

Spring 2014

# Star Trek as an Agent of Cultural Reproduction

Jacob H. Pullis

*Trinity College, [jakepullis@gmail.com](mailto:jakepullis@gmail.com)*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses>

---

## Recommended Citation

Pullis, Jacob H., "Star Trek as an Agent of Cultural Reproduction". Senior Theses, Trinity College, Hartford, CT 2014.  
Trinity College Digital Repository, <http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/397>

***Star Trek* as an Agent of Cultural Reproduction**

Jake Pullis '14

Sociology Senior Thesis 2014

Adviser: Johnny E. Williams

## Introduction

On Stardate 1709.2 (calendar year 2265), the USS Enterprise NCC-1701, a Federation starship captained by James Tiberius Kirk, faced one of the most powerful adversaries it would encounter on its five year mission. An unknown threat had destroyed several outposts along the border separating the Federation, a vast alliance of humans and friendly alien species in our quadrant of the galaxy, and the Romulan Star Empire, a seldom-seen civilization of xenophobic warriors. Captain Kirk and the Enterprise, having been ordered to survey the destruction and root out its cause, finds itself facing an invisible enemy. A ship, rendered imperceptible both to ship's sensors and the naked eye, was the cause of the outposts' destruction. Speculating that the unseen enemy might be Romulans, Kirk, as he often does on missions, seeks information from his crew. The ship's helmsman is quick to inform the captain of the ruthless and underhanded nature of the Romulans. As no human had laid eyes on a Romulan in over a hundred years, Kirk remarks that he was not aware that history was the helmsman's specialty. The young officer replies that his relatives had fought in the most recent war against the Romulans and were killed in action by their feckless enemies. The crew sits uneasy.

After a series of scientific tests to determine the location of the Romulan ship by tracing particle emissions, the Enterprise's science officer, Mr. Spock, is able to reverse-engineer a video feed into the enemy ship, and the Romulans become visible to the crew. To everyone's surprise, their brows are prominent and their ears are pointed, exactly like Mr. Spock's. The helmsman comments that he should have no trouble interpreting their signals and surmising their combat strategy, implying that Spock is a spy. Kirk reprimands the crewman for his bigotry, but continues to rely on his expertise to make the next move. After conferring with his senior officers, Kirk decides to attack the vessel. After a long and arduous battle that took the Enterprise

into Romulan territory, Kirk and his crew subdue the Romulan ship. When Kirk offers to rescue the surviving crew of the ship before its destruction, the Romulan commander refuses, explaining that it is not possible under Romulan tradition. However, before initiating his ship's self-destruct mechanism, he says, "I regret that we meet in this way. You and I are of a kind. In another reality, I could have called you friend." The Enterprise warps back toward Federation space, confident in its safety and the safety of its outposts, ready to take on whatever threat the next day might bring. (McEveety 1966).

While the Enterprise took on an unseen enemy in far off space three hundred years in the future, its adventure aired on television for the viewing pleasure of Americans in December of 1966. The sixties were an era of uncertainty and change in the United States, both because domestic social disruptions such as the Civil Rights Movement were challenging the dominant cultural hegemony and because American foreign policy blunders such as the Vietnam War caused the American public to question their leadership. Some months before the airing of "Balance of Terror," the episode of *Star Trek: The Original Series* (then just called *Star Trek*) described above, Communist China conducted its third nuclear test (Kristensen 2006), while at the same time America's own military was rolling out a new line of stealth planes (Military Factory 2014). Just four short years past the Cuban Missile Crisis, the US's island neighbor was still considered a border territory, and tensions remained high with Fidel Castro. The House Un-American Activities Committee was still heavily relied upon by the government to weed out "domestic threats," and the shadow of McCarthyism still loomed heavily over a country that had pushed through the first wave of the Red Scare without leaving behind its vitriolic anti-communist sentiment. All that said, many protested proxy-disputes against the USSR in third-party nations, and rallies against American involvement in Vietnam were attended by common

people and high-profile activists alike. A threat seemed to hang over a nation in the midst of social upheaval, while at the same time the American public struggled desperately to hang on to the values it had held so dear since the end of the Second World War. The Civil Rights movement was in full swing, and issues such as school busing and economic injustice broadcast on the news forced people to form a position on racial tension in the US. This was 1966 in reality.

Though the events of Stardate 2265 and 1966 occurred in vastly different contexts, one in the fictional future utopia of a California man's imagination on national television, and the other in the lived experiences of a population of people in their present reality, these two images of life reflect one another. "Balance of Terror" was produced and aired in 1966, and was shaped by prevailing events and ideologies of the time. In turn, because "Balance of Terror" was viewed in 1966, the people of 1966 (and '67, '68, '69, and later years once the show ran reruns) who viewed this episode of this television series at this point in time understood and made sense of the show through a cultural understanding based in that year. The Romulan "cloaking device" may very well have been an allegorical representation of the Chinese nuclear warhead, or even the American stealth plane fallen into the wrong hands. The attack on Federation outposts could have been understood as metaphors for Russia's placement of missiles in Cuba. The helmsman's insinuation that Spock might be a traitor because of his resemblance to the Romulans is quite certainly reminiscent of McCarthyism. The Romulan ship's captain's parting speech is an indictment of conflict itself, a ringing endorsement of those who might protest the meaningless violence of unnecessary wars. I give these vignettes seemingly out of order to show that while yes, "Balance of Terror" is a work of entertainment created by biased individuals, it is equally influential in viewers' thinking about their everyday lives.

I am a lifelong fan of the *Star Trek* Franchise. When I was old enough to understand what I was watching on the television screen, *Star Trek: Voyager* was in its original airing (*Voyager* ran from 1995-2001), and when I had had my fill of that series I moved on to others in the franchise. Science fiction's ability to craft human narratives removed from their real world social contexts has always fascinated me. In the years after *Star Trek: Enterprise* ended its run and for the first time in eighteen years no new *Trek* installment was in sight, I began to see the value in older episodes, not only for their timeless (and in many cases not so timeless) stories, but also for what they told me about the time period in which they were produced. While viewing earlier *Trek* series, I realized social issues informed plots, dialogue, costumes, themes, and the construction of characters. Within media, texts reflect reality and in turn, people, through consumption of this media, are shaped by this reflection and subsequently influence the construction of social reality. In this thesis, I examine the historical significance of *Star Trek* as an agent of American cultural reproduction in an effort to understand how *Star Trek* produced and embodies American ideology and culture. I use Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory to consider how cultural and ideological themes are exhibited throughout two different installments of the *Star Trek* franchise. Cultural reproduction suggests that cultural artifacts-such as television programs- are both shaped by the dominant culture and in turn influence the people comprising society who will socialize others into the reflected social understanding of those artifacts. This is a useful tool for my paper because I intend to show that *Star Trek* as a franchise is not removed from cultural norms and ideologies, but instead embodies them and showcases those which are deemed most important at the time of production. From these episodes people receive guidance in how they come to think about such issues.

## Methodology

Newcomb and Hirsch (1983) suggest that since television as a media platform is constrained by time, television programs do not require a very “deep reading” to reveal themes. Specifically, they argue that the “complexities of image, style, resonance, narrativity, history, metaphor, and so on are reduced in favor of that content which can be more precisely, some may say more objectively, described” (1983:561). This dynamic is apparent in the formulaic narrative structure exhibited by many television shows. For instance, if an episode of a children’s show were about peer pressure, we would expect a central or supporting character in that show to be offered participation in some unsavory substance or activity within a short while of the opening credits. The character will spend much of the episode pondering his or her choice, and within a few minutes of the end of the time slot he or she will make a decision, leading to a monologue in which the character details the merit of his or her decision and likely the other characters are swayed by this speech. Assuming that this formulaic model for television scripts may apply to shows of a more mature audience (we can posit that, for the most part, *Star Trek* viewers are not those who need a lesson on peer pressure), it should be simple to draw clear and concise themes from an engaged viewing of an episode. To this end, my methodology for investigating *Star Trek* as reproductive of American culture involves a “reading” of each episode as a cultural text in which I can examine the narrative as a script for cultural socialization. Drawing on historical contexts of each episode, I will explore how themes and special characters present in these episodes reflects and reproduces cultural norms and understandings.

My original intent was to analyze every episode of every *Trek* installment across the five live-action television series. This plan would have required nearly 500 hours of viewing the nearly 700 episodes of *Trek*. Giving that this was not a feasible option, I decided to narrow the

scope of my study. After *Star Trek: The Original Series* had finished its initial airing in 1969, it would be nearly twenty years before another live-action installment in the franchise would air. During this run of this next series, Gene Roddenberry died, and his golden rule for script writing, that “humans get along,” died with him. I examine only *The Original Series* and *The Next Generation* because the “humans get along” rule lends itself more readily to episode plots with incredibly heavy-handed social commentary, easily analyzed. In total, these two series number around 250 episodes, and I have viewed all of these.

During the course of my research I practiced content analysis to gather data on individual episodes. Rather than attempt to fit the themes and dialogue observed in episodes to specific theories ahead of time, I used a grounded approach to my research and collected data before attempting to match it to historical context. This allowed me to decide for myself what themes were important to the series without the bias of foresight and context. In my viewing of each episode I took care to make note of themes apparent in dialogue, costume design, casting, and overall plot devices. For example, if a plot revolved around the Federation’s concern that the Klingons were planning to annex a third-party planet (the plot of TOS 2x19, “A Private Little War”), I would make a notation for that episode that there existed in the plot a theme of proxy wars and perhaps the Domino Effect. Typically, episodes of *The Original Series* were more easily identifiable, as their plots reflected a cultural point in time where people were more outspoken. This heavy-handed allegory in plot devices allowed for a careful viewing of the episodes without regard to a pre-developed idea of what themes might be important. The three overarching themes of cultural reproduction identified and analyzed more thoroughly for *The Original Series* were race, gender, and Cold War politics, which itself includes multiple facets ranging from McCarthyism (as was the case in the opening example) to proxy wars to hippie

protests. The themes identified for *The Next Generation* were gender and sexuality. The themes emerging from the data are presented within the paper as a series of episode vignettes followed by analysis, both of the content of the episodes through multiple sociological lenses (chiefly Marxist theory and Goffman's dramaturgical concept) and also of the context of the episodes in American history. Through this approach to the viewing of individual episodes I intend to describe the "meaning" of the episodes (in a sociological sense, such that the reader can see socially constructed dynamics at play within these episodes) and attempt to explain both how those meanings came about as a product of their time and also how the meanings may have shaped their time. This is what would be expected from a cultural reproduction perspective, as context impacts content and content in turn influences viewers. The themes I discovered in the data reflect important social upheavals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and their presentation within the text likely helped to shape the opinions of certain viewers on those upheavals.

### **Review of Literature, Part 1: Viewing Television**

Within the field of media analysis, the study of television has existed for several decades as an extension literature examining cultural artifacts as reflectors and producers of social norms and ideologies. Television exists as a unique form of media. Because it is pre-filmed, writers and directors have more control over what occurs on screen than do playwrights, but because it is confined to twenty-one or forty-four minute segments (in most broadcast and cable television series these are the standard lengths of television episodes) there is not enough time to develop nuanced narratives within a given episode. In the past two decades, writers and directors of television series have worked to raise the cultural quality of their work by increasing the quality of their writing and establishing a nuanced and complex narrative over the course of several episodes, called "plot arcs." However, during the production of the first and second *Star Trek*

series this technique was not available. David Barker describes the basic function of television analysis as an attempt to “decode” messages in television texts, where one examines how producers engender in media meaning and audiences decode it (1985:169). Critical media literacy helps television viewers to deconstruct such stylistic choices as camera space and lighting design on the apparent themes within the text.

In addition, television literacy enhances viewers’ awareness of symbols within the text rather than through the projection of the lens (used here literally). Herman Gray presents an argument that representations of blackness in popular American media are shaped by the ability of a small number of black television creators in the industry who counter negative presentations of African Americans (Gray 1995:283-285). He contends that subgenres of television, such as family sit-coms, have established a new way of treating the black subject. For example, “in *The Cosby Show*, blackness, although an element of the show’s theme, character, and sensibility, was mediated and explicitly figured through home life, family, and middle-classness” (Gray 1995:291). The construction of the black middle-class character, whose sensibilities mirror their white counterparts in dialogue and occupation choices, was a step away from former stereotypical popular constructions, and these representations do not allow for much critical analysis of race dynamics in the popular culture. América Rodríguez builds on this by showing that even in nonfiction television (such as Spanish language news broadcasts), training in the American cultural context has led Spanish speaking broadcasters to reinforce the constructed “U.S. Latino panethnicity” (Rodríguez 1996:331). By this Rodríguez means that Latinos in American popular fiction (and those who represent this fiction) conform to an American racial understanding devoid of cultural nuance. Racial and ethnic subjects in television programming help to define the ways in which noncritical viewers internalize dominant ideologies by setting

the agenda for what viewers think about. When a racialized subject is represented, this media image gives Americans a script for understanding real life racialized individuals. Nancy Signorielli and Aaron Bacue wrote in a 1999 longitudinal analysis of television characters that after thirty years (their study consisted of data from the '60s through the '90s), men still outnumber women representationally as characters in television shows, but that this disparity has fallen noticeably in that time (Signorielli and Bacue 1999:535). Their analysis covered two main concepts of media characterization, "recognition" and "respect." By recognition they meant the representation of a character in the first place, which gives that character's social location visibility. By "respect," they mean the way characters are constructed in terms of age and occupation. It is one thing for a female character to exist on a television show, but it is also important to examine how old that character is in relation to male characters, as well as what her relative social location is due to her occupation. Over the years studied in their analysis, Signorielli and Bacue found that women were consistently underrepresented and under-respected, though this representational disparity dropped slightly between the '60s and the '90s in television.

Viewing television as a cultural artifact also requires consideration of the cultural context in which the text is produced. Douglas Kellner's (1995) analysis of the *Beavis and Butt-Head* animated series provides a unique perspective on how critical analysis of context shapes media texts. "In a certain sense, *Beavis and Butt-Head* is "post-modern" in that it is purely a product of media culture, with its characters, style, and content almost solely derivative from previous TV shows" (Kellner 1995:320). Kellner argues that while the series is seen by many critics, particularly those media reactionaries who blame social decay on popular media, as a sign of cultural collapse, *Beavis and Butt-Head* actually emblematic of '90s culture insofar as it speaks

to a generation of young people who were “raised” on television, whose knowledge of society comes less from socializing agents such as school and organizations and more from mass media. Though crass and violent, the show is reflective and reproductive of a cynical view of mass culture in the last decade of the twentieth century. This relates to my analysis of *Star Trek* because it gives a firm example of the way in which contemporaneous cultural understandings of reality influence and are reflected in media images.

### **Review of Literature Part 2: *Star Trek* as Science Fiction and Americana**

A former police officer and military veteran of World War II, Gene Roddenberry drew from personal experience as a civil servant as part of a larger force as inspiration for *Star Trek*. Originally titled “Wagon Train to the Stars” (Hark 2008:8), *Star Trek* has at its core always been inspired by military operations, even when Starfleet officers claim that their ships are primarily concerned with exploration and scientific curiosity. Within the universe of the show, Starfleet, the armada of interstellar ships in which most main characters serve, is the operational subordinate of The United Federation of Planets, a vast organization of intelligent species from across our portion of the galaxy based on the United Nations. Starfleet is responsible for the defense and expansion of the Federation (typically in the form of colonization of otherwise uninhabited planets, but occasionally by means of ushering new civilizations into the union), as well as exploring uncharted space. Because most Trek series (the one exception being Deep Space Nine, which is not used as a point of analysis in this paper) take place on Starfleet vessels exploring new portions of space, each installment episode allows for a different story to take place, typically in the form of allegory relating to contemporaneous events. This allegory has lent itself to a great deal of literary and scholarly analysis.

In *TV Classics: Star Trek*, Ina Rae Hark traces the lineage of Trek series from Shatner's 1960s to the prequel series *Enterprise* of the early 2000s. Hark shows the structural evolution of the show's main characters as a reflection of prevailing cultural ideologies (Hark 2008), particularly where it relates to the "three-man" leadership structure seen in many of the series. For example, in *The Original Series*, the three characters given the most screen time are Kirk, the captain, Spock, the first officer, and McCoy, the chief medical officer. While McCoy favors "gut feelings" and emotional decisions and Spock uses only logic to dictate his actions, Kirk takes a middle-of-the-road approach, a reflection of an American public polarized between extremist views who want above all else to find progress through compromise. In *The Next Generation*, Captain Picard is a more logical commander, while his first officer, Riker, is more emotional. Hark points out that while Riker sits at Picard's right hand, the seat on Picard's other side is reserved for Deanna Troi, the ship's therapist, reflecting America's psychiatry craze of the '80s and '90s (Hark 2008:63).

The role of marginalized character subjects in *Star Trek* is addressed by a number of authors approaching this subject within the franchise as both a critical and progressive projector of egalitarian values while also reinforcing the sociopolitical context's predominant ideology. The ideas of race, sex, and sexuality, which I address in this paper, are immediately clear in the diversity of the show's cast (though, not to cause too much controversy, "diverse" cast members are generally put in less significant roles) (Decherney 2001:38) (Johnson-Smith 2005:82). Daniel Bernardi, author of "*Star Trek in the 1960s: Liberal Humanism and the Production of Race*," states that "Star Trek is...re-nowned for addressing the experiences and ideologies of physiognomic and cultural difference via science-fiction metaphors like aliens" (Bernardi 1997:210). In *The Original Series*, these physiognomic metaphors were primarily intended to

address the ideology of race in American culture, while issues of sex were given less direct discussion and analyzed through the role-taking of female characters. In *The Next Generation*, both race and sexuality were given alien metaphors as explanatory devices, and sex is again left by the wayside. While depictions of racism in the form of alien-on-alien lead viewers to believe The Federation is post-racial (and this itself is unclear as while most race allegories within the series revolve around non-Federation species, many episodes dealing with Vulcans, a founding species of the Federation, deal with race as well), depictions of sex often play into sexist ideological parameters. Ann Cranny-Francis, in “Sexuality and Sex-Role Stereotyping in ‘Star Trek,’” contends that female characters are constructed within the series, as in the dominant culture, as being a non-normative class, and that it is frequently the role of Captain Kirk to “tame” otherwise uncooperative women to become more socially acceptable (Cranny-Francis 1985:275). Occasionally, rather than taming women, Kirk must prove his masculinity by protecting weak-willed women (Greven 2009:13). Only occasionally are female characters constructed in their supposedly ideal form; as intelligent, intuitive, personable, and most of all extremely beautiful. In episodes such as these multiple male characters often express interest in the female character, frequently leading to a dispute, before ultimately the female character is revealed to be corrupt, either because she has altered herself to appear more beautiful than her natural state, or because she herself is artificial, as in the case of the android woman Reena (Blair 1983:293).

Some scholars contend that *Star Trek* is not exclusively an agent of normative reinforcement. Homoerotic themes occasionally show up in Original Series in dialogue between male characters, but not in the same metaphor-producing strategy that issues of race are given (Greven 2009:6). More overtly, in *The Next Generation* (Heller 1997:231) there are a number of

episodes where characters find themselves sexually attracted to a person on the basis of a personal relationship rather than the sex-of-object-choice model of sexual orientation used to classify the hetero-homo binary in the contemporary discourse, perhaps because the popular discourse of identity politics at the time led to a desire for a future without labels. In addition to these challenges to dominant ideology, *Star Trek* can be seen as reflective of popular opinion on contemporaneous issues, such as the Vietnam War, analogized in *The Original Series* in a number of episodes chronicling the conflict between The Federation and The Klingon Empire which see-saw between condemning and condoning foreign intervention in local struggles (Franklin 1994:24). In the social turmoil of the 1960s, one author writes, *Star Trek* can be seen as an emergent American myth system seeking a utopian social change (Kapell 2010:19). This analysis is based in an understanding of the American idealized “man of action,” embodied by the starship captain, who, rather than waxing poetic on topics of social dysfunction, jumps into battle to change the world for the better.

The review of television analysis shows primarily how important subject construction is in the analysis of television, and to this end I will pay special attention to the relative status of characters whose status would be considered marginal in contemporary society. How much respect are these characters given by more normative characters? What is their position in society? Are they portrayed within the text of the episode as relatively intelligent, good-hearted, and socially adept? The review of *Star Trek* gives me a basic foundation from which I can base my own analysis. How do race and sexuality metaphors reflect normative and non-normative ideas of cultural contexts in which *Star Trek* was constructed? How are female characters treated by their fellow officers? What “current-event” allegories can I find within the texts?

## Theory

The foundation of my analysis of *Star Trek* relies on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction. Within Bourdieu's explanation of social construction, culture is a process of creating a shared reality among members of a society through its norms, traditions, ideologies, and values. Bourdieu's understanding of the reproduction of culture began in the context of education where it arbitrarily reproduces the existing class order (Fowler 1997:25). For Bourdieu, sites of social interaction reflect social ideologies (elaborating on and demonstrating the cultural ethic already dominant during the production of culture. People embody this culture and act accordingly. For example, Bourdieu describes teachers as agents of cultural reproduction because they present to their students a "cultural arbitrary" mirroring that of the dominant class, who Marx might call the bourgeoisie and Mills might call the power elite. Teachers themselves, who are not necessarily members of these groups but have some sway over the working class and very poor by virtue of their socializing position are inclined to instill in students the dominant hegemony. This occurs without the teacher's knowledge, but their curriculum maintains dominant groups' power not just in their overt lessons but in the subconscious subtext of their interactions. In *Structures, Habitus, Practices*, Bourdieu describes this process as:

The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them (1974:445).

Essentially, the "habitus" of a group, or its collective norms and values, act as structuring agents on that group's society, and these structuring agents are both created by people and help to create the ways that people act in the future, securing their position in the culture as reproducible acts.

As social artifacts, episodes of television shows can behave in the same way as the teachers in Bourdieu's school example. As storytelling devices they are written and produced by people removed from the dominated class in such a way that their general narrative will reflect the dominant class's ideology. As mass mediated sources of entertainment reaching a wide audience, television shows are able to influence people's ways of thinking. *Star Trek* is a particularly fruitful site of analysis in this regard for a number of reasons. Its place in the science-fiction genre was influenced by the social significance of the space race at the time, giving it public attention as more than simply entertainment but also as social commentary. The tumultuous social conditions of the time cause its episodes' themes to be full of topical significance, particularly in regards to social structuration. Finally, the relative diversity of its cast (discussed throughout) allowed for *Star Trek* to address topics in relation to the dominant cultural ideology. In my analysis I use cultural reproduction theory to examine how the themes present in episodes of *Star Trek* both reflect and reproduce the dominant cultural ideology.

### **Analysis: *The Original Series* and Race**

I begin my analysis of the franchise with selected plot synopses from *The Original Series*, highlighting key moments from the series along thematic lines that will best demonstrate the ideological narrative of the time of its airing. These episodes fit the themes of race, sex, and the Cold War. I begin with episodes depicting race. *The Original Series* consists of 79 episodes, of which ten feature race or racism as. These episodes exclusively use aliens as metaphors for American racial groups, but these are not the only ways in which race is portrayed in the series. The Enterprise's pilot, Lieutenant Sulu, as well as its communications officer, Lieutenant Uhura, are the series' attempt at 'diversifying' the crew. Sulu, portrayed by George Takei, is an Asian male (it is not specified what his ethnic or national origin is), and Uhura (Nichelle Nichols) is a

black female (her origin is East African, and she speaks Swahili). Of note is the fact that while throughout the entire run of the series, the character of Sulu appeared in 52 episodes and Uhura 66, neither character is given a first name during its original airing. Sulu would be given the first name Hikaru in the sixth *Star Trek* film, whereas Uhura remained nameless until 2009's reboot film. This is in contrast to every other main character, including Pavel Chekov, who did not appear in the first season of the show, who were given not only names but in many cases substantial characterization. The under-construction of these racially diverse characters robs them of the opportunity to stand out on their own merit for anything other than the color of their skin. Instead, episodes in which these characters are featured show them in exotic displays, such as Uhura singing and dancing seductively and almost enchantingly or Sulu recklessly whipping a fencing foil around. While these characters lack depth, episodes which attempt to address issues of race or racism often take the tone of progressive educator, giving Captain Kirk the opportunity to soliloquize on an alien's racial intolerance. Though the Enterprise Crew often finds fault with the racial logic of those they meet, their own dialogue reflects racially-charged ideology, which I will illustrate below. This approach to depicting race, wherein the series is able to rob racially marginalized characters of their individuality while still condemning racially prejudiced aliens, reproduces the dominant racial hierarchy by downplaying the racist ideology of the dominant class. Humans are the most prominent characters in the show, and white male humans occupy two of the three central roles. While their nonwhite subordinates are rendered invisible, or even at times exoticized, the captain's intolerance of overt racial prejudice allows him to appear accepting and without prejudice of his own.

## Let That Be Your Last Battlefield

At the opening of this episode, in the third and final season of *The Original Series*, the Enterprise is on mission to a planet plagued with a lethal virus where decontamination is necessary. The ship picks up on its sensors a stolen Starfleet vessel, moving erratically, and uses a tractor beam to pull it onboard to find its sole inhabitant, an unconscious alien. This alien is strange in that it is vertically separated down the middle of its entire body, with one half jet black and the other solid white. The intro music plays and we find the alien, as well as Kirk, Spock, and McCoy, in sickbay, where McCoy explains to the captain and first officer that there is no known way that this alien should look the way he does. Spock posits that the bi-chromatic alien is one of a kind because its biology is illogical. Despite not knowing or understanding much about the alien's physiology, McCoy attempts to treat him, and he wakes up. The captain and the alien argue for a few minutes regarding the alien's appropriation of the Federation shuttle, and then the alien introduces himself as Lokai, a being from a planet in the southernmost part of the galaxy, far from Federation-charted space. When Kirk informs Lokai that he will be tried for stealing the shuttle, Lokai retorts "you monotone aliens are all alike. First you condemn and then you attack." McCoy suggests the two calm down. Insisting that he is tired, the alien lays down and refuses to continue talking, and Kirk goes back to duty. Another vessel is detected by the ship's sensors, but it appears to be cloaked so that the crew cannot make a visual confirmation. When the ship appears to run directly at the Enterprise, the ship takes evasive action, after which they discover that the ship disintegrated, leaving behind its pilot, an alien seemingly from the same species as the first, this one named Bele, also bi-chromatic. Bele claims that he has come to take custody of Lokai, because the latter is a prisoner on their home world, guilty of treason. When Bele confronts Lokai in sick bay, Lokai shouts to Kirk that he will not agree to be taken

back to a world of “murderous oppressors.” Lokai explains that his people had been enslaved by Bele’s people, and when Bele retorts that they were freed long ago, Lokai argues that this freedom was a sham, that his people are still under the heel of their oppressors, and that for Bele’s “utopia” to come to fruition, a genocide of Lokai’s race is planned. Lokai asks Kirk for political asylum, and the captain replies that rather than taking him to his home world for imprisonment, he will take Lokai to a Starbase where he can answer for his crimes against the Federation. Bele, finding this solution unreasonable, commandeers the Enterprise via psychic control. He explains that because he has been chasing Lokai for 50,000 years, he will not yield control of the ship until his mission is complete. Lokai asks the crew to help him, and Bele mocks him. Kirk argues with Bele, not for the life of Lokai but for that of the billion people on the planet the Enterprise was ordered to save at the start of the episode. When Bele refuses again, Kirk threatens to destroy the ship. Bele responds, “you can no more destroy this ship than I can change color.” Kirk calls his bluff, and activates the ship’s self-destruct sequence. Before the sequence can complete, Bele yields, and the captain ends the order. Before agreeing to completely release control of the ship, Bele asks the captain to ensure that when their mission is over the Enterprise will bring the two aliens to their world. The captain does not agree, but control is released anyway. The crew remarks on the aliens’ hostility toward one another, which Scotty calls “disgusting.” During the ship’s trip back on course, Lokai and Bele both make claims to various crew members to convince them of their side in the conflict. Lokai claims to Chekov “you are from the planet Earth, there is no persecution on your planet. How can you understand my fear?” Chekov tells Lokai that there was persecution on Earth “once, that [he] read about it in history books.” Kirk decides to put the matter of Lokai’s custody to Starfleet command, who order the captain to deny extradition to Bele. Bele remarks to the captain and

Spock that it is obvious Lokai is of an inferior breed, to which Spock replies that the two aliens appear the same. Bele is horribly offended, and explains what the crew has been missing the whole time, that the two are bi-chromatic on opposite sides. Bele is black on the right side and white on the left, and vice versa for Lokai. Kirk and Spock realize the political conditions of the alien planet were fueled by racism. When the Enterprise completes its mission to disinfect the planet, Bele takes control of the Enterprise once again, destroying its ability to self-destruct so that Kirk cannot stop him. The ship continues on to the alien home planet. When Lokai comes to the bridge he asks for help again, saying that the crew purports to support justice but are unwilling to fight and die for it. The crew comments that Lokai seems himself to be very much alive, but they are not sure his followers are. Lokai and Bele fight hand to hand, and the Enterprise reaches the planet, where all intelligent life has been destroyed, apparently by their own fighting. The two aliens blame each other's people for the violence, and then fight again. Though Kirk implores them to give up their hatred and learn to live together, the two beam back to the planet to continue their fight. Kirk orders they leave, saying that their hatred is all they have left (Taylor 1969).

### **Analysis**

At the start of the episode we are presented with a character, Lokai, whose production is meant to mirror that of marginalized racial groups in reality. Though this is clearly the case, as is evidenced by Bele's description of him as of an "inferior breed," the first depiction of Lokai is that of a criminal. While he has stolen the Federation shuttle as a means of escape from his pursuer, the first several minutes of the episode concern not only his criminality and Kirk's accusations thereof, but also his belligerence at the idea that what he has done is wrong, to the point of refusing to continue his conversation with Kirk. Bele's arrival and claim that Lokai is

guilty of treason furthers his image as a criminal, despite Bele's rapid degradation into clear prejudice and hatred. The two characters, from the same planet, are given the unique phenotypic distinctiveness that they are both bi-chromatic, mirroring each other. Because both are half black and half white, the viewer is intended to see neither character as either black or white, as is the constructed binary of racial hierarchy in American culture (though other racial categories exist, the ideology of race defines whiteness through its distinction from blackness), which has a dual effect. As powerful as its intended effect, which is to see the inherent ridiculousness of racial prejudice, making both characters equally both colors allows the story not to cast one character as the oppressor and the other as the oppressed. Although Lokai claims his people are treated unequally by Bele's, comments from the Enterprise crew show equal disgust for both aliens, not for the structure of their social hierarchy but for the beliefs they hold about race itself. Lokai is far more heavily criticized throughout the episode, particularly toward the end when crew members ponder how many he has sent to their deaths in the name of equality. So, while the episode calls into question the concept of race, and challenges racism as a social ideology, it fails to recognize and in fact reinforces structural racism (systems through which society disadvantages nonwhite groups by denying them access to equal opportunities or basic needs) by portraying racism not as an issue of a dominant group oppressing a subordinate group, but as a way of thinking wherein various races hold illogical hatred toward one another.

### **The Cloud Minders**

The Enterprise is ordered to the planet Ardana, where the only known source of a substance that can end a virulent plague on another planet exists, to collect enough of the substance to save a population at risk of destruction. Captain Kirk is surprised to learn that while Ardana has instructed Enterprise to lock its transporter onto the coordinates of its mine

entrances, its communication arrays are located on a city in the clouds. Kirk sends a request to Stratos, the city in question, to forgo the usual diplomatic niceties, and beams himself and Spock to the planet's surface to expedite their trip. The two discuss among themselves that the population of this planet has totally eliminated violence in their society, and that art and culture are its only priorities, aside from the mining of the miracle cure. Suddenly, they are attacked by a group of "Troglytes," the planet's miners, and captured. The teaser ends and the opening sequence plays. When we return, Kirk and Spock break free of their ropes and fight back against the Troglytes, managing to hold them at bay despite their superior numbers until a delegation of Stratos residents beam down to the surface and rescue them, killing one Troglyte with a phaser. One of the Stratosians is the city's High Advisor, who apologizes for their attack. He explains that the Troglytes have a predilection toward violence, and that their uncooperative nature has led to both a disruption of Ardanian society and to the theft of Kirk's substance. Apparently, this planet is not as peaceful as Kirk and Spock had believed. On Stratos, the advisor introduces the two to his daughter, who remarks that she has never met a Vulcan, seemingly enamored. Troglytes are found to have vandalized works of art, and the advisor explains that their culture does not value art, that they wish to employ terror tactics to convince Stratos to give into undescribed demands. After Kirk and Spock are ushered to their quarters, the advisor is seen interrogating a Troglyte angrily, who jumps from the city to his death rather than be detained. Spock narrates his thoughts, pondering the separation of Ardanian society and its apparent injustices wherein Stratos citizens reap all the benefits of Troglyte miners, and wonders whether the advisor's daughter could live with this knowledge if she discovered the harshness of surface conditions. Spock goes to see the daughter, who remarks that she understands Vulcans are intellectually equal to Stratos citizens. While they speak, a disguised Troglyte attempts to kill the

captain in his sleep, but he awakes and subdues her. Shots of the two couples intermix, with Spock and the daughter discussing Vulcan reproduction and Kirk and the Troglyte struggling. The Troglyte explains, as the other enter the room, that she intended to take Kirk hostage to stop the Stratos citizens from using the Enterprise to “intimidate them.” The daughter and the Troglyte argue as to whether Troglytes have any right to live in the city, with the daughter arguing that the city’s beauty and culture would be wasted on Troglytes, whose purpose is in hard labor. She explains that Troglyte minds are “not accustomed to logic.” The captain and Spock grow wary of the daughter, imploring her to consider integrating her society, but she says that in the city violence is completely eliminated. Immediately following, the advisor is seen using a device to torture the Troglyte to interrogate her, but when Kirk and Spock insist he stop he argues that it is the only way to find the substance Kirk needs. Spock and the advisor again argue about the Troglytes, with the advisor claiming the Troglytes are unevolved and unable to understand the concept of equality and culture. After sending the two back to their ship, the advisor tells his guards to kill any Starfleet personnel who return to the planet. On the ship, McCoy seems to confirm what the advisor and the other Stratos citizens claimed, that the Troglytes have markedly decreased intellect. He explains the mined substance, in its unrefined state, releases an odorless gas which horribly retards those who inhale it. If inhalation ends, the brain returns to normal. Kirk, via teleconference with the advisor, explains that with oxygen masks the Troglytes could be the equals of the Stratosians, but he refuses, saying that the surface dwellers are inherently inferior. Kirk beams to Stratos in secret and attempts to convince the captured Troglyte that by wearing the masks her people could improve their quality of life, but she does not believe him. Instead of denying him completely, she tricks him into bringing her deep into the mines, where she captures him and uses him as a hostage. After several hours, the

Troglytes devolve into argument over whether or not to kill Kirk. Kirk's captor says that their goal is to force the Stratosians into the mines and to take their homes in the clouds. After a struggle, Kirk frees his phaser from the woman, blasts a wall to cause a cave-in, and contacts his ship. He orders Spock to beam the advisor into the mine with him and the woman, where, after a time, the three of them fall into violent and mindless conflict. Realizing that the captain is too far devolved to give orders, the crew beams the party back to the ship, and the fight ends. On the planet, sometime later, the Troglyte gives Kirk his substance, and the advisor laments that with the oxygen masks, which he now admits are necessary, all the Troglytes will be stubborn and insubordinate. His daughter tells Spock that she will work in the mines, because she no longer wishes to live a segregated life. Kirk offers to send the Federation to mediate discussion between the two factions, and is rebuked. The Enterprise leaves, apparently assured that conditions on this planet are sure to improve soon. The episode ends (Taylor 1969).

### **Analysis**

This episode is somewhat more challenging to the ideology of race than the previous episode, which focused primarily on racism as a problem of personal views rather than structural inequality. In contrast, "The Cloud Minders" offers a view of social hierarchy which shows how unequal access to resources entrenches and recreates social inequality. Troglytes are shown to be uneducated not because they are inherently inferior, as the advisor and the other Stratosians believe, but because their environment exposes them to unsafe toxins which retard their mental abilities and because they do not have access to education or artistic expression. Both genotypically and phenotypically, the two castes of Ardana are identical, which serves to emphasize the arbitrary and constructed nature of race, but the subject construction of the Troglytes as impulsive and irrational, although tempered by the understanding that they were

made this way based in their circumstances, is still problematic in that it reinforces negative stereotypes of the “race as culture” phenomenon, wherein “colorblind” racist ideology seeks to construct the black subject as depraved not in biology but in cultural performance. Again in this episode we see Kirk and Spock impart their post-racism wisdom on a society they see as backwards, while essentially ignoring their own planets’ pasts of violent oppression. Like in “Let that be Your Last Battlefield,” those within the oppressed group seeking to better their conditions through unconventional means are admonished by the Enterprise crew, who believe peaceful negotiations are the only legitimate means of cultural reform. Of note in this episode, however, in contrast to “Battlefield,” is the significance of Doctor McCoy’s incorrect understanding of the biological differences between Troglytes and Stratosians. As an authority in the medical field, McCoy mirrors those in privileged positions in historical and contemporary Western society who furthered ideologies of biological determinism, such as phrenologists. McCoy’s initial conclusion regarding the Troglytes is that the advisor has correctly diagnosed them as genetically inferior, but Kirk proves that this is inaccurate by exposing the effect of the gas on Troglytes and on himself. By challenging the medical profession in its authority over contested knowledge of race, the episode serves as a more radical alternative to “Battlefield.” The episode also exposes the power of privilege among those in the dominant class, and has the advisor’s daughter choose to renounce her privilege by working in the Troglyte mines while her people simultaneously extend their resources to the Troglytes. The intent of the producer may have been to express a belief that “average” members of dominant groups are often unaware of the effects of structural racism or the unfair benefits it provides them, but it is also fair to say that the daughter’s verbal recognition of this privilege serves to illuminate it for viewers.

**Special Recognition: Plato's Stepchildren and TV's First Interracial Kiss**

The episode "Plato's Stepchildren" takes place on a planet whose inhabitants have developed incredible psychic powers and immortality due to a special substance in their diets. Because of their incredible lifespan and general good health, their society has no need for doctors, and so when their leader suddenly falls ill it becomes necessary to call on the Enterprise crew for help. After Doctor McCoy has cured the leader, Parmen, the crew is trapped, for no reason in particular, while Parmen declares that he will destroy the ship and crew and keep McCoy as a personal doctor. Because McCoy retorts that he will refuse to treat Parmen should he go through with this plan, the crew is spared and used by Parmen and the other Platosians for their amusement (Alexander 1968). The episode is not itself about race or racism (rather it touches briefly on themes of ableism, but this is not a topic of my study), but it is important to the discourse of race because it features the first interracial kiss aired on television, between Captain Kirk and Lieutenant Uhura. The kiss was controversial due to the racist discourse which, in its need to keep the dominant group "pure," is against interracial relationships. By having the two characters kiss, the producers were challenging this ideology and the assumption that segregation of races is the natural order. It should be noted that the kiss was forced upon both characters by Parmen using his telekinesis, and that neither Kirk nor Uhura consented to the contact, but it is equally important to note that their hesitance was not due to racial differences but to the power dynamic of their relative ranks and the impropriety of captain-subordinate relations. While filming the scene, NBC insisted that a version of the episode be produced where their interaction did not include a kiss, so that audiences deemed unready for such a social commentary would not be offended. However, according to Nichelle Nichols, both she and William Shatner were so opposed to the idea of censoring the kiss that they shot take after take

performing a real kiss for the camera until the producers gave up, and the episode aired everywhere included a real kiss between the two (Nichols 1994:197). This dedication to the portrayal demonstrates the importance of the scene in the racial discourse.

### ***The Original Series and Gender***

Of the 79 episodes of *The Original Series*, twelve contain stories with female characters being fundamental to the plot. Only one of these episodes, “Mudd’s Women,” treats the construction of the female subject as a site of discourse into issues of sexism, and the relative importance of women on the show is questionable at best. In fact, the most prominent female characters portrayed throughout the series, Nurse Chapel, Yeoman Rand, and Lieutenant Uhura, are rarely given the opportunity to express any semblance of character development, and while Uhura’s marginalization as a character has been discussed above, the other two are similarly underwritten. Predominantly, recurring female characters express themselves in relation to the men they admire, often Kirk, Spock, or McCoy, three white men of high status, while none of the women are themselves highly ranked or respected. Yeoman Rand in particular is troubling because while she at times expresses interest in the captain, and he in her (though only ever when under the effect of some mind-altering agent, or once when split into a good half and an evil half), his attitude toward her is more paternalistic than professional. This is expected given the fact that female characters in *The Original Series* tend to fall into one of three categories: seductress trap, artificial ideal, or incompetent and insane. These three categories are illustrated below.

## The Man Trap

Orbiting the planet M-113, the Enterprise surveys a long-dead civilization while Kirk, McCoy, and a crewman named Darnell beam to the planet so that McCoy can perform a regular checkup on archaeologists Robert and Nancy Crater, who have been studying the ruins. Kirk notes in his opening log that the mission is routine save for the fact that Nancy crater is “that one woman in Dr. McCoy’s past,” indicating that the two were romantically involved at some point. Kirk and McCoy joke about courting rituals before they find Nancy. When McCoy sees her, she appears far younger than he, and he remarks that she seems as young as when they last saw one another, but when Kirk sees her she looks much older, with greying hair and age blemishes. He is taken aback, but greets her courteously. To crewman Darnell, Nancy is no older than her twenties, with long blonde hair and red lipstick. When he compliments her beauty he is sent away from the group by Kirk, and he waits outside the Craters’ home. Nancy leaves as well, ostensibly to find her husband, but we see her (as the young blonde) lead Darnell away seductively. After the credits roll, Robert Crater returns home and greets the two, encouraging them to leave, asking only for a supply of salt and not medical treatment. They argue over regulation, and then are suddenly drawn out by sounds of screaming. They find Nancy standing distraught over the body of Darnell, who is dead and covered in strange suction marks. She tells them he died of poisoning from eating indigenous plant life, and they seem to believe her. Again requesting salt, the Craters insist they have time to recover from the shock and Kirk and McCoy pause their examination. On the Enterprise, Uhura and Spock converse, and Uhura describes herself as an “irrational woman,” more interested in discussing romance than duty logs. In sickbay, McCoy determines that the plant could not have killed Darnell, and the two grow suspicious of Nancy, realizing they have been perceiving her differently. They learn that

Darnell's body is completely devoid of salt, which killed him, and return to the planet to investigate. While Kirk and McCoy interrogate Robert, two more crew members are killed by Nancy, who suddenly takes the guise of one of the crew and returns to the others. The three beam back to the ship and Nancy, still in disguise, kills several more members of the crew. Kirk captures Robert to gain information, and Robert reveals his secret: Nancy is an alien who can take any appearance she desires to lure people in and drain their bodies of salt for sustenance. The real Nancy was killed several years ago by this alien, and it and Robert had been living together as companions. The creature appears and kills Robert, then transforms back into Nancy to gain McCoy's support, but McCoy kills it, saving the day (Daniels 1966).

### **Analysis**

The construction of the female subject within this episode falls under the first category I listed in the introduction to this section, that of the seductress trap. Nancy, or rather the alien imposter of Nancy, appears to each of her victims as the person most likely to draw their attention. To McCoy, she appears as the woman he dated several years previously, while to Kirk she is older, as would be expected judging from McCoy's age, but also wiser and more respectable. To Darnell she is young and sexually appealing, and to the various crewmembers aboard Enterprise she appears in forms suited to engender their trust, situating her immediately as a subject whose value relates to her physical form. These disguises belie her true nature as a monster intent on feeding off of them, and it is through the false sense of safety she creates that she is able to kill so many people. This alien uses men (as one might expect from the episode's ominous title) in a way allegorical to the infamous gold digger stereotype. Rather than wealth, she is after salt, but both the stereotype and the monster use seduction to draw in a man who can provide in some way, use him, and then move on. Perhaps more important than the construction

of the female subject as a dangerous temptress, however, is her relationship to her “husband.” Robert Crater was married to the real Nancy, and could very easily have decided to kill the creature when he discovered it had killed his wife. Being a citizen of the federation, he would not have been at risk being alone on the planet, but rather could have sent for help and had a starship rescue him in a matter of days. Instead, he struck a deal with the alien. In exchange for any salt he could provide it, it would take the form of his wife and give him companionship. The alien’s “realness” as Nancy, and value as a woman, was predicated on her appearance and willingness to give company to the man she was with. Of course, it could be argued that Robert was severely traumatized from the ordeal and used this method to cope, but the fact that he lived with this alien posing as his wife for so many years speaks to the value given to the female character within the script.

### **Requiem for Methuselah**

In order to satisfy plot conditions eerily similar to those present within the previously examined episode “The Cloud Minders,” the Enterprise crew is ordered to visit an uninhabited planet to procure a special mineral to produce an antidote to a virus rampant on the ship. With only four hours to produce the medicine before all crewmembers are expected to be irreversibly impacted, Kirk, Spock, and McCoy discover a robotic probe on the planet’s surface, indicating to them that it may not be uninhabited after all. The probe attempts to kill them but is stopped by its creator, an older man who calls himself Flint. After explaining their condition, the crew is taken by Flint to his home, where they find a number of rare books and paintings spanning centuries of history. Of the paintings, Spock remarks that it is interesting that while it is clear they are works of Da Vinci, they are not any he has seen before. In another room, Flint speaks with a young woman who begs him to allow her to meet the crew. He seems distraught that she might crave

attention from other people, but relents, and introduces the crew to the woman, whom he calls Rayna, his adopted daughter. Kirk is immediately struck by her beauty and intelligence. Flint tells the three that Rayna holds the educational knowledge of 17 university degrees, but McCoy insists that she appears to be the “furthest thing from a bookworm” he had ever seen, referring to her elegant appearance. While McCoy supervises a robot’s refinement of the mineral into the antidote, Kirk flirts with Rayna and discusses Earth history with Flint. He dances with Rayna while Spock plays the piano using sheet music that while apparently written by Johannes Brahms, like the paintings, is unknown to Spock. The dancing makes Flint noticeably jealous. When he has left, Kirk continues to flirt with Rayna, asking if she would not rather leave the planet and be with him, and attempts to seduce her. After being attacked by Flint’s probe, Kirk and Spock determine that Flint is attempting to keep them on the planet, and investigate his home, Kirk still attempting to convince Rayna to come with him, telling her that he loves her. While searching the home the three crewmembers find a room containing several robots, the apparent precursors to Rayna, identical to her but nonfunctional. Kirk is appalled, and his voiceover captain’s log notes that they have discovered Flint’s secret, that he has created “the perfect woman; her only flaw that she isn’t human.” Flint confronts them, and it is further revealed that Flint is immortal, having posed in human history as several significant cultural figures including Da Vinci and Brahms, whose works Spock commented on earlier. He is so old, in fact, that he has contributed more to human history than any other individual. He had developed Rayna to have a companion to share immortality with. This is not enough for Kirk, who challenges Flint to battle for Rayna’s love. Flint retorts that Rayna is his property, and that Kirk will not be allowed to take her. They fight violently, hand to hand, until the emotional turmoil of seeing this battle causes Rayna to overload and she collapses, dead. Having lost all he

cared about, the captain returns to the ship with his crew and antidote, lamenting his loss. Spock secretly performs a Vulcan mind meld on Kirk to make him forget his love for Rayna, so that he can go on with his life. The episode ends (Golden 1969).

### **Analysis**

This episode is not as detailed, or even as significantly about its female subject as “The Man Trap,” but its depiction of Rayna is important in the production of the second category of women that I have identified, the artificial ideal. Rayna is considered by the crew to be perfect in every way. She is exceedingly beautiful, extremely intelligent, skilled in such relaxing hobbies as billiards and dancing, and very personable. Though they are very impressed by her level of education (Spock in particular, as he is the most cerebral character on the show), McCoy makes a special note that she is not a “bookworm.” By this he apparently means that while it is impressive that she has attained such a high level of knowledge, it is more important that she has not let that education interfere with the maintenance of her appearance. She wears a long, flowing dress and her hair and makeup are immaculate. If she were instead portrayed as frizzy-haired with glasses, there is no doubt that McCoy and Kirk (though perhaps not Spock, as an emotionless Vulcan) would be far less interested in her. Her exceptional beauty on its own is enough to garner the attention of Kirk and McCoy, the former of whom declares his love for Rayna after having known her for less than two hours, imploring her to leave her “father” and travel the stars with him. Her style of dress and physical attractiveness, although contrasted with her intellect, is constructed to draw the male gaze more than any other measure of worth. When it is ultimately revealed that Flint created Rayna, he explains that he wanted to create the perfect woman to spend eternity with, suggesting that no organic woman would qualify as good enough for him. Her beauty and intelligence are so impressive that even after Kirk discovers the extreme

significance of Flint's contribution to human history, he tries to kill him to win Rayna. Even while telling Flint that she is not something to be owned, Kirk's gaze suggests his assumption that should he win the fight she would surely be his. When Rayna is destroyed it is because in building the perfect woman, Flint had to give her a woman's one weakness, her emotions. This loss is considered so significant that Spock considers it a favor wiping Kirk's mind of the events. The unattainable prize that is the perfect woman was so close that he could not go on living knowing he had lost it (the word 'it' used intentionally).

### **Turnabout Intruder**

Answering a distress call from an archaeological crew, Captain Kirk finds that the crew contains a former lover, Janice Lester, who is very sick. While the rest of his landing party explore the planet, attempting to find the radioactive source of the sickness, Kirk stays with Janice, and the two talk about their lives before Kirk's stint aboard the Enterprise. Janice resents the fact that as a woman, she would never have been able to become captain of a starship. As they talk, she activates a machine without Kirk's knowledge, and the two suddenly switch bodies, with Janice's mind controlling Kirk and vice versa. Janice's body is still weak from the sickness, and Kirk's mind cannot force it to fend off his own body with Janice controlling it as she tries to strangle him to death. Before she can finish the job, the others return, and Janice-Kirk (signifying Janice's mind in Kirk's body), convinces the others to allow Janice's assistant to provide medical treatment for Kirk-Janice, whom they believe is Janice. In sickbay, Kirk-Janice begins to wake up, and the assistant (knowing Janice-Kirk's plot), orders him sedated to prevent him from giving them up. Janice-Kirk provides a voice-over inner-monologue, stating that she has at last obtained what is rightfully hers, command of a starship. Janice-Kirk orders the ship's course altered, taking the Enterprise directly away from their current mission. When challenged

in this decision, she becomes irritated with Spock and lashes out at him verbally. Spock grows suspicious of his captain. Further questioning the captain's emotional and mental capacity, McCoy orders Janice-Kirk to undergo a series of medical and psychological examinations, which is his right as chief medical officer. Janice-Kirk reacts with contempt, but eventually submits, and McCoy finds nothing wrong. Meanwhile, Kirk-Janice wakes up and demands that Nurse Chapel bring him Spock, as he has been imprisoned within this body by Janice. Believing him to be insane, Chapel prepares a sedative for him. Kirk-Janice escapes and attempts to inform McCoy of the switch, but Janice-Kirk knocks him out and orders him to be confined to quarters under guard. Spock goes to Kirk-Janice's room to find out what is happening, where Kirk-Janice explains to him that Janice switched minds with him. Spock believes him, and when he tries to take Kirk-Janice out of his room, security calls Janice-Kirk and several more armed guards, who take Spock under arrest for mutiny. When Janice-Kirk explains that she intends to serve Spock the death penalty, several senior crew members object, and are themselves arrested and charged with mutiny. As Janice-Kirk's emotional state deteriorates further and her behavior becomes more erratic, the mind-switch reverses momentarily. Growing concerned, Janice-Kirk realizes she must kill Kirk fully to maintain control over his body. Before she can do so, the mind-switch reverses again, this time permanently, and Janice, back in her own body, collapses into a fit of tears, weeping that she will never be a captain. Her assistant comforts her as she implores him to kill Kirk, who allows him to care for her until they can decide what to do with her. Kirk claims that "her life could have been as rich as anyone's, if only..." The episode ends (Wallerstein 1969).

## Analysis

“Turnabout Intruder” was the final episode of *The Original Series* to air, reaching homes in June of 1969. It is perhaps the most extreme example of a female villain within the *Star Trek* universe up until the introduction of the Borg Queen several decades later, and perfectly encapsulates the spirit of my third category of female characters, the incompetent and insane villain. Janice Lester, like any good villain, has a motivation for her actions. In this case it is the sexist segregation of women from the captaincy in Starfleet. However, the viewer is never given the opportunity to empathize with or even sympathize with Janice, because from the beginning of the episode until its conclusion she acts not with any righteous motivation but rather with insanity and malice. She makes irrational decisions which jeopardize not only the safety of the ship but also her façade as the captain, leading the rest of the crew to believe wholeheartedly that she is not in fact James Kirk. When Janice switches bodies with Kirk, she is taking not only his physical strength and his professional record, but also the privilege he carries as a man in Starfleet to have the opportunity to captain a starship. However, she proves incompetent in the job despite having similar training to Kirk. Though she understands Starfleet protocol, she insists it be broken repeatedly in front of senior crewmembers, who have no choice but to believe that there must be something amiss. Within minutes of the transformation McCoy has sensed something different about Kirk, and orders a full psychological examination, which, though never completed, would surely have revealed the impersonation. The viewer is led to believe through Janice’s incompetence that perhaps Starfleet’s strict no women captains policy is a sound one. The episode aired during a time of heightened conflict between men and women, particularly those seeking to enter the work force. Women’s liberation was continuing to gain momentum as a movement and female workers demanded equal pay and fair treatment. They

were met with gendered stereotypes such as Janice's character, portraying ambitious women as somehow villainous and inherently criminal, but ultimately lacking the skills necessary to do a man's job. It perpetuates stereotypes of women as irrational and driven solely by their emotions, rather than allowing Janice the opportunity to prove herself a capable officer and by proxy prove women capable of commanding a ship.

### ***The Original Series and the Cold War***

One of the most topical recurring themes in *The Original Series* is Cold War allegory. These episodes tended to reflect the public opinion that the war effort, particularly as it applied to cases like Vietnam, was undesirable and at worst immoral. Episodes containing Cold War themes tended to feature Klingons and Romulans as enemies, and, while these enemies are constructed in a dehumanizing manor (such as having Klingons wear blackface during conflict-heavy episodes), the Enterprise's crew often expresses dissatisfaction with the state of unease between their civilizations, wishing to end hostilities. These episodes are particularly poignant when they show Starfleet officers learning this lesson in the middle of allegorical conflicts mirroring our own.

### **The Omega Glory**

The Enterprise approaches the planet Omega IV and is surprised to find another Starfleet vessel already in orbit, the USS Exeter. When the ship cannot be hailed, Kirk and an away team beam over, only to find everyone dead and turned to piles of crystal ash. They find a recording from the Exeter's captain, explaining that the ship is infected with a virus and that anyone seeing the recording should beam to the planet's surface to save themselves. The away team does so, and finds the captain, Ronald Tracey, living with the Kohms, one of Omega IV's two ethnic

groups. The Kohms, though somewhat brutal, seem to have developed a relatively advanced society, mirroring that of Old West-era America. They are at war with Omega IV's other ethnic group, the Yangs, who by contrast do not speak and attack Kohms (and those they think are Kohms) viciously and immediately on sight. Kirk is surprised and distraught to learn that Captain Tracey has been supplying the Kohms with phaser firepower, a violation of the Federation's Prime Directive, which states that Starfleet officers should not interfere with the development of native cultures. Though it appears at first that Tracey's motives are simply to survive long enough to escape the planet, Spock and McCoy soon discover that the inhabitants of the planet are not only spared the effects of the virus infecting all of them, but are granted exceptionally long life by some unknown condition on the planet. When they realize that Tracey is helping to fight the Yangs for his own selfish reasons, wanting to discover a way to live forever, Tracey imprisons Kirk with captured Yangs. In an attempt to communicate with the Yangs, Kirk comes to the realization that they are surprisingly similar to the American people of Earth, several centuries before. Their society seems to revolve around worshiping words such as "freedom." The Yangs escape after knocking Kirk out, and when he awakens he too escapes and rejoins McCoy, who tells him that in his research of the planet he has concluded that the virus is the result of a long-past biological war, and that while the planet's conditions do serve as a natural cure to the virus (in fact, everyone infected is now noncontagious), the inhabitants of the planet are extremely old because of natural selection, not any reproducible condition. Tracey appears and engages Kirk in combat, and a group of Yangs, who had been fighting the Kohms outside, capture the group. Kirk, suddenly coming to the realization that the Yangs are the natural progression of "Yankees" and the Kohms are the progression of "Communists," recites the Pledge of Allegiance to gain the Yangs' trust. Knowing that this planet must be the result of a

parallel to Earth history where the communists won their great war, Kirk encourages the Yangs to spread democracy for all, even the Kohms, and after doing so beams back to the Enterprise with his crew, ready to face another mission. The episode ends (McEveety 1968).

### **Analysis**

“The Omega Glory” is without a doubt the most heavy-handed attempt on the part of *Star Trek* to opine on the state of the nation’s ethical standing during the Cold War. Because typically Starfleet and the Federation are parallels for the United States in episodes mirroring Cold War events, the use of two separate parties in this episode allows the writers to show a far more bleak turn of events. Not only have the American allegory group lost their war, but they have ultimately devolved into a group of brutal savages, while the Kohms live in relatively superior conditions (contrasting the Yangs’ caves with their wooden homes). The episode warns of the potential outcome of an end to the virtual stalemate of mutually assured destruction, and questions whether the US military might be just as savage as the enemy shown in propaganda films. Ultimately, Kirk reveals that the reason the Yangs have fallen so far is that they have begun to treat sacred concepts like freedom and liberty as guarded secrets of a shaman caste, and by revealing that he too has this revered knowledge he establishes himself as a person worthy of attention to Yang society. The episode suggests that so long as American society ensures liberty and justice for not just some but for all, it will prosper. The episode does not resolve the conflict between the Yangs and the Kohms, but it ends on an optimistic tone, suggesting that some way or another the two groups will end their dispute. The episode is careful to treat the Yangs ultimately as the party worthy of victory, but explains that they have lost their way, implying that if the US does not live into the values it purports to have in the Cold War, it will fall into savagery and chaos. The episode is ultimately best explained as a reproduction of an America

that values its freedom, whatever that might mean, and does not wish to see itself come to an end, but is also wary of a government that has continued to engage in conflicts long past their public popularity. The episode could be expected to have informed the opinions of viewers tuning in to be entertained after seeing news reports of the climbing death toll in Vietnam.

### **A Private Little War**

The Enterprise arrives at Neural, a pre-warp planet protected by the Prime Directive, on a scientific mission to study soil samples. Captain Kirk has been to the planet before, thirteen years prior, and remembers fondly the peaceful inhabitants of the planet whom he befriended, saying that they only ever used bows and arrows as weapons for hunting. Suddenly, Kirk and Spock spot a group of natives carrying rifles, and yet another group carrying only spears. The rifle group appears poised to attack the less developed natives, and Kirk distracts them with a thrown rock so that the spear carriers, one of whom he recognizes as a friend from his first visit, can escape. Before the landing party can escape, Spock is shot. They beam up to the ship to seek medical attention for him, and, leaving him in sickbay, return to the planet to investigate the sudden development of advanced weaponry. When Kirk is attacked by an animal native to the planet and badly poisoned, McCoy takes him to the village where he first researched the planet, where Kirk's friend, Tyree, and his wife, Nona, begin to heal him. Meanwhile, the Enterprise has detected a Klingon ship also in orbit, and attempts to hide itself from detection by leaving orbit, stranding Kirk and McCoy. After Kirk recovers, he continues his investigation, and after searching a nearby village of rifle wielders he finds the locals negotiating with a Klingon named Krell. The Klingons apparently consider Neural a strategic necessity in their dispute with the Federation, and have produced rifles for one of the planet's villages not only to disrupt local politics but also in exchange for the rights to use resources from the planet. Kirk and McCoy do

not wish to engage in politics of this nature, but Nona steals their phasers and approaches rifle villagers. Before Kirk, McCoy, and Tyree can stop her, she fails to use the phaser and is stabbed and killed by the men. The three fight the men and Tyree kills the man who stabbed Nona before asking Kirk for rifles of his own. Having seen the bloodshed, Kirk calls to the Enterprise, which has re-entered orbit, to beam down a hundred rifles, but cancels the order, looking defeated, and returns to the ship. The episode ends (Daniels 1968).

### **Analysis**

As is typically the case in *Original Series* episodes featuring the Enterprise crew as an allegory for mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century America, the crew takes a more idealistic approach to proxy warfare than did the real United States. Instead of actively participating in and shaping local politics and conflict, as was done in Vietnam, Kirk and McCoy act as somewhat passive observers to the Klingons' interference. The Klingons, clearly a representation of the Soviet Union, uses the perceived innocence and gullibility of another polity's populace as a tool in their campaign to dominate the Federation politically and militarily. In turn, the Neuralians play right into their trap, falling from the grace of Kirk's described peaceful Eden to savage one-sided brutality. While "The Omega Glory" showed a vision of America wrought with foreboding but ultimately secure in its underlying ideological foundations, "A Private Little War" chooses to omit America's involvement entirely, reflecting perhaps a difference in the public opinion of the war effort. Though produced and aired in the same year, "A Private Little War" suggests an American public that is so disillusioned with Vietnam that it would rewrite history. Both episodes are similar in that they warn of the evils of conflict between two superpowers, but "The Omega Glory" sheds the prospects of the US in a much better light.

### ***The Next Generation and Gender***

Premiering eighteen years after the finale of *The Original Series*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, set nearly a hundred years after the events of Kirk's missions, reflected the America of Reagan's '80s. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in sight, *TNG*'s producers took the liberty of situating a Klingon security officer on the bridge of the new Enterprise. The captain, Jean-Luc Picard, was more diplomat than Kirk's warrior, and made most command decisions only after consulting with senior crew, more akin to a corporate executive than a military officer. For all the changes to the appearance of the show, subject construction of marginalized characters did not improve much. While prominent female characters were situated in greater positions of respect and authority (Deanna Troi being a lieutenant commander and Beverly Crusher a commander and chief medical officer), their actions were still chiefly motivated by stereotypical female failings, primarily an inability to make important decisions or control their emotions. The following two episodes illustrate this phenomenon.

#### **Sub Rosa**

Attending the funeral of her recently-deceased grandmother, Doctor Crusher catches a glimpse of an attractive and brooding man who places a camellia, her grandmother's favorite flower, on the casket. While she cannot find the man either by searching herself or asking the settlers of Caldos II, her grandmother's home colony, Crusher finds him mentioned in diaries left behind in the house left to her in her grandmother's will. At the house, Crusher is confronted by a man named Ned Quint, who tries to steal a family heirloom, a metal candle, and warns Crusher to vacate the house and never return. He believes the candle to be a curse on her family, and says it is likely the reason her grandmother died. Believing Ned to be crazy, Crusher takes the candle back from him and asks him to leave. Aboard the ship, Crusher becomes increasingly obsessed

with the man in her grandmother's diary, and eventually has an erotic dream featuring him. She returns to the house to finish packing and finds the man there, though she can only see him in mirror reflections and here him through a sort of psychic connection. He tells her that he has been with her family for several generations, having traveled with the women of the family through the candle and becoming their lovers. Though scared, Crusher allows the ephemeral presence to join with her, and gives into his power. Later, back aboard the ship, Counselor Troi comes to find Crusher and invite her to a martial arts lesson, and is surprised to find that Crusher's eyes have changed color from their normal blue to the bright green that her grandmother had. Her eyes look almost unnaturally bright, and she seems uneasy, but Troi goes back about her business. Investigating mysterious energy readings throughout the ship, Captain Picard finds Crusher in the transporter room, where she tenders her resignation and beams back to the surface permanently. Picard follows her, believing something to be wrong, and when he confronts her the presence attacks him. Crusher tends to his injuries and then follows the man to the cemetery where her mother is buried, where she finally kills him with her phaser. After the man is dead, Crusher comes to her senses, but before the episode ends she remarks that whatever evil the presence may have been, it made her and her grandmother very happy (Frakes 1994).

### **Analysis**

Though more than two decades had passed from the end of *The Original Series* to the airing of this episode, the subject construction of female characters in *The Next Generation* still relied heavily on culturally stereotypes and inaccurate tropes. Crusher is a highly trained professional, holding both the rank of Commander (one step below captain in Starfleet) and the title of Chief Medical Officer, meaning she is the only character aboard the Enterprise who can give Picard a direct order. Despite her expertise and relative respectability, this episode

highlights that Crusher is subject to the same flights of inexplicable selfish and unthinking obsession that one might ascribe to the stereotypical teenage girl. Her obsession for the candle ghost began long before meeting him, and after the two do meet she is more than happy to allow him to possess her. He is so important to her, despite the two having just met, that she resigns from a decades-long career and leaves all of her friends behind to be with him. Though ultimately the viewer might see the ghost as responsible for Crusher's corruption, it is her corruptibility which lends itself to reinforcing the stereotype. She offers no resistance to the ghost until he hurts her closest friend (and, it is important to note, her only consistently hinted love interest aboard the ship), and even then she is heartbroken to have had to kill him, saying that even if he was a bad person he did make her family happy. Throughout the episode, Crusher makes no decisions free of the influence of or irrespective of the thought of a man, establishing that her character has value only insofar as she relates to the male characters. This construction of female characters is common in *The Next Generation*, with Crusher's episodes typically involving either conflict (or interest) with a male crewmember or her relationship with her son, giving her character further meaning through her motherhood. While this construction is common for Crusher, another problematic characterization occurs for Deanna Troi.

### **Thine Own Self**

This description will combine a partial episode summary and an analysis, as the episode itself primarily revolves around Data struggling to remember who he is on an alien planet. For my purposes, the episode is important for its subplot, or "B story," which details Counselor Troi's attempt to become a bridge officer. At the opening of the episode, Troi beams aboard the ship late at night, having been picked up by the Enterprise from a starbase where she was attending a class reunion. Doctor Crusher is in command of the ship, and Troi remarks that it

seems odd to her that Crusher would choose to hold the rank of Commander despite not needing it to be the Chief Medical Officer. Rather, the rank of Commander confers upon officers not in command or operations roles to take regular shifts in charge of the ship, which Crusher feels is an important part of being a well-rounded officer. Two years previous, Troi had taken command of the ship when a crash left her the highest-ranking officer on the bridge, though the event was incredibly stressful for her and nearly led to the deaths of all onboard. She asks Commander Riker to allow her to be tested for promotion, and though he is hesitant, he agrees. In a holodeck simulation of the engineering department of the ship, Troi frantically struggles to command those in her charge and stop a warp core breach, which would result in the destruction of the ship. When she fails, she asks Riker for advice, and he refuses. When she has failed twice more, Riker pulls the plug on the test, telling her that she is not capable of commanding a starship. After he leaves, Troi decides to run the holodeck simulation again, this time commanding Geordi La Forge to sacrifice himself to stop the explosion. Riker enters the holodeck and congratulates her on her tough choice, saying she has passed (Kolbe 1994).

Until the airing of *Star Trek: Voyager*, a female captain had not been the focus of a *Star Trek* series, or even fully suggested beyond the example of “Turnabout Intruder.” The image of captaincy portrayed in *The Original Series* and *The Next Generation* mirrors that of masculinity. Men are logical and able to take action quickly, while women are generally illogical and driven by emotion. It is never truly clear why Counselor Troi decides it is so important for her to become a bridge officer, aside from the implicit status bridge officers have on the ship. She had not been in a command situation since the disaster two years prior to this episode, and in that case she hated the decision she was forced to make. For this reason I infer that Troi is most influenced by the difference in rank between herself and Doctor Crusher, suggesting Troi’s

ambition toward promotion is rooted in selfishness. The ultimate challenge to her success in the test is her unwillingness to think clearly and do what is best for the ship if it means hurting her friends, showing the viewer that Troi's greatest weakness is her own emotions. While Geordi is clearly the best choice for solving the warp core problem, she does not allow herself to make a difficult decision because it would mean hurting a friend. Aside from the emotional difficulty in coming to a solution, Troi is also extremely emotional in her failure, becoming exasperated when Riker refuses to give her advice and angry when he tries to stop the testing. Her characterization reinforces the stereotype that a woman is not fit for command, not only because in all prior instances of her being in command she failed, but also because it took her four attempts of the same simulation to come to the right solution. While she is ultimately promoted to Commander and bridge officer in this episode, the next time she would take full command of the ship would be to pilot it in *Star Trek Generations*, wherein she crashed the Enterprise. Her incompetence as an officer is only heightened by the fact that she is the second-most senior woman on the crew of the Enterprise, highlighting the issue of gender construction in *The Next Generation*.

### ***The Next Generation and Sexuality***

Sexuality and sexual orientation, becoming an increasingly talked-about issue by the late '80s and early '90s, enjoyed more airtime in *The Next Generation* than did issues of race. Like race in *The Original Series*, sexuality in *The Next Generation* was expressed primarily through alien metaphor, choosing to place human sexuality in an idealized openness and examine persecution and oppression through other cultures. One important episode highlights these metaphors.

## The Outcast

Answering the request of an alien species called the J'naii to help locate a missing shuttle, the Enterprise begins a search of the J'naii star system with the aid of an individual named Soren. Commander Riker, assigned to lead the search mission and coordinate with Soren, learns that the J'naii are all androgynous, having developed non-differentiated biological morphologies and considering it taboo to express gender or sexuality in any way that mirrors or suggests alien masculinity or femininity. Commander Riker is particularly taken aback by this fact, as he has long served aboard the Enterprise as a symbol of manliness and his sexual conquests are many. However Soren soon gains Riker's friendship as Soren proves to be a capable pilot and quick wit. While taking a break from the search, Soren and Riker share a meal in Ten Forward, the Enterprise's bar and lounge, and Soren asks Riker to describe the differences between men and women. Aboard an Enterprise shuttle sometime later, Soren tells Riker that while her species generally identify as androgynous, there are individuals who self-identify as gendered, and Soren is among those individuals, considering herself to be female. This must remain a secret however, as it is considered a criminal offense to hold such beliefs, and those found to be in violation of the J'naii gender norms are reconditioned to "correct" the issue. In addition to coming out as female to Riker, Soren explains that she is attracted to him, and the two kiss after their mission is completed, but Soren is discovered by another J'naii and is arrested while Riker is speaking with Counselor Troi. When he discovers the arrest, he pleads with the J'naii court that the kiss was his fault and that Soren should not be punished, but she is sentenced to reconditioning. In an attempt to rescue her later that night, Riker finds that the reconditioning has already been completed, and Soren refuses both to come with him to the Enterprise and to

reciprocate his feelings any longer. The episode ends with Riker telling Captain Picard that the mission is over and that there is no longer anyone for him on the surface (Scheerer 1992).

### **Analysis**

“The Outcast” aired in March of 1992, notably the same year that the World Health Organization declassified homosexuality as a mental illness. In the wake of widespread gay rights activism in the ‘70s and ‘80s, the end of the Reagan administration, and the beginning of the decline of the AIDS panic, it is not unusual that “The Outcast,” being aired when it was, was perhaps the most prominent attempt on the part of the *Next Gen* writing staff to highlight nonconformity in sexuality. It is also not unusual that this episode is presented in the form of an extended alien metaphor, like *Original Series* episodes featuring issues of racism, exactly because of the unique temporal location of this episode at a point where relative progress had been made through wide scale turmoil. While it is problematic that throughout the episode no character questions the apparently intrinsic link between gender and sexuality presented by the J’naii taboo system (in fact, the only explanation other than a future wherein all children are born cisgender is the possibility that the Federation is perhaps *so inclusive* that no interpretation of gender and sexuality is confronting to them), the episode does present material that is very challenging to the status quo. Soren’s apparent need to keep her gender and sexual identity a secret from her entire community is a clear and compelling mirror for “closet” homosexuals, and her planet’s codified sanctions for violating these norms reflect an awareness of discriminatory sodomy laws and “gay therapy” clinics. It is particularly powerful that Riker is ultimately unable to stop the J’naii from reprogramming Soren, because while she is shown to be unperturbed by the invasive mental reconditioning, her former self feared it more than anything. The conclusion of the episode shows a heartbroken Riker presumably considering what could have been, and the

viewer likewise must question whether the outcome would have been different had Captain Picard petitioned the J'naii on Riker's behalf. Picard was apparently unable to do so because of diplomatic agreements between the J'naii and the Federation, and this overlooking of human rights violations in the name of international diplomacy is a theme that presumably spoke to viewers at the time (not just because of its implications in gay rights but also because of contemporaneous ethnic cleansings and political upheavals at the fall of the Soviet Union) as much as it should today (in an era more inundated with outsourced sweatshop labor than ever before, as well as continued violent opposition to any kind of difference at home and abroad). For these reasons, "The Outcast" is one of the most powerful episodes of *The Next Generation*.

## **Conclusion**

From the '60s-era whimsical space fantasy that was *The Original Series* to the darker but equally idealistic and utopian adventure that was *The Next Generation*, the use of allegorical plot to discuss social issues remained a constant. In the case of race in *TOS* and sexuality in *TNG*, the use of the alien metaphor to make these discussions safer and more accessible was a common thread. Episodes featuring social issues like racism and heterosexism were more varied and nuanced, containing both extremely problematic depictions of the issue they portrayed, as well as atypical and critical challenges to the social hierarchy. Episodes constructing marginalized characters that were not intended to "preach," as it were, were not so nuanced, and in fact served to reproduce negative stereotypical understandings of social constructs such as gender. Using Signorielli and Bacue's framework of recognition and respect, the trend from the '60s to the late '80s seemed to be that while female characters in the franchise were more respected (insofar as Crusher and Troi hold higher ranks and titles and are older than the women of *TOS*), they were

less recognized, and they were equally problematic in their depiction as slaves to their emotions during episodes where they were the main focus.

Insofar as episodes featuring either metaphors for social oppression or constructions of marginalized subjects appeared to be reflective of contemporaneous societal ideologies, I can assume that these episodes were also reproductive of them. *Star Trek* as a franchise was (and continues to be, despite not having aired an episode in nearly a decade) extremely popular, and viewers, being exposed to the messages contained within the narratives, would add these messages to their social dialogue. As Captains Kirk or Picard represented the ultimate in respectable men at the height of prestige, their actions and beliefs will have shaped the imaginations and subsequent actions of countless individuals. As a social phenomenon, *Star Trek* may have influenced opinion on the Cold War (both in favor and opposed to continued hostility, depending on the episode), the Civil Rights movement (in favor of a sort of “race-blind” equality, but critical of organizations like the Black Panthers), and the gay rights movement (in favor of extended freedoms, but under heteronormative assumptions about gender roles).

In viewing around 250 episodes, I have been able to draw these simple trends, showing increased social awareness in some respects while continuing to fall short on others. However, this data leaves out more than a decade of additional *Star Trek* which would be exceedingly interesting to compare to what I have already studied. *Deep Space Nine*, for example, was the first to move away from the idea that the Federation itself was a utopia for its citizens, and the first to fully acknowledge actual events in American history that the country is less than proud of. This is no surprise, as it is also the first *Trek* to feature a black captain, who himself would be an interesting case study in the construction of the black male in popular media. Captain Sisko, while certainly as capable as Kirk and Picard, may prove to become more easily angered.

*Enterprise*, the final installment in the *Trek* franchise, is heavily influenced by the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and would be particularly exciting to view in regards to reactionary media, as it is one of the most topical series and also falls into the metaphor camp. Judging from the lack of significant representational improvement from the '60s-era *Trek* to that of the late '80s, this future analysis should have a lot to offer.

## Works Cited

- Alexander, David. 1968. "Plato's Stepchildren." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount Television.
- Barker, David. 1985. "Television Production Techniques as Communication." Pp. 169-182 in *Television: The Critical View, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*, edited by Horace Newcomb. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bernardi, Daniel. 1997. "'Star Trek' in the 1960s: Liberal-Humanism and the Production of Race." *Science Fiction Studies* 24(2):209-225.
- Blair, Karin and R.M.P. 1983. "Sex and 'Star Trek.'" *Science Fiction Studies* 10(3):292-297.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1974. "*Structures, Habitus, Practices.*" Pp. 444-449 in *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings, 4<sup>th</sup> edition*, edited by Charles Lemert. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Cranny-Francis, Anne. 1985. "Sexuality and Sex-Role Stereotyping in 'Star Trek.'" *Science Fiction Studies* 12(3):274-284.
- Daniels, Marc. 1968. "A Private Little War." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount Television.
- Daniels, Marc. 1966. "The Man Trap." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Desilu Productions.
- Decherney, Peter. 2001. "Race in Space." *Cinéaste* 26(3):38-39.
- Fowler, Bridget. 1997. *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations*. London: Sage Publications.
- Frakes, Jonathan. 1994. "Sub Rosa." *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Paramount Domestic Television.
- Franklin, H. Bruce. 1994. "'Star Trek' in the Vietnam Era." *Science Fiction Studies* 21(1):24-34.

- Golden, Murray. 1969. "Requiem for Methuselah." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount Television.
- Greven, David. 2009. *Gender and Sexuality in Star Trek*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- Grey, Herman. 1995. "The Politics of Representation in Network Television." Pp. 282-305 in *Television: The Critical View, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*, edited by Horace Newcomb. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hark, Ina Rae. 2008. *Star Trek*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heller, Lee E. 1997. "The Persistence of Difference: Postfeminism, Popular Discourse, and Heterosexuality in 'Star Trek: The Next Generation.'" *Science Fiction Studies* 24(2):226-244.
- Johnson-Smith, Jan. 2005. *American Science Fiction TV: Star Trek, Stargate, and Beyond*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Kapell, Matthew Wilhelm. 2010. *Star Trek as Myth: Essays on Symbol and Archetype at the Final Frontier*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- Kellner, Douglas. 1995. "Beavis and Butt-Head: No Future for Postmodern Youth." Pp. 319-329 in *Television: The Critical View, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*, edited by Horace Newcomb. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kolbe, Winrich. 1994. "Thine Own Self." *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Paramount Domestic Television.
- Kristensen, Hans. 2006. "Nuclear Weapons." From *Federation of American Scientists*. Found at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/nuke/>.

- McEveety, Vincent. 1966. "Balance of Terror." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Desilu Productions.
- McEveety, Vincent. 1968. "The Omega Glory." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount Television.
- Newcomb, Horace and Paul M. Hirsch. 1983. "Television as a Cultural Forum." Pp. 561-573 in *Television: The Critical View, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*, edited by Horace Newcomb. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nichols, Nichelle. 1994. *Beyond Uhura: Star Trek and Other Memories*. New York: Putnam.
- Rodriguez, América. 1996. "Objectivity and ethnicity in the Production of the *Niticiero Univisión*." Pp. 330-353 in *Television: The Critical View, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*, edited by Horace Newcomb. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Scheerer, Robert. 1992. "The Outcast." *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Paramount Domestic Television.
- Signorielli, Nancy and Aaron Bacue. 1999. "Recognition and Respect: A Content Analysis of Prime-Time Television Characters Across Three Decades." *Sex Roles* 40(7-8):527-544.
- Staff Writer. "Lookheed SR-71 Blackbird High-Altitude Reconnaissance Aircraft (1966)." From *Military Factory*.
- Taylor, Jud. 1969. "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount Television.
- Taylor, Jud. 1969. "The Cloud Minders." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount Television.
- Wallerstein, Herb. 1969. "Turnabout Intruder." *Star Trek: The Original Series*. Paramount Television.

