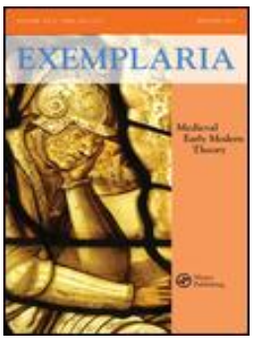

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Exemplaria

Medieval, Early Modern, Theory

ISSN: 1041-2573 (Print) 1753-3074 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/yexm20

Re-embroidering the Bayeux Tapestry in Film and Media: The Flip Side of History in Opening and End Title Sequences

Richard Burt

To cite this article: Richard Burt (2007) Re-embroidering the Bayeux Tapestry in Film and Media: The Flip Side of History in Opening and End Title Sequences, Exemplaria, 19:2, 327-350, DOI: 10.1179/175330707X212895

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1179/175330707X212895

Exemplaria, vol. 19, No. 2, Summer 2007, 327 – 350

Re-embroidering the Bayeux Tapestry in Film and Media: The Flip Side of History in Opening and End Title Sequences

RICHARD BURT
University of Florida

This essay explores homologies between the Tapestry and cinema, focusing on the opening title sequences of several films that cite the Bayeux Tapestry, including *The Vikings*; *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves; Bedknobs and Broomsticks*; *Blackadder*; and *La Chanson de Roland*. The cinematic adaptation of a medieval artifact such as the Bayeux Tapestry suggests that history, whether located in the archive, museum, or movie medievalism, always has a more or less obscure and parodic flip side, and that history, written or cinematic, tells a narrative disturbed by uncanny hauntings and ghostly citations.

Keywords: Bayeux Tapestry, medieval, film, scroll, opening title sequence, parody, credits, paratext

Bayeux Tapestry, the Movie: Coming Soon to a Theater Near You

In a cartoon drawn by Richard Jolley, two American tourists are seen viewing the Bayeux Tapestry in a museum, and the husband remarks to his wife "The storyboard was great … why did they never make the movie?" The punchline depends, of course, on our appreciating the differences between the Tapestry and film, high French fine arts culture and low American film culture, naive and knowing viewers, the past and the present. The tourists are far from being alone, however, in comparing the Tapestry to modern visual media. Scholars have frequently drawn analogies between the Bayeux Tapestry and animated cartoon, storyboard, screenplay, silent film, sound film, digital hypertext and even "hypertextile"; Jean Verrier calls it a "propaganda film" (*Broderie,* 2).[1] Marie–Thérèse Poncet includes a screenplay of the "film" and divides the Tapestry into seventy–three shots (*Étude*, 5). Michel Parisse discusses the Tapestry in terms of montage sequences, mise–en–scene, flashbacks, and jump cuts, and he divides the Tapestry into sections that make up

 DOI 10.1179/175330707X212895

a screenplay (*Bayeux Tapestry*, 53). Similarly, Suzanne Lewis refers to sequences, scenes, cuts, fast cutaways, and fade shots in the Tapestry (*Rhetoric,* 11–12). More broadly, François Amy de la Bretèque sees a kind of reciprocal equivalence between the Bayeux Tapestry and film: "One may consider that, in the minds of many of our contemporaries, the embroidery [Bayeux Tapestry] represents a kind of medieval equivalent of cinema…. The embroidery was a form of 'precinema'" (*L'imaginaire,* 144, my translation). Perhaps coincidentally, not long after scholars began to draw an analogy between the Bayeux Tapestry and film, the Tapestry itself began to appear in film. It has been cited in at least nine widely varied films: *The Vikings* (1958), *El Cid* (1961), *Is Paris Burning?* (1966), *Bedknobs And Broomsticks* (1971), *La chanson de Roland* (1978), *Hamlet* (dir. Zeffirelli, 1990), *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991),[2] and a made–for–television film, *Blackadder: Back and Forth* (1999).[3] These cinematic citations of the Bayeux Tapestry invert the analogy frequently drawn by scholars between the Tapestry and film, making these films related to the Middle Ages analogous to the Bayeux Tapestry.

Before advancing an argument about the Tapestry as cinematic analogue and considering its broader implications for the way we understand both medieval visual and pre–print culture (as well as movie and media medievalism) in terms of analogies, I would first like to relate cinematic and televisual citations of the Tapestry to the fidelity discourse of film criticism discussed in my introductory essay to this issue. Critics who adopt or reject the fidelity model of film adaptation assume uncritically that an artifact from the medieval past may be made fully visible in film; that is, questions about a film's accuracy depend on a sense that the past is available as a check against its cinematic adaptation. The Bayeux Tapestry itself challenges this assumption by calling into question whether there is an original Tapestry that can be simulated or copied in film more or less faithfully. The integrity of the Tapestry is itself the subject of debate: some scholars believe that the Tapestry we have is complete, while others believe it is missing its original beginning and/or final panels. The "Tapestry" misnomer that scholars frequently point out (it is really an embroidery, not a tapestry) is to the point. The Bayeux Tapestry is repeatedly misnamed and just as repeatedly analyzed in terms of numerous analogues (Michel Parisse is typical of scholars in referring to it both as a comic strip and a film). Furthermore, there is no scholarly agreement as to what the "original" Bayeux Tapestry is, and modern reproductions often show a conflation of "restored" versions.[4] The genuine Tapestry at the Centre Guillaume le Conquérant in Bayeux is not the original Tapestry. The scholar and spectator always view a simulation, or virtual Bayeux Tapestry. Even the genuine Tapestry is restored, and the Tapestry's wrap–around museum installation there does not let us see the Tapestry all at once, in contrast to what scholars believe was the panoramic view available to spectators when it was initially displayed. Notably, the visitor to the museum begins the tour with a film about the Bayeux Tapestry.[5]

The fidelity model assumption of the visible past is further complicated by the Bayeux Tapestry's film citation. Strictly speaking, we do not see the full Bayeux

Tapestry in films but small parts of it, and we usually see a kind of conflation–simulation–recreation–adaptation of different parts of the Bayeux Tapestry that alters the Tapestry's design, texture, colors, and even medium. We may see the Bayeux Tapestry in a fragmented, incomplete state in the process of its making. None of these films directly adapts the Tapestry; that is, none narrates the succession debate between Harold and William and the subsequent Norman invasion and conquest of England in 1066; rather, the Bayeux Tapestry appears in cinema most frequently in the opening and end title sequences and takes a variety of forms, including animated cartoon (*The Vikings*), film stills (*Chanson de Roland*), and film montage (*Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*). The Tapestry is not typically cited "faithfully," as it were, but is often restitched and re–embroidered. The Bayeux Tapestry scenes shown in *El Cid* and *Hamlet* are hybrids of scenes in the Tapestry. In opening title sequences, the Tapestry is made into a film prologue, and the Tapestry also sometimes shows up in scenes of the film. In each case, the Tapestry is put into the service of another narrative, though *El Cid* and *La chanson de Roland* echo a generic link, noted by Bayeux Tapestry scholars, between the epic poems that the two films adapt and the Bayeux Tapestry.[6] When adapted as a film prologue, the Tapestry frames the film and always tells another story, so it always serves as an analogue. *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*, for example, historicizes and retells scenes of the invasion of England in the Bayeux Tapestry as the story of English soldiers leaving England for the Crusades (Figure1).

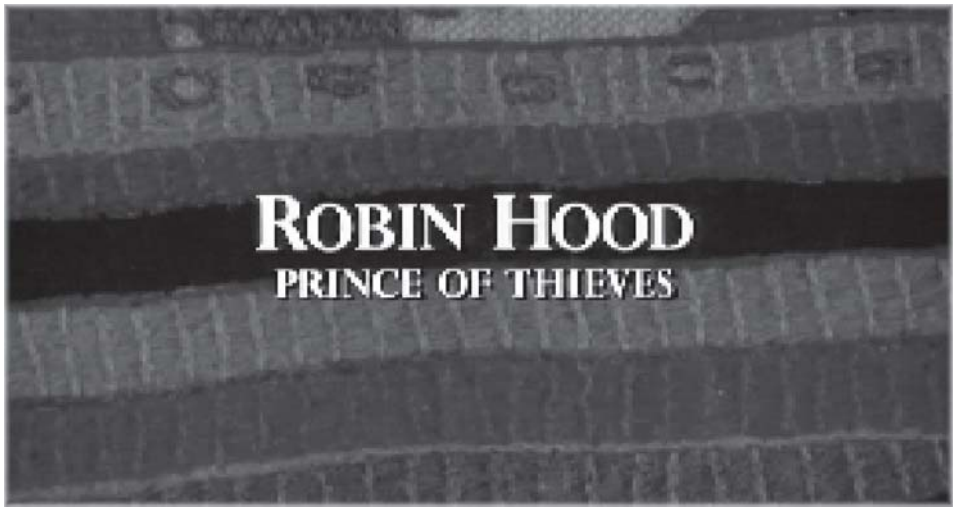

Figure 1: Texturing Robin Hood. Title sequence,
Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves (dir. Reynolds).

The sequence exploits similarities in the Bayeux Tapestry's representation of Saxons and Normans, using scenes of the Saxons on horseback and departing for France in ships as well as Norman knights and William's ship to suggest the ways in which the Crusades, according to the film, led to the end of conflicts between

Normans and Saxons. These stories have some scholarly warrant. William's invasion of England had a papal blessing and William's forces carried the banner, so the invasion has been compared to a crusade.[7] Similarly, the Viking invasions of England predated William's, and the Normans were descendants of the Vikings. At Stamford bridge, days before he engaged William in battle at Hastings, Harold had defeated a Viking invasion of England from Norway led by King Harald Hardrada and Harold's brother, Tosti Godwinson. William's ships are linked to Viking ships (same dragon heads), as Wolfgang Grape notes.

To be sure, there are cases where we do see the genuine Bayeux Tapestry, such as the 1966 French film documentary *The Battle of Hastings: 1066* and, more recently, an episode in the 2005 History Channel television documentary series *The Conquerors* entitled *William the Conqueror*. Both show the Tapestry's many tears, holes, and patches quite clearly, though in neither case does the voice–over narrator draw our attention to them. Yet differences in lighting make the genuine Tapestry look different in each case, and cinematic supplements such as music and sounds of battle are added as well. In these documentaries, we never see the reverse side of the genuine Tapestry. Thus one could argue that cinematic sequences and scenes showing the Tapestry restored, rather than its over four hundred tears and holes, come closer to giving us the original than do the documentaries.

Cinematic citations put the medieval past and film into dialogue in ways that offers a more complex model for considering analogies between the medieval past and film. The preservation and transmission of the genuine Bayeux Tapestry involves alterations, restorations, simulations, facsimiles, print reproductions, and a CD–ROM edition that are analogous to its adaptation and transmission on film. The transmission and storage of both the Bayeux Tapestry and films that cite it involve a particular kind of "transmissive interaction," in Jerome McGann's terms, namely, an unrolling that is also an unraveling. [8] This unrolling/unraveling is both damaging and reparative to the Tapestry or film's visibility, both iconoclastic and iconic: on the one hand, unraveling involves illegibility, obscurity, and invisibility, vulnerability, danger, injury, tearing, grease staining, tear drops, scratches, breaks, split ends, lost panels or frames, and frayed edges; and, on the other, unraveling involves legibility and visibility, cleaning, sewing, patches, splices, and in the case of DVDs, restoration.

What I would call, after Jerome McGann (*Textual Condition,* 12), the Tapestry condition, has significant hermeneutic implications as well for our understanding both of the Bayeux Tapestry's cinematic transmission and afterlives in particular, and for movie medievalism in general. Rather than regard the Tapestry as a vulnerable text and the reader as its protector or guardian who figuratively repairs it in the act of viewing itself, we may more precisely regard the Tapestry and its transmission and viewing in film as entailing a hermeneutics of flip sides including both iconoclastic damage and iconic reparation, both invisibility and hypervisibility: What is seen becomes clear in the process of its unfolding/unrolling even as what is seen is frayed /scratched and damaged by the Tapestry/film's unrolling. Cinematic re–embroideries of the Bayeux Tapestry link the medieval past to the present by an

"iconoclash," or conflict between icon and iconoclasm located both in the genuine Tapestry and in its cinematic adaptation (see *Iconoclash*, especially Bruno Latour's introduction and the essays by Koerner and Groys). The cinematic adaptation of a medieval artifact such as the Bayeux Tapestry suggests that history, whether located in the archive, museum, or movie medievalism, always has a more or less obscure flip side, and that history, written or cinematic, tells a narrative disturbed by uncanny hauntings and ghostly citations. As we shall shortly see, the flip side is by no means limited to parodic flippancy or to a more iconoclastic flipping off of the Tapestry or (women's) history. The flip side is not a foundation but an ever receding ground, a *mise–en–abyme* in which the "real thing" turns out to be another analogy. There is thus no master analogy or master allegory for the Bayeux Tapestry or the Bayeux Tapestry in film and media. To put the Tapestry into dialogue with its cinematic citations is to put one analogy in dialogue with another, not an original and its later, more or less analogous citation.

Even as they deconstruct the distinction between original and copy, however, cinematic citations of the Bayeux Tapestry do not simply leave questions of fidelity behind. To the contrary, they often figure the making of the Tapestry in terms of female sexual fidelity or its forced violation. The citations implicitly link the damage caused by unrolling/unraveling both to the Tapestry and to film prints to visual and thematic elements of both the Tapestry and the films that cite it: wounds, mutilated corpses, decapitated corpses, geldings, possible rapes, blindings (of Harold in the Tapestry; of Marian's attacker in *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*). In citing an ersatz Bayeux Tapestry that entails both damage and repair, cinematic citations of the Tapestry figure reading and seeing the past, particularly the past of women, as a desire to see both its front and flip sides. The flip side of the Tapestry makes visible and restores the Tapestry in some respects as it damages and represses it in others. Conceiving the Tapestry in terms of a front side and flip side model is thus quite different from conceiving it, as is customarily the case, in terms of a center–and–margin model that focuses on the front side alone. To right or reweave the Tapestry or film citation in such a manner would be to turn the Tapestry into an historical document that, if not transparent, could nevertheless be decoded to give us a complete picture of its true, hitherto hidden meaning. Yet even as this questionable interpretive operation restores the margins of the past, it represses the flip side of the Tapestry and its cinematic citations, which remain invisible. Instead of imagining (women's) history as a reversal, restoration, and uncensoring (making the marginal the center), the films citing the Bayeux Tapestry imagine (women's) history as involving both its censoring and uncensoring rather than a binary opposition between subversion and containment or memory and counter–memory.

Becoming the Bayeux Tapestry: the (Re)making of an Icon(oclash)

The analogy between film and the Tapestry was first drawn by academics and the Bayeux Tapestry first appeared in films in the wake of the Second World War, when

it was achieving or perhaps had by then achieved its present iconic status. Moreover, the Bayeux Tapestry began to be cited in film not just because its protocinematic potential makes it a particularly apt analogue for medieval films but because it had become a recognizable icon of medievalism.[9] The Bayeux Tapestry typically shows up in film and television documentaries about the Battle of Hastings and William the Conqueror, for example, and has even appeared in a videogame.[10]

Art historians have recently become interested in the way paintings like *American Gothic*, the *Mona Lisa*, and the *Last Supper* have become cultural icons, occasioning iconoclastic attacks and numerous parodies such as Marcel Duchamp's "Mona Lisa with Mustache and Beard (LHOOQ)."[11] While a recognizable icon, the Bayeux Tapestry has never been subject to iconoclastic attack the way *American Gothic* and the *Mona Lisa* have. While Grant Woods received threatening letters in response to his *American Gothic*, the Bayeux Tapestry has not been parodied, as these paintings reputedly have been, so much as used in the service of a parody of something else. This displacement of the Tapestry does involve what may reasonably be called its iconoclastic transformation, however, even if the breaking up of the Tapestry is not aimed at its destruction.

For example, the Tapestry was used as the model for Rea Irvin's cover of *The New Yorker* about D–Day and Hitler's defeat, divided up into panels like a Sunday full–page comic strip.[12] The cover looks almost like a *Mad Magazine* "spy versus spy" cartoon, showing Hitler cowering under a bed next to rats in the bottom right panel (Generals Montgomery and Eisenhower are assigned nicknames Monty and Ike in the upper left inscription). Yet the New Yorker cover stops well short of the openly parodic jokes about Hitler in *To be or Not to Be* (Ernst Lubitsch,1942). The Latin tag in the last panel of the "comic strip," "Sic Semper Tyrannis!" introduces another analogy that may be a rather scholarly in–joke about the English as neo–Republicans fighting off a would–be Caesar/Kaiser.

Subversive (St)itches: Bastardizing the Bayeux Tapestry

The flip sides of the Tapestry's cinematic citations range across the divide between serious and parodic. Occupying opposite sides of this divide, consider the most clearly parodic example, *Blackadder: Back and Forth,* and the most scholarly, *Le chanson de Roland*. The *Blackadder* film title sequence opens with the words written in white type on a black background dissolving into a shot that cites a panel near the end of the Bayeux Tapestry, with a knight standing below the words "Harold Rex" gripping what some scholars believe is an arrow in his eye.[13] The camera tracks left as the music continues and moves in more closely as we hear the sound of an arrow hitting its target and then see that Edmund Blackadder, clearly delighted with himself as he skulks off, is the happy archer who has just shot and killed Harold (Figure 2).

Rewriting history in parodic fashion here involves a literal movement upwards from below and from the margin to "the center of British history." Though an

archer rather than a knight, Blackadder is in the main part of the Tapestry and in the center of the film shot, while all the other archers are in the bottom border.

Title sequence, *Blackadder Back and Forth* (dir. Weiland).

While Blackadder could be put at the parodic pole, and Cassenti's erudite *Chanson* at the other, these poles have to be understood as part of a continuum rather than occupying opposite sides of a divide. To be sure, *Blackadder* is obviously funny. Yet it is more scholarly than most cinematic citations in citing the "original," and though the scene from the Bayeux Tapestry is brightly colored in *Blackadder*, the comedy requires that the viewer has knowledge both of the Battle of Hastings and of the Bayeux Tapestry, and of course the joke itself is a scholarly one.[14] In re–embroidering the Tapestry by first showing it without the arrow in Harold's eye and then letting us know that Blackadder has just shot it, the sequence recapitulates the Tapestry's own history of successive re–embroiderings, reproductions, and facsimiles: the "original" Bayeux Tapestry now on display at the Centre Guillaume le Conquérant in Bayeux, France, is itself the product of various "restorations," including the arrow in the eye of the knight under Harold (see Foys). By activating the bottom border's satirical, de–idealizing comments on the disturbing stripping and mutilation (beheading) of corpses in the battle being fought above, the sequence employs the low–mode carnivalesque to a make a serious comment in a punk–rock manner about the way official British history is itself an idealization based both on images and the repression of the darker violence on which it depends, as shown in the Tapestry's margins.

The shots of the Bayeux Tapestry in the opening title sequence of *La chanson de Roland* show a different kind of flip side, history happening in a kind of double time that similarly both establishes and complicates its erudite status. The Tapestry is literally doubled and redoubled in the film. In addition to the opening title sequence, the film shows a large piece of leather with armed Normans in the design of the Bayeux Tapestry; this item is used twice, first by two actors rehearsing a

swordfight for their play, and then later, before the battle involving Christians and Muslims, when Bishop Turpin rallies the Christian troops. Doubling it as both the precursor of the *Song of Roland* and its after–effect, *Chanson* flips the Bayeux Tapestry backwards in time by citing it at an historical moment before it was made. Cropping images from the Bayeux Tapestry to foreground both its idealization of aristocratic warriors—of epic heroism—and its obscene, parodic, and carnivalesque de–idealization of such violent heroism, Cassenti shows that history is narrative and that popular history is re–enacted, retold, and rewritten from below by an explicitly secular lumpenproletariat troupe who perform for both popular and aristocratic audiences. Echoing the abrupt ending of the Bayeux Tapestry, the film closes with the murder, by knights, of the actors' associates, and the consequent disbanding of the theater troupe. The lead actor Klaus (Klaus Kinski) wanders off alone in a long shot that is the film's last shot. The making of history, Cassenti implies, is always a class struggle, even if "the people" are sometimes defeated. Cassenti's *Chanson* translates the fictional aspects of the Bayeux Tapestry into more specifically theatrical terms, with theater spilling over into extra–theatrical labor struggles, and history (already theatrical) overlapping.

Lines from a *Chanson de Roland* were sung before the first charge at the Battle of Hastings according to one of its chroniclers, Wace, who wrote his account a century after the battle and probably used the Bayeux Tapestry as a source. Cassenti's film places images of a medieval account of a battle (the Bayeux Tapestry) involving the afterlife of the epic poem before the film adaptation of the poem that precedes that account and battle. The opening sequence thereby anticipates the doubleness of the film itself, which alternates between scenes that adapt the poem and scenes about the poem's later re–enactment by a wandering theater troupe (the same actors appear in the lead roles of both plots), who join forces with two prostitutes and textile workers led by a young woman (played by Dominique Sanda).[15]

Furthermore, the opening title sequence provides a somewhat parodic allegory of the film's production. By matching crew and cast credits to various images from the Tapestry, the opening title sequence of Cassenti's *Chanson* offers a quasi–Godardian allegory of filmmaking as class struggle, with parallels implied between the film makers and actors and their roles in making and acting in the film (in the case of the actors, the parallels are to both plots). The operative metaphor for tensions between crew and cast is open warfare, hunting, and betrayal. The opening title sequence moves from an authoritarian and hierarchical notion of male producer and male stars to a more collective, mobile notion represented by a a director as one of two messengers riding between members of a collective and from past to present. As the status of the actors starts to get lower, the panels become more collective. With Bishop Odo's feast before the Battle of Hastings, we move to a more festive notion of the cast and the film's acting troupe. The borders of the Tapestry also appear as we move past acting credits, and several images of battlefield corpses in the bottom border offer a de–idealizing commentary on the epic pretensions of the star system and perhaps the Hollywood epic film (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Film Adaptation as Obscene Mode of Production in *La chanson de Roland*. Title sequence, *La chanson de Roland* (dir. Cassenti).

The Bayeux Tapestry Bewitched

Like Rea Irvin's 1944 *New Yorker* cover, the opening title sequence of Disney's family film *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* begins with an image of a building from the Tapestry surrounded by upper and lower borders and a border on the left. The film uses borders in a manner similar to the cover to keep on track what become cartoon panels (left to right and then down). Architecture and borders in the opening title sequence serve as metaphors for national defense, with history as an allegorical construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction. Unlike the *New Yorker* cover, however, the opening title sequence of *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* encloses two alien threats: not only the Nazis but the powerful, single Englishwoman, signified by witches in the film. It treats the latter well before dealing with the former.

We can see how the film deals with these twin threats (undomesticated women; foreign invaders) by comparing the *New Yorker* cover's incorporation of the magazine's title elements with the framing of the Walt Disney credit at the beginning of the film's title sequence. The camera quickly moves into the upper right side of the image of the castle to show the film company name ("Walt Disney Productions presents"), and only the tops of the towers of the right of the building and the top border remain visible. Whereas the *New Yorker* title is effectively enclosed by the Tapestry elements that flank it on the left and right, the Walt Disney title appears at once surrounded and yet not fully enclosed since the right side of the frame has no

border. As the camera tracks right, we see a witch and her black cat, keying Angela Lansbury's credit, with the top border still visible (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Tracking Female Star Power in *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (dir. Stevenson).

The border on the top or the bottom serves to keep her character Eglantine Price on track, as it were, so as to assure the viewer that whatever power Miss Price attains does not threaten the castle to her left. The camera tracks down to a male juggler, with the bottom border serving as a similar track. The border ends as a new witch appears. The camera tracks right from the juggler to an older, uglier witch stirring a boiling pot, with two skulls at her feet and bats and animals flying out of the cauldron. The border ends where Lansbury's rather attractive witch is doubled by a much darker version. Female witchcraft may stir things up in a way that unleashes powers beyond England's (patriarchal) control. The cauldron explodes and the music signals the explosion as a comic development. Various fantastical animals come forth such as a walking fish, with two black cats that are holding brooms flanking the lower and left and right panels and two owls perching on the arch. The border reappears and a new arch appears. The film title then appears, with the smoke clearing on either side. With the film title, there is an architectural reassertion of symmetry and enclosure (the film is inside this bounded space) as the cats become guardians. The film will wander, but it will not go off track, in other words. While a witch may get out in front, she will not get so far out as to be in front of the front. Witch, yes; bitch, no.

A similar though less disruptive movement in and out of the border and arches occurs as we move to another image of witchcraft, a screeching black cat pulling out of a close–up to reveal it is standing on a skull and across from three children in bed, wide awake. With the art directors' credit, we return to another building,

this one in the process of being built by men. The camera tracks down the building, and we see the architect still designing the building and a woman weaving below him as we see to the right the credits for make–up, hairstylist, sound, music and choreographer. The border reappears to the right of the woman weaver, again tracking her place, if not enclosing her. A gender hierarchy and a hierarchy of film crew are subtly established with men on top (designers as laborers and architects) even as women (film production arts are coded as feminine) are shown to be foundational, so to speak, with a woman weaver working in the bottom floor. Yet the border also works to mark the bottom floor of the building and suggests that the woman weaver's position is the foundation upon which everything else is built and also perhaps cues the Bayeux Tapestry as the foundation of the title sequence. While the effect of the inclusion of men and women is to harmonize the various aspects of building design and construction, with laborers, designer, and weaver all working together toward a common goal, the weaver nevertheless remains excessive since, unlike the architect, there is no correlation between weaving and building design or building construction. Elements of the Tapestry (the comet, seen in reverse) and its borders come in and out of a number of following credits, in which women play prominent roles. The technical consultants credit shows a woman fortuneteller, in a tent, reading the palm of a man who stands outside it; the music credit begins with a close–up of a woman leaning out of a tower throwing a rose to two male rivals serenading her for her attention; and the choreography credit shows three women dancing and two men/beasts (they have animal legs), one wearing a fool's cap (he looks like the juggler). Architectural images and the Bayeux Tapestry work to track a vanguard female power led by a witch, now licensed by a male authority that nevertheless remains on the top layer.

The last part of the title sequence moves from disruptions focused on women and witchcraft to the external threat posed by male Nazi invaders. A surfacing Nazi submarine, identified by the German flag it's flying, is followed by soldiers in boats and then landing in England; there are no borders, and the building seen when they land now has a Union Jack flying over it and the special effects credits to its right. The English castle flying the Union Jack is not sufficient, however, to defend against the invasion. The film has to employ some magic of its own via special effects, signaled as the shot dissolves into a close up of Norman ghost warriors (with blank areas where their heads and limbs should be embroidered). The camera pans down and pulls back to show a border at the bottom as the warriors all march to the right. The title sequence appears to reassert male authority and power as these soldiers are matched successively to the writing, production, and direction credits. Yet even here women reappear as the base and the vanguard. For example, two monks writing and revising in a small enclosure appear on the right as the screenplay credit appears for writers Bill Walsh and Don Dagradi. But below their names we read "Based on the book by Mary Norton." Like the woman weaver, here an invisible (ghosted?) writer is the foundational base/basis for the film's storyline. In the final parts of the opening title sequence, a male vanguard is displaced by

a female vanguard. The random, free–floating camera work of the title sequence up to this point and the random flight of the witch now takes a strictly horizontal direction. As what had seemed a medieval story is updated and the English are put on a war footing, space and movement are stabilized. Similarly, the producer credit matches the producer to a foot soldier leading an army of warriors, some on foot and others on horseback. Yet the director credit gets no visual match. Instead, in what I take to be the funniest moment of the sequence, the witch (seen first next to Lansbury's credit) again rides her broom in the air, but this time she has been militarized. Whereas in her first appearance she looks at the viewer and has her cat ride on her broom, now she appears not only as flag bearer but as an allegorical figure, Britannia, wearing a World War II helmet and carrying a sword. The Union Jack for the English building seen when the Nazis landed is here attached erect to the back of her broom, replacing her black cat (the German flag on the submarine is tilted and more relaxed). Her power is even further asserted by the fact that she is leading what has become a cavalry charge rather than foot soldiers, and she thus commands a faster, more mobile, more powerful force (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The Bayeux Tapestry on or off–track in *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (dir. Stevenson)?

Women, the sequence suggests, are enlisted in the war effort by being freed to move to an apparent position of martial leadership even if that means putting them at risk. While it is not clear who is directing the soldiers here—the director or the witch—it is clear that the supernatural Britannia on a broom is far more vulnerable than the enclosed screenwriters. The final image shows four Nazis shooting at the witch and the warriors, thereby suspending the narrative.

The opening title sequence's dynamic tension between female flight and power, on the one hand, and architectural enclosure and border tracking, on the other, is at odds with the film narrative's rather domestic recuperation of the single woman qua witch in the film itself. Eglantine Price (Angela Lansbury) is a failure at witchcraft (she falls off her broom), and she needs a man, Mr. Emelius Browne (David Tomlinson), to teach her how to become a witch. At the end of the film, Miss Price marries him and takes into her new nuclear family three children forced on her against her will at the beginning of the film. Given that *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* was released in 1971, it would be easy enough to see this "family values" Disney film mobilizing a potentially disruptive, explosive gender liability identified with the single woman only in order to secure the "nuclear" family in its post–patriarchal phase. With its light–hearted, breezy theme music, *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* might reasonably be said to have been in the forefront in a war against feminism and divorce, hoping to return us to the world of the wonderful wartime comedy *I Married a Witch* and its television spin–off, *Bewitched*. Eglantine Price is first seen in *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* near a history museum that houses various kinds of armor and weapons. This kind of architectural warehouse or musealization of the ghost of history is what Miss Price, as a witch, can magically call up: the museum doubles as an armory waiting to be mobilized. Unlike the witch at the end of the opening title sequence, however, Miss Price does not lead the ghost knights fighting off the Nazis at the end of the film.

If the opening title sequence sets up a conservative, apparently inevitable happy ending (equaling marriage and children), the sequence does have a wayward potential. For the borders in the sequence, like the borders on the Tapestry, serve not only to track the narrative but to comment indirectly on it as well. The title sequence only shows animals from the Tapestry's borders (no obscenity here), and images of animals appear both in images without borders or coming out of borders into the main frame.[16] Various images of animals in the sequence serve as images of domestication (lambs are herded by a shepherd) or of a dog–eat–dog world (the fox trying to trick the crow, a fable seen in the Bayeux Tapestry), possibly unleashed by the Nazis. The animation credits are particularly interesting in charting a course between hierarchy and revolt. The animation director credit appears next to a lion seated in a throne, with animals in the border above him. It is followed by the woman fortuneteller (box office predictor?) who seems to let loose the animals as animators. The animation credit (for nine animators) shows several animals, as if moving out of the border, standing on one another waiting to block Halley's comet, a phenomenon of flight as unusual and notable in the Tapestry as the flying witch is in the opening title sequence. The meaning of their action (intended to do good or bad?) is not clear, but it is possible to read their independence from the animation director as farsighted initiative or animal willfulness. By putting the animal back into animation, as it were, the sequence implicitly links artistic and cinematic freedom with a female vanguard.[17]

Horning in on the Bayeux Tapestry

I want to focus at some length on the opening title sequence and closing credits of *The Vikings* because it can be read both as a serious attempt to represent an authentic Viking past and as a parody of such attempts.

Figure 6: Re–animating the Bayeux Tapestry as Animated Cartoon.
Title sequence, *The Vikings* (dir. Fleischer).

The hermeneutics of the animated cartoon prologue (Figure 6) of *The Vikings* are unusually indeterminate. It cites a number of panels and borders of the Tapestry as it depicts the story of Viking invasions of England, narrated in voice–over by Orson Welles, who adopts a slight English accent:

> The Vikings, in Europe of the eighth and ninth century, were dedicated to a pagan god of war, Odin. Cramped by the confines of their barren icebound northlands, they exploited their skill as shipbuilders to spread a reign of terror then unequalled in violence and brutality in all the records of history. The greatest wish of every Viking was to die with sword in hand, and enter Valhalla where a hero's welcome awaited them from the god Odin. The compass was unknown and they could steer only by the sun and the stars. Once fog closed in they were left helpless, blind. After all the earth was flat. Sail too far off course and the black wind would blow them across the poison sea that lay to the west over the edge of the world into limbo. Their abiding aim was to conquer England, then a series of petty kingdoms, each one the jealous rival of the next. Thus when the Vikings set forth to rob and plunder England they never sailed out of sight of land. They confined their attacks to swift overnight raids. It was no accident that the English Book of Prayer contained this sentence: "Protect us O Lord from the wrath of the Northmen."[18]

Welles did the voice–over prologue in the first U.S. historical film parody based on *The Corsican Brothers*, namely, *Start the Revolution Without Me*. In that film,

Welles parodies himself and is shot down at the end of the film just as he is about to reveal a putatively earth-shattering secret about the French Revolution.

The animated cartoon prologue of *The Vikings* lends itself to two opposed readings of the film that follows. Taken seriously, the prologue may be read along the lines of Eric Rohmer's *Perceval le Gallois* (1978), as a scholarly attempt to represent the Vikings as they would have visualized their own history in the ninth century. The Vikings' ability to represent their history, we are to infer, is the equivalent of a crudely animated, two–dimensional cartoon; while celluloid film, by contrast, now provides us more realistic and authentic means of representing the Viking past. Director Richard Fleischer follows the animated prologue with a scene of pillage, murder, and rape in order to show the superiority of film as a medium for visualizing the past, what the wrath of the Northmen really meant. The animated cartoon prologue can just as easily be taken as a spoof, however, read as a parodic commentary on the film that follows; that is, *The Vikings* is to be understood as the equivalent of a crude cartoon, an unrealistic 1950s fantasy about what the Vikings were really like. The cartoon medium is a metaphor, in other words, for the inability of filmed history to represent the past accurately and convincingly.

The openness of the animated prologue to these opposed readings has to do with three overlapping elements related to analogue and parody: its remediation of the Bayeux Tapestry; its presentation as an animated cartoon; and its voice–over by Orson Welles. Though the prologue was made by animators at UPA (United Productions of America) rather than by Fleischer, there is an extraordinary investment in the authenticity of the citations of the Bayeux Tapestry. The prologue pursues the commonly observed analogical relation between modern media and the Tapestry with extraordinary creativity and precision. The flat perspective of animation offers a more specific analogue to the Bayeux Tapestry than does a style that evokes naturalistic movement in three dimensions or live–action film (a parallel often mentioned by scholars). The back–and–forth movement from left to right and right to left in the animated prologue very specifically mirrors the same kind of movements in the Bayeux Tapestry (e.g., the funeral procession precedes Edward's death in the Tapestry). In remediating the Tapestry, the animated cartoon prologue of *The Vikings* may reasonably be said to highlight the Tapestry's protoanachronistic dimensions, its performative aspects, and its anticipation of later media analogues, rather than frame it as an original historical document.

The animated cartoon prologue not only modernizes the Bayeux Tapestry but also historicizes it, progressively backdating the Tapestry to its Scandinavian and Viking origins. Wolfgang Grape (*Bayeux Tapestry*, 37–38) notes that the bow and stern of the first of the "fully formed" ships in the Tapestry are of Scandinavian design (and pagan influences), and C. M. Gillmor compares the ships to a number of excavated Scandinavian ships ("Naval Logistics," 118ff). The ship seen near the end of the cartoon prologue is more recognizably a Viking ship than a Norman ship, closer to the ones used in the film itself. The Viking ship near the middle of the animated prologue has a tail and a dragon on the sail. The men are now fully

armed. The historicizing and modernizing of the Bayeux Tapestry in *The Vikings*' animated cartoon prologue suggest a double movement of interpretation: on the one hand, we may read the Bayeux Tapestry moving forward from the past in relation to the media of the present; on the other, we may read the cartoon prologue moving backwards from the present in relation to a medieval visual multi–medium of the past.

Richard Fleischer is the son of Max Fleischer, best known for the animated cartoons *Betty Boop* and *Popeye the Sailor* and the feature length *Gulliver's Travels* (see Richard's book on Max, *Out of the Inkwell*). Max Fleischer and Walt Disney were rivals, and Richard Fleischer agreed to direct Disney's first live feature, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954), after seeking and gaining permission from his father to direct (Fleischer, *Just Tell Me When*, 103). Moreover, the credits were made by UPA, a group of animators who had broken with Disney after the 1942 strike. UPA pioneered a limited animation style.[19] Esther Leslie (*Hollywood Flatlands,* 293) explains UPA's style as follows: "Stephen Bosustow's UPA dismantled the assembly–line system of animation, devolving work onto small spontaneous grouplets. UPA's look denied the flesh–and–blood–realism of Disney's feature–length films. They—like other studios—abandoned the pursuit of the real. Stereoptical and multi–plane technologies tended to be discontinued in the 1940s, as flat graphics came into vogue. Thin outlines stylized reality rather than imitating it. UPA cartoons, such as *Gerald McBoingboing* and *Mr. Magoo*, emphasized the two–dimensional plane." Perhaps the best–known example of this animation was Jay Ward's *Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*, the television series that originally aired from 1959 to 1961; UPA veterans Bill Hurtz, Bill Scott, Ted Parmalee, Lew Keller, and Pete Burness all worked at the Ward studio. Compare, for example, the clouds covering the Viking ships in the cartoon prologue and the storm in the opening sequence in *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*. The boy Sherman in *Mr. Peabody's Improbable History* was named after Sherman Glas, a technical director at UPA (see Keith Scott, *Moose that Roared,* 126). The adult, parodic aspects of this program and cartoons like *Fractured Fairytales* and *Mr. Peabody's Improbable History*, narrated in deadpan by Edward Everett Horton, further reinforce a sense, if only retrospectively, of *The Vikings* prologue as a spoof. [20]

Trailing After the Bayeux Tapestry

To grasp fully the way the flip sides of the Bayeux Tapestry involve its displacement and even destruction, we may turn now to the end title sequences of *The Vikings* and of Mel Brooks's *History of the World, Part I* (1981), and then to an intercinematic dialogue involving two films that parody *The Vikings* and repress its citation of the Bayeux Tapestry. Like a later parody of Fleischer's film, *Erik the Viking* (dir. Terry Jones, 1989), *History of the World, Part I* does not cite the Bayeux Tapestry. Brooks's film is particularly interesting since it cites the end of *The Vikings* but not that film's final Bayeux Tapestry sequence. Brooks's film also parodies, in its own

closing paratext, many of the paratextual conventions for marketing films which are normally located outside of a film itself, namely, in the film trailer. To be sure, *The Vikings* now seems to many viewers to be a ridiculous film. Lisa Bitel thinks it is so inaccurate that she uses it to show her students "what the Middle Ages weren't" ("*Sorceress,*" 54). While it is easy enough to see why *The Vikings* has come to be a fit subject of cinematic parody, it is worth pointing out that the end title sequence includes a parodic commentary on the making of the film itself. If the animated prologue lends itself to a serious reading of medieval visual culture, the playful end title sequence makes the case for reading it as a parodic commentary on conflicts between cast and crew.

The end title sequence shifts from animated cartoon to something like a series of stills, resembling slides. that successively match the film's actors to the characters they played in the film. The title frames are taken from panels of the Bayeux Tapestry, again re–embroidering the panels to bring them in line with *The Vikings*. The figures are matched to the actors and the characters they have played in the film. Yet while the panels with the actors' names and characters have no direct reference to the Bayeux Tapestry, the credits for director, producer, screenwriter, editor, animated prologue, and production company all do.

The end credits for director Fleischer, producer Jerry Bresler, and production designer Harper Goff all connect them to figures of Viking domination and even violence. They assert their power over the film and the film crew, in other words, by aligning themselves, tongue in cheek, with Viking power, or its check. The production credit revises the panel in which Harold submits to William into Tony Curtis submitting to the producer King William. The music credits match a composer with two figures, a knight who is identified as William in the Bayeux Tapestry and a messenger William is addressing; William and the messenger are made analogous to the composer and orchestra conductor. The Fleischer credit is particularly interesting as it places Fleischer in the position of William, who is hearing news about Harold in the Tapestry and presumably giving the order for the destruction of the countryside that follows in the scene of the burning house. In the Fleischer credit, however, it is unclear whether King Fleischer is hearing news about a Viking attack (production problems) or giving the order to attack.

The History of the World, Part I, has an explicit connection to *The Vikings* beyond using Orson Welles as the voice–over narrator for the film's opening prologue.[21] Just when the end credits would usually appear, Brooks addresses the spectator in voice–over too ("Hey! Where are you going?") and announces a "coming soon" series of three trailers. The second trailer is for *A Viking Funeral*. The trailer for *A Viking Funeral* begins with the final shot of *The Vikings* and follows with a spoof in which Brooks has the Vikings appear to be wearing helmets with horns only to reveal, as they take them off, that the Vikings themselves have horns. Rather than move forward into the Tapestry end credits from *The Vikings*' final shot, *A Viking Funeral* parodies the sequence of shots just before the final shot of *The Vikings*. The trailer is not entirely ridiculous, however, since the spoof depends on knowledge that

Fleischer's Viking helmets without horns are historically accurate. Brooks makes a rather erudite joke. My point is that Brooks's joke depends on his having excised the Bayeux Tapestry citations that appear in the closing credits of *The Vikings*. An index of Brooks's repression of *The Vikings*' animated prologue and closing credits lies in the posthistorical hermeneutic relation to the films Brooks later made based on the other two "trailers" at the end of *History of the World, Part I*. The first trailer, *Hitler on Ice,* anticipates his 1983 remake of Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be* (1942). Even more directly, the third and last trailer, for *Jews in Space,* anticipates Brooks's *Spaceballs* (1987); moreover, the end credits of *History of the World, Part I,* parody the scrolling type in the opening prologue of *Star Wars*, of which *Spaceballs* will be a direct parody.[22] *The Vikings'* cinematic paratext remains beyond the reach of Brooks's parodic range, however.

But Wait, There's More on the Flip

This hermeneutics of the flip sides of history throws light, perhaps obscurely, on the ways in which academic fantasies about the Bayeux Tapestry, like movie medievalism, draw analogies between the Tapestry and film. Both cinema and scholarship share a fascination with seeing both sides of the Tapestry. Notably, many scholars include reproductions of the reverse side of a panel of the Tapestry.[23] Is it too much of a stretch to say that photographs of reverse sides of Tapestry panels in books, passed over without comment, or similar photographs showing holes, tears and patches in the Tapestry panels, also passed over without comment, constitute a repression on which Bayeux Tapestry scholarship depends? That scholars discuss an imagined, ideal Tapestry that does not exist and probably never did—but that various print and digital reproductions are thought to more or less nearly approximate? That claims that the Tapestry's margins are subversive depend on an imagined Tapestry of paranoid coherence, in which everything means something? That the "reel" Bayeux Tapestry shown being made or fully restored and delivered to the spectator in various films is not all that different from fantasies about the "real" Tapestry academics believe the archival research can deliver?

Consider two analogies we may draw more precisely: between scholars and film, on the one hand, and between the scholar and the film fan. Bayeux Tapestry scholars draw a series of analogies between the Tapestry and older and newer media in order to understand what the "original" Tapestry was really like, what it meant, how it was displayed, performed, and so on. Movie medievalism similarly depends on analogies. The Bayeux Tapestry, for example, provides a framing cinematic analogue that shows us what the Middle Ages must have been like. The assumption in both cases is that if we get the right analogy, we will be closer to the past as it was, closer not to the genuine Bayeux Tapestry in its present state but to its restored/original state as we imagine it to have been.

As the history of Bayeux Tapestry scholarship shows, the reverse is the case. Analogues have multiplied. One could easily extend analogies between the Bayeux Tapestry and film even further than they have been thus far.[24] The last panel of the

Tapestry, what Martin Foys refers to as its "final footage" ("All's Well," 57), is bifurcated by a tree branch much like a split screen. The writing on the Tapestry would be the equivalent of voice–over film narrative; the Tapestry borders would be the equivalent of DVD audiocommentary. Richard Brilliant surmises that a jongleur would have read the text of the Tapestry as part of a theatrical and musical performance. If the Bayeux Tapestry was rolled up around a spindle turned by a winch, we may conclude that the Tapestry resembles a celluloid film rolled up on a spool.[25] And if we follow scholars who think that the Bayeux Tapestry was not necessarily displayed permanently in one place but stored on a portable roll that was carried from place to place, the Bayeux Tapestry resembles a film that is delivered to several theaters (Foys, "All's Well," 67). Similarly, threading the needle is like threading the film reel in the camera projector, and the eye of the needle that embroidered the Bayeux Tapestry resembles the eye of the camera, or camera lens. And if the Bayeux Tapestry was sometimes viewed not all at once but in scenes as the Tapestry was rolled forwards or backwards, it resembles the fast–forward and reverse options available for viewing film on video and DVD.

The digitalization of film has made the analogy between film and the Bayeux Tapestry even tighter. Hence the difference Suzanne Lewis notes between celluloid film and the Bayeux Tapestry in terms of narrative no longer obtains. According to Lewis (*Rhetoric,* 43): "Like film, the Bayeux Tapestry insinuates exposition and description into the same line of running narrative. But description [...] interrupts and freezes the time line of the story. [...] Whereas events move too fast in cinema to permit the contemplation of visual detail, such narrative pressure is absent in the Bayeux Tapestry." DVD makes it possible to interrupt, freeze, and "read" the film's running narrative the same way Lewis says the Tapestry does. If the Bayeux Tapestry may reasonably be described as protocinematic, film citations of it on DVD may be just as reasonably described as "retrotextual." The point, however, is that the analogies between the Bayeux Tapestry and film not only keep expanding uncannily because film and media change (from celluloid to digital) but will never stop doing so.

The scholar and the film fan share analogous assumptions about their research. The scholar thinks that if she raids the right archive or raids the archive in the right way, or if he gets a better analogy that otherwise is eluding her grasp, then he will find the ground that will enable her to arrive at a correct interpretation of the complete, original Tapestry. Similarly, the film fan focuses on paratextual material others may regard as trivial such as "making of" documentaries, DVD audiocommentaries, film magazine reviews, cast interviews, and so on, thinking that by getting behind the scenes into the film's production history he will get to the foundation that will ground a complete interpretation of the film. The assumption in each case is that if one finds all the pieces, the mosaic will finally fall into place and one will see the total picture of the past in high resolution. Yet in both cases the desire for wholeness masks a desire for fragmentation. What is really desired is another item to collect, whether it be a paratextual item on a DVD or a primary document in an archive. The fan and scholar are both blind to the way the archive and the film

paratext (more precisely, the epitext, or materials not in the film itself, such as reviews, DVD extras, and so on) set up a desire for completeness that produces a counter–effect of what Adorno calls atomistic listening—or viewing ("On the Fetish Character," 41). The drive to restore the Bayeux Tapestry, and by extension the medieval past, is driven by holes and by the sewn patches which double as veils, making our inquiring scholarly and cinematic minds want to know what lies behind the scene but masking our various fragmentations of the Bayeux Tapestry as film and in film with the fantasy that we can or have seen it all and sewn it up.

Notes

Parts of this paper were presented at the "Getting Medieval on Film and Media" conference organized by Richard Burt and held at the University of Florida, March 11–12, 2005; the NEH seminar on the Bayeux Tapestry held at Yale University, July and August, 2005; the "Middle Ages on Film" conference held at St. Andrews University, July 7–9 2005; the annual SEMA Conference held at Daytona, Florida, October, 2005; the University of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, January 28, 2006; and the New College Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Sarasota, Florida , held March 9–11, 2006. I would like to thank Martin K. Foys for his many generous exchanges about the Bayeux Tapestry.

[1] Martin K. Foys's work is particularly notable. On silent film and sound film, see Gerald Noxon, 29-35; Lucien Musset, 26-28; J. Bard McNulty, 64-65.

[2] Katherine Biddick, 72, briefly mentions the opening title sequence of *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*.

[3] I thank Martin K. Foys for calling my attention to *Is Paris Burning?* and James Paxson for calling my attention to *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*. For screen captures of the citations of the Bayeux Tapestry in the films to which I refer, see http://www.clas.ufl edu/~rburt/middleagesonfilm/bayeux1.html.The Bayeux Tapestry also appears in several film and television documentaries (see the filmography and also Schama's companion book to his documentary series, *A History of Britain*, 85–97). Space does not permit a detailed account of these documen taries. Suffice it to say that they typically contain a mix of footage from B movies; black and white silent films; contemporary reenactments with no dialogue; medieval images, nineteenth-century commemorative statues; modern drawings; location shots of cathedrals, museums, grave sites and battlegrounds; and montage sequences using panels of the Bayeux Tapestry, usually accompanied by music and sound effects. The Tapestry is treated as an historical, transparent document and also made into a kind of film through the addition of sound effects and music. I have not seen a made-for-television film that may cite the Bayeux Tapestry: *Blood Royal: William the Conqueror* (1990).

[4] As David Hill notes, "none of the modern editions of the Bayeux Tapestry distinguishes between original and restoration" (384). The establishment of the "text," Hill points, can only be done with recourse to a supplement of reproductions of the Tapestry: drawings, facsimiles, and photographs. Yet even this textual model, based on the notion of an original, is called into question by recent scholarship which, as Martin K. Foys comments, views the Tapestry "not so much as a text but as a matrix of discursive elements ... an intersection of word, image, space, sound, border, audience, and monument.... The Tapestry is understood to operate through interwoven layers of multimedia expression, received across the physical space of display and possibly through the oral performance of an interlocutor. Written texts still inform and function within the narrative of the Tapestry, but in such a model, they do not dominate" (Above the Word," 94-95).

[5] The Tapestry is displayed in a darkened space and lit by bulbs just above the top border, giving the

Tapestry a yellow hue. Tellingly, scholars do not agree on what is the best reproduction of the Tapestry: photographs in books, Martin Foys's CD-ROM edition, or the one-seventh-size, fold-out panorama designed by Roland Lefranc and sold at the Centre Guillame le Conquérant. Gale R. Owen-Crocker cites the fold-out as superior to book reproductions like those in David M. Wilson's *Bayeux Tapestry*. Yet Foys ("All's Well") regards his CD-ROM edition as superior to Wilson's photographs, which are much larger than the CD images when viewed at the proper resolution.

[6] The parallels between the Bayeux Tapestry and the *Song of Roland* and between the Tapestry and *El poema de mio Cid* have been noted by Richard Brilliant, C. R. Dodwell, and Shirley Brown ("Bayeux Tapestry," "Bear," 153-58). Frank Cassenti's film *La chanson de Roland* includes jongleurs who tell the story of Roland with illustrations from the Tapestry as their backdrop.

[7] The comparison is made by Richard Jones in the History Channel documentary narrated by Captain Dale Dyer, *The Conquerors: William the Conqueror*.

[8] Jerome McGann remarks that "literary works ... are not channels of transmission, they are particular forms of transmissive interaction" (12). Celluloid film, like video, degrades each time it is projected, and film prints may of course even break. This damage in turn calls forth repairs such as splicing and even restoration of damaged film prints with an eye to release on DVD.

[9] The Bayeux Tapestry was also the model for a Bayer Tapestry telling the history of the corporation famous for its aspirin, and a copy decorated a Connecticut Burger King restaurant. Gift shops sell ties and other items using the Tapestry.

[10] On page 23 of the *Ivanhoe* comic book, based on Walter Scott's novel, a wall hanging seen in a room of the castle (when de Bracy corners Rowena) is taken from parts of the Bayeux Tapestry, here taking the form of a scroll-like wall hanging. The Bayeux Tapestry appears in the context of a thinly veiled threat of rape (in this case, coerced marriage), as it often does in film.

[11] See Donald Sasson; Steven Biel; and Leo Steinberg. See also the museum scene in which the Joker (Jack Nicholson) spray-paints canonical paintings in *Batman* (dir. Tim Burton, 1989).

[12] The Bayeux Tapestry has also frequently been compared to a cartoon and comic strip. See J. Anderson; S. McCloud; D. Wilson, 17-18; G. Bond, 20n; L. Musset, 26-28; and J. B. McNulty, 64-65.

[13] Scholars remain divided over whether this knight is Harold or whether the fallen knight cut by a sword in his thigh is Harold, or both are Harold.

[14] Interestingly, only the Tapestry is colorized in this manner. As the title sequence continues, we see Blackadder in similarly transgressive and comic historical settings, moving through media, from Tapestry to manuscript painting (the next animated sequence is based on a manuscript painting from a French treatise on monasticism entitled *La Sainte Abbaye*) to photograph. But in each case, the "simulation" is much closer to the "original."

[15] For a brief discussion of Frank Cassenti's *La chanson de Roland*, see François Amy de la Bretèque. The unusual, somewhat atonal music on the soundtrack further departs from the cinematic conventions of the Hollywood film epic. Cassenti compares himself to one of William's messengers rather than to a knight in battle or a political or religious figure of authority.

[16] The *Bedknobs* title sequence might thus be said to enact an aspect of the Tapestry itself. The Tapestry's top and bottom borders are not synchronized, nor do they run consistently across the Tapestry. The top border is sometimes invaded (Gale Owen-Crocker, 262). Owen-Crocker notes that "[i]in a final touch of grim humour, little dragons flee through the battlefield, scuttling under the horses' hooves and clinging to a standard [...] escaping their long confinement in a border which is no longer safe" (271-72).

[17] The female film star is also out in front. Lansbury gets the first credit, even before the director.

[18] Perhaps the most ambiguous aspect of *The Vikings'* animated cartoon prologue is Orson Welles's voice-over narration. Michael Anderegg comments on the way Welles's voice and line delivery exceed any single, stable signification:

> Welles' easily recognizable, highly authoritative manner of speaking allowed him to be featured in films and television, as well in the more obvious media of radio and sound recordings, as a voice only, to such an extent that "narrated by Orson Welles" became, depending on the context and occasion, a promise of a variety of specific moods or tones: importance, significance, seriousness; mystery, weirdness, the strange; false seriousness, comic portentousness, camp. [...] But whether employed straight or for the purposes of parody, each instance of nar-

> ration depends for its effect on the authority of Welles' voice, its ability to transcend the mere materiality of the spoken word, to invest words with an excess of meaning, with, quite precisely, resonance in both its acoustic and metaphoric sense. (160)

[19] On UPA, see Michael Barrier, *Hollywood Cartoons*, 510-37; 543-44; 563-65.

[20] Fleischer made his own historical film parody, *The Prince and the Pauper* (1978), clearly linked on the DVD cover to Richard Lester's brilliant *The Three Musketeers* (1975), and using three stars from those films, Oliver Reed, Charlton Heston, and Raquel Welch.

[21] Welles is perhaps also meant to be heard as parodying the voice-over narration he did in *King of Kings* (dir. Nicholas Ray, 1961).

[22] Brooks's citation of *The Vikings* may have something to do with his own relation to the schlock of the Middle Ages (a period not included in *The History of the World, Part I*). He could just as easily have had a trailer for *A Jewish Viking Funeral*. Richard Fleischer, Kirk Douglas, and Tony Curtis are all Jewish. Along related lines, Fleischer's casting of Cedric Connor as Sandpiper, a black, deaf and dumb slave, who is a friend of fellow slave Eric (Tony Curtis), anticipates echoes of American slavery and civil rights in Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1960). The race theme of *The Vikings* is made more explicit in *Erik, the Viking*, by Terry Jones's casting of Eartha Kitt as the soothsayer woman; all these films anticipate the African-American rappers as Merry Men in Brooks's *Robin Hood, Men in Tights*. Douglas was working with Kubrick on *Paths of Glory* in 1957, and Kubrick and Douglas forced Fleischer to let the screenwriter of *Paths of Glory*, Calder Willingham, completely rewrite the dialogue in Fleischer's screenplay for *The Vikings* (Fleischer, *Just Tell Me*, 143).

[23] For examples of reproductions of reverse sides of panels from the Bayeux Tapestry, see Bond, 24; Bernstein, 80-81; Wilson, 196; and *The Bayeux Tapestry,* ed. Pierre Bouet et al., 309. On the back side of the Tapestry, see Isabelle Bédat and Béatrice Girault-Kurtzeman, and Owen-Crocker, 259.

[24] The lookout figures and spies in the Bayeux Tapestry could also be viewed as anticipatory cameramen or spectators.

[25] The Bayeux Tapestry was stored on such a spindle by 1818 (Foys, "Above the Word," 87-88). It may have been stored in a box and either folded or rolled up; in the latter case the Tapestry resembles a reel in film canister. The Bayeux Tapestry is presently capable of being rolled up in minutes in case of fire at the Centre Guillame le Conquérant. The connection between film roll and Bayeux Tapestry is strengthened by the probability that the Norman designer created a cartoon or storyboard of the entire work which could be unrolled to guide the embroiderers (Owen-Crocker).

Works Cited

Amy de la Bretèque, François. *L'imaginaire médiéval dans le cinéma occidental*. Paris: Champion, 2004.

Adorno, Theodor. "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening." *The Culture Industry*. J. M. Bernstein. Ed. New York: Routledge, 1991. 26-52.

Anderegg, Michael. *Orson Welles, Shakespeare, and Popular Culture*. New York: Columbia UP, 1999.

Anderson, John D. "The Bayeux Tapestry: A 900-Year-Old Latin Cartoon." *Classical Journal* 81 (1986): 253-57.

Barrier, Michael. *Hollywood Cartoons*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History. Pierre Bouet, Brian Levy and François Neveux. Eds. Caen: PU de Caen. 83-109.

Bédat, Isabelle and Béatrice Girault-Kurtzeman, "The Technical Study of the Bayeux Tapestry." *Bayeux Tapestry*. 83-108. David J. Bernstein, *The Mysteries of the Bayeux Tapestry*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987.

Biel, Steven. *American Gothic: A Life of America's Most Famous Painting*. New York: Norton, 2005.

Bitel, Lisa M. "*The Sorceress* as an Interpretive Tool in Medieval History Classes." *Medieval Feminist Newsletter*. 1 (2000): 52-56.

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

Bond, Gerald A. *The Loving Subject: Desire, Eloquence, and Power in Romanesque France*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1995.

Brilliant, Richard. "The Bayeux Tapestry: A Stripped Narrative for Their Eyes and Ears." *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry* 7.2 (1991): 98-126.

Brown, Shirley Ann. "The Bayeux Tapestry and the *Song of Roland*." *Olifant* 6 (1979): 339-59.
—. "Bear, Harold, and the Tapestry." *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*. Gale R. Owen-Crocker. Ed. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2005. 149-60; at 153-58.
Burt, Richard. "Border Skirmishes: Weaving Around the Bayeux Tapestry and Cinema in *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves* and *El Cid*." *Medieval Film*. Anke Bernau and Bettina Bildhauer. Eds. Manchester: Manchester UP, forthcoming.
Dodwell, C .R. "The Bayeux Tapestry and the French Secular Epic." *Burlington Magazine* 108 (1966): 549-60.
Esther, Leslie. *Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory and the Avant-garde*. London: Verso, 2002.
Fleischer, Richard. *Just Tell Me When to Cry: A Memoir*. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1993.
Fleischer, Richard. *Out of the Inkwell: Max Fleischer and the Animation Revolution*. Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 2005.
Foys, Martin K. 1999. "Above the Word, Beyond the Page: The Past and Present Dilemma of Bayeux Tapestry Scholarship." *Envoi* 8.3 (1999): 87-103.
—. "Hypertextile Scholarship: Digitally Editing the Bayeux Tapestry." *Documentary Editing* 23 (2001): 34-43.
—. *The Digital Edition of the Bayeux Tapestry*. Leicester, UK: Scholarly Digital Editions, 2003.
—. "All's Well that Ends: Closure, Hypertext, and the Missing End of the Bayeux Tapestry." *Exemplaria* 15 (2003): 39-72.
Gillmor, C. M. "Naval Logistics of the Cross-Channel Operation, 1066." *The Battle of Hastings: Sources and Interpretations*. Stephen Morilli. Ed. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 1996. 114-128.
Grape, Wolfgang. *The Bayeux Tapestry, Monument to a Norman Triumph*. Munich: Prestel, 1994.
Groys, Boris. "Iconoclasm as an Artistic Device / Iconoclastic Strategies in Film." *Iconoclash*. 282-95.
Iconoclash: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel. Ed. Cambridge: MIT, 2002.
Irvin, Rea (illustrator). *New Yorker* (cover). 15 July 1944.
Koerner, Joseph. "The Icon as Iconoclash." *Iconoclash*. 64-213.
Latour, Bruno. "What is Iconoclash? Or Is There a World Beyond Image Wars?" *Iconoclash*. 14-27.
Lefranc, Roland (designer). *La Tapisserie de Bayeux* (1/7-size fold-out panorama). Bayeux: Ville de Bayeux, n/d.
Lewis, Suzanne. *The Rhetoric of Power in the Bayeux Tapestry*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. New York: Perennial Currents, 1986.
McGann, Jerome. *The Textual Condition*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991.
McNulty, J. Bard. *Visual Meaning in the Bayeux Tapestry: Problems and Solutions in Picturing History*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2003.
Musset, Lucien. *The Bayeux Tapestry*. Richard Rex, trans. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2005. 26-28.
Noxon, Gerald. "The Bayeux Tapestry." *Cinema Journal* 7 (1967): 29-35.
Owen-Crocker, Gale R. "The Bayeux 'Tapestry': Invisible Seams and Visible Boundaries." *Anglo-Saxon England* 31 (2002): 257-73.
Parisse, Michel. *The Bayeux Tapestry*. William Courtney, trans. Paris: Denoel, 1983.
Poncet, Marie-Thérèse. *Étude comparative des illustrations du Moyen Âge et des dessins animés*. Paris: Nizet, 1952.
—. *L'esthétique du dessin animé*. Paris: Nizet, 1952.
Prah-Perochon, Anne. "Le film animé de la tapisserie de Bayeux." *Stanford French Review* l.3 (1977): 339-65.
Sasson, Donald. *Becoming Mona Lisa: The Making of a Global Icon*. New York: Harcourt, 2001.
Schama, Simon. *A History of Britain: At the Edge of the World? 3000 BC-AD 1603*. New York: Hyperion, 2000.
Scott, Keith. *The Moose That Roared: The Story of Jay Ward, Bill Scott, a Flying Squirrel, and a Talking Moose*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000.
Scott, Walter. *Ivanhoe* (adaptation). Classics Illustrated #2 (January, 1957). Illus. Norman Nodel. Adapter and cover artist unidentified.
Steinberg, Leo. *Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper*. Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2001.
Verrier, Jean. *La broderie de Bayeux dite Tapisserie de la reine Mathilde: Réproduction intégrale au cinequiéme de l'original et 8 planches en couleurs*. Paris: Éditions Tels, 1946.
Wace Brulé. *Master Wace his Chronicles of the Norman Conquest from the Roman de Rou*. Edgar Taylor, Esq., trans. F.S.A. London: William Pickering, 1837.
Wilson, David M. *The Bayeux Tapestry*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1985.

Filmography

American Museum of Natural History. *Bayeux Tapestry* (documentary). CBS, USA, 1956. 30 min.
Badou, Marcel, dir.. *The Battle of Hastings: 1066* (documentary). France, Pathé, 1966. 36 min.
Barjol, Jean-Michel, dir. *Guillame le Conquérant* (documentary), France, 1986. 52 mins.
Brooks, Mel, dir. *History of the World, Part I*. USA, 1981. 92 min.
—. *To Be or Not to Be*. USA, 1983. 107 min.
—. *Spaceballs*. USA, 1987. 96 min.
Cassenti, Frank, dir. *La chanson de Roland*. France, 1978. 110 min.
Clair, René, dir.. *I Married a Witch*. USA, 1942. 77 min.
Clément, René, dir. *Is Paris Burning?* France/USA, 1966. 173 min.
Fleischer, Richard, dir. *The Vikings*. USA, 1958. 116 min.
Freeston, Jeremy, dir. *William the Conqueror*. UK. Cromwell Productions. 1996. 50 mins.
Grangier, Gilles and Sergiu Nicolaescu, dir. *Cucerirea Angliei / Guillaume le conquérant*. Romania/France, 1982. 180 mins. TV miniseries.
Jafelice, Raymond, dir. *Brian Jacques' Redwall*. UK, 2001. 84 mins.
Jefferies, Peter, dir. *Blood Royal: William the Conqueror*. Australia/Canada/France/UK, 1990. TV movie.
Jones, Terry. *Erik, the Viking*. UK, 1989. 75 mins. Director's Son's Cut DVD 116 mins.
Kubrick, Stanley, dir. *Spartacus*. USA, 1960. 184 min (premiere version); 198 min (1991 restored DVD version).
—. *Paths of Glory*. USA,1957. 87 mins.
Leenhardt, Roger and Jean Pierre Vivet, dir. *La conquête de l'Angleterre* (documentary). France, 1955. 20 min. *The Norman Conquest of England, as Seen Through the Bayeux Tapestries*. 1961.
Lester, Richard, dir. *The Three Musketeers*. USA / UK, 1975.103 mins.
Lubitsch, Ernst, dir. *To Be or Not to Be*. USA, 1942. 99 min.
Lucas, George, dir. S*tar Wars*. USA, 1980. 121 min.
Mann, Anthony, dir. *El Cid*. Italy/USA, 1961. *182 min.*
Nock, Andrew, dir. "William the Conqueror." *The Conquerors* (documentary TV series). USA, History Channel, 2005. 60 min.
Reynolds, Kevin, dir. *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*. USA, 1991. 143 min.
Rivière, Jean-Claude, dir. *Guillaume le Conquérant* (TV documentary). France, Les Films Normands, 1987. 78 mins.
Schama, Simon (writer). "Conquest! (Circa 1000-1087)." *A History of Britain* (documentary TV series). UK, BBC Television, 2000.
Stevenson, Robert, dir. *Bedknobs And Broomsticks*. USA, 1971. 117min.
Weiland, Paul, dir. *Blackadder: Back and Forth*. UK, 1999. 33 min. Made for TV.
Yorkin, Bud, dir. *Start the Revolution Without Me*. USA, 1970. 90 min.
Zeffirelli, Franco, dir. *Hamlet*. USA/UK/France, 1990. 130 min.

Notes on Contributor

Richard Burt (rburt@english.ufl.edu) is Professor of English and Film and Media Studies at the University of Florida. He is the author of *Licensed by Authority: Ben Jonson and the Discourses of Censorship* (Cornell UP, 1993), *Unspeakable ShaXXXspeares: Queer Theory and American Kiddie Culture* (St. Martin's, 1999), and *Medieval and Early Modern Film and Media* (forthcoming Palgrave, 2008). Burt has also published essays on medieval film in a special issue of the French journal *Babel* N° 15 (Spring 2007) on "Le Moyen Age mise-en-scène: perspectives contemporaines" and *Medieval Film*, ed. Anke Bernau and Bettina Bildhauer (Manchester UP, 2007).