Back to the Future: *Star Trek* and the Old French Epic

Kimberlee Campbell
Harvard University

Recent critics have commented that the science fiction serial *Star Trek* has evolved into a cyclical corpus of stories resembling traditional epic or saga. This study explores the parameters of that cyclicity in comparison with the chanson de geste. Although *Star Trek* borrows little content from the Middle Ages, poetic and narrative structures are markedly similar to the Old French epic. The author theorizes a generalized Western storytelling filiation, elaborated in response to similar collective need, through which past and future function equally to validate the present.

Introduction

In recent years, postmodern relativism, with its insistence on the ultimately untranslatable singularity of voice and experience, has come to dominate much of the way we theorize the agency and representation of our selves and our others in the world. For scholars of the medieval, this ideology, even as it seeks both to reintegrate the historical object into its material and social context and to assess the effect of the researcher's own ethnically or historically determined agenda, has ironically served to reinforce the perceived alterity of the Middle Ages.[1] As Kathleen Biddick cautions in *The Shock of Medievalism*, even "the new medievalism […] retraces a rigid topography of interiority and exteriority," separating the presumably scientific study of history from sentimental or political appropriations of the medieval past (p. 2). On the other hand, in popular *milieux*, there is no such separation, the Middle Ages furnishing, naively, anachronistically or not, archetypal models for a contemporary Western mythos. As Umberto Eco puts it, the Middle Ages are "something in which we still live," ("Dreaming," p. 68). They are a much mended patchwork through the iterations of which we write versions of a collective childhood, the medieval other a transfigured and often heroic self. In fact, we could go so far as to say that, even in the United States, the Middle Ages are ubiquitous, expressed in architecture (New York's neogothic Grace Church), in film (*Excalibur*), and as a product of computer technology (*Dungeons and Dragons*), to name only a few examples. But beyond explicit attempts to recreate or investigate those centuries, the legacy of the Middle Ages often inhabits and informs our telling of the

[1] As Stephen Nichols puts it, "[...] the period really was unique, different from what went before and came after [...]" ("The New Medievalism," p. 12). Louise O. Frandenburg talks about the alterity of the Middle Ages that is "urged upon us." ("'Voice Memorial,'"p. 173).

world in more subtle ways, so that, while we rightly reserve judgment as to whether our imagined Middle Ages in any way resemble the historical reality, we may find that, conversely, our knowledge of medieval frameworks is a fruitful starting point for the study of contemporary mentalities. It is therefore with a view to understanding the resonances and uses of the medieval past in modern contexts that I explore, in the following pages, the science fiction serial *Star Trek* through the lens of the medieval epic cycle, the structures of which *Star Trek* closely parallels.

From its beginnings in 1966, *Star Trek*, as most anyone familiar with American popular culture knows, has become, as Chris Gregory puts it, an "unparalleled multimedia phenomenon" (*Star Trek*, pp. 1-2) comprising five television series, ten feature films, an animated series, novelizations, and merchandising. Although the original series was canceled in 1969 after only three seasons, paradoxically, *Star Trek* continued to grow in popularity throughout the 1970s, its momentum fed by continuous reruns. Both the films and the additional series were launched in response to audience demand; by 1991, as Henry Jenkins and John Tulloch note, *Star Trek*:

> […] commanded the covers of major magazines and was the focus of a two-hour television documentary. The first five feature films had earned a total of $398 million in box office revenues. Thirty-five different *Star Trek* novels have commanded a spot on the New York Times paperback bestseller list and Pocket Book's long-standing series had grown to more than a hundred titles. Widely syndicated, the original *Star Trek* episodes were still being shown 200 times a day in the United States and were all available for rent or purchase on videotape. *Star Trek*: *The Next Generation* was America's highest rated syndicated drama, seen by more than 17 million viewers every week (*Science Fiction Audiences*, p. 3).

The later series (*Deep Space 9, Voyager, Enterprise*) and movies have prolonged the popularity of *Star Trek* into a new millennium: *Enterprise*, the fifth of the televised series, was produced through 2005, while the most recent of the films, *Nemesis*, first aired in 2002. In 2006, the fortieth anniversary of the first *Star Trek* episode, reruns still garner considerable audiences, while the original 60s series has recently been released on DVD. As one might expect given the obvious impact of *Star Trek* in American culture, a number of sociological and psychological studies have been done, most particularly in the area of fan culture and viewer demography.[2] Recently, however, criticism has begun to focus more on the structural, cultural and mythological aspects of the material.[3] In this context, the resemblance of the *Star Trek* cycle to the medieval legacy has been noted – Chris Gregory comments that *Star Trek* "has evolved into an interconnected 'web' of

[2] See for example Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* as well as Henry Jenkins and John Tulloch's *Science Fiction Audiences*.

[3] See in particular Jan Lundeen and Jon Wagner, *Deep Space and Sacred Time: Star Trek in the American Mythos* and chapters 7 ("Ritual and Relativism: *Star Trek* as Cult") and 8 ("*Mythos* and *Logos*: *Star Trek* as Mythic Narrative") of Chris Gregory's *Star Trek: Parallel Narratives*.

stories in a way that parallels the development of traditional sagas, odysseys or mythic story cycles" (*Star Trek*, p. 9) – but the specific parameters of this parallelism have remained largely unexplored.

Explicit medieval references in *Star Trek*

As we begin our inquiry into this parallelism, a first question is obvious: What is the debt of *Star Trek* to the explicitly medieval? That is, does the *Star Trek* corpus borrow heroes, motifs or story lines from identifiable medieval literary or historical repertories? As it happens, *Star Trek* is not particularly medieval in this respect. In the best tradition of science fiction, the *Trek* cycle is set in a future invented through the lens of technology; much in evidence are the space ships, laserlike weapons and matter transformation gadgetry of the universe as it might be two or three hundred years from now. Absent, on the other hand, are the neomedievalist, quasi-Arthurian overtones of George Lucas's *Star Wars*. Indeed, the creator of the original idea for the *Star Trek* series, writer/director/producer Gene Roddenberry, looked rather to the Western than to the Middle Ages for his inspiration; for him, *Star Trek* was to be the "wagon train to the stars" (Engel, *Gene Roddenberry*, p. 64). Moreover, the various writers who contributed to *Star Trek* over the years eschewed for the most part the fairy-tale atmosphere and the transparent translation of medieval knighthood that are part and parcel of *Star Wars*. This is not to say that explicit references to the Middle Ages are entirely lacking; however, there are only a handful of episodes based on specific medieval narratives.[4] Among these is an episode from the *Next Generation* series in which Captain Picard and his crew are recreated in the roles of Robin Hood and his men, this transformation having been performed by Q, one of a race of often mischievous super beings ("QPid"). As Robin Hood, Captain Picard is obliged to explore the limits of passion as against his legendary self-control, when faced with the prospective death of his lover, reincarnated as Maid Marian. In another episode, this one from the *Voyager* series, members of the crew find themselves trapped in a simulation of *Beowulf*, at the mercy of Grendel; "Heroes and Demons" is one of the many *Trek* episodes that validate the series' central multicultural philosophy, as the crew struggles to understand the unknown life-form that has taken over the *Beowulf* simulation. In both of these episodes, the medieval story line serves as a pretext or platform, in the way that Umberto Eco has remarked ("Dreaming," p. 68), for the staging and resolution of issues contemporary to the characters themselves rather than as a forum for any real exploration of the past.

[4] Somewhat curiously, in all the many episodes featuring time travel and historical fantasies on the holodeck, the *matière de Bretagne*, King Arthur and his knights, and the quest for the Grail are never represented, although the Arthurian material is a popular subject for feature film, from the *Knights of the Round Table* (1953), *The Sword of Lancelot* (1963) and *Camelot* (1967) to *First Knight* (1995) and the aforementioned *Excalibur* (1981) without forgetting *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975). For a discussion of the Arthurian material in film, see Aberth, *A Knight at the Movies*; *King Arthur on Film*, ed. Harty; R. and S. Umland, *The Use of Arthurian Legend in Hollywood Film*; and especially Aronstein, *Hollywood Knights*.

If the Middle Ages are a figurative backdrop in the episodes mentioned above, they are a literal backdrop in others: in the original series, "Catspaw" features a medieval castle as the setting for an episode about witches and warlocks, "Shore Leave" costumes its tourists in the medieval garb of their fantasies, and "Errand of Mercy" includes a medieval-looking village, complete with costumed villagers, as a disguise for the inhabitants' true being, as creatures of pure energy. The later series also include quasi-medieval backdrops or costumes—the Boraalans in *The Next Generation*'s "Homeward" episode; the early Irish costumes used by Miles O'Brien and Dr. Bashir in *Deep Space 9* ("The Bar Association")—and for much the same reason. The medieval in these episodes functions as a part of a visual code in which it signifies, much as the word itself does in current American English, that which is at the very least old-fashioned, but also very probably unenlightened. The old-fashioned can be an exotic place to visit, as Miles and the doctor do through the agency of the holodeck, which can reify fantasy, thereby permitting its users to live out any scenario they choose; it also suggests the primitive, thereby placing the *Trek* characters in a position of superior modernity vis-à-vis the inhabitants of the medieval. This is the case for both "Errand of Mercy" and "Homeward" in which it is assumed that exposure to twenty-fourth century technology would frighten and corrupt the supposedly backwards villagers, and indeed, in the latter episode, the one villager who finds himself on the Enterprise by reason of a technical malfunction is half-mad with fear and commits suicide. The medieval can also point to a sort of moral unenlightenment, as it does in "Catspaw," in which the characters, though powerful and seemingly more advanced technologically than the crew of the Enterprise, are nevertheless ethically inferior, since they do not recognize the dignity and sanctity of all life forms but rather play with them, like cats with mice.

In all of the episodes discussed above, *Star Trek* borrows from the Western repertory of stock references, images and artifacts chosen deliberately and self-consciously for their cultural resonances. The resulting vision of the Middle Ages, operating as a commentary on the narrative present of the episode in question, posits an "other" against which a collective future self may be more clearly drawn. It is the alterity of the medieval that these episodes leverage to make their point. Clearly then, the sense of *Star Trek* as a literary corpus the development of which parallels that of the saga or epic does not have its source in these relatively limited instances of direct medieval borrowing. Furthermore, extant epic narratives, medieval or otherwise, are evoked only twice in all the *Star Trek* corpus: the aforementioned *Beowulf* episode and an episode from *The Next Generation* in which *Gilgamesh* is Captain Picard's contribution to an intergalactic exchange of epic narratives ("Darmok"). The epic dimensions of *Star Trek* are not, in sum, a function of this sort of explicit intertextuality. As we will see, the parallelism of the chanson de geste and *Star Trek* is expressed at the level of narrative and poetic structure rather than that of content.

Star Trek and cyclical narrative

Viewed in their entirety, the *Star Trek* materials constitute a narrative cycle, the overall development and shape of which correspond quite closely to the medieval model of the chanson de geste. In similar fashion to

the Old French epic, the *Star Trek* corpus grew in response to popular demand as various writers sought to enlarge the narrative possibilities by creating additional adventures for the original cast of characters. As Guillaume in the *Couronnement de Louis* or Charlemagne in the *Chanson de Roland*,[5] whose next battles are beginning even as the chanson draws to a close, the captain of the Enterprise must be ever vigilant, since despite the often repeated desire for peace and the Prime Directive, which in theory forbids interference in the affairs of other planets, conflict is almost inevitable as the United Federation of Planets seeks to defend both its physical boundaries and its way of life. In the cause of territorial and cultural hegemony then, the crew of the Enterprise battles a variety of opponents, ranging from amorphous neural parasites to the warlike Klingons, but always with the knowledge that each adventure, each battle, begets another.

From the core of the original seventy-nine episodes, filmed in the 1960s, *Star Trek* expanded along genealogical lines in much the same way as did the various epic cycles, although the *Trek* genealogy was constituted as an organizational rather than familial filiation. Nevertheless, the second series was called *The Next Generation*, a title that underscored the cyclical relationship between the two *corpora* of episodes while almost atavistically recalling the earlier Western epic cycles. The introductory monologue of *The Next Generation* further reinforced the notion of kinship, repeating virtually word for word the mission statement of the original series[6] while signaling cyclicity through the addition of a temporal qualifier as the five-year mission became an "ongoing" one. Certainly, the jongleur's commentary about the eternalized conflict of Lorrains and Bordelais in *Gerbert de Metz* could apply equally well to *Star Trek*:

---

[5] For example, from the *Couronnement de Louis*:

> Or se cuida Guillelme reposer,
> Deduire en bos et en rivier aller ;
> Mais ce n'iert ja tant com puisse durer,
> Car li Franceis pristrent a reveler
> Li uns sor l'altre guerreier et foler. (ll. 2657-61)

And from the *Chanson de Roland* (Oxford version):

> Culcez s'est li reis en sa cambre voltice.
> Seint Gabrïel de part Deu li vint dire :
> 'Carles, sumun les oz de tun emperie !
> Par force iras en la tere de Bire,
> Reis Vivien si succuras en Imphe,
> A la citét que paien unt asise :
> Li chrestïen te recleiment e crient.'
> Li emperere n'i volsist aler mie.
> 'Deus,' dist li reis, 'si penuse est ma vie !'
> Pluret des oilz, sa barbe blanche tiret. (ll. 3992 – 4001)

[6] "Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before." This introduction was read during the opening credits of each episode of the original series aired between September 8, 1966 and June 3, 1969.

Granz fu la guerre qui ja ne prendra fin.
Aprés les mors la reprennent li vif;
Aprés les peres la racuellent li fil. (ll. 2471-73)

The most recent of the *Star Trek* series, *Enterprise*, represents another aspect of cycle development well known to scholars of the chanson de geste: that is, the development of narratives about generations preceding the original cast of characters. In this iteration of *Star Trek*, the *Enfances*, or backstory, of an entire collective is developed; the episodes feature a twenty-second-century crew—the original series having been set in the twenty-third century, the *Next Generation* and its spin-offs in the twenty-fourth—manning the first ship capable of warp 5, in other words, enough speed to reach other planets within a reasonable length of time. Warp drive is the technology that defines membership in the United Federation of Planets, signifying the boundary between the civilized and the primitive. Civilized worlds share similar technologies, but also an ideology, it being assumed that warp-capable species would have developed a social code to match their technology. The marginalized primitive is the quintessential outsider with whom no communication is possible; the Prime Directive mentioned above actually forbids contact until such species have "matured," both technologically and socially. Given that the *Enterprise* series represents the moment of Earth's entry into the club of civilized warp-capable civilizations, it is clear that these *Enfances* seek to validate the future collective self by inventing and invoking its ancestry, much as do the chansons of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which legitimate a contemporaneous collective self by laying claim to history. In the case of *Star Trek*, it is the super-civilized and rational Vulcans, rather than Charlemagne and Pepin, who validate the future present by endorsing the past as they invite Earth to become a part of a larger universe, and serve as mentors for the first, hesitant contacts depicted in *Star Trek: Enterprise*.

The germ of these *Trek Enfances* goes back long before the last televised series, however; in fact, it is first suggested in an episode of the original series in which Zefram Cochrane, the inventor of the warp drive on Earth, is found alive on a distant planet, his ship having crashed there ("Metamorphosis"). Although a century has passed, he is still alive, thanks to the ministrations of the planet's only inhabitant, a cloud-like being who maintains Zefram's fleshly biology in order to escape the loneliness of its situation as the last of its kind. His personal story, as well as the collective genealogy of future Earth, is fleshed out in episodes of the *Enterprise* series ("Future Tense" and "Broken Bow") as well in through the 1996 feature film *Star Trek: First Contact* in the same way as references to ancestors in earlier chansons are developed in later ones.[7] In this way, *Star Trek*, like the chanson de geste, maintains the intertextual continuity that reinforces a cyclical

[7] For example, the twelfth-century *Garin le Loheren* references Garin's father Hervis:
Grant joie fu du Loheren Hervil,
Je que diroie ne conteroie ci,
Que d'Aeliz la cortoise ot .ii. fiz :
L'ainnez ot non li Loherenz Garins. (ll. 790-93)
This reference is developed in the eponymous thirteenth-century chanson, *Hervis de Mes*.

understanding of self. As I have said elsewhere, these genealogical references serve as a structural touchstone, since the personality, actions and social position of the characters in any given text are predicated on those of other generations; each character thus referenced becomes a microcosm of the whole and a repetition of the others (Campbell, "Commemorative Formulae," p. 104).

Yet another aspect of Old French epic cycle development that finds a parallel in the *Star Trek* corpus is the idea of the *moniage* or spiritual retreat pursued by the hero later in life. Although very sketchy in comparison with the extensive elaboration of the generational structure in *Star Trek*, *Deep Space 9* does conclude as a series with the visioning of such a period for the main character ("What You Leave Behind"). After the end of the great war between the Federation allies and the Founders, and after insuring the safety of the planet Bajor by defeating the demonic pah-wraiths, Captain Sisko finds himself in the illusive atemporal home of the Bajoran Prophets. It is suggested that the captain will benefit from a retreat from the world, for, like Guillaume, the captain has been long at war.[8] A contrast is made in these scenes between the necessary but soul-damaging physical brutality of battle and the contemplative, ethereal plane of existence to which the captain is thenceforth called. Like the protagonists of the epic, it is assumed that the captain will one day return to a more worldly existence once he has learned all that the Prophets have to teach him, although the timing of this return is unclear, and the tone remains one of somber nostalgia throughout. Despite the brevity of this episode, it is clear that the writers and producers of *Star Trek*, after several years of an intensifying story arc about intergalactic war, featuring episodes on prisoners of war and post-traumatic stress disorder among other issues, cannot help but reflect upon the same question figuring in the Old French epic: that is, the place of the warrior vis-à-vis religious traditions. This parallelism is not surprising given that *Deep Space 9* as a series explores not only war but the scope of faith, fundamentalism and fanaticism through the evocation of a religion, that of the Bajoran people, with which the members of the Federation are every bit as uneasy as are the Christians with Islam in the chanson de geste. The commonality of cyclical narrative structure—the *moniage*—therefore has its roots in similar philosophical preoccupations, as both epic and *Trek* measure the importance of religion to identity.

Star Trek and epic style

If *Star Trek* evidences striking parallels with the chanson de geste in terms of overall cyclical structure, this parallelism is also manifest at the level of poetic—or in the case of *Star Trek*, theatrical—structure and style. Like the Old French epic, *Star Trek* is essentially an oral medium and, as such, utilizes many of the same stylistic devices designed to facilitate comprehension as well as composition. *Reprises,* or summaries to remind viewers of what has happened during a previous episode or scene, are common. The second half of an

[8] See *Le moniage Guillaume: chanson de geste du XII^e siècle*, edited by Nelly Andrieux-Reix as well as Wilhelm Cloetta's earlier edition, *Les deux rédactions en vers du* Moniage Guillaume. Of course, the *Trek moniage* lacks the rich development of the Guillaume cycle; for example, the comic element is entirely absent in *Deep Space 9*.

episode spanning two weeks is always preceded by such a summary, made explicit, as is the convention for American television, with the tag "Last week on *Star Trek*" plus the name of the specific series. While these introductory *reprises*, pronounced by a disembodied, omniscient narrator, remain external to the plot, summaries of material not part of the same episode, or even the same series, are generally worked into the narrative line, so that one of the characters may give the summary as a part of the dialogue.[9] Such summaries may simultaneously serve as a sort of *annonce*, hinting at the action to come. For example, in a *Voyager* episode, Chakotay and Tuvok between them summarize a previous episode during the course of which both crew and ship were duplicated by the biomimetic fluid found on a planet visited some months earlier. Tuvok goes on to speculate about the fate of that duplicate crew, a subtle preview of upcoming events, since it will become clear, as the episode unfolds, that it is about the duplicates and their eventual fate.

Formulaic language, another mnemonic device common to the chanson de geste, is also a prevalent stylistic feature of *Star Trek*. In the chanson de geste, formulae focus on the repetitive and repeatable aspects of actions, characters and environment: the month of May with its flowering fields, the knight girding on his sword, the barons riding rapidly towards their destination. In *Star Trek*, such formulaic language tends to be used in order to make familiar through repetition the esoteric vocabulary of technical operations. For example, "inertial dampers are offline" is a stock phrase that is widely used across the series; it is relatively situation neutral and therefore can be used in any plot in which the integrity of the starship is physically threatened, just as the stock epic phrase about the month of May fits many possible narrative lines. As well as facilitating memorization and comprehension, these formulae also reinforce the sense of cyclicity and recurrence, encouraging the audience's reading of the intertextual layer of meaning encoded in the dialogue. For instance, ships' physicians regularly reiterate the parameters of their position using a formulaic phrase with a variable ending. First pronounced by Doctor McCoy in the original series, "I'm a doctor, not a bricklayer" ("The Devil in the Dark") or "I'm a doctor, not an engineer" ("Mirror, Mirror") is a leitmotif that establishes continuity across time and narrative boundaries. In *Deep Space 9*, Doctor Bashir is also heard to say that he is "a doctor, not an historian" ("Trials and Tribble-ations") and "a doctor, not a botanist" ("The Wire"). In *Voyager*, the holographic Doctor, who has no name, reiterates that he is a doctor, not a battery, not a bartender ("Gravity"; "Twisted"). The use of formulaic language also permits a certain amount of self-reflexive verbal play through the inversion or repositioning of the original phrase, as for instance, the scene in which the *Voyager* Doctor contacts the female chief engineer over a two-way video intercom while the latter is in the shower, unclothed ("Drone"). The Doctor's remark that he "is a doctor, not a peeping Tom," by recasting the line in the comic register, suggests a sophisticated appreciation of the possibility for irony inherent to cyclical literature.

Another feature of the chanson de geste, the laisse, or more particularly, the relationship between laisses, has an echo in the scene-based theatrical structure of *Star Trek* episodes. Although *Trek* scenes are obviously

[9] Jean Rychner notes a similar structure: "[…]les rappels sont justifiés par la narration, trouvent leur raison d'être dans le récit" (*La chanson de geste*, p. 60).

not written in assonanced verse, the flow of scenes in some episodes does recall the *laisses parallèles* or *laisses bifurquées* of the Old French epic. Looking at one example structured along the lines of a *laisse bifurquée*, from "Timeless," a *Voyager* episode, it becomes clear that the narrative goal of suggesting more than one possible outcome of or reaction to a particular series of actions is very similar.[10] In this episode, involving a rewriting of history by means of a device that allows members of the crew to send messages through time as well as space, one scene does indeed have two very different endings. In the first iteration of the scene, Captain Janeway orders the implementation of data received privately by Seven-of-Nine through her cranial implants despite her puzzlement at the unusual routing of the message. The data received, because erroneous, eventually causes the death of the crew when the ship crashes on an icy, inhospitable planet. In the second iteration of the scene, representing Ensign Kim's second attempt to correct a mistake made years earlier from his point of view – a mistake that had also resulted in the death of the rest of the crew, although not his own – the ship is thrown clear of the high-velocity tunnel created by an experimental engine, and the crew is saved. Similar groups of scenes in other episodes serve to underline the essentially oral nature of television; the parallels with the chanson de geste, another oral medium, should come as no surprise.

Conclusions

In the foregoing paragraphs, we have examined, albeit all too briefly, some of the specific narrative and poetic elements that contribute to the sense of *Star Trek* as a later-day epic or saga. The parallels with the Old French epic are, in fact, quite striking. Does this mean that we can posit some sort of filiation between the Old French chanson de geste and this modern science fiction serial? My answer to this question is very cautiously affirmative, although this affirmation is at the level of a generalized heritage of Western storytelling rather than an assertion of a direct link between epic and *Trek*. It is here that I return to Umberto Eco's comment that we still live in the Middle Ages. We also live with an eye to the future, so that, if Fredric Jameson is correct in his assertion that science fiction operates "in the space on which a sense of the past had once been inscribed" (*Archeologies of the Future*, p. 286), *Star Trek* is no more than the futuristic translation of a very long-lived Western narrative tradition.[11] The Middle Ages looked to the past to authorize its present; *Star Trek* validates a collective, popular American "present" by means of an authorizing future of which the current era becomes the originating past. A heroic future assures the validity of that past in precisely the same way that ancestral genealogies validated a twelfth- and thirteenth-century present. The

[10] Jean Rychner defines the *laisse bifurquée* as two story lines developing from a single present: "Il semble que soient juxtaposés deux moments, ou, plus exactement, qu'à partir du même moment, du même point, se déroulent deux fils différents" (*La chanson de geste*, p. 80).

[11] Or as Jan Lundeen and John Wagner put it in *Deep Space and Sacred Time*: "Furthermore, traditional societies' veneration of the past as somehow more real than the present has been reversed in modern industrial societies like ours. Therefore, it should not be surprising if contemporary mythmaking seeks the 'undiscovered country' of the future as a setting for its cosmic narratives" (p. 7).

assumption of descending from, or being the ancestors of, a race of laudable heroes imputes similar qualities to the present of narrative reception by the logic of filiation. In short, the mythical expression of collective legitimacy enables the present by way of an excursion through heroic time; it is of little matter that this time be past or future. *Star Trek* and the chanson de geste, reflecting shared narrative and poetic traditions, constitute comparable responses to an equivalent need for a collective reaffirmation of identity.

Works Cited

Primary Texts

La chanson de Roland. Ed. F. Whitehead. Rev. T. D. Hemming. London: Bristol, 1993.

Le couronnement de Louis: chanson de geste du XII^e^ siècle. Ed. Ernest Langlois. 2nd ed. CFMA. Paris: Champion, 1984.

Les deux rédactions en vers du Moniage Guillaume. Ed. Wilhelm Cloetta. 2 vols. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1906-1911.

Garin le Loheren. Ed. Josephine E. Vallerie. Ann Arbor: Edwards, 1947.

Gerbert de Mez: chanson de geste du Xlll^e^ siècle. Ed. Pauline Taylor. Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres, fasc. 11. Namur: Secrétariat des Publications, Facultés Universitaires, 1952.

Hervis de Mes. Ed. Jean-Charles Herbin. TLF. Genève: Droz, 1992.

Le moniage Guillaume: chanson de geste du XII^e^ siècle. Ed. Nelly Andrieux-Reix. CFMA. Paris: Champion, 2003.

Secondary Texts

Aberth, John. *A Knight at the Movies: Medieval History on Film.* New York: Routledge, 2003.

Aronstein, Susan. *Hollywood Knights: Arthurian Cinema and the Politics of Nostalgia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Biddick, Kathleen. *The Shock of Medievalism.* Durham: Duke UP, 1998.

Campbell, Kimberlee A. "Commemorative Formulae in the *Geste des Loherains*." *Olifant* 19 (1994-95): 101-12.

Eco, Umberto. "Dreaming of the Middle Ages." *Travels in Hyperreality*. Trans. William Weaver. San Diego: Harcourt, 1986. 61-72.

Engel, Joel. *Gene Roddenberry: The Myth and the Man behind* Star Trek. New York: Hyperion, 1994.

Frandenburg, Louise O. "'Voice Memorial': Loss and Reparation in Chaucer's Poetry." *Exemplaria* 2 (1990): 169-202.

Gregory, Chris. Star Trek*: Parallel Narratives.* London: Macmillan, 2000.

Harty, Kevin J., ed. *King Arthur on Film: New Essays on Arthurian Cinema*. Jefferson: McFarland, 1999.

Jameson, Fredric. "Progress versus Utopia, or, Can We Imagine the Future?" *Archeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. New York: Verso, 2005. 281-95.

Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Jenkins, Henry and John Tulloch. *Science Fiction Audiences: Watching* Doctor Who *and* Star Trek. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Lundeen, Jan and Jon Wagner. *Deep Space and Sacred Time:* Star Trek *in the American Mythos*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.

Nichols, Stephen G. "The New Medievalism: Tradition and Discontinuity in Medieval Culture." *The New Medievalism*. Eds. M. S. Brownlee, K. Brownlee, and S. G. Nichols. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991. 1-26.

Rychner, Jean. *La chanson de geste: essai sur l'art épique des jongleurs*. Genève: Droz, 1955.

Umland, Rebecca A. and Samuel J. Umland. *The Use of Arthurian Legend in Hollywood Film: From Connecticut Yankees to Fisher Kings.* Westport: Greenwood, 1996.

Star Trek **Films and Episodes:**

"The Bar Association." *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*. Paramount. 19 February, 1996.

"Broken Bow." *Star Trek: Enterprise*. Paramount. 26 September, 2001.

"Catspaw." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount. 27 October, 1967.

"Darmok." *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Paramount. 30 September, 1991.

"The Devil in the Dark." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount. 9 March, 1967.

"Drone." *Star Trek: Voyager*. Paramount. 21 October, 1998.

"Errand of Mercy." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount. 23 March, 1967.

"Future Tense." *Star Trek: Enterprise*. Paramount. 19 February, 2003.

"Gravity." *Star Trek: Voyager*. Paramount. 3 February, 1999.

"Heroes and Demons." *Star Trek: Voyager*. Paramount. 24 April, 1995.

"Homeward." *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Paramount. 15 January, 1994.

"In a Mirror, Darkly." *Star Trek: Enterprise*. Paramount. 22 April, 2005.

"Metamorphosis." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount. 10 November, 1967.

"Mirror, Mirror." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount. 6 October, 1967.

"QPid." *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Paramount. 22 April, 1991.

"Shore Leave." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount. 29 December, 1966.

Star Trek IX: First Contact. Dir. Jonathan Frakes. Perfs. Patrick Stewart, Jonathan Frakes, Brent Spiner. 1996. DVD. Paramount Home Entertainment, 2005.

"Timeless." *Star Trek: Voyager*. Paramount. 18 November, 1998.

"Trials and Tribble-ations." *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*. Paramount. 4 November, 1996.

"Twisted." *Star Trek: Voyager*. Paramount. 2 October, 1995.

"What You Leave Behind." *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*. Paramount. 2 June, 1999.

"The Wire." *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*. Paramount. 8 May, 1994.