.

Greedy Peasant's content is a mish-mash of references, not just to the Middle Ages or to modern cultural events, like RuPaul's Drag Race: ›four skulls stand before me. Tonight's runway theme are the rival reliquary skulls of St John Chrysostom« (greedy peasant, 11.6.2023). But also to medievalist intermediaries like the distinct Monty Python-esque aesthetics in his designs and illustrations (Greedy Peasant: Museum; Kaufman 2010). Greedy Peasant plays with medieval aesthetics yet often steps outside of that box. Some major components in his videos are references to decorative tassels, costume design in, for instance, historical films during the Golden Age of Hollywood, and American historical cemeteries. He characterises all these elements as *medieval*. And yet, he positions his Middle Ages firmly in modern America. In a ›short presentation on Medieval New York‹ (greedy peasant, 3.9.2022) he complicates the temporalities of his own medievalism, explaining: ›If you are trying to place Medieval New York on a historical timeline, it would be: today and tomorrow«. Greedy Peasant's queer, campy, dreamlike video content prompts us to reconsider the assumed rigid boundaries between past and present. It demonstrates that the notion of contemporary medievalism as synchronous and linear falls short in the face of the complexity of its temporal and cultural phenomena (cf. Dinshaw 2012).

This curious entanglement of time shows that dreaming of the Middle Ages shapes our perceptions of the past, just as our understanding of history informs these modern imaginations. Famous examples are the gargoyles of Notre Dame, fantastical stone creatures of 19th century post-romantic imagination. They represent what was thought the Middle Ages were (or what it should have been), and, at the same time, they are instrumental to how we experience the medieval origins of the modern city of Paris. Michael Camille describes them as modern ghosts that haunt us from an invented heroic medieval past (cf. Camille 2009). Imagination is a significant stage in world-forming, in how the world is perceived, and consequently in the production of knowledge. For there to be dragons in the world, we must first dream of them (cf. Ingold 2013). And this may indeed go wrong: medieval history and imaginations about it are appropriated to defend extreme political views, possibly even on TikTok. Too many times, this has had horrific and deadly consequences (cf. Elliott 2017; Albin et al. 2019; Wollenberg 2014). The virtual Middle Ages are thus shaped and reshaped in different cultural contexts, for good and for bad. The contemporary imagination of the medieval era (even if it is fanciful, a bricolage, or perhaps not directly related to anything *truly* medieval) significantly impacts knowledge production, as it shapes how we engage with and appropriate history, how we feel and enjoy it. Dismantling the myths of a homogeneous Middle Ages, medievalisms illuminate the period's longevity and diversity (cf. Aurell et al. 2023: 203–210). In performing his asynchronous queer medievalism on a highly popular social media platform, Greedy Peasant invites us into his virtual medieval realm,

where the Middle Ages are continually (re)fashioned.

Medievalism is the medieval taken up, or the medieval continued, in contemporary culture. It is nostalgia and aversion; it is looking back and looking forward. Medievalism is a product of the imagination, it is the creation of knowledge, an unreal aspect within the real, simultaneously true, and fabricated. It suggests cultural remoteness, whilst at the same time creating a curious familiarity. It is a folding of time and space, a juxtaposition and entanglement of temporalities. Medievalism is complex, involving bricolage, re-use, re-contextualization. It holds political weight and can be perilous, yet it is also light-hearted and fun. It is a queer medieval fever dream.

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Meta

Herausgeber:innen

Meta Platforms Inc.; ISIN US30303M1027, WKN: A1JWVX; Unternehmen der Absatzwirtschaft (→ Foto, virtuelles). Nichts zu sehen.

Multiplizität

Stefan Laser

Die gleichzeitige Ausführung mehrerer Programme gehört zu den Errungenschaften der Informatik und ist heute

ein selbstverständlicher Bestandteil digitaler Rechenprozesse aller Art. Einige Beispiele: Ich lasse auf meinem Laptop mehrere Fenster nebeneinander offen und wechsele auf dem Smartphone mit einem Wisch zwischen Apps. Bei unserer ethnographischen Forschung zu universitären Rechenzentren (→ Hypervisor) schwärmt die IT-Administration von den Vorzügen virtueller Server, die nicht nur Operationen, nein, nicht einmal Programme, sondern ganze Nutzer:innen nebeneinander laufen lassen. Und Hersteller:innen von Headsets für Virtuelle Realitäten legen über die erdliche eine digital-virtuelle Realität. Als User erwarte ich Flexibilität, und bekomme sie, in vielfältiger Form, gleichzeitig. Das kann erstaunliche Erfahrungswelten hervorbringen (siehe etwa → Medieval TikTok, → Tribunal). Die Art und Weise, wie Gleichzeitigkeit gelingt, basiert auf in den 1960er Jahren etablierten informatischen Konzepten: der *Multiprogrammierung* und dann dem *Multitasking*. Das Prinzip ist in die Alltagssprache eingegangen und macht die Arbeit am und mit dem Rechner ubiquitär (vgl. Mattern 2003). Wir multitasken. Aber: Programme laufen eigentlich gar nicht gleichzeitig ab. Multiplizität ist eine Illusion. Sphären von Aktivitäten überlagern sich, es findet mehr als eine Handlung statt, aber niemals viele (vgl. Strathern 1991). Genau wegen dieser virtuellen Illusion ist die Technik so erfolgreich. Ein Blick in die (Geschichte der) Computerarchitektur erhellt das Thema.

Eine kurze Geschichte der Verdrahtung

Computerchips (CPUs, nach der englischen *Central Processing Unit*) arbeiten Aufgaben nacheinander ab, das heißt Prozesse warten auf ihre Exekution (vgl.