The final frontier: Critical theory and the Star Trek phenomenon.

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THE FINAL FRONTIER:

CRITICAL THEORY AND THE STAR TREK PHENOMENON

by

Michael Eugene Farkas

A Thesis
submitted To the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of
Communication Studies in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1993
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ABSTRACT

THE FINAL FRONTIER: CRITICAL THEORY AND THE STAR TREK PHENOMENON

by

Michael Eugene Farkas

This study employs the multidimensional and multiperspectival critical theoretical approach of Douglas Kellner to analyze the Star Trek phenomenon. More specifically, it combines elements from Marxism, socialist feminism and myth analysis and utilizes the resulting framework to uncover both the progressive and regressive representations of gender and race appearing in the narratives of Star Trek, Star Trek: The Next Generation, and Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, beginning with its pilot episode entitled "The Cage." These representations in the texts are then contextualized by relating all of the series to their particular socio-historical time periods. Finally, they are all compared and contrasted with one another to note the similarities and differences among them.

The general results of the study showed that with the exception of the original Star Trek series, airing in the late 1960s, the Star Trek phenomenon displayed increasingly progressive images over time of both gender and race in its television narratives which reached its height in early 1993 with the creation of Star Trek: Deep Space Nine.

More specifically, "The Cage," Star Trek's original pilot, displayed images of women that ranged from extremely sexist ones to more progressive ones (including a female as second-in command) which reflected social struggles and acknowledged, to
some extent, their expanding roles in our society. However, it largely ignored issues of race by featuring an exclusively white crew. The original Star Trek series displayed an almost opposite emphasis: a few fairly progressive images of race, as well as some attacks on racism, appeared in its episodes, but the series exhibited an immense regression from the pilot in terms of its portrayals of women. The following series, Star Trek: The Next Generation made significant steps forward in terms of both gender and race representations in its narratives, but was not completely egalitarian as white males were still usually the primary characters in its narratives and featured in most of the privileged positions. Finally, with Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, the power and ideological focus shifted to a black male commander with a female functioning as his second-in-command. In this fashion Star Trek: Deep Space Nine overthrows the usual hierarchical ordering of society by placing white males lower in the command hierarchy than both females and non-whites, breaking the trend of all previous Star Trek series.
To my parents
Mary and Eugene Farkas
for their patience and understanding
during my eight year journey
to through university life.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Almost every home in the United States has a television set that is turned on for more than seven hours per day. Individuals spend more time watching television than in any other leisure activity and, cumulatively, far more time in front of the television than in school; only work absorbs more waking time. Furthermore, polls reveal that television is the most trusted source of news and information (Kellner 1990b, 1-2).

Television, over the past several decades, has become an extremely influential agent of socialization in our contemporary capitalist society whose images, symbols and messages markedly affect the ways in which reality is perceived. The presentation of news, information and entertainment programming on television influences our interpretations of events, issues and people to such an extent that critical examinations of the medium and its artifacts is essential for comprehending how the dominant ideas in society are perpetuated while the concerns and representations of the more marginalized individuals are often down-played or omitted entirely.

In capitalist societies, some theorists perceive television in liberal or conservative fashions as providing "harmless entertainment" or "objective information" for its audience (ibid., 21). Meanwhile, other more radical theorists view television in more Althusserian terms as one of a number of "ideological state apparatuses," similar to churches, schools and other institutions, which "produce ideology and . . .

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1The term Althusserian makes reference to Louis Althusser, a French Marxist who made numerous contributions to Marxian social theory. His most noteworthy achievement was his further development of the Marxian notion of ideology (Eagleton 1991, 18).
serve the interests of the ruling class by idealizing existing institutions, practices, and ideas" (ibid., 7). Since the purpose of this investigation is to attempt to decode television's ideological messages in capitalist society, I will assume a critical stance in this particular analysis.

This theoretical perspective stems from the conviction that in western society, it is generally the white, upper-middle class male perspectives and values which are extolled and celebrated in popular culture, often to the misrepresentation or exclusion of alternative group interests, such as those of the working class, women or racial minorities. Therefore, it is important to analyze the ways in which the producers of television texts reinforce the political and social values and practices of dominant groups, while rejecting competing values and practices, if we are to understand and challenge the subjugation of the marginalized.

The importance of this undertaking may be demonstrated by considering two matters. The first, borrowed from the writings of Douglas Kellner, is the firm belief that television is an "electronic ideology machine which generally serves the interests of the dominant economic and political class forces" (Kellner 1990b, 20). In the preceding passage, the term "generally" is significant because it emphasizes that although television attempts to

induce consent to certain positions and practices . . . this process of ideological production and transmission is not a one-dimensional process of indoctrination, but, rather, is an active process of negotiation that can be resisted or transformed by audiences according to their own ends and interests (ibid., 19).

Therefore, the ways in which the producers of television texts serve the dominant social, political, economic, and cultural interests in society, along with the ways and extent to which they allow for the expression of oppositional or counterhegemonic
messages, are important considerations worthy of further investigation.

A second concern is that much of the ideology transmitted through television is done so by way of entertainment programming, especially through programs such as Star Trek, which become popular culture icons that significantly influence people's lives. A testament to the level of popularity which Star Trek has achieved over the past few decades appears in Jay Goulding's Empire, Aliens and Conquest:

Since the cancellation of the original television series in 1969, Star Trek has gained a world-wide, almost fanatical following. The series shows continuously over 300 times each week in more than 50 countries in more than 40 different languages. Dozens of conventions, hundreds of fan clubs and hundreds of magazines accompany Star Trek (Goulding 1985, VII).

This enduring popularity and influence of Star Trek makes the analysis of such programs important for understanding the hegemonic\(^2\) and ideological functions of television in western society (Kellner 1990b, 20). Towards this end, an investigation into the specific ideological and hegemonic messages presented in Star Trek, Star Trek: The Next Generation and Star Trek: Deep Space Nine will be conducted as their popularity for audience members appears to transcend the mere entertainment they derive from viewing these media presentations. This last assertion makes reference to the fact that numerous viewing audience members become so involved in this mythical universe that they form clubs around it and, in some instances, create stories which "rewrite" the program to suit their particular interests. This phenomenon will be addressed in Chapter II.

When examining popular culture texts, there are a number of perspectives from

\(^2\)The concept of hegemony refers to the ways in which the ruling power in society gains consent to its rule from subordinate classes, largely through ideological means, in order to legitimate and maintain the present social structure (Eagleton 1991, 112-13).
which to choose depending upon one’s theoretical orientation. However, when attempting to demystify the ideological and hegemonic functions of popular culture artifacts, the multidimensional and multiperspectival critical approach of Douglas Kellner, which derives from the work of the Frankfurt School, seems the most appropriate.

He contends that while it is useful to carry out textual readings from a singular perspective, such as a Marxist, feminist or structuralist one, the use of a multiplicity of approaches in the same analysis, that is, combining Marxism with feminism and structuralism, will ultimately yield more well-rounded critiques of specific phenomena than can be achieved by using a one-sided singular approach. Furthermore, certain methods are often more useful than others for examining specific elements within a given text. For instance, many Marxist approaches are excellent for delineating the political or economic imperatives associated with popular culture texts, but are generally silent on gender analysis. Similarly, numerous feminist methods are excellent for conducting gender analyses, but often ignore the larger issues relating to class interests and political economy. The point here is that combining methods in order to view matters from a variety of perspectives will result in more well-rounded critiques than can be achieved by viewing matters from just one perspective (Kellner 1991b, 17-18).

The second chapter will then discuss Star Trek as a cultural phenomenon. It will emphasize both its historical development and its transformation into a consumer-driven phenomenon. Some consideration in this section will also be given to the reception of Star Trek by its fans.

In order to properly define and discuss the specific elements which will be used
to conduct this analysis, chapter three will comprise a summary of Douglas Kellner's theory, delineating its origins in Critical Theory. It will begin with a brief description of the Frankfurt School's development of Critical Theory and then shift to a discussion of how Kellner moved away from their approach through writings borrowed from Antonio Gramsci and British cultural studies. Finally, Kellner's multidimensional and multiperspectival approach will be outlined, along with other methods and disciplines useful for conducting an analysis of the Star Trek phenomenon.

The fourth chapter will apply Kellner's critical epistemology to the original Star Trek series, including its original pilot entitled "The Cage." Primary emphasis in this chapter will be placed on the ideological representations of gender and race in the series with reference to both the texts themselves as well as their socio-historical contexts. This section will therefore not look solely at the series to examine these representations, but will consider both the context of the 1960s and, to a limited degree, the network television structure which affected the content of the series.

Chapter five will act as an epilogue for the thesis. It will analyze Star Trek: The Next Generation more briefly than the original series, but in essentially the same way. It will also compare and contrast Star Trek: The Next Generation with the original Star Trek series. Furthermore, it will also briefly compare and contrast Star Trek: Deep Space Nine with the other two series, noting its vast differences from Star Trek's original pilot, "The Cage." Finally, this chapter will outline the conclusions which can be drawn as a result of this analysis, a critical appraisal of Kellner's theoretical approach for examining the Star Trek phenomenon, and suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STAR TREK INTO A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The following discussion will both trace the historical development of the Star Trek phenomenon and illuminate readers with respect to the loyal following it has acquired over the last twenty-five years. It will provide for those readers unfamiliar with Star Trek a common framework necessary for comprehending the later application of Kellner's approach. This segment will also serve to legitimize the phenomenon itself as an appropriate corpus for this particular analysis.

2.2 THE ORIGINS OF STAR TREK

The history of Star Trek dates back to 1960 when Gene Roddenberry, then a young television writer, first conceived of the program. Impressed by the successes of such westerns as Gunsmoke and Rawhide, Roddenberry tailored his outline for Star Trek, basically a science-fiction series, as a western set in space. His reasons for this choice were clear. At the time, there had never been a successful science-fiction television series which revolved around continuing characters. All of the successful science-fiction series to date had been "anthologies," such as The Outer Limits and The Twilight Zone, which relied heavily upon the use of different characters and settings each week. Meanwhile, the television western format was extremely popular at that time (Whitfield and Roddenberry 1968, 36-7). In his original outline for Star Trek, Roddenberry detailed the specific format for his new series: "[t]he format is
"Wagon Train to the Stars"--- built around characters who travel to other worlds and meet the jeopardy and adventure which become our stories" (ibid., 23).

This basic premise has remained virtually unchanged throughout Star Trek's history. Roddenberry also populated this fictional universe with distinct and interesting characters, paying great attention to detail. Among the primary characters during this early stage of Star Trek's development were:

Captain Robert T. April, mid-thirties, an unusually strong and colorful personality, the commander of the cruiser. . . "Number One," a glacierlike, efficient female who serves as ship's Executive Officer; José "Joe" Tyler, the brilliant but sometimes immature Navigator; Mr. Spock, with a red-hued satanic look and surprisingly gentle manners; Philip "Bones" Boyce, M. D., ship's doctor and worldly cynic; and uncomfortably lovely J. M. Colt, the Captain's Yeoman (ibid., 24).

Roddenberry's attraction to the science-fiction genre was due to its ability to disguise the nature and intent of its narratives. By making use of this genre Star Trek could, at the surface level, appear to be a standard, action-oriented television adventure series. Meanwhile, at a deeper level, by setting the narratives on faraway worlds and in the future, Roddenberry could conceal the fact that Star Trek's stories were actually social commentaries on important contemporary issues including "politics, sex, economics, the stupidity of war, and half a hundred other vital subjects usually prohibited on television" during the 1960s (ibid., 21-2).

Despite the fact that Roddenberry completed his proposal for Star Trek in 1960, he did not attempt to sell it to any of the three networks until 1963. At that time, he was serving as the creator and producer of a series entitled The Lieutenant for MGM studios when he was approached by an executive there who requested that he submit ideas for new television programs. Roddenberry turned in his proposal for Star Trek to MGM who immediately rejected it, as did several other studios, on the
grounds that it was a strange concept that would be too difficult to produce while remaining within the strict time and budgetary constraints of television (ibid., 34-7).

2.3 THE FIRST STAR TREK PILOT: THE CAGE

By 1964, Roddenberry had all but given up on selling Star Trek until he received word that Desilu studios was in desperate need of television programs to produce and sell to one of the networks. After meeting with Roddenberry in April of 1964, Desilu signed him to a three year contract to create television pilots. He took this opportunity to attempt to sell Star Trek once again; this time to NBC. In May of 1964, Roddenberry met with Mort Werner, then NBC Vice-President in Charge of Programming, who read the outline for the series, liked the concept, and requested that Roddenberry submit three pilot scripts to the network. One of them would ultimately be selected for production (ibid., 40-2).

After careful consideration, the NBC executives selected a script entitled "The Cage" and supplied Roddenberry with a $630,000 budget with which to create it (ibid., 121). Both the premise and the characters remained the same as they appeared in Roddenberry's original proposal with only one notable exception: the captain's name was changed from Robert April to Christopher Pike (Asherman 1989, 13).

"The Cage" was completed in February of 1965 and screened by a collection of NBC executives who were impressed with it, yet rejected it on several grounds. Among the network's major complaints were that they felt the pilot lacked sufficient action, was too intellectually challenging for the American viewing public, featured a disturbingly "friendly" alien with a satanic appearance, and starred a strong-willed, self-sufficient woman in a powerful, second-in-command position. Despite these
objections, NBC still felt the concept was viable and offered Roddenberry the opportunity to produce a second pilot. NBC did, however, demand a couple of cast changes. They wanted both the alien, Mr. Spock, and the high-ranking female character, known only as "Number One," eliminated from the second pilot. Roddenberry objected to these changes and pleaded his case to NBC. The two factions eventually came to a compromise: "Number One" would be dropped from the new pilot, but Mr. Spock would be allowed to remain (Whitfield and Roddenberry 1968, 123-28).

Star Trek was plagued with further casting problems before production began on this new pilot. By the time that the previous difficulties between the network and Roddenberry were resolved, a number of cast members slated to star in the new pilot were contractually obligated elsewhere and replacements were needed. In the end, the only character from the original pilot to appear in the second one was, ironically, Mr. Spock (ibid., 135-6). Due to these major casting changes, "The Cage" could never be aired as part of the Star Trek series. The network's losses on the rejected pilot were later minimized as segments from it were used to create a two-part episode entitled "The Menagerie" (ibid., 126).

2.4 STAR TREK BECOMES A TELEVISION SERIES

Star Trek's second pilot, "Where No Man Has Gone Before," was completed in January of 1966 at a cost of $330,000. After viewing it, the network executives were so pleased with this more "action-oriented" pilot they announced the inclusion of Star Trek on NBC's Fall schedule. In this pilot, the characters of Captain Kirk, Lieutenant Sulu and Chief Engineer Scott were first introduced (ibid., 158-9). The characters of
Dr. McCoy, Lieutenant Uhura, and Yeoman Rand were not created until production began on the regular series. Star Trek's Russian ensign, Mr. Chekov, was not invented until after the first season and remained with the series, while Yeoman Rand was dropped from the series after its first season.

Star Trek's original run on network television was, to say the least, inauspicious. It ran for three seasons, receiving very poor ratings, and was cancelled by NBC after only 79 episodes. Star Trek would have been cancelled by the network even sooner if not for the unprecedented letter campaign organized to keep it on the air; a phenomenon requiring a more detailed discussion (Gerrold 1984, 95-9).

2.5 THE 1967 LETTER CAMPAIGN TO SAVE STAR TREK

It is impossible to pinpoint the exact moment at which Star Trek began its transformation from "just another television program" into a cultural phenomenon. However, if one were to attempt such an ambitious task, the most logical place to begin would be with the letter-writing campaign to save the series from cancellation after its second season.

This campaign began in late 1967 when Bjo Trimble, a devoted fan of Star Trek since its premiere, learned of NBC's plans to cancel the series.¹ She wrote to the network to protest its cancellation and sent out 800 letters throughout the United States, to people she had met through science-fiction conventions, urging them to do the same. Surprisingly, many of these people took up Trimble's cause to save the

¹At the time, Bjo Trimble was not only a devoted fan of the series. She enjoyed the series so much since its first episode aired, that she gradually became the official fan liaison of the series while it remained on the air (Gerrold 1984, 91).
series themselves by sending similar letters to contacts they had made at science-fiction conventions. These events caused a chain reaction whereby over one million letters were sent to NBC studios in New York and organized protests against the network were conducted in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco (ibid., 91-98). After much resistance, NBC finally complied with the wishes of fans on March 1, 1968 by making an on-air announcement that Star Trek would be returning to NBC in the Fall (Whitfield and Roddenberry 1968, 394).

Roddenberry's delight at the renewal of his series was short-lived, however, as he was informed by NBC that a similar protest the following year would not result in another renewal unless the program's ratings improved. Star Trek was then dealt a further blow when the network moved it to Friday evening at ten o'clock, practically the worst time slot. This seemed to ensure the demise of the series as it was nearly impossible at that time to achieve a large viewership on a Friday evening. The ratings for the third season remained mediocre as expected and Star Trek was cancelled as promised (Gerrold 1984, 110-11).

2.6 THE SYNDICATION OF STAR TREK

Everyone associated with Star Trek, creators, producers, actors, and fans alike, truly believed that this would be the end of the series and their lives would continue on in new directions. However, it would actually be only the beginning of the phenomenon known as Star Trek.

In 1969, Paramount, who had financed the creation of the Star Trek episodes for NBC, put together a "syndication kit" in order to sell the old episodes to independent television stations all across the United States (Asherman 1989, 139).
Numerous independent television station owners purchased Star Trek immediately and used more common-sense than NBC had in terms of scheduling it. Instead of airing Star Trek at ten o'clock in the evening, as NBC had for its final season, they aired the series in the late afternoon or early evening in order to capitalize on the teen and pre-teen audiences as well as adults. This marketing strategy was so successful that by 1973 the series had been syndicated in 146 markets, in many cases winning its ratings period (Gerrold 1973, 264). The rapidly increasing popularity of Star Trek in syndication was also supported by the 1975 Neilson/Arbitron ratings which surveyed key cities including New York, San Francisco, Denver, Cincinnati, and Baltimore. In these surveys, Star Trek consistently finished first in its time slot as late as its twelfth or thirteenth run in the same area (Sackett 1977, 11-13).

The popularity of Star Trek in syndication was not solely an American phenomenon either, but one with world-wide implications. For instance, Doug Shuit of the Los Angeles Times reported in 1972 that Star Trek was already syndicated in such distant countries as Zambia, Japan, and Argentina, as well as fifty-five other nations, not including the United States (Shuit 1972, I:1). By 1979, this number had increased to 131 foreign markets (Ryan 1979, 6:2).

The popularity of the original series has not diminished in the intervening decades either. For instance, Lewis Beale of the Chicago Tribune reported in 1986 that Star Trek was so popular that it had remained in syndication in over 140 markets for more than 15 years (Beale 1986, 2:3). Similarly, Steve Daley, also from the Chicago Tribune, reported in 1987 that Star Trek had remained syndicated in almost all American television markets since 1969. He further claimed that there was likely never a twenty-four hour time period since its syndication that it has not aired
somewhere in the world (Daley 1987, 10:6).

2.7 STAR TREK CONVENTIONS

The renewed interest in Star Trek during the early 1970s, due primarily to its syndication, prompted a number of New York fans to organize the world’s first convention to celebrate the series in January of 1972. Expecting only a few hundred guests, its organizers were surprised when the event attracted over 3,000 ardent fans. The success of this first New York convention led to it becoming an annual event attracting 6,000 fans in 1973 and 15,000 fans in 1974. After the enormous turnout at the 1974 convention, fourteen more were planned in various cities throughout the United States (Lichtenberg, Marshak, and Winston 1975, 4-5). The Star Trek phenomenon has grown steadily since the 1970s and now dozens of conventions are held throughout the United States and Canada each year with thousands of fans in attendance at each (Gerrold 1984, 106).

2.8 STAR TREK ORGANIZATIONS AND FAN CLUBS

Organizations and fan clubs associated with Star Trek have existed nearly as long as the series itself. The first official Star Trek organization formed was the Star Trek Association for Revival. It began in the 1970s with a membership of about 15,000 fans who were devoted to the monumental task of restoring Star Trek to network television. The most famous Star Trek organization established in the 1970s, however, was the Star Trek Welcommittee, formed by Helen Young of Houston, Texas (Lichtenberg, Marshak and Winston 1975, 4). It operated as a non-profit information
service which answered any questions fans of the series had regarding the episodes, actors, clubs, fanzines and newsletters of Star Trek. Its most useful contribution to fans is its publication of a Directory of Star Trek Organizations which lists complete addresses and information for the clubs, fanzines and newsletters associated with Star Trek and is updated regularly (Turnbull 1979, 40).

Since the early 1970s, Star Trek fan clubs have been forming in the United States, Canada and many other nations throughout the world. There are essentially two types of fan clubs. The first is known as a mail fan club where, for a membership fee, a fan may join a particular club, receive periodical newsletters from it and share his or her ideas and interests with other Star Trek fans. A second type is one with local chapters and its members periodically meet in person to discuss their particular Star Trek interests rather than corresponding by mail (Van Hise 1988, 10). Some of these fan clubs are devoted to the series in general, while others are dedicated to specific actors or topics. Fairly detailed information concerning all types of fan clubs is available in several sources (Turnbull 1979, 42-105; Van Hise 1988, 13-26; Van Hise 1990, 22-39).

2.9 THE STAR TREK FANZINE PHENOMENON

The most interesting phenomenon associated with Star Trek, however, has been the development of fan publications, or as they are more commonly known, "fanzines," which contain both fictional and non-fictional material written exclusively by and for fans of the series. Once composed, they are distributed, usually by the writer herself or an editor who has compiled the works of numerous authors, and then sold on a non-profit basis through mail order and at conventions. Fanzines are
unauthorized publications, however, the creators of the series allow their continued publishing so long as they are sold on a non-profit basis (Jenkins III 1988, 89). David Gerrold, a writer closely associated with both Star Trek and its resulting fandom, provides a succinct definition of this type of publication:

A fanzine . . . is an amateur magazine, generally mimeographed, sometimes dittoed, occasionally off-set printed with full-color covers, and looking better than the prozines. The fan publisher pays for it himself and generally edits it himself too; all the articles are voluntary, and generally the fan sells just enough copies to other fans to break even on the whole thing (Gerrold 1973, 159).

The publishing of Star Trek “fanzines” began shortly after its premiere on NBC in September of 1966 and their numbers have increased markedly over the ensuing decades. One popular fan-publication dedicated to the television series. These publications can be categorized as one of two types: "letterzines” and “fictionzines.” A letterzine is usually comprised of short articles and letters which discuss and comment upon the Star Trek television and film series. By contrast, a fictionzine may contain short stories, poems, and novels, composed by fans, utilizing Star Trek’s characters. The essential difference between these two types is that the former is non-fictional while the latter is fictional (Jenkins III 1988, 89).

Although not exclusively so, an overwhelming majority of fictionzines are written and distributed by women. In fact, Camille Bacon-Smith, in a 1986 New York Times article, reported that over 90% of the writing, artwork and editing of Star Trek fanzines was done by women, a curious phenomenon which prompted Smith to examine this issue in her doctoral dissertation (Smith 1986, 26).

Equally interesting is the wide array of fictionzine story types which exist. They include sexual fantasies, love stories, parodies, serials and straightforward
adventures (Lichtenberg, Marshak, and Winston 1975, 221-2). Jenkins, in a 1988 article, discussed the most popular types at length. The first type he identified focuses on female lead characters, generally Uhura or Chapel, and deals with contemporary women's issues such as the struggle for the social acceptance of career women in a male-dominated world. A second type has been dubbed the "Lieutenant Mary Sue" genre which utilizes a soap opera or romance formula as its story-telling technique allowing its writers to participate in what many women perceive to be a "traditionally masculine space opera." In these stories, young female lead characters are either experiencing or recounting their romantic encounters with leading Star Trek characters, usually Kirk or Spock. Finally, the most controversial type of fan fiction is an underground phenomenon known simply as the K/S genre. These stories generally explore an assumed homosexual relationship between Kirk and Spock, or possibly between other characters in Star Trek, which writers of the genre argue is implied in the series. Their compositions often contain sexually explicit situations, language, and artwork (Jenkins III 1988, passim).

Two other types of Star Trek fictionzines not discussed by Jenkins in his article are the "get 'em" and the "alternate universe" genres. The first type is identifiable by the fact that one or more of the leading characters meets a tragic fate by the conclusion of the story. In the second, one or more of the leading characters have different hierarchical roles in the "alternate universe" which serves as the setting for the stories. For example, in the popular fictionzine series entitled Kraith, Kirk has a subordinate role to Spock rather than the other way around (Van Hise 1990, 54-7). Finally, I must emphasize that not all fan fiction can be situated within a single category as many works contain elements which are representative of two or more
genres.

2.10 THE COMMODIFICATION OF STAR TREK

The commodification of Star Trek began in 1967 while Bjo Trimble was conducting her letter-writing campaign to save the series from cancellation. The necessary funds to save Star Trek were difficult to raise, so, in order to supplement the expensive campaign, various items from its set, including old scripts, props, and unused film clips, were auctioned to the public, generally at science-fiction conventions (Gerrold 1973, 264-65).

In the 1970s, Star Trek conventions and stores specializing in the sale of science-fiction and fantasy material became the primary sites for the commodification of the series. While it is impossible to list and discuss each piece of nostalgia associated with Star Trek, there are certain popular items. This merchandise includes novels, manuals, magazines, scripts, buttons, blueprints, photographs, posters, artwork, figurines, plates, medallions, and even costumes which fans may purchase in order to role-play their favourite characters (Van Hise 1990, 92-108).

2.11 THE ANIMATED STAR TREK SERIES

Star Trek became such a huge success in syndication during the early 1970s that Roddenberry and Paramount Pictures were approached by a number of animation companies interested in producing a Saturday morning Star Trek cartoon using the voices of the original cast (Gross 1987, 16). The contract for this new series was awarded to Filmation and NBC again purchased the product. The first episode aired
on September 8, 1973 and, like its predecessor, the series was plagued with poor ratings from the start. This was surprising since the original series, then in its fourth year of syndication, was at the height of its popularity. The animated series was soon cancelled after running for only two years and 22 episodes (Peel 1988, 18).

2.12 THE STAR TREK II SERIES

Despite the failures of both the original and animated series, Paramount still believed there was an audience for Star Trek which they could exploit. Initially, the studio planned to create a new Star Trek series featuring all of the original cast, with the exception of Leonard Nimoy who declined an offer to return, to air on the new fourth network the studio was planning. However, before production began on this new series, Paramount’s network plans fell through and the Star Trek II television project became Star Trek: The Motion Picture with Leonard Nimoy agreeing to rejoin the cast (Gross 1987, passim).

2.13 THE STAR TREK FILM SERIES

Star Trek: The Motion Picture was released in late 1979 and was moderately successful. The popularity of this first film led to the film series becoming a continuing venture resulting in the creations of five additional films to date featuring the entire primary cast: Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (1982), Star Trek III: The Search For Spock (1984), Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home (1986), Star Trek V: The Final Frontier (1989), and Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country (1991), the last released just in time to celebrate Star Trek’s twenty-fifth anniversary.
2.14 STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

The popularity of both the original Star Trek series in syndication and the ongoing film series continued throughout the 1980s leading to the creation of a new Star Trek television series featuring an entirely different array of characters, but the same basic premise, setting and philosophy as the original. Its new characters included Captain Jean Luc Picard, a human white male; Commander William Riker, also a human white male; Counsellor Deanna Troi, a telepathic Betazoid\(^4\) female; Lieutenant Commander Data, an android; Lieutenant Worf, a Klingon male; Dr. Beverly Crusher, a human white female; Lieutenant Geordie La Forge, a blind human black male; Lieutenant Tasha Yar, a human white female; and Wesley Crusher, the human white teenage son of Beverly Crusher.

Since the premiere of the series on September 26, 1987, there have been several character changes. Most notably, the character of Lieutenant Tasha Yar was killed near the end of the first season and Dr. Crusher was replaced with Dr. Pulasky, another human white female, for its second season. Dr. Crusher later returned to the series for its third season replacing Dr. Pulasky. Other character additions for the program’s second season were Guinan, a black alien female; and Transporter Chief O’Brien, a human white male. The character of Keiko, an Oriental female, was added to the cast during the fourth season of the series and introduced as O’Brien’s fiancee. During Star Trek: The Next Generation’s fifth season there was one last character addition: Ensign Ro, a Bajoran female. Bajorans are an alien race similar in appearance to humans with the exception that they have ridges on their noses. Ro

\(^4\)A Betazoid is a person from the planet Beta which is a member of the Federation. They are essentially the same as humans with the exception that they have telepathic abilities.
was originally slated to become a regular character, but then appeared in only a few episodes.

The series is set 80 years in the future from the original and most of the action again takes place aboard a starship. Unlike the past two television projects, however, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* had a moderately successful first season. The program’s ratings then increased significantly over the next few seasons and it has since become one of the most popular syndicated television shows ever (Gross and Altman 1991, *passim*). At the time of this writing, the series is in the middle of its sixth season.

2.15 THE FUTURE: STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

In January of 1993, a new *Star Trek* television series entitled *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* made its debut beginning with a special two-hour episode featuring Captain Jean Luc Picard from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The program contains mostly newcomers to the *Star Trek* universe; nevertheless, a couple of characters from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* joined the new series. In particular, two minor ones from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, namely Transporter Chief O’Brien and his wife Keiko. The new characters created just for the series include Commander Benjamin Sisko, the black male commander of the station; his young son Jake; Major Kira Nerys, a Bajoran female who is also second-in-command; Lieutenant Jadzia Dax, a

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*Originally, Ensign Ro was to join the series as well, but the actress who portrays the character, Michelle Forbes, opted instead to pursue a film project. In her place, the character of Major Kira Nerys, another female Bajoran was added to the cast.*
young female Trill\(^6\); Odo, a shape-changing alien security chief\(^7\); Dr. Julian Bashir, a young white-male physician; and Quark, a Ferengi\(^8\) businessman who operates a gambling establishment on the station.

This new series stands apart from both *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* mainly because it does not take place on a starship which travels to distant worlds, but rather aboard an alien space station located near an unstable wormhole. The tone of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* is darker and grittier than either of the previous two television series, yet remains true to the philosophy of the late Gene Roddenberry's original conception for *Star Trek*. The darker tone is due in part to the environment itself, which is more uncomfortable than that of the Enterprise, and by the fact that its narratives contain more interpersonal conflicts between major characters than those of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Altman and Gross 1992, 101-8).

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\(^6\) A Trill is a "joined species" made up of two separate but interdependent beings. The "host" provides a humanoid form or body for the two entities. The other being is a worm-like creature which is placed inside the body of the host. In this case, the host is a young female and the worm-like creature over 300 years old.

\(^7\) Odo is the only known member of his species and, as his name suggests, he can take virtually any form he desires. He appears almost human, but that is by choice. His natural state, however, is a pile of gelatinous liquid.

\(^8\) The Ferengi are a nemesis to the Federation. They are humanoid in appearance, but are generally less than five feet tall and have large ears and sharp teeth. They are also very capitalistic in nature.
CHAPTER III

THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL AND MULTIPERSPECTIVAL CRITICAL THEORETICAL APPROACH OF DOUGLAS KELLNER

3.1 WHAT IS CRITICAL THEORY?

In offering a working definition of 'Critical Theory', one important consideration should be kept in mind: there is no one unitary definition of the concept (Kellner 1989, 7). In fact, even among the originators of the approach there was not a "readily identifiable collective position, and the differences between them often overshadowed the similarities" (ibid., 1). Furthermore, Critical Theory also began as a broad area of investigation, one which has undergone so many significant changes over the years, and examined such a wide range of phenomena, that presenting an exhaustive definition of it is a near impossible task (Morrow 1985, 711). My purpose here is not to resolve these theoretical differences among the originators of Critical Theory, but to present a general working definition of the concept which may then be employed in an analysis of the Star Trek phenomenon. Best and Kellner, in Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations, present one such definition:

A critical social theory . . . detects and illuminates crucial social problems, conflicts, and contradictions, and points towards possible resolution of these problems and progressive social transformation. Critical theory analyzes fundamental relations of domination, exploitation, and the ways that hierarchy, inequality and oppression are built into social relations and practices (Best and Kellner 1991, 264).

The best way in which to present the reader with a grasp of the theoretical and methodological principles which lie behind this deceptively straightforward definition is to return to the origins of the concept and the primary theorists who contributed to its development. This undertaking is imperative since Kellner's multidimensional
and multiperspectival critical approach is built upon many of the general principles of this model.

3.2 THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL’S DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THEORY

The concept 'Critical Theory' is associated with the work of the Institute of Social Research established at the University of Frankfurt in 1923. Founded by Friedrich Pollock, Felix J. Weil, and Max Horkheimer, through funding provided by Weil's father, the Institute was Germany's first Marxist-oriented academy whose original intentions were to analyze the ways in which the ruling classes exploited and dominated the working class in capitalist societies. The primary goal of the Institute was to unite the German proletariat in the singular cause of combatting the oppression of capitalism in order to effect a progressive move towards socialism which, in their opinions, represented a more egalitarian system (Kellner 1989, 1; Jay 1973, 5-11). However, their cause was complicated by the fact that over the several decades prior to the establishment of the Institute, Germany's working class, once having had a strong revolutionary spirit, had become more integrated with the rest of German society by adopting its bourgeois ideals, even though the Frankfurt theorists believed that this was not in its best interests. For this same reason, they also felt the reawakening of the proletarian revolutionary consciousness to be a very difficult, yet essential, task as their aim of social transformation required the assistance of an "historical subject," namely the proletariat, to resist this oppression (Jay 1973, 42-4).

The work of the Critical Theorists began in the 1920s as primarily a Marxist critique of political economy, with Carl Grünberg, an orthodox Marxist, functioning as the Institute's first director. His particular brand of Marxism gave preference to
examining the political and economic modes of domination in capitalist societies, often to the exclusion of analyzing its social and cultural determinants. This strictly political economist approach was modified by Horkheimer in the 1930s when he became the Institute’s new director (Kellner 1989, 14).

During the early years of Horkheimer’s tenure, there were both internal and external pressures at the Institute which required his attention. The primary external pressure at this time was due to the fascist takeover of Germany which disrupted the Institute’s socialist project by forcing many of its primary members to flee the country. Most of those exiled established a temporary base for their operations at Columbia University in New York (Jay 1973, 43-44). While in exile at Columbia, Horkheimer sought to alter the focus of the Institute since he and many of its other younger members began to doubt the validity of utilizing a purely Marxian political economist approach. Instead of continuing to critique political economy in its writings, he shifted the Institute’s theoretical emphasis towards critiquing traditional theoretical approaches as applied to the human sciences (Kreckel 1980, 256).

The result of this shift was the formulation of the term ‘Critical Theory’ and its explication by Horkheimer himself through a collection of essays published in the late 1930s in the Institute’s journal, the Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung (Tar 1977, 28-9). The term ‘Critical Theory’ was coined and attached to the Institute’s endeavors from that point onward, instead of ‘Marxism’ or ‘socialism’, for the simple reason that once its members had relocated to the United States, they then resided in a country which was hostile to Marxist or socialist political viewpoints. They ultimately felt it necessary to develop code words to disguise the nature and intent of their writings (Kellner 1989, 45).
The most important work towards defining this theoretical approach was Horkheimer's seminal essay entitled "Traditional and Critical Theory" published in 1937 (Connerton 1980, 27; Tar 1977, 28-9; Jay 1973, 80; Kellner 1989, 43-4). In this essay, like similar ones appearing in the Zeitschrift, the concept of 'Critical Theory' was characterized as

... rooted in 'critical activity', which is oppositional and involved in a struggle for social change and the unification of theory and practice. 'Critique', in this context, therefore involves criticism of oppression and exploitation and the struggle for a better society (Kellner 1989, 46).

At this time, the Frankfurt School theorists did depart from their initial orthodox Marxian position; however, there were some elements of Marxism to which they continued to adhere: its unity of theory and practice, its desire to both interpret and change the world and, most importantly, its "assumption that all ideas about social reality... are socially determined and in this sense historically and socially relative" (Kreckel 1980, 254). While this last assertion is important, it should be qualified by keeping in mind that all interests and ideas in society, according to Marx, are not equally valued; those associated the ruling classes tend to receive more consideration. While Marx disagreed with the privileging of ruling class ideas, he did not believe they should be regarded as less valid in society than other ideas either. Nevertheless, he still called for a "critique" of them and outlined a method which he believed detected "the true' standpoint among the... social based interests and ideas in society. This was the method of critique of ideology" (ibid., 254). Marx's 'true' standpoint from which to evaluate societal ideals, was thus conceptualized as the one which reflected the interests of the proletariat, which he believed was "the moving force of history," and liberated it from the exploitation, oppression and domination of capitalism (ibid., 255).
According to Marx, the demystification and breaking of the ruling class ideas in capitalist societies must be achieved in order for this goal to be realized. He sought this accomplishment by applying his method of ideology critique to what he believed to be the most oppressive form of domination in capitalist society: political economy (ibid.). According to Marx's model, "ideology critique consists of the analysis and demystification of ruling-class ideas, and the critique of ideology is to ferret out and attack all those ideas which further . . . class domination" (Kellner 1991a, 10).

Through the critique of political economy, Marx hoped to stir the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat and move them to resist their own domination since he believed the "proletariat was the only class both interested in the abolition of class exploitation and able to bring it about" (Kreckel 1980, 255). Since the role of the proletariat as the shaper of its own social reality was crucial to the Marxian critique of political economy, the Frankfurt theorists' doubt regarding this class's revolutionary potential during the 1940s, due to the spread of fascism in Europe and the conformism of the working classes in capitalist societies, forced them to move away from this perspective (ibid.).

While the Frankfurt School theorists valued and retained the Marxian method of ideology critique in their work, they changed the object of their critique: instead of critiquing political economy, they began to critique positivist traditional theoretical approaches, as applied to the human sciences, to legitimize their perspective. In order to fully comprehend Critical Theory, then, it is first necessary to understand what is meant by a positivist or traditional theoretical approach and then to contrast it with the major tenets of Critical Theory.

Positivism, according to Horkheimer, "refers to all science of man, society and
culture attempting to follow the example of natural science by trying to analyze human reality according to the same epistemological principles as the natural world (ibid., 257). The major concern of positivism is with "the formulation of general, internally consistent principles describing the world" (ibid.). Its purpose is the acquisition of knowledge or the determination of social facts. This characteristic of traditional theory is fundamentally opposed to Critical Theory which seeks to transcend the mere acquisition of knowledge by attempting to use knowledge gained through critique to induce social action (Jay 1973, 80). For this reason, Horkheimer viewed traditional theory as a conformist approach

... characterized by... 'foundationalism', an attempt to ground theory in simple particulars, in basic 'facts',... which then builds its theoretical constructs on this foundation. Traditional theory tends to be deductive and to privilege science and mathematics; its goal... is unity and harmony, with mathematics as its model... traditional theory is thus a projection of the bourgeois ideal of the harmonious capitalist market... uncritically submitting to the dominant instrumental, quantitative and capitalist values (Kellner 1989, 45).

For all of these reasons, Horkheimer believes that traditional theory denies the possibility of social transformation as it merely contributes to the "reproduction of existing socio-economic systems" (Tar 1977, 30).

In contrast to this system-maintenance function of traditional social theories, the main concern of the critical theoretical approach advocated by Horkheimer was "with a radical transformation of existing social arrangements" where knowledge and action are unified to create a rational society which liberates the individual from the physical and ideological exploitation and domination inherent in capitalism (Tar 1977, 32; Kellner 1989, 49). The focus of traditional theory on the mere discovery of knowledge or social facts is thus condemned by Horkheimer as it reinforces the present social structure by emphasizing matters as they are instead of looking towards
progressive social transformation (Jay 1973, 82).

One final major element which separates traditional and Critical Theory is the former's emphasis on the separation of value and research. In fact, traditional theory's claim to conduct "disinterested scientific research" was rejected by Horkheimer who affirmed that the social scientist was part of the social object under analysis and "[h]is perceptions were . . . mediated through social categories through which he could not rise" (ibid., 81).

The Frankfurt School's critical theoretical project underwent additional changes during the 1940s and 1950s when the Institute's members gave up hope regarding the revolutionary potential of the proletariat and the possibility of a progressive move towards socialism. Their shift away from the classical Marxist themes of political economy, class struggle, and social relations was directly related to the specific "historical conditions" which they experienced in the United States (Kellner 1989, 83-4).

Once their belief in a revolutionary proletariat was finally abandoned, without a suitable replacement to carry out their objectives, the Frankfurt School theorists opted instead "to develop a Critical Theory . . . based on the method of critique of ideology alone" (Kreckel 1984, 256). This method is often referred to as "critical pessimism" whereby the Frankfurt School theorists viewed "instrumental rationality" as a source of technological progress on the one hand, while on the other, believed that it furthered "inhumanity, repression and false consciousness in late capitalist and state socialist societies" (ibid.). Moreover, they believed that in advanced capitalist societies, instrumental rationality was being perverted into an ideological weapon used by the ruling classes to dominate other men. Kreckel best summarizes the
gradual program shift of the Critical Theorists which began in the 1940s:

All spheres of social and cultural life in advanced capitalist societies had become increasingly affected by this "logic of instrumentalism," leaving little scope for hope. Swimming without illusions against this ideological mainstream of instrumentalism, commercialism, crude propaganda, militarism, consumerism, was the new "theoretical praxis" of Critical Theory (Kreckel 1984, 256-7).

Their radical "critical pessimism" was applied to many areas of inquiry; however, its clearest expression was in its appraisal of the effects of the 'culture industries' on both individuals and society as a whole.

3.3 THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL AND THE 'CULTURE INDUSTRIES'

In the late 1930s, while most of the Institute members were in exile in the United States due to the fascist control of Germany, the ideology-critique of the 'culture industries' and their products became of primary concern to them. This emphasis occurred because they witnessed, while residing in America, what they perceived to be the evolution of an extremely "manipulative popular culture" which was assuming the vital function of socializing its citizens, a function previously left to families, schools and religious institutions (Slater 1977, 117). Due to this occurrence, the Critical Theorists believed that culture, on the whole, was beginning to

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'The term 'culture industry' was first coined by Horkheimer and Adorno in their now famous Dialectic of Enlightenment to replace the concept of mass culture (Held 1980, 90). It refers to the mass media institutions which create standardized artistic products for mass consumption. They include the film, popular music and television industries which produce the aforementioned commodities seen by the Critical Theorists as both uniform and interchangeable (Roblin 1990, 325).
... fall ... prey ... to tendencies toward rationalization, standardization and conformity ... Thus, while culture once cultivated individuality, it was now promoting conformity and was a crucial part of 'the totally administered society' that was producing the 'end of the individual' (Kellner 1989, 121).

The Frankfurt School theorists essentially believed that, through the culture industries, the individual was now being socialized by so-called 'impersonal institutions', including television and its products, whose objectives were to serve "the interests of capital, which sought to turn culture into a series of profitable objects," and to create a conformist society which frowned upon members who deviated from its accepted norms and values (Dunn 1986, 116). As a result, the mass audience was being manipulated into passively accepting and conforming to the current social order leaving little or no hope for a progressive social transformation (Jay 1973, 216).

The Frankfurt School's actual critiques of the culture industries and their products, whether conducted by Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, or Lowenthal, were designed to condemn these institutions and their products as sources of social conformity which encourage integration into the present social structure (Kellner 1989, 122). The following discussion of art and the culture industries will focus primarily, but not exclusively, on the assertions of Adorno and Horkheimer, the most prolific Institute writers in this area. Their views were representative of the 'official' Institute position regarding these matters, although complete agreement among members on any particular issue was rare. Accordingly, their differences will not be addressed with one notable exception: the writings of Walter Benjamin, a lesser-known member of the Institute. The ways in which Benjamin's position departed from that of the other Institute members will be outlined since his perspective was both a source of controversy at the time and greatly influenced the later critical writings of
Kellner (Kellner 1989, 144).

In order to effectively analyze the culture industries, while also avoiding accusations of cultural elitism, the Frankfurt School theorists contrasted the products of the culture industries with what they termed "autonomous art" or "high culture." According to Gans, a noted expert on culture, the term

..."high culture"... refers... to the art, music, and literature... preferred by the well-educated elite... [and] the styles of thought and feelings of those who choose these products... [while] "mass culture"... refers to the symbolic products used by the uncultured majority (Gans 1974, 9-10).

By contrasting high culture with mass culture, the Critical Theorists avoided merely denouncing the regressive elements associated with the culture industries. This was accomplished by providing a "socially-grounded critique" of mass culture's qualitative differences from autonomous art which they believed legitimized their treatment of the latter as superior to the former (Dunn 1986, 118).

The Frankfurt School theorists viewed the products of the culture industries as "standardized," "pseudo-individualistic," creations designed to control the audience through the marketing of profitable goods for human consumption (Roblin 1990, 325; Held 1980, 91). In this instance, "standardized" meant formulaic, repetitious, stereotyped and virtually interchangeable with other culture industry offerings in terms of both structure and content (Roblin 1990, 325; Dunn 1986, 120). "Pseudo-individualistic" meant that these products merely pretended to offer the consumer choice, under the pretenses of appearing novel and spontaneous, while little significant variation between choices actually existed (Dunn 1986, 120). They maintained that unlike high art, these products, while hiding behind the guise of harmless entertainment by providing escapism from the harsh realities of life, were
actually "subtly indoctrinating [people] with dominant ideologies" (Kellner 1989, 131). In essence, "[t]he culture industry . . . tries to induce the individual to identify with society's typical figures and models . . . and serves as a powerful instrument of social control which induces individuals to accept their fate and conform to existing society" (ibid., 133).

In order to illustrate these assertions, Adorno often conducted analyses of the popular music industry. This began in 1932 with his analysis of jazz, and continued throughout most of his intellectual career. In these analyses, he applied the descriptive categories of commodification\(^{11}\), standardization and pseudo-individualism to music as well as a wide variety of other culture industry offerings. Adorno's most relevant research for this particular study is his application of mass culture theory to television specifically, most clearly expressed in his seminal essay "Television and the Patterns of Mass Culture" (Dunn 1986, 120-21).

In this essay, Adorno effectively illustrates mass culture's attempts to socially and psychologically control the individual through an analysis of the medium of television. According to Adorno, this control runs along two dimensions. First, the content of television programs tends to be repetitive creating a sense of familiarity with characters, themes and situations. Secondly, these programs elicit automatic responses from audience members by resolving the conflicts arising within their narratives in pre-established fashions. This pre-established resolution of conflicts generally affirms the legitimacy of the current social structure by presenting the dominant societal position as both morally correct and triumphant by the conclusion

\(^{11}\)Commodification refers to the process by which a work of art, such as music, is transformed into a commodity or exchangeable product as a result of its mechanical reproduction (Dunn 1986, 119).
of the program. For instance, a character in a television narrative who refused to conform to the current social structure was presented as a deviant "who's actions needed to be corrected," showing the viewer that that particular character's behaviour was unacceptable (ibid., 121). Similarly, the roles of the heroes in television programs suggested "identification with the existing form of social relations" and provided viewers with positive role models (Held 1980, 94).

By contrast, autonomous art consisted of those works, usually referred to as bourgeois "high art," which expressed both an affirmation and negation of the present social structure. In other words, autonomous art, to the Frankfurt School theorists, was a contradictory product which supported the present society in some ways, while in other ways criticized it. However, its primary task, according to Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse, was to repudiate the existing order in favour of a utopian vision of the world which allowed for the expression of alternative possibilities (Held 1980, 81; Dunn 1986, 117-18). Adorno in particular firmly believed that autonomous art

... provided insight into existing reality, expressing human suffering and the need for social transformation, as well as providing an aesthetic experience which helped to produce critical consciousness and awareness of the need for individual and social transformation (Kellner 1989, 129).

The creation of autonomous art therefore represented a realization on the part of the artist that the existing social order was not perfect and looked towards the emancipation of the oppressed by refusing to unquestioningly integrate with the norms of society (Roblin 1990, 328; Held 1980, 81). According to the Critical Theorists, this serious art was best characterized by its "anti-utilitarian" nature due to its refusal to serve neither the culture industries nor consumers (Roblin 1990, 328).
The best examples of "autonomous art," according to Adorno, resided in the realm of the avant-garde which strayed from the creation of affirmative, beautiful, and harmonious works "in favour of ugliness, dissonance, fragmentation and negation, which ... provided a more truthful vision of contemporary society and a more emancipatory stance for socially critical art" (Kellner 1989, 129).

3.4 WALTER BENJAMIN’S THEORY OF THE ‘CULTURE INDUSTRIES’

Although most of the Frankfurt School theorists perceived the culture industries to be tools of oppression and domination, Walter Benjamin, a lesser known member of the Institute, held a somewhat different opinion. In his seminal essay entitled "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," he addressed the impact of the development of mechanical reproduction techniques on both genuine art and mass culture. First of all, Benjamin was convinced that these innovations deprived all works of art of their "aura."

"The aura was the unique nimbus that surrounded an original work of art. It was the special sense of ... here and now ... giving authenticity to the work..." His quality of unapproachability was an essential element in a work's aura, not unconnected with the ritual, magical context out of which art originally came. It was this unique aura of a genuine work of art that could not be preserved once the art was reproduced (Jay 1973, 210).

He essentially believed reproductive technologies not only robbed genuine art and mass cultural works of their "auras," but transformed both of them into commodities for human consumption. Instead of venturing to halls to hear great musical works, or travelling to faraway countries to see classic paintings, the listener or viewer could, for a small price, purchase an audio recording or an art book and privately experience a virtually flawless reproduction of the original (Held 1980, 87).
With art's loss of aura and authenticity, Benjamin believed that its function in society changed as well: it was no longer based on "ritual" or "tradition," but rather on politics. Up until this point, Adorno and the other Frankfurt School theorists agreed with Benjamin's assessments regarding this functional change of art in society due to mechanical reproduction. Their opinions diverged, however, on their respective assessments of the effects of this functional change for society. While Benjamin mourned genuine art's loss of aura as a result of reproduction, he believed that its politicization contained societal benefits which were more important than this forfeiture. By politics, Benjamin meant that he believed mechanical reproduction would allow the proletariat the opportunity to create and distribute material which represented its interests and raise the "political consciousness" of its members in order to move them to progressive social action (Jay 1973, 210). To illustrate this point, Benjamin turned to the film industry:

[The]... proliferation of mass art, especially through film, would bring images of the contemporary world to the masses, and would help raise political consciousness by encouraging scrutiny of the world, as well as by bringing socially critical images to millions of spectators (Kellner 1989, 124).

Adorno, Horkheimer and the other Frankfurt School theorists rejected Benjamin's optimistic appraisal of the effects of mechanical reproduction in society. Instead, they believed these technologies would more likely be used by the ruling elite "to reconcile the audience to the status quo" rather than to raise their "political consciousness" (Jay 1973, 210).

3.5 THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO KELLNER'S APPROACH

Despite the fact Kellner has many reservations concerning the ways in which
the Frankfurt School applied Critical Theory to the culture industries, he acknowledges their numerous contributions to this research area. First of all, he hails them as the first theorists to recognize mass culture as an important form of social control, with its products being important vehicles for the transmission of ideology (Kellner 1989, 121).

He also heralds them for being among the first to recognize that the working class in capitalist societies was being integrated into a conservative social force which allowed itself to be dominated by the ideologies of the ruling classes. The Frankfurt School theorists blamed the rise of mass culture for much of this cooptation. In their opinions, through mass culture "people were deceived, indoctrinated and mystified [since]... mass culture was a form of ideology that served the interests of the ruling class and was thus a new mode of social control" (Kellner 1990c).

The Frankfurt School theorists knew a great deal about these manipulative powers of mass culture due to their firsthand experiences with it. In the 1930s, during the Nazi occupation of Germany, they were exposed to the political propaganda disseminated by Hitler, through film and radio, and could see the frighteningly totalitarian effect this had on the German people. Once emigrating to the United States, Institute members such as Marcuse and Lowenthal found the situation little better. During World War II, they worked in Washington at the Office of War Information and other intelligence offices where propaganda was created for the war effort. At this same time, Roosevelt was using periodical radio broadcasts to unite the American public in his efforts to combat fascism while assuring the people that victory for the United States and the Allies was imminent. While the exiled Frankfurt School members supported Roosevelt’s efforts to battle fascism in Europe, they were alarmed
by his method due to its similarities to Hitler’s use of media to unite his fascist regime (Kellner 1984, 196-7).

Furthermore, Kellner praised the Frankfurt School theorists, especially Theodor Adorno, for being among the first to recognize the repressive effects of the new technology of television which he claimed promoted conformity, stereotyping, and domination in capitalist societies (ibid., 198). Most of these concerns were expressed in his famous “How To Look At Television” article from 1954, long before many scholars even suspected any potentially dangerous ideological effects associated with the medium.\(^\text{11}\) (ibid., 201).

Finally, Kellner praises the Frankfurt School for both appropriating and further developing the Marxian method of “ideology critique” which he believes is a useful tool for engaging in radical cultural criticism which should be pursued at present (Kellner 1989, 141; ibid., 232-33). Due to its usefulness in analyzing the ideological content of popular culture artifacts, ideology critique will be the method employed in this analysis of the Star Trek phenomenon.

### 3.6 KELLNER’S DEPARTURE FROM THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL’S THEORY

While appreciating the Frankfurt School theorists for creating a theory of the culture industries which characterizes the media and popular culture as instruments of social domination, there are a variety of fundamental ways in which he departs from their position (Kellner 1984, 202; Kellner 1989, 137-8). First, he disagrees with their “elitist” distinction between “high” and “low” culture where the former is

\(^\text{11}\)For the brief discussion of this essay’s major points, see pages 32-33.
celebrated for embodying the potentiality for emancipation and social transformation, while the latter is denounced as a monolithic instrument of ideological manipulation imposed by the ruling classes on the masses from above (Kellner 1990c). While Kellner admits that this brand of "cultural discrimination" is legitimate to a degree, he believes that the dichotomy between "high" and "low" culture, which pits avantgarde 'authentic art' against mass culture, should no longer be the focus of radical cultural criticism. Kellner views this as an elitist attitude which unfairly negates the value of low culture solely on the basis of its aesthetic inferiority to high culture. He believes that Critical Theory today must avoid denouncing the culture industries and their artifacts on aesthetic grounds. Instead, it should treat mass cultural artifacts as seriously as it had previously treated high art by analyzing it using the same theoretical strategies once reserved for high culture only (Kellner 1989, 144-45). These readings would move away from making aesthetic evaluations of popular culture texts, and towards conducting political readings of texts, as suggested by Walter Benjamin, "to distinguish critical and oppositional from conformist and conservative moments in a cultural text" (Kellner 1991b, 5).

Secondly, these readings must counter the Frankfurt School's pessimistic view of mass culture as a monolithic form of domination and a total vehicle of conservative ideology. Kellner believes that this manipulation model, which assumes that the audience is merely indoctrinated and passively reproduces the ideas and behaviours disseminated through the media, is inadequate and merely reflects the elitist contempt and hostility that Horkheimer, Adorno, and the rest of the Frankfurt School theorists had for the culture of the common man (Kellner 1984, 202-3). Instead, Kellner posits another perspective:
Rather than seeing artifacts of popular culture as simple expressions of hegemonic ideology and ruling class interests, it is more useful to see popular entertainment as a complex product that contains contradictory moments of desire, as well as displacement and repression, articulations of hopes and fears, dreams and nightmares, ideological celebrations of the status quo and utopian transcendence, moments of rebellion and its attempted containment (ibid., 204).

3.7 THE INFLUENCE OF GRAMSCI AND THE HEGEMONY MODEL

Kellner's departure from classical Critical Theory's mass culture theory was influenced by British Cultural Studies, in particular the Birmingham School, which provided him with an alternative to the one-way manipulation model. This alternative was based on the "hegemony" model, developed by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, which the theorists of the Birmingham School borrowed and employed to analyze the ideological content of the culture industries and their products in a less rigid and monolithic fashion (Kellner 1990c).

Gramsci's theory of hegemony holds that cultural domination or... cultural leadership is not achieved by force or coercion, but is secured through the consent of those it will ultimately subordinate. The subordinated groups consent because they are convinced that this will serve their interests; they accept as "common sense" the view of the world offered them by the dominant group (Turner 1990, 66-7).

According to Gramsci's model, there are two ways in which ruling classes exercise power and maintain social control in bourgeois capitalist society: through "force" and "consent." Force is exercised through institutions such as the government, the police and the military, who use violence or coercion to enforce societal rules. By contrast, consent is achieved through institutions such as churches, schools, or the culture industries which utilize hegemonic ideology in order to legitimate the existing social structure (Kellner 1990b, 17).
It is this second mode of social control which is of interest in this thesis. Rather than viewing mass culture as a monolithic instrument of social control, the hegemony model of culture is more complex, viewing "dominant ideological formations and discourses" as a shifting terrain of consensus, struggle and compromise (ibid., 16). This means that even within the confines of the ruling classes themselves, there is no one "dominant ideology" imposed on the masses from above. Instead, there are separate interest groups within the ruling classes struggling for social dominance as well. This means that even once hegemony is won by a specific dominant group, it is still "never a once-and-for-all achievement, but 'has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended and modified'" (Eagleton 1991, 115).

Furthermore, although ruling groups attempt to ideologically control and dominate subordinate groups, these endeavors are not always successful. Individuals may not accept the dominant ideologies to which they are exposed, due to exposures to counter-experiences and discourses, and actively resist them (Kellner 1990b, 16). This phenomenon demonstrates the possibility of a counter-hegemony in society: a resistance to the dominant ideology.

The dominant forces in Western society are in a constant struggle with opposing social forces, such as socialists and feminists, who are also striving to have their views represented as well. Thus, society is always in a matrix of struggle. Due to this occurrence, popular culture, too, becomes a contested terrain where different groups battle for the representation of their interests. These conflicts are often

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1'Discourse theory is a specific method of analysis which asserts that meaning is not simply given to phenomena, but rather is socially determined (Kellner 1991, 26). However, the sense in which Kellner appears to use the term "discourse" in this instance is a more traditional one which roughly translates as conversation, talk or lecture.
articulated in popular culture where various subcultures produce texts that reflect or reproduce their respective beliefs and concerns (Kellner 1990c).

Gramsci's model can be further clarified by relating it to television specifically, a hegemonic institution used by the ruling classes to attempt the ideological domination of individuals. According to this model,

...[t]elevision... mobilizes images, forms, style and ideas to present ideological positions. It draws on and processes social experience, uses familiar generic codes and forms, and employs rhetorical and persuasive devices to attempt to induce consent to certain positions and practices. Yet this process of ideological production and transmission is not a onedimensional process of indoctrination, but rather, is an active process of negotiation that can be resisted or transformed by audiences according to their own ends and interests (Kellner 1990b, 18-19).

Accordingly, I do not analyze the Star Trek phenomenon as a simplistic producer of one-dimensional dominant ideology, but as a complex product which espouses contradictory messages, that I can examine from a variety of perspectives.

3.8 THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL AND MULTIPERSPECTIVAL CRITICAL APPROACH

Prior to the application of Kellner's method to the Star Trek phenomenon, it is first necessary to define and describe a number of its terms in order to give readers a basic understanding of them. According to Kellner, a critical social theory exhibits multidimensionality by refusing to reduce social phenomena to only one dimension of social reality. In other words, it considers the "connections between the economic, political, social and cultural dimensions of society... that relate social phenomena to each other and the dominant mode of social organization" (Best and Kellner 1991, 263). A multidimensional critical theory pays considerable attention to all four of these major dimensions of social reality, since all are interrelated and each one
significantly affects the others.

Secondly, a social theory exhibits multiperspectivity by viewing matters from a variety of perspectives, instead of from just one. It must be emphasized here that a perspective is merely a "way of seeing" and suggests that the particular one chosen by a researcher is only one of a number of vantage points from which to view social phenomena and does not necessarily mirror all of reality. One must also remember that a perspective is not all-inclusive either; it is selective and subject to the predilections of the researcher (ibid., 264-65).

Furthermore, a perspective, when functioning as a theoretical tool applied in conjunction with social theory, can refer to a wide array of items. This includes entire disciplines, schools of thought within a single discipline, and individual theories or positions (ibid., 265). According to Kellner, when conducting critical analyses it is best to combine appropriate theoretical tools or perspectives which will illuminate the social phenomenon under investigation, rather than select perspectives in a haphazard or unsystematic fashion. For instance, Kellner believes we must apply a number of critical methods, including ideology critique, semiotics, psychoanalysis and feminism, to the reading of television texts in order to fully comprehend their complex dimensions (ibid., 266).

The following textual analysis of Star Trek is conducted via the multidimensional critical theoretical approach known as ideology-critique, developed by Marx, discussed earlier in this chapter. However, many believe that the initial focus of Marx's approach, limited to critiquing class oppression and domination, to the exclusion of other modes of domination, is incomplete. By limiting oneself to a class

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13 For a complete discussion of Marx's development of ideology critique see pages 28 to 30.
analysis, it makes it appear as though it is the only type of oppression and domination occurring in society. This is clearly not the case (Kellner 1991a, 10). Accordingly, this particular ideology critique will analyze the texts and representations which legitimate gender and race domination.

According to Kellner, when conducting ideology critiques of popular culture texts, one is analyzing the "images, symbols, myths, and narrative as well as propositions and systems of belief" (Kellner 1990a, 90). Therefore, the ensuing ideology critique examines all of these important elements within the corpus of Star Trek, Star Trek: The Next Generation and Star Trek: Deep Space Nine texts.

The concept of ideology used in this analysis will be extended to include texts, images and ideas which legitimate the domination of women and racial minorities by white men, thereby serving ruling gender and race interests (ibid.). More specifically, my definition of ideology, borrowed from Kellner's writings, will refer to "a set of ideas that legitimate the existing organization of society and obscures class/gender/race domination, oppression, exploitation, inequality, and the like" (Kellner 1990b, 7).

This expansion of ideology into the realms of gender and race is especially important for the study of cultural texts "because it opens the way to the exploration of how ideology functions within culture and everyday life and to see how images and figures constitute part of the ideological representations of sex, race and class in film and popular culture" (Kellner 1990a, 90-1).

Although class is at least as important a category to consider as gender and race in an ideology critique, I will focus on the two latter issues. In order to carry out this ideology critique, my study will also be multiperspectival, blending elements from Marxism, socialist feminism and myth analysis together to examine the values and
beliefs, whether hegemonic or oppositional, reinforced through the Star Trek phenomenon. I will define and explain the important concepts within these disciplines and schools of thought in the analysis section prior to their applications. At this time, however, I will briefly describe each of the four perspectives in general, beginning with Marxism.

First of all, there is no one definition of Marxism with which everyone will agree, due to individual differences between theorists regarding what should be included in the perspective and what is beyond its scope. However, Robert Heilbroner, a noted expert in Marxist theory, argues convincingly that while widespread debates concerning the purview of Marxism exist, there are four basic elements which characterize it. The first emphasizes that Marxism is a dialectical approach to knowledge. Heilbroner is quick to add that the concept of dialectics is impossible to briefly summarize, but believes there is a central core to the concept which can be stated succinctly: "This dialectical core is principally revealed in a view that considers the innermost nature of things to be dynamic and conflictual rather than inert and static; a view, therefore, that searches within things for their 'contradictory' attributes" (Heilbroner 1980, 20).

Secondly, all branches of Marxism adhere to the notion that it is a "materialist approach to history." While acknowledging that materialism is another concept which is impossible to adequately summarize briefly, he defines it generally as a "perspective that highlights the central role played in history by the productive activities of mankind, and that therefore locates a principal motive for historical change in the struggle among social classes over their respective shares in the fruits of production" (ibid., 21).
A third common element in all forms of Marxism is that writers in the area have a shared view of capitalism based on Marx's socioanalysis. In other words, Marxist writers "accept and begin from . . . an understanding of what capitalism 'is' that derives from Marx's original insight" (ibid.). Finally, all brands of Marxism are committed to socialism and believe in a "unity of theory and practice," the purpose of which is to aid the transformation of capitalist societies into socialist ones for the betterment of humankind (ibid., 22).

Socialist feminism is another perspective which defies a succinct definition due to a lack of agreement among its proponents concerning who belongs to the movement and which content is its appropriate subject matter (Jaggar 1983, 123). Therefore, the definition of socialist feminism presented here will not be all-inclusive either, but rather a working one derived primarily from the writings of Alison Jaggar and Caroline Ramazanoglu.

According to Jaggar, the primary goal of socialist feminism is the attainment of equality for all women. Its proponents believe this can only be achieved by overthrowing capitalism in favour of a new political and economic system which is neither male-dominated nor allows any social group to dominate other ones. Socialist feminism also vigorously contests all manifestations of sexism in capitalist societies including the inferior economic and legal status of women, the sexual division of labour, and the control of women's reproduction. Furthermore, socialist feminists often unite with the working class against the capitalist system in general which they maintain creates poverty amidst wealth (Jaggar 1978, 140-41). In order to bring across its major objectives, socialist feminism draws "on radical feminist notions of patriarchy (the generalized power of men over women) and on the notion of sexual
politics (the general struggle of women against men’s power over them)” (Ramazanoglu 1989, 15).

Lastly, I will use myth analysis within the structure of this thesis in a fashion reminiscent of Kellner’s writings. According to his perspective, myths are stories used by societies to “dramatize society’s values, ideals and way of life; they are enacted in story-telling media and are often embedded in rituals” (Kellner 1982, 133). The chief reason myths must be studied in conjunction with this model is that they attempt to indoctrinate people with dominant ideologies at the same time as they entertain them. Myths contain within their narratives both heroes who support society’s ideals and villains who reject them. Their simplistic morality tales tend to support existing societal ideals and values, while at the same time “deligitimizing[ing] oppositional and non-conformist behaviour; the entertaining form of these tales, however, masks their moral thrust, and the viewer is usually oblivious to their ideological dimension” (ibid., 134). According to Kellner, we must “demythologize” the myths associated with advanced capitalist societies because they are the “bearers of its ideologies” which attempt to preserve capitalism’s legitimacy and social stability (ibid.). Similar to Kellner’s analysis of myths and mythologies, I also make use of elements from this perspective in my analysis.

When examining a cultural artifact as complex as Star Trek, it is inadequate to conduct a textual analysis exclusively. During my analysis, I will therefore broaden the scope of the investigation by also situating its texts within their socio-historical contexts (Kellner 1991c, 22-3). For the original Star Trek series, considering the socio-historical context means examining the text in relation to the geo-political economy of the 1960s. This is important, since Kellner believes that television broadcasting
intervenes in the matrix of struggle between various forces at specific socio-historical junctures and that these struggles often find expression within television programming. They are political, economic, social or cultural struggles between various factions which are attempts to obtain power, control, and legitimation within these realms (Kellner 1990b, 21). Similarly, for Star Trek: The Next Generation and Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, I relate their texts to the geo-political economy of the 1980s and 1990s. More specifically, the analysis will be contextualized by reading all three programs politically, as suggested by Kellner, by making reference to the social and political climates of their particular time periods (Kellner 1990a, 102-3). In this way, I will show how the content of Star Trek, Star Trek: The Next Generation and Star Trek: Deep Space Nine are bound up with and shaped by their particular contexts.

To summarize, this thesis will apply the multidimensional and multiperspectival critical theoretical approach of Douglas Kellner to the Star Trek phenomenon. This will entail examining Star Trek, Star Trek: The Next Generation, and Star Trek: Deep Space Nine paying attention to the texts themselves and their socio-historical contexts. The overall guiding method of this analysis is ideology critique which is used to ferret out the progressive as well as the regressive ideological representations of gender and race exhibited in these texts. Accordingly, the Star Trek phenomenon will not be criticized for being a simplistic producer of one-dimensional conservative ideology, but will instead be examined as a complex product containing a plurality of political positions which are often conflictual or contradictory.

To add depth to the analysis, elements from a number of perspectives including Marxism, socialist feminism and myth analysis, are employed.
Finally, I must stress that the interpretations outlined in this critique are not necessarily the only meanings, or even the privileged meanings which may be derived from the reading of these texts, but represent my subjective interpretation of them in conjunction with the theoretical framework. My purpose here as investigator is to attempt to present a balanced account of these conflictual texts and intervene in support of the side which is deemed the most progressive.
CHAPTER IV

AN IDEOLOGY CRITIQUE OF THE ORIGINAL STAR TREK SERIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the Marxian tradition, this chapter, and the one following it, will entail political readings of the texts of Star Trek by, on the one hand, uncovering the sexist and racist ideologies in them, while on the other, acknowledging progressive\(^1\) or critical moments as they appear. One must remember that these particular types of images, figures and representations are not limited to the texts of Star Trek, but appear in most other television programs as well. Since television is a complex and influential medium, as emphasized in Chapter I, I believe it is important to critique the ideological messages in its programming which are oppressive\(^2\) and serve the interests of the dominant social, political, cultural and economic groups in capitalist society, while at the same time to acknowledge any progressive or emancipatory messages the medium contributes.

An analysis of the ideological representations of gender and race in Star Trek will be conducted in two separate sections beginning with the issue of gender. In order to critique these representations in Star Trek, I will combine theoretical elements from Marxism, socialist feminism and myth analysis, looking both at the images presented in the narratives and at the overall structure of the series. Once

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\(^1\)In this context, the term progressive applies to those ideas, images and representations in the texts which oppose the continued subservience of women and non-whites to white males and promote their equality.

\(^2\)In this context, the term oppressive refers to those ideas, images and representations in the texts which symbolically or directly oppose equality for women and non-whites.
these representations have been outlined, I will then contextualize them by explaining their significance with respect to their particular socio-historical contexts.

*Star Trek*'s pilot episode entitled "The Cage" will be examined in this chapter prior to the original series, and then later compared and contrasted with *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* in my concluding chapter, to emphasize its vast difference from the original pilot. "The Cage" will be analyzed here in great detail, in comparison to any other single *Star Trek* episode, since it is unique and features major characters in this particular narrative who only briefly appear again. Before my textual analysis of "The Cage," I will first present a brief summary of it to ensure that readers will clearly comprehend the critique.

4.2 A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF "THE CAGE"

In this narrative, the U.S.S. Enterprise, commanded by Captain Christopher Pike, investigates the possible crash-landing of a spaceship on a planet named Talos IV. When the captain and his landing party beam down to its surface, they discover a group of aged scientists and a young woman named Vina who claim to have crashed there nearly two decades ago. A mutual attraction immediately develops between Captain Pike and the young woman.

Meanwhile, in an underground cavern, a collection of pale, bald, telepathic aliens are secretly observing the interaction between Pike and Vina with great interest. When Pike asks Vina how the group of survivors have stayed in such good health on this barren planet, she replies that the answer lies at a nearby hill and leads him to it. An opening suddenly appears in the side of this hill and the aliens emerge, render the captain unconscious and drag him into it. Simultaneously, the
aged scientists and Vina disappear.

Below the surface of Talos IV, Pike is caged by the aliens who probe his mind and proceed to create various fantasy illusions for him featuring Vina first as a princess, then his wife, and finally a slave girl. The purpose of these illusions is to make Vina appealing to Pike so that the two of them will mate and create other humans for an alien "zoo." When Pike refuses to cooperate, the aliens perceive the problem to be Vina, so they kidnap "Number One" and Yeoman Colt as other potential mates for him.

After being caged together for a short while, Pike manages to capture one of the Talosians attempting to retrieve two phasers that "Number One" and Yeoman Colt were wearing when kidnapped. The three Enterprise crew members, along with Vina, escape with the alien to the surface of the planet. Once on the surface, the captured Talosian claims that he wanted the group to escape all along and tells Pike that he wants him to repopulate Talos IV with the female of his choosing. Two more Talosians suddenly appear beside the hill. Pike tells them that he will comply with their demand if "Number One" and Yeoman Colt are allowed to return to the Enterprise. Before they can respond to his proposal, "Number One" sets her phaser on overload stating that she would rather die than have the captain remain against his will. All of the humans, including Vina, stand with her, willing to sacrifice their lives as well.

At that moment, the Talosians realize that the captured humans are too violent for their purposes and agree to allow them to return to their vessel. "Number One" turns the phaser off and she, along with Yeoman Colt, is suddenly transported back aboard the Enterprise. Pike wants to take Vina with him as well; however she
informs him of her desire to remain on Talos IV due to the fact her physical appearance is merely an illusion provided by the Talosians. In reality, she is a disfigured middle-aged woman, the sole survivor of the S.S. Columbia crash. The Talosians reveal Vina's disfigurement to Pike who then leaves her behind on Talos IV without further argument knowing that she will lead a happier life there than if she returned to her home world.

4.3 IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER IN "THE CAGE"

An ideological analysis of "The Cage" reveals that it, like most television programming, is a complex product which defies a simplistic interpretation. The episode is both extremely sexist, yet somewhat progressive. It offers its audience images, figures and myths regarding women which range from regressive\(^{16}\) ones which depict them as scantily-clad sex objects, domestic housewives, and physically weak females requiring male protection, to more progressive images of them as competent, intelligent and resourceful people.

Sexist elements appear early in the pilot when the audience is introduced to the character of Yeoman Colt, whose job as yeoman resembles that of a handmaiden and secretary. She performs numerous service tasks for the captain; most noticeably the taking care of routine paperwork. This image of Colt exposes viewers to a mythical universe which has a distinct job segregation by sex. This segregation is hierarchical in nature with women generally occupying positions of secondary importance, present to serve men and assist them with their primary tasks.

\(^{16}\)In this context, the term regressive refers to those ideas, images and representations in the texts which support the continued dominance of women and non-whites by white males.
Furthermore, in her brief exchange with Pike in the narrative, Yeoman Colt is portrayed as both nervous and clumsy as she nearly collides with him on the bridge when delivering some forms. The captain responds by behaving abruptly with her and chastising her for approaching him on the bridge; that is, until she reminds him that he requested the paperwork be given to him at this time. After Colt's departure, Pike feels guilty for his behaviour towards her and openly apologizes to the bridge crew using the excuse that it was difficult for him to accept women working on the bridge. Ideologically, this scene may be read at least two ways. First, his impatience with Colt, and subsequent apology, could both symbolize and give voice to an underlying conservative male fear for the "intrusion" of women into traditionally male occupational spheres. Secondly, the scene can also be read as both a subtle insult to "Number One," who is a woman, and an insult to women in general. I will now clarify this last point through a detailed analysis of the scene.

After his comment regarding women on the bridge, "Number One" turns to Pike and he apologizes to her, while quickly adding that he does not consider her a woman in the same sense as Yeoman Colt. The underlying ideological message here is that although "Number One" is obviously a woman, she is not deemed a "real" woman by Pike because she does not behave in accordance with any of his stereotypical impressions of women. Her character is presented as cool, rational, efficient, and intelligent; due to this, she is perceived by him to be more like a man than a woman. The underlying political position of this scene is highly conservative and reactionary, in opposition to liberal feminism, with the dominant message to viewers being that if women enter traditionally male domains and occupations, they may have to forfeit being viewed as "real" women by their male counterparts. Later
in the pilot, we are introduced to Pike's range of "appropriate" images of women when his fantasies are used by the aliens as illusional experiments for himself and Vina.

The captain's attitude in the first exchange is also sexist towards women in general. His comment on the bridge shows that he identifies the female gender with the qualities exhibited by Yeoman Colt in his exchange with her. During this interaction with Pike, she appears clumsy, nervous, and passive, especially in exchanges with a male superior; qualities which seemingly constitute at least one of his stereotypical images of a woman.

The images of Vina in the pilot, especially in the masculine fantasies of Pike, are also stereotypical and point to the sexist ideology operating within the narrative. In the first illusion, Pike is sent back to Rigel III, a place he had been a short time ago, where he fought a brutish giant. In this fantasy, Vina is present, dressed as a "princess" from earth's middle ages. The image she evokes in these scenes is that of a weak, helpless "damsel in distress" archetype who requires Pike's protection from the evil, violent brute out to harm her. Pike is forced to fight the giant and ultimately kills him in order to protect her. Even though it is never "wrong" to protect or assist a person who is in danger, it is sexist to continuously present women as weak, helpless beings who are unable to defend themselves and therefore require male protection. Sexist imagery is also expressed in this scene through the characterization of Pike. As much as it is sexist towards women, it is a similarly regressive image of maleness as well. The scene, using Pike as a model, justifies a stereotypical definition of masculinity in terms of the mythical male warrior who legitimizes the use of force and violence to resolve conflicts.

The second illusion places Vina in the role of Pike's adoring wife on a picnic
with him at his ranch on earth. During the fantasy, Vina is unpacking a picnic basket while talking to him. The figure she presents here is that of a wholesome, conservative housewife akin to 1950s television wives and mothers, content in her role of providing domestic services for her husband. In this scene, she promotes conservative family values and is a figure of female domesticity.

In the final fantasy, Vina portrays an olive-skinned slave girl. Throughout the scene, she is scantily-clad, thus objectifying her body, and dances seductively for Pike in an illusionary harem. Here she connotes the regressive image of "woman" as a sexual temptress who uses her physical attractiveness to entice men to succumb to her advances.

All three of these fantasies cater to three of the primary stereotypical masculine fantasies men have concerning women and point to the patriarchal nature of the pilot. In all of them, Vina embodies female images and figures which cater to male conceptions, needs and fantasies. In each of them, the male is placed in a position of power, since the illusions are created for his benefit, and the female in a position of submission or dependence on the male for protection, attention and adoration.

One could argue, however, that Pike's ultimate rejection of all three of these fantasies symbolically represents his rejection of ideologically regressive images of women. However, I believe this would be an incorrect interpretation. Instead I submit that when Pike rejects the fantasies he is not consciously opposing the sexist images of Vina in them, since these fantasies are taken from his own mind, but

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17In this context, I use the term objectify to refer to the way in which female characters are treated as sex objects who are valued only for their physical appearances. This treatment ignores both their internal (and more important) qualities and the fact that they are complex beings.
instead is resisting his own captivity. In these scenes, Pike is incessantly preoccupied with discovering a way to escape his captors. To have accepted these fantasies and cooperated with the Talosians would have meant that he would have also had to accept his captivity. His quest for freedom overrode any other desires he may have otherwise had. Therefore, I believe it was the context in which the fantasies were presented to him that triggered his resistance of them.

Probably the most regressive aspect of the exchanges between Pike and Vina in the narrative is the overall ideological message she delivers to the audience. Throughout the entire episode, she begs Pike to cooperate with the Talosians and to choose fantasies that they can experience together. She implores him to choose fantasies he in particular wants to experience. Thus, even by Vina’s own admission, her hopes, dreams and fantasies are subordinate to those of Pike. This promotes an oppressive image of women as beings who are content to live their lives catering to the fantasies of men, instead of realizing their own dreams.

Finally, the figure of Vina enticing Pike to the hill opening, to ultimately become her mate, serves to perpetuate a popular contemporary myth that women frequently use deception to “trap” potential mates; a theme explored in countless films and television programs.

Both perspective and technical devices also play important roles in presenting ideological positions concerning gender. In this particular offering, most of the narrative is presented from the male point of view, primarily that of Pike. Throughout the episode, Vina’s physical attractiveness is emphasized through the use of technical devices associated with the medium. For instance, when she is first introduced to the Enterprise’s landing party, the male group disperses and she is
allowed to walk up the center of the screen towards Pike and the camera, as it closes in on her face. Instantly, the men stop speaking and stare at her as she approaches. She is framed as the center of attention and her physical attractiveness is highlighted and objectified both by the camera and the gaze of the males in the scene, while mysterious, alluring music accompanies her entrance. Similarly, technical devices are used to intensify the illusion in which Vina dances for Pike as the slave girl. In this scene, numerous close-ups of Pike's face, along with those of his illusionary companions, are interspersed with long, medium and close-up shots of Vina which follow her body as she dances seductively for them. As the sequence progresses, the close-ups of Pike's face increase in both length and frequency and he begins to look troubled and perspire, emphasizing the sexual tension he experiences while watching her dance. The music to which she dances also becomes more intense as the scene progresses. This segment, as a whole, objectifies women's features and encourages male viewers to engage in lustful voyeurism along with Pike.

Finally, the regressive ideological message that a woman's value to humanity may be equated with her physical attractiveness is reinforced in the narrative near its conclusion. In this scene, Vina informs Pike that she wishes to remain on Talos IV due to her physical disfigurement. The ideological message here is that she would rather live in a fantasy world where she can retain an illusory sense of beauty than live in a real world where she would likely experience rejection, primarily by men, due to her physical appearance.

These sexist images of women in "The Cage," however, are offset somewhat by the more progressive images of women embodied by the character of "Number One." Although she is excluded by Pike from the initial landing party which beams down to
the surface of Talos IV, her role becomes increasingly progressive, and in some respects emancipatory, once he is captured by the Talosians.

Immediately following Pike’s capture, "Number One" assumes command of the Enterprise and organizes the rescue of the captain. In these scenes, she is depicted as a strong, competent leader who is respected by the other crew members. She is not portrayed as a stereotypical weak, passive female who needs to be rescued by a man, as Vina is in the “princess” fantasy, but as a capable and resourceful woman who can take care of herself as well as be instrumental in securing the captain’s freedom near the end of the episode. However, one final contradiction is evident in this scene. The manner in which she rescues Captain Pike can be interpreted as a typically female one: she does not accomplish it through combat, as a male hero would likely have done, but by threatening to commit suicide.

4.4 IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF RACE IN "THE CAGE"

The ideological representations of race in "The Cage" can be dealt with adequately very briefly due to the fact that this issue is largely ignored in it. However, since "The Cage" is only a brief pilot episode, running just over an hour in length, its neglect may not be considered unusual. Nevertheless, a few speculations may be drawn regarding this omission.

Essentially, representations of race have little or no impact in "The Cage" since all of the primary characters in it are Caucasian. This is especially surprising since Roddenberry’s original conception for the series was intended to be progressive by employing a multiracial cast and using its narratives to comment upon significant contemporary social issues. Certainly race should have qualified as a significant
contemporary social issue. Furthermore, the 1960s was arguably one of the most turbulent decades in American history with respect to race. Countless events, most notably the race riots of the late 1960s and the black struggle for equality led by Martin Luther King, were taking place all across the nation.

This lack of representation must be viewed as regressive to some degree. For as Kellner states, what is excluded from representation, in terms of marginalized voices, particularly in cultural texts, is often as important as what is included. This phenomenon is known as the "logic of exclusion" where certain voices and images are excluded from expression in the media due either to the fact that the government does not support these positions or media executives fear that they will offend certain segments of the population by including them (Kellner 1990b, 9). In a time so rife with conflict over race, it is disturbing that a program which claims to represent an optimistic mythical future would exclude non-whites from active participation in that future.

What might be concluded is that the pilot merely glosses over the issue of race by presenting a simplistic, homogenized view of earth's future with white humans making all of the significant contributions towards space exploration. However, one must not be excessively critical of "The Cage" for this omission because it does present some fairly progressive images of women. Perhaps its creators believed that including progressive images of race in the same narrative would have been too controversial at the time.
4.5 CONTEXTUALIZING THE IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER AND RACE IN "THE CAGE"

In Chapter III, I discuss the Gramscian notion of hegemony which, when applied to television, shows the ways in which ruling class interests use television as a forum to reproduce, in some form, the struggles and contradictions occurring in society at the time. In the 1960s, the era in which the pilot was produced, the sexual revolution was in full swing, the women’s liberation movement was rapidly expanding, and television was just beginning to leave its era of exclusively ultra-conservative and restrictive portrayals of women. In many respects, "The Cage" reproduces within its narrative these same societal conflicts with respect to the issues of gender and gender roles occurring in the 1960s.

For instance, the character of Vina symbolically represents the passive, oppressed, domestic woman, especially in the scenes where she is held "captive" by the aliens (who are male) and subject to their patriarchal authority (controlled and punished for misbehaving). While held in captivity she is forced to participate in their illusion experiments. Her subservience to the Talosians is not only due to the fact they saved her life when her ship crashed on the surface of the planet, but also because they provided her with the necessities of life, including food, shelter and clothing, for nearly two decades. Symbolically they represent her male providers, much as men have been considered the primary providers for their wives and families for most of recorded history. Vina’s relationship to the Talosians reinforces the dominant traditional conservative values of American society which attempt to keep women domesticated and at the service of men.

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*For an extensive discussion of hegemony and its relationship to television see pages 39-41.*
By contrast, the character of "Number One" is symbolic of the independent career woman beginning to emerge during the 1960s. She is not dependent on males for her sustenance since she is earning her own living. Read symbolically, "Number One," travelling aboard the Enterprise, in a relatively powerful position, displays an image of "woman" as an individual who is free to explore her potential and unrestricted by the same captivity as Vina or the more domestic women still prevalent in the 1960s. To the viewing audience, she is a progressive figure of the free and independent woman who, to some degree, provides a worthy model for career-oriented women to identify with and emulate. Her image legitimizes life choices for women which move beyond that of homemaker or occupations such as nurses or secretaries often considered primarily female domains. One can see the clashes between these two types of representations occurring throughout the text as well as within the context of the 1960s themselves.

By examining these contradictory images of women in the pilot, one can see it providing, on the one hand, the traditional male-oriented view of women which keeps them subservient, while on the other, liberated images of women, at least for its time, which allow them a measure of freedom. However, the image of "Number One," also contains a number of contradictions which reinforce the notion that she, and ultimately 1960s females, cannot acquire complete freedom. For instance, even though "Number One" has more independence than many women of the 1960s, she is still subject to patriarchal authority, most directly embodied in the figure of Captain Pike. A good illustration of this point is Pike's decision to exclude her from the original landing party to the surface of Talos IV, a decision he claims to have made for two reasons: to protect her from potential danger on a planet he maintains is an
"unknown quantity" and to have a competent officer remain aboard the ship in case of an emergency. These two reasons can lead one to read the scene in two very different, yet valid ways. If one considers Pike's first reason to be the primary determinant for his decision and the second one to be merely a convenient excuse, this scene could be read as a reminder to her and women of the 1960s that although women are allowed to enter more spheres of public life than ever before, they are still restricted by patriarchal ideologies which depict females as beings who require male protection from physical danger. If one considers Pike's second reason to be the primary determinant for his decision, the scene could be read as more progressive. It would then symbolize Pike's confidence in "Number One" to keep the ship running smoothly and efficiently in his absence. In essence, it would show that he feels comfortable leaving the ship in the hands of "Number One" and, more importantly, in the hands of a woman, during his absence. To me, it appears as though both interpretations are valid and serves to further demonstrate the ambiguous nature of television narratives and a reluctance on the part of the pilot's creators to take a firm stand with regard to gender issues.

Perhaps the most telling scene with respect to gender in the episode, which reflects the debates over gender roles in the 1960s, is the bridge incident between Captain Pike and "Number One" where he states his ambivalence regarding serving with women on a starship. Read contextually, this can be seen as a conservative fear of 1960s males for the more independent women of the time who were beginning to enter traditionally male vocations. Pike's behaviour symbolizes the ambivalent feelings that traditional men have regarding the expanding roles of women in society. These same issues concerning women are still highly contested even today. However,
if one looks deeper into the pilot, the success of "Number One" in leading the crew during Pike's absence and securing his rescue may be read as a reaction and challenge to the chauvinistic attitude that women are incapable of succeeding in traditionally male domains.

Finally, with respect to the issue of race, Kellner's notion of the "logic of exclusion," which asserts that those images and positions which are excluded from the narrative can often be as significant as those included in them, requires some additional consideration (Kellner 1990b, 9). The fact that the pilot seemingly glossed over the representations of race appears to represent the ambivalence of the dominant ideology towards this issue. It was likely unsure of where to stand on the issue of race, so opted instead to ignore it entirely.

4.6 INTRODUCTION TO A CRITIQUE OF THE STAR TREK SERIES

In section 4.1, I express the difficulties one faces when engaging in ideological criticisms of television narratives, due both to the complex and often contradictory messages contained within them and the multiple interpretations which may be inferred from them. These difficulties become even more pronounced when critiquing an entire series, instead of a single episode, since one faces the difficult task of selecting appropriate representations from a large body of texts. Furthermore, it is impossible in a composition of this size to critique all of the episodes in as great detail as "The Cage" was previously examined. Therefore, the following analysis of the original Star Trek series will be more generalized, examining on an overall basis significant themes, images and representations with respect to the issues of gender and race. The points made during the analysis will then be supported by examples
drawn from particular episodes. This segment will be organized in much the same fashion as the one in which "The Cage" was examined."

4.7 IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER IN STAR TREK

The following analysis will critique the images and treatment of the female gender in the original Star Trek series through an examination of both recurring and guest female characters in its narratives. To be a comprehensive gender critique, it will also criticize the ways in which male characters have more power and responsibility, and also have their perspectives privileged over female ones in the episodes. This important issue will begin the analysis.

In the original Star Trek series, there are three female characters with recurring roles: Yeoman Rand, Lieutenant Uhura, and Nurse Chapel. However, only one of these characters, namely Lieutenant Uhura, appears in most of the episodes and is a primary character of any consequence. Yeoman Rand is dropped from the series in the middle of Star Trek’s first season, and is never replaced, after appearing in about a half dozen episodes, while Nurse Chapel appears in less than a quarter of them even though she remains with the series throughout its production. On the other hand, there are six recurring male characters in Star Trek, namely Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Scotty, Sulu, and Chekov, and all of them, with the exception of Chekov, appear in more than two-thirds of the episodes.29

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29For an extensive discussion of the purpose of the analysis, see pages 49-50.

29Chekov does not appear in Star Trek during its first season, but is featured in over sixty percent of its second and third season episodes. Therefore, it is likely that he would have appeared in about two-thirds of the episodes had he been in the series during its initial season.
At issue here is not only that there are quantitatively more recurring male characters than female ones in the series, but that character roles and responsibilities are, for the most part, stereotypical and gender-biased with males filling all of the positions of power on the ship. This exemplifies a qualitatively unequal treatment between male and female characters in the narratives. In Star Trek, male characters have more command responsibilities and more central roles in the storylines than female characters. Furthermore, male characters by and large also take more active participation in landing parties, meetings to resolve crises and missions generally, with a male protagonist always leading them. When women are included in meetings or missions, they are usually relegated to the margins of these scenes, functioning as silent observers, attractive scenery or handmaidens, and contribute little towards the resolution of whatever problems the crew is facing. The execution of plans to resolve conflicts in the episodes are also led primarily by male characters.

A typical example of this type of treatment of female characters in Star Trek occurs in an episode entitled "Miri." In this episode, Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Yeoman Rand and a security officer beam down to the surface of an unknown planet and discover that the adults on it have died, leaving behind their children. The children, however, are really hundreds of years old; their aging process has merely been artificially retarded. Kirk and the landing party soon discover that once these children enter puberty, they develop a disfiguring skin disease which causes violent behaviour and then death. The entire landing party, with the exception of Spock, becomes afflicted with the same disease and must find an antidote before they all perish.

The portrayal of Yeoman Rand in this episode clearly displays Star Trek's
sexist regard of females as mere handmaidens, marginalized observers and "decoration" in the narratives. Nowhere is this more evident than in the scenes in which the landing party is attempting to discover an antidote to the fatal skin disease. During these scenes, each member of the group is given a distinct task and makes contributions towards this end with the exception of Rand. Kirk doles out the responsibilities to each landing party member and participates in the discussions concerning the disease. Spock also takes part in the discussions, but has the additional task of sifting through the research left behind by the deceased adults in search of information which may provide clues to a cure. McCoy's primary function is to use his medical knowledge and equipment to study the disease and find a cure. While Kirk, Spock, and McCoy discuss their options for finding an antidote, Rand is relegated to the margins of the scene, standing there in the background during most of it listening to the three men make all of the constructive suggestions and decisions. The few times that she does speak, her remarks are merely superfluous dialogue. Some of the tasks Rand actually performs during these scenes include standing around, taking children for walks, and assisting McCoy with his medical experiments. These images of Rand in the episode are ideologically regressive since they are representative of the way in which women on landing parties are relegated to positions of limited or secondary importance. The missions remain essentially "male" expeditions and adventures.

Similarly, when women are present during departmental meetings on the ship, their inclusion is usually to perform service tasks such as taking dictation. Rarely, if ever, do they offer any input during these meetings. From the outset, then, this displays the tendency of Star Trek to present male characters and their contributions
as central in the narratives, especially with regard to resolving the conflicts arising within them, while marginalizing female characters by giving them positions of limited importance.

Furthermore, in Star Trek male views and perspectives always represent the ideological center of the text. This ideological center is usually the perspective offered by Captain Kirk in the narratives which are framed by his "Captain's Logs" which appear intermittently throughout them. He is also the "center of attention" in the episodes since much of the action in the series takes place on the bridge of the Enterprise. On the bridge, he is seated proxemically in the center, his "captain's chair" elevated like a throne, and his crew surrounding him like loyal subjects who dutifully obey his every command. Here, Kirk connotes the image of a monarch presiding over his kingdom. This encourages the audience to identify with him as the primary character in the series and to interpret the events taking place within the episodes from his point of view. In his absence, Spock and Scotty are allowed to take his place in the "command chair" to make important decisions and record ship's logs, which frame portions of certain episodes from their perspectives, but never is a female character allowed to record a ship's log, command the Enterprise, or have a narrative presented from her point of view.21

The sexist nature of Star Trek is also exhibited through the characterizations of the three recurring female characters in the series, whose roles and duties are essentially traditional and discriminatory. Through an analysis of the characterizations of Yeoman Rand, Nurse Chapel, and Lieutenant Uhura, the

21 For examples where Spock is given command of the ship, see episodes 10, 35, 64, and 68. For examples where Scotty is left in command of the ship, see episodes 38, 61, and 77.
stereotypical images of women advanced by the series will become clear. First, the character of Yeoman Rand is young, blonde and attractive, evoking the image of a "blonde bombshell" in the tradition of Marilyn Monroe. Although she appears in only a handful of episodes, Yeoman Rand's role in them essentially falls into two categories: to provide minor service tasks, primarily for Kirk, and to be regarded and treated as a love interest or sex object.

Her professional role on the Enterprise, similar to that of Yeoman Colt in the pilot, is to serve as the "Captain's Yeoman," where she performs numerous minor service tasks, generally for the captain. In the narratives, the tasks we actually witness her doing include carrying food trays to male crew members in "The Corbomite Maneuver" and "The Man Trap"-essentially a domestic function-delivering messages to Kirk in "Balance of Terror" or merely standing silently at Kirk's side on the bridge in "The Naked Time," "Miri," and "Balance of Terror," connoting the obvious image of a handmaiden waiting to serve Kirk. These images offered through the character of Yeoman Rand are ideologically regressive because they show the contributions of women on the ship or during missions, to be minor service tasks, while male characters perform all of the important tasks and fill all of the principal departmental positions.22

Furthermore, although Yeoman Rand appears in a half-dozen episodes, she is

22Kirk is the captain of the ship. Mr. Spock is his first officer and head of the Science Department. Commander Scott is third in command and is head of the Engineering Department and Dr. McCoy is head of the Medical Department. Lieutenant Uhura is seemingly the head of the Communications Department, but it is never regarded as a primary department in the series like the other ones. This notion is reinforced in an episode entitled "By Any Other Name" where the Kelvins, a race of beings who have taken control of the Enterprise, reduce all "non-essential" personnel on the ship to small blocks. The only crew members remaining in their human form after this process of elimination are Kirk, Spock, McCoy and Scotty.
only significant to the narrative in two of them and in both instances her primary function is to be treated as an object of sexual desire. In "Charlie X," the Enterprise takes aboard an adolescent human male named Charlie who has never seen a woman before. The first woman he meets on the ship is Yeoman Rand and he immediately develops a crush on her. The crush is innocent enough in the beginning, but quickly develops into an unrelenting obsession. Throughout the episode, she is framed in soft-focus close-ups which present her as a romanticized object of desire and is constantly sexually harassed by Charlie. The most disturbing aspect concerning the episode is that Charlie's harassment, especially his act of slapping Rand's bottom, is trivialized and the subject of some humour. Later, when she complains to Kirk about it, more humour is evoked when the captain has the uncomfortable task of explaining the inappropriateness of this behaviour to Charlie. Kirk even finds Charlie's attention towards Rand and his subsequent harassment of her to be humorous to a point, but later attempts to quell the behaviour once he realizes it has gone too far. Similarly, in "The Enemy Within," Captain Kirk is split into two separate people by a transporter malfunction, a "good" Kirk and an "evil" Kirk. Yeoman Rand's role in this episode as well is to function as an object of sexual desire, this time for the "evil" Kirk who first stalks and then sexually assaults her.

Lieutenant Uhura, the communications officer on the ship, is given a similarly small role in the series, appearing most often in bridge scenes, where she is relegated to the margins of most of the activity. Aside from being a female character in the series, she is also noteworthy because she is a black woman. As Uhura's title suggests, her primary tasks on the ship are to send and receive communications to
and from the Enterprise.\footnote{For examples of Lieutenant Uhura functioning as the ship’s communications officer, see episodes 4, 6, 7, 9, 11 and practically all other episodes her character appears in.} Her very limited, stereotypical role and usage in the series has prompted Mary Jo Deegan, a frequent feminist writer on Star Trek, to appropriately view Uhura as filling “the traditional female role of translating linguistic meaning. She is the high-tech telephone operator of the future” (Deegan 1986, 213). As Deegan observes, Uhura is sometimes included in landing parties, but contributes very little to the progression of the narratives in these instances. She is seemingly included to consciously feature a female character in the storyline and is never essential to any of them (ibid.). Therefore, an argument can be made that her inclusion on various landing parties represents mere "tokenism."

Finally, Nurse Chapel is the Enterprise’s head nurse whose function is to assist Dr. McCoy with his duties. Her role serves to characterize her as basically a handmaiden in the series since she is most frequently shown aiding McCoy with medical operations in episodes such as “Journey To Babel.” Furthermore, her career choice and ensuing characterization reinforces a stereotypical notion of women as fit for only caring and nurturing activities, as exemplified in such episodes as “Amok Time,” “Journey To Babel,” and “Operation: Annihilate,” where she appears in numerous scenes empathizing with and taking care of patients.

Only one episode actually features Nurse Chapel as a primary character and, like the episodes which feature Yeoman Rand, she too is characterized as an object of male sexual desire. In “What Are Little Girls Made Of?,” the Enterprise takes orbit around planet Exo III to find out what has happened to Dr. Roger Korby, Nurse Chapel’s fiancee. After locating him in an underground cavern beneath the planet’s
surface. Chapel, Kirk and two security guards beam down to greet him. Throughout the early portion of the episode, Chapel appears in numerous soft-focus close-ups which romanticize her beautiful facial features and identify her as a love interest for Roger Korby. She contributes little else towards advancing the narrative.

Admittedly, Star Trek is somewhat progressive for presenting career-oriented images of women in this traditionally male sphere of activity. In fact, few if any other television programs at the time were doing the same. However, the fact that the above images and occupations are the only appropriate ones that women are qualified to perform in Star Trek shows that there is still a hierarchical job segregation by sex operating on the ship and, ultimately, in the series itself. In this segregation, men fill all of the primary command positions while women are relegated to positions of limited importance. All three occupations performed by the recurring female characters are essentially traditional female vocations. Yeoman Rand acts as Kirk’s handmaiden and secretary; Uhura’s role is akin to that of a telephone operator in space; and Nurse Chapel’s career and behaviour promotes the stereotype of females as nurturers. Ideologically, the roles of these three characters reveal that while women have more career opportunities in this traditionally male sphere of activity, career choices within it are still limited to vocations deemed appropriate spheres for females. These positions that women are fit to hold carry less power, prestige and presumably monetary benefits than many of those filled exclusively by males. In the original series, we encounter neither female characters who are admirals in Starfleet Command nor Federation starship captains. Furthermore, women, in the performance of their duties, are also subject to patriarchal authority, most directly embodied by the figure of Captain Kirk who ultimately makes all of the important decisions which
affect their lives as crew members.

Occasionally, however, females are cast in non-traditional roles on Star Trek which present more progressive images of them, at least in terms of careers. Two examples are Lieutenant Areel Shaw, a prosecuting attorney in "Court-Martial," and the Romulan Commander in "The Enterprise Incident." However, in their respective episodes, the two women are not portrayed as exceptional in their occupational fields as their male counterparts often are. For instance, in "Court-Martial," Lieutenant Areel Shaw, a former flame of Kirk's, loses the court case against him and, more importantly, loses it to a male defense attorney. This image seems to express a latent sexist notion that women, even though they can compete with men, still cannot prevail when in direct competition with them. The episode would have been more progressive and liberatory if Shaw had been Kirk's defense lawyer and instead defeated a male prosecuting attorney. Similarly, the Romulan Commander in "The Enterprise Incident" performs a progressive, non-traditional role by commanding a starship, both a powerful and prestigious position. This somewhat progressive image is negated, however, by the fact that she is easily outwitted by two males, namely Kirk and Spock, who exploit her both sexually and emotionally to achieve their objective. They are able to accomplish this in the episode when the Romulan Commander displays a romantic interest in Spock. He and Kirk use this knowledge to devise a scheme which will allow them to take the Romulan "cloaking device." While Spock spends time with the commander, feigning an attraction to her, Kirk beams aboard the Romulan ship in disguise and steals the instrument. This, too, displays an ideologically regressive image of women as easy dupes for male deceptions, especially if the males feign attraction and shower them with compliments as Spock did. Too often Star Trek fails
to use its narrative opportunities to present strong, competent women characterized exclusively by their positions and accomplishments, and instead usually presents them as love interests or sex objects for male protagonists.

At the most transparent level, however, the sexist nature of Star Trek is evident by its incessant objectification of women's physical features. Nearly every episode engages in this sexist regard of women who are often present merely to provide attractive "scenery" in the episodes. I will illustrate this assertion by considering female representations in "I, Mudd" and "The Gamesters of Triskelion."

In "I, Mudd," the Enterprise is taken control of by a male android posing as one of the crew who locks it on course for an unknown planet. Once the starship arrives, Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Scotty, Uhura, Chekov, and the android, beam down to the planet and discover they were summoned there by Harry Mudd, an intergalactic con man. As they enter Mudd's chamber, he is seated on a throne, flanked on both sides by beautiful, scantily-clad female androids who stand ready to cater to his every need. Mudd is drinking from a cup while one of the female androids flanking him is holding a jug of liquid, ready to serve him.

Throughout this episode, we are introduced to numerous female androids, either from the "Alice" or "Barbara" series, who are all extremely attractive and dressed in the same exotic costume: a long, backless, shimmering metallic gown, slit up the front to expose their legs\(^4\). The upper part of the dress is tight fitting, emphasizing their shapely hourglass figures. These female androids do little in the episode except stand around in attractive poses, providing pleasant scenery for both

\(^4\)"Alice" and "Barbara" refer to the two specific female android types that Mudd creates. All "Alice" models are physically similar to one another; the same is true for all androids bearing the name "Barbara."
the male audience and male crew members who, with the exception of Spock, leer at them throughout it. Their collective roles in the narrative are to serve Harry Mudd and, later, to fulfill any needs or desires of the captured crew members.

"The Gamesters of Triskelion" offers similarly sexist images of women through the objectification of the character Shahna's body. In this narrative, Kirk, Chekov and Uhura are captured and trained to fight in gladiatorial contests by a superior race of beings whose essences are disembodied brains encased in receptacles. Kirk's trainer for these contests is Shahna, a young, beautiful, child-like woman who has engaged in them since she was very young. Throughout the episode she is dressed in the same revealing outfit. The top half of her wardrobe consists of a shiny, silver halter top which fits snugly around her breasts emphasizing both their size and shape. Her top is then complemented with a pair of tight, shiny silver shorts which leave her legs exposed, and the ensemble is completed with a pair of knee-high silver boots. Guest female characters are adorned with similarly exotic and erotic costumes which exploit them as sex objects in a host of other Star Trek episodes as well.25

The objectification of the female form is not limited to the images offered through female guest stars on Star Trek either, but includes ones exhibited through recurring female crew members. In the episodes in which they appear, Rand, Chapel and Uhura, as well as background female crew members who walk the corridors of the ship, all wear tight-fitting Starfleet mini-dresses which place both their hourglass figures and legs on display. Their legs are then further accentuated with black nylon stockings. The figures of these women also function as attractive scenery in many

25 For further examples of the objectification of women's bodies through exotic and/or erotic costumes in Star Trek, see episodes 4, 16, 33, 36, 38, 50, 57, and 61.
episodes where they contribute little to the storylines, but appear in them nonetheless.

Generally speaking, nearly all of the women featured in *Star Trek*, especially its female guest stars, are physically attractive and fitted with revealing costumes which accentuate their most appealing physical features. The prevalence of these exploitative images of women in *Star Trek*'s narratives serve to titillate male viewers and legitimate both the viewing and treatment of women in the series and, ultimately, in the real world, as nothing more than sex objects. In fact, no overweight or unattractive women appear in any *Star Trek* episodes, with the exception of a few characters in "The Deadly Years" where both male and female crew members develop a fatal aging disease. The point here is that while numerous overweight and unattractive male characters appear in the series, virtually all female ones are physically attractive women with hourglass figures. On the whole, these images unjustly provide women with ideologically regressive conceptions of what a woman "is" which focuses primarily on her physical appearance, to the exclusion of more important qualities such as intelligence, and places great pressure on female viewers, who are incessantly bombarded with these images, to echo these ideals. It expresses a latent sexist ideology which ignores the fact that women, like men, come in all shapes and sizes and ultimately devalues women who do not possess physical beauty. This obsession with physical attractiveness in television programs, and other media, can also be ideologically dangerous to women, since falling short of these ideals most likely contributes to social ills such as self-esteem and inadequacy problems.

Women are not only treated as sex objects in *Star Trek* through the vulgar exploitation of their bodies, but also through the use of technical devices which soften and romanticize their physical features, giving them an elegant, mythical, "goddess"
appearance. This encourages male audience members to engage in voyeuristic consumption of these images in the narratives and legitimizes the similar treatment and regard of women by men, and the accompanying attitudes towards them, in society. Although numerous instances of this appear in Star Trek, the introduction of Reena to Kirk in "Requiem For Methuselah" is one of the more striking examples.

In this episode, Kirk, Spock and McCoy beam down to the surface of Holberg 917-G to acquire an antidote to a deadly disease when they unexpectedly encounter a man named Flint who reluctantly agrees to assist them. Flint leads the three crewmen back to his home where he has constructed a beautiful female android named Reena who is human in every detail except that she lacks emotions. Initially, Flint conceals her from the three men, but at her repeated requests he begrudgingly introduces her to them. When Kirk develops an attraction to Reena, Flint decides to exploit this opportunity and delays giving the antidote to the three officers. The purpose of the delay is to give Kirk the opportunity to seduce Reena and attempt to awaken human emotions within her. A detailed analysis of the scene depicting Kirk's first meeting with Reena clearly illustrates how these technical devices present a romanticized image of Reena which legitimizes her viewing and treatment as a sex object.

After leaving Kirk, Spock and McCoy alone for a short while, Flint returns and invites the three men to stay for dinner. He then extends his right arm into the doorway that he has just walked through. The camera pans towards the empty doorway and Reena steps into it and takes hold of Flint's hand. Immediately, soft and romantic music fills the soundtrack as Reena saunters into the room dressed in a long, elegant gown. Her regal entrance is reminiscent of the entrance of a queen or
princess to a formal ball in mythic fairy tales. This shot is immediately followed by a close-up of Kirk, who obviously finds her extremely attractive, staring at her with just the hint of a smile on his face. Since the audience is prompted to identify with Kirk in the narratives, the reaction shot of Kirk staring at her encourages them to stare at her as well and regard her as a sex object. As the soft, romantic music continues, a brightly lit soft-focus close-up of Reena suddenly fills the screen, heightening her already romanticized image. Finally, the shot of Reena is replaced by another close-up of Kirk who continues to silently stare at her, cuing the audience to the fact that she is a romantic interest for him specifically in the narrative, and advocating a voyeuristic consumption of this image to the audience. Similar technical devices are used to characterize women as romanticized objects of male adoration and desire in numerous other Star Trek episodes.  

Besides the regressive objectification of women’s physical features, Star Trek has the propensity to exhibit stereotypical conceptions of women, which illustrates both the patriarchal and chauvinistic nature of the series. For instance, women are constantly given nurturing roles in such episodes as “Miri” where Yeoman Rand is ordered by Kirk to take Miri for a walk or comfort her when she is frightened during her first encounter with the landing party.

The patriarchal and chauvinistic nature of Star Trek is also evident by its treatment of women by men as physically and emotionally frail and helpless creatures who require both delicate treatment and male protection and comfort. These depictions often take the form of paternalistic attitudes towards women, exhibited by

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26 For further examples of the use of technical devices to romanticize women’s features, thereby objectifying them, see episodes 4, 6, 8, 10, 25, 28, 33, 57, 58, 72, and 78.
male protagonists, who feel compelled to play the role of "guardian" or "protector." These can be grand gestures by a male character, usually Captain Kirk, who risks his own life and well-being, to protect a "helpless" woman. For instance, in "Friday's Child" Kirk violates Capellan tradition by hindered the execution of Eleen, the pregnant wife of a former Capellan leader, even though she accepts her fate and does not wish to be rescued. This behaviour can also take the form of more subtle gestures such as holding on to Nurse Chapel as they near a bottomless pit in "What Are Little Girls Made Of?" to make sure that she does not fall in. Kirk responds in this manner even though she can see the pit as clearly as he can. This image displays an overprotectiveness on the part of Kirk who feels the need to protect Chapel like a child. This sort of paternalistic behaviour is even displayed in situations where women are in no immediate danger and characters other than Kirk engage in it. For instance, in "Who Mourns For Adonais," the Enterprise is captured by a giant green hand in space near the planet Pollux IV. The controller of this hand identifies himself to Kirk and the crew as the god Apollo and demands that they beam down to the surface of the planet, where he plans to take care of them for the rest of their lives. Kirk, McCoy, Scotty, Chekov and Lieutenant Carolyn Palamas, a young female crew member who is an expert in mythology, all beam down to Pollux IV. During the episode, Apollo becomes attracted to Palamas and expresses his desire to take a walk with her alone. Even though she is not afraid of Apollo, and he is not threatening to harm her, Scotty still interjects and rushes to attack Apollo. Scotty's act is easily countered by Apollo, who merely points his finger in the human's direction and knocks him to the ground with a thunderbolt. Scotty exhibits similarly paternalistic behaviour towards women in a couple of other episodes, including "The Lights of
Zetar” and “The Changeling,” where he feels the need to protect and comfort “helpless” women.

The most chauvinistic behaviour in the series, however, is displayed in an episode entitled “Elaan of Troyius.” In this narrative, the crew of the Enterprise is ordered to transport Elaan, the Dohlman (a title denoting her leadership) of Elas, to the planet Troyius to marry its leader. The purpose of this union is to bring peace to the two warring civilizations. These two cultures are very different: the Troyans are an extremely polite and reserved race, while the Elasians are more rude and war-like. During the trip to Troyius for the wedding, Petri, a Troyan ambassador, is assigned the difficult task of teaching Elaan the social customs of his people. Elaan violently resists Petri’s attempts to “civilize” her and stabs him in her quarters. The Troyan ambassador’s injury is serious and Kirk is forced to take his place and oversee Elaan’s cultural “education.”

On the whole, the episode is an obvious retelling of “The Taming of the Shrew” with a few additional plot twists. At a deeper level, it can be viewed as indicative of the way in which Star Trek legitimizes conservative and restrictive images of women within its narratives. It imposes socially constructed male conceptions of women on women in an effort to encourage them to behave in “dainty” and “lady-like” fashions. A closer reading of the episode will illustrate how this ideological message was brought across.

In the early portion of the episode, Elaan is portrayed as ill-mannered, insulting, barbaric, and childish. In numerous scenes, she demands that people kneel before her, request permission to leave her presence, refuses to listen to anyone and breaks things when angered. She also screams and behaves extremely violently when
her wishes are not carried out. For instance, in one of the episode's early scenes, she is dissatisfied with the quarters she is given and proceeds to throw things around in them. She essentially hates the quarters because she feels surrounded by "female trappings" there. When Kirk then treats her like a child, since she is behaving like one, she throws a dagger at him. This stereotypical image exhibited by Elaan in these early scenes seems to function as a caricature of assertive women which ignores the fact that a woman can be strong-willed without being childish and irrational.

However, after she stabs the Troyan ambassador, and Kirk becomes her new "instructor," this stereotypical image begins to disappear and a new one emerges. Kirk quickly becomes both her father and lover figure. While instructing her, she and Kirk have such a heated argument that her rough exterior finally breaks down and she cries. Kirk then holds Elaan in his arms, kissing and comforting her. From that point onward, she exhibits a new stereotype: a soft, quiet, obedient woman who has finally been taught, by a male, "appropriate" feminine behaviour. Due to Kirk's teachings, Elaan has been "tamed," effectively restoring the restrictive conservative gender order of the series by the episode's conclusion.

The sexist nature of Star Trek is also evident by its treatment and regard of women in the series, conveyed primarily through its female guest stars, as "disposable women." This term, coined by Karin Blair, is very telling because it so well suits the fate of most female characters who are killed, left behind on a planet, rejected outright or conveniently disposed of in some other manner by the conclusion of many episodes (Blair 1983, 292). Blair notes that most of them are first used with a specific end or purpose in mind, usually directly related to the mission at hand, prior to their disposal (ibid.). This sexist treatment of women is ideologically regressive due to the
fact it legitimizes sexual and emotional exploitation to achieve an objective.

However, in Star Trek's defense, to forgo the disposal of its female guest stars would upset the mythic structure of the series which, like Rambo, relies heavily upon the mythical archetype of the individualistic hero who must ultimately renounce both women and sexuality in order to "go it alone" (Kellner 1990, 95). Kirk is the primary character who most frequently engages in this "using" of women, although there are occasions when other crew members do the same. For instance, in "The Enterprise Incident," the Enterprise is captured by a Romulan vessel after crossing into the "Romulan Neutral Zone." 27 The female commander of this ship, who is attracted to Spock, is duped into believing that he is similarly attracted to her and wishes to defect from the Federation in order to join the Romulan Empire. In reality, he is keeping her occupied with a feigned seduction, while Kirk engages in espionage aboard her ship. Similarly, in "By Any Other Name" Kirk seduces Kelinda, a member of a race known as the Kelvans which has taken control of the Enterprise. The purpose of Kirk's advances towards her is to make Rojan, the Kelvan leader, jealous so that dissension among their ranks will occur and he can regain control of his ship. Finally, in "The Gamesters of Triskelion," an episode already discussed, Kirk gains Shahna's confidence and seduces her to extract the necessary information from her to effect an escape from his captors. Kirk successfully gains some of this important knowledge and Shahna is physically punished by her keepers for revealing the information to him. Obviously, Spock, Kirk and other male characters in the series who exploit women to achieve an end feel their actions are justified because they prioritize their

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27Romulan Neutral Zone is a treaty-created buffer space between Federation and Romulan territories. The treaty forbids either side from crossing into the zone.
mission over the physical and emotional damage their actions inflict on the women they use. How odd it would have appeared if Uhura, Rand or Chapel had been featured in numerous episodes "using" male characters and treating them as "disposable!"

Despite *Star Trek's* propensity to present sexist, regressive images of women in its episodes, all of them pale by comparison to the horrendous images and conceptions of women conjured in its last episode entitled "Turnabout Intruder." In this narrative, Kirk beams down to the planet Camus II when he is summoned there by Dr. Janice Lester, an old girlfriend. Lester is jealous of Kirk because he commands a starship, a career she desires but is unfit to perform. On Camus II, Lester has found an alien machine which can transfer minds from one body to another. She subdues Kirk and uses the machine to transfer her mind into his body and his mind into her own body. Lester plans to kill Kirk while he is in her former body, but is interrupted and both of them are beamed aboard the Enterprise with Kirk still unconscious. When Kirk's mind in Lester's body regains consciousness, he is able to convince Spock that it is his essence encased in Lester's body. Meanwhile, Lester in Kirk's body behaves inconsistently, arousing the suspicions of various crew members, most notably Scotty and McCoy. Lester, in Kirk's body, then initiates court-martial proceedings against all of the crew members who believe this unlikely story. The pressure of the proceedings eventually weakens Lester and the two minds transfer back to their rightful bodies. Lester, once back in her own body, collapses and almost entirely loses her sanity.

Mary Jo Deegan, a writer who has conducted feminist readings of *Star Trek,*
analyzes this episode in great detail in two separate articles. Since I came to similar conclusions after examining the episode prior to reading Deegan, since the sexist, hateful images and dialogue included are so vivid, there is, in a sense, a corroboration of my analysis. In "Turnabout Intruder," the character of Dr. Janice Lester is portrayed as a jealous woman who craves the command of Kirk's starship. The episode presents stark images of women through Lester which display an ideological male fear of women who seek power in traditionally male-dominated spheres. She is further characterized as despising her own gender due to the powerlessness she feels because she is a woman. This sexist theme is expressed in a vile manner through numerous scenes and lines of dialogue which express blatant misogyny. Although several examples appear in the episode, perhaps the most striking one occurs just after Lester has "traded" bodies with Kirk. At this time, she speaks aloud to the unconscious form of Kirk in Lester, stating that now that his essence is "trapped" in her body, he will know the indignity of being a woman.

4.8 CONTEXTUALIZING THE IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER IN STAR TREK

Analyzing the original Star Trek series both contextually and relationally in terms of gender representation, one thing is certain. While "The Cage" exhibits

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30 To avoid being influenced by Deegan's reactions to the episode, I composed my brief summation prior to reading her analyses. However, she reacted to many of the same vivid images and dialogue in the episode and therefore some overlap exists.
conflictual and contradictory images of women, which run the gamut from extremely sexist to fairly progressive ones, thus reflecting the social contradictions and conflicts with respect to gender roles and representations of the 1960s. The original Star Trek series leans significantly more towards displaying almost exclusively sexist ones. For instance, in "The Cage," "Number One" is characterized as a strong, competent female who displays positive career-oriented images of women, since she contributes significantly towards both the mission generally and the narrative as a whole. The images she evokes, however, are then sharply contradicted by the more traditional, stereotypical and sexist images presented by Vina in the narrative. In this way, the pilot acknowledges and gives some voice to the struggles and contradictions between domestic and career-oriented images of women, an important topic of debate in the 1960s.

By contrast, the series that followed lacks any primary characters who can be perceived as progressive or emancipatory role models for women. Granted, the recurring female characters in the series, Uhura, Rand and Chapel, along with a few of its female guest characters, display career-oriented images of women. Nevertheless, they perform primarily stereotypical female occupations, are treated as sex objects in most episodes and contribute very little towards the advancement of storylines or missions. They remain, for the most part, shallow and unremarkable characters. The diverse representations of the female gender between "The Cage" and the original Star Trek series is especially surprising since both are products of the same socio-historical time period, the 1960s. Therefore, one would expect the same social conflicts and tensions with respect to gender that were reflected in "The Cage" to be as much reflected in the narratives of Star Trek. Instead, as discussed in section 4.7, the
original series assumes an almost entirely conservative and restrictive stance with respect to its portrayal and treatment of female characters which, in many respects, covers over and ignores the fact that women are capable of filling any of the important positions traditionally filled exclusively by males, most notably command, technical and scientific positions.

Due to the highly volatile time period gender-wise in which Star Trek was created, with both feminism and sexual equality being heatedly debated issues, the series must be interpreted as mostly reasserting conservative and restrictive gender values, operating mostly as a reaction to feminism and conceptions of sexual equality emerging in the social context of the 1960s, even though it often claims to be doing otherwise. However, Star Trek does admittedly contain a few contradictions to the sexist ideology which generally pervades it. There are a number of women on the series who enjoy both military and non-military careers which place them fairly high in the social and economic hierarchy. Among them are a female lawyer,30 an enemy commander,31 and a Federation commissioner.32 All of this pays some homage to the expanding roles of women in society, thereby somewhat disrupting the one-sidedness of its representations, but not nearly enough. On the whole, the sexist and stereotypical images and conceptions of women in Star Trek greatly overshadow its few progressive moments, making it a definite step backwards even from "The Cage" in this regard.

This is especially surprising, since Roddenberry’s original intent was to present

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30Lieutenant Areel Shaw in "Court-Martial."
31The Romulan Commander in "The Enterprise Incident."
32Federation Commissioner Nancy Huford in "Metamorphosis."
progressive and liberated images of women, as well as non-whites, on Star Trek. Some of the blame for the sexist nature of the series must therefore rest with the NBC network and its executives for rejecting the original pilot, in part because they believed that a 1960s viewing audience would reject a strong, competent and intelligent woman as the ship's first officer. In fact, NBC even conducted an audience test which supported this claim showing that the role and position of "Number One" conjured feelings within the viewers which reportedly ranged from resentment to disbelief, even though they appeared to like the actress who played the role (Whitfield and Roddenberry 1968, 128). This general finding was reported to Roddenberry, but the inconsistency of the audience response, since it is odd that the audience disliked the character of "Number One" yet still liked the actress, and the fact that the specifics concerning such matters as the implementation of the test and the demographics behind the study were not given, lead me to question the accuracy of the testing.

In any case, this early confrontation Roddenberry had with NBC executives, and the subsequent pressures they exerted on him once Star Trek became a weekly series, were seemingly important contributing factors towards his reluctance to give women important roles on it.33 However, while this may account in part for the lack of strong recurring female characters on Star Trek once it became a weekly series, it

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33 Fear of network interference due to gender representations and responsibilities exhibited on Star Trek were not entirely unfounded, as at least one situation testifies. There was one script where all of the primary characters were to be trapped on the surface of a planet together which would have left Uhura the senior ranking member on board. When the script called for her to take control of the ship, it was suddenly re-written with her not only not taking over the ship, but written out of the story entirely. Although not explicitly stated in the text, it is implied that the network made the determination that a "woman" could not take over a "man's" ship (Gerrald 1973, 115).
still does not entirely excuse the sexist fashion in which women are generally characterized and treated in its narratives. the fact that very few guest female characters are powerfully characterized and it certainly does not legitimize the awful mistreatment of the female gender as a whole in its final episode, "Turnabout Intruder."

Therefore, although the NBC network can be criticized for restricting female characters from appearing in certain roles and exhibiting certain images in the original Star Trek series, there is no evidence to support a presumption that the sexist images and representations they do exhibit in it were "forced" upon Roddenberry by network executives. For this reason, he and his staff must accept at least some of the blame for the sexist and regressive characterizations and treatment of women on Star Trek. Perhaps it was an overreaction on Roddenberry's part to NBC's rejection of a female second-in-command in the pilot when he excluded women entirely from active and progressive roles once Star Trek became a weekly series. Nevertheless, although it is unlikely that he would have been able to feature a woman as first officer on the Enterprise, he certainly should have featured them in more active and emancipatory roles in the series than they actually are.

4.9 IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF RACE IN STAR TREK

The following analysis of race in the original Star Trek series will be organized in much the same fashion as section 4.7 which dealt with gender representation. In terms of content, it will analyze the characterizations and treatments of non-white recurring and guest characters in the series and compare them to those of white characters. This section will also move beyond the previous gender critique by
substantiating that the power and ideological focus in *Star Trek* rests not only with males, but with white males in particular.

On *Star Trek*, there are basically two non-white recurring characters: Lieutenant Uhura, a black female, and Lieutenant Sulu, an Oriental male. The other seven recurring characters are, for the most part, Caucasian.\(^{34}\) Since the character of Uhura received considerable attention in section 4.7, it is unnecessary to repeat many of those same points here. It is sufficient to reiterate that she is a character of lesser significance in the series since she plays a non-essential role in each of the narratives in which she appears.\(^{35}\)

The only other non-white recurring character in the original *Star Trek* series is Lieutenant Sulu, the ship’s Japanese helmsman. His main function on the ship, as suggested by his title, is to “steer” the Enterprise for Captain Kirk. Sulu usually appears in bridge sequences, as a background or secondary character, where he ordinarily unquestioningly follows orders. On occasion, Sulu participates in missions and landing parties; however, he has small roles and performs minor duties in these instances.\(^{36}\) Although males other than Kirk, namely Scotty and Spock, command the Enterprise in the captain’s absence, Sulu, even though he is fourth or fifth in the

\(^{34}\) All of these characters, with the exception of Mr. Spock, are entirely human. Spock’s father is from the planet Vulcan while his mother is a white human from earth. For this reason, he is one-half human white male and functions as one in the narratives.

\(^{35}\) For a more detailed analysis of Uhura’s characterization and function on the ship, see pages 69-70.

\(^{36}\) Sulu performs minor landing party and security duties in “That Which Survives,” “The Enemy Within,” “Shore Leave” and several other episodes.
command hierarchy, never really commands the starship during the entire series."

Furthermore, Sulu is never featured as a central character in any of Star Trek's narratives either; he remains in the background in most of them. In fact, his most memorable scenes occur in an episode entitled "The Naked Time" which, unfortunately, also serves to stereotype him. In this narrative, the crew of the Enterprise travels to planet Psi 2000 to check on a research team based there. Spock and a young lieutenant named Tormolen beam down to its surface and discover that all of the researchers have frozen to death after one of them apparently turned off the life-support system. After investigating the tragedy more closely, Spock and Tormolen discover that the researchers had contracted a contagious disease which caused them to behave recklessly. Before Spock warns Tormolen not to touch anything in the research area without his de-contamination equipment on, he removes one of his gloves and unwittingly contracts the disease as well. He ultimately infects numerous Enterprise crew members upon his return.

The effect of this disease on stricken crew members is to allow their hidden thoughts, fears and feelings to surface in a heightened form. For instance, Kirk becomes obsessed with losing control of the Enterprise, Spock can no longer suppress

"In an early scene in "The Savage Curtain," one can catch a glimpse of Mr. Sulu seated in the command chair. However, he only sits there silently in the background of the scene and does not give any commands. Sulu does this while Kirk, Spock and Uhura carried on a conversation with an Abraham Lincoln clone on the bridge of the Enterprise. Therefore, I do not believe him to be commanding the vessel in this instance since Kirk is actually present and would have immediately taken the center seat if an emergency had arisen. Similarly, in "Errand Of Mercy," Sulu is left in charge of the Enterprise by Kirk before he beams down to surface of Organia. The captain, however, instructs Sulu to merely continue to orbit Organia unless confronted by a fleet of Klingon starships. If that occurs, his orders are to take the Enterprise to a safe haven. Due to these "pre-determined" instructions, and the fact that Sulu does not give any orders to the crew while seated in the command chair, I do not consider him to be actually commanding the vessel in this instance either."
his emotions, and Chapel professes her secret love for Spock to him. However, when Sulu becomes afflicted with the disease, its effect on him results in an ideologically regressive and stereotypical image of both himself and Oriental people generally. Once infected, he acts out his fantasy of being a swordsman, presenting the image of a Japanese samurai warrior. Throughout much of the episode, he races around the decks and corridors of the ship gleefully challenging other crew members to fencing duels until he is finally subdued on the bridge and brought to sickbay. The image Sulu displays in "The Naked Time" is especially regressive since this episode represents virtually the only opportunity in the series that the audience receives to see a dimension of his character, and Oriental ones generally, which moves beyond blindly following the orders of a white male.

Periodically, however, *Star Trek* does feature non-whites other than Sulu and Uhura in high status positions displaying talents that are well-respected by colleagues. I must emphasize, however, that only non-white male, and not female, characters are portrayed in this somewhat progressive fashion. The most vivid example is the character of Dr. M'Benga, a black male physician who appears in two episodes, "A Private Little War" and "That Which Survives."

In "A Private Little War," Kirk and Spock beam down to the surface of a planet thought to be inhabited by a peaceful, tribal culture. Upon their arrival, however, the two officers are unexpectedly caught in the middle of a violent conflict. As they flee the hostile area, Spock is shot with a flintlock gun, a piece of warfare technology that should be hundreds of years beyond the culture's production capabilities. Kirk and

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3Dr. M'Benga's role in "That Which Survives" is very small and not worthy of extensive consideration in this critique.
Spock then beam back aboard the Enterprise where Spock is cared for by both Dr. McCoy and Dr. M'Benga in the transporter room.

In this episode, M'Benga is featured as an extraordinarily gifted physician. While both physicians are treating Spock in the transporter room, McCoy steps aside to speak with Kirk who is concerned about his friend's condition. McCoy informs him of the serious nature of Spock's wounds, but stresses that he is in the very competent hands of M'Benga. At this time, M'Benga is also characterized by McCoy as a highly distinguished physician who not only interned at a Vulcan ward, but is a leading expert on Vulcan physiology. He is framed in such a positive light by McCoy that even though Spock's injuries are critical, both he and Kirk are confident enough in M'Benga's medical abilities to leave Spock in his care while they beam down to the planet to proceed with the mission. During the episode, the scene intermittently cuts away from the main storyline to present brief glimpses of M'Benga caring for Spock and giving Nurse Chapel instructions regarding his care. On the whole, M'Benga represents a positive image and role model for non-white individuals. His characterization demonstrates to the audience the possibility that non-whites can be competent, successful professionals in society as well, an image often left unexpressed on television prior to the 1960s.

What must be concluded from the treatment of the two non-white recurring characters, as well as that of M'Benga, is that while they are allowed to serve in Starfleet and generally portrayed as capable officers, sometimes even exceptional ones, they are still limited in terms of career opportunities and advancement in Starfleet. Non-whites are mostly relegated to secondary positions of limited importance, like women, where they remain subservient to white male authority. Their subservience
to whites is also evident by the fact that non-white characters are also never given command responsibilities. "allowed to record ship's logs" or have a narrative presented from their point of view during the entire series. This power and ideological focus in Star Trek is always expressed by a white male character, normally Captain Kirk.

Furthermore, non-whites are rarely central characters in any of Star Trek's narratives. My interpretation of a character's "centrality" in an episode is not determined solely by his or her appearance in a certain number of scenes. Another important qualification is whether or not the character in question also plays an essential role in the episode by engaging in at least semi-autonomous action which contributes to the progression of the storyline. Employing this criterion, there is only one episode in which a non-white character is actually central in a Star Trek narrative, "The Ultimate Computer." and it paints, at best, a contradictory picture of black individuals.

In this episode, the Enterprise is selected by Starfleet Command to test a new advanced computer system developed by Dr. Richard Daystrom, a highly regarded black male computer expert. The system, known only as the M-5, has been designed

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33As stated in the previous section, only Kirk, Spock and Scotty, all white males, command the Enterprise in the original series. Furthermore, all high ranking Starfleet officers who made guest appearances on Star Trek, which includes captains, commodores and admirals, are all white males. For specific examples, see episodes 8, 15, 16, 23, 35, 40, 42, 53, and 72.

43On the Enterprise, only Kirk, Spock and Scotty, all white males record the ship's logs.

44It is usually Kirk's perspective espoused in the narratives. However, there are occasions when Spock and McCoy are central in the narratives. For example, McCoy is arguably the primary character in the episode "For The World Is Hollow And I Have Touched The Sky."
by Daystrom to take the place of sentient crew members aboard starships. It can control the helm, communications, weapons and computer systems on a ship, thus eliminating the need to risk large crew complements in a dangerous and unpredictable area. Its implementation would reduce the number of crew on a starship from 400 to approximately 20.

After the M-5 is installed on the Enterprise, it performs excellently during its initial test, but gradually begins to behave recklessly. It first seeks out and destroys an automated freighter and then, more devastatingly, misinterprets mock tactical battles with other Federation vessels as genuine military conflicts. During this second encounter, it destroys the Excalibur killing all of her crew. Commodore Wesley, the leader of the test battle group, is both confused and outraged by the Excalibur's destruction and demands an explanation from Kirk. Unfortunately, since the M-5 has control over all ship's functions, Kirk is unable to respond to him. The Commodore's only course of action at this point is to request permission to destroy the Enterprise before it obliterates any more Starfleet vessels. Meanwhile, Kirk implores Daystrom to help them disconnect the M-5 unit; he, however, has become obsessed with protecting his "child" from the consequences of its horrendous actions. Furthermore, he is simultaneously unable to come to grips with the deaths aboard the Excalibur, especially his part in them. When Daystrom's emotions eventually overcome him, he becomes incoherent and suffers a complete nervous breakdown. Spock renders him unconscious with a nerve pinch and he is removed from the bridge. As a last resort, Kirk utilizes a moralistic approach on the M-5 unit to convince it that killing the Excalibur's crew was murder and it must now pay for its deed. The system shuts itself down and lowers its defenses in an attempt to commit suicide as self-
punishment for its actions. The Enterprise and her crew are spared destruction, however, when Commodore Wesley breaks off his attack, refusing to fire upon a defenceless "enemy."

Dr. Richard Daystrom is the only black character to ever be "central" in a Star Trek narrative by my definition of the concept. For this reason, the images of black individuals he presents are especially significant to this critique. Prior to Daystrom's introduction in the episode, Mr. Spock and Commodore Wesley are both in awe of his numerous accomplishments and the accompanying fame he has received. His reputation is built up so high before his initial appearance in the episode that when he finally does turn up, and is a black man, it is nothing short of a strikingly progressive image for acknowledging the possibility that a black man can also be a highly distinguished scientist.

The lustre of his image is, unfortunately, tarnished shortly thereafter and the progressive side of his character is rapidly overshadowed by his less appealing qualities. After appearing only briefly in the narrative, Daystrom begins to show himself as elitist, arrogant and completely unaffected by the elimination of careers his creation is likely to effect. His loyalties seem to lie with the technology he has devised instead of with his fellow human beings. This is further substantiated by the fact that when Daystrom's system later begins to murder human beings, he is still reluctant to help Kirk and his crew to disconnect it. In fact, even when the M-5 kills one of Kirk's own crewmen, Daystrom acts as an apologist for the machine's action by claiming that the crewman's death was an "accident." When he is confronted by McCoy, who also wants the M-5 turned off, Daystrom responds that one does not turn off a learning child. At this point, it becomes clear that Daystrom is putting the
continued existence of his mechanical creation ahead of the lives of human beings.

His irrational behavior becomes even more pronounced when the M-5 destroys the Excalibur and her crew. He is so far gone after this tragedy that he merely becomes a "pathetic" character who loses sight of his humanity, eventually becoming completely incomprehensible. The point to be made here is not that a black man is characterized negatively in this episode, since many white male and female characters are also portrayed in unheroic fashions on Star Trek. What makes Daystrom's image especially regressive is the fact that he is the only black character ever to be central in a Star Trek narrative and is ultimately portrayed in a negative fashion.

While Star Trek presents some positive images of non-whites, it only offers post-integration ones which shows them taking part in a white male-dominated society where their concerns are largely ignored or suppressed. Moreover, non-white recurring characters in Star Trek have, in many cases, even foregone most of their cultural roots, choosing instead to blend in with the dominant culture by accepting and joining a "United Earth" which essentially celebrates "white" American culture, while mostly down-playing cultural diversity. This assertion is supported by the fact that Uhura, Sulu and all other non-white characters in the series do not have accents, even though some non-American white characters, most notably Scotty and Chekov, have them. Furthermore, Scotty and Chekov also display pride in their heritages throughout the series, often boasting about them, while Uhura and Sulu rarely discuss them at all. In fact, the audience is told nothing of Sulu's heritage throughout the entire series, while all we learn about Uhura's background is that she can speak Swahili\textsuperscript{42} and that her name roughly translates into English as "Freedom."

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\textsuperscript{42}This fact is brought out in an early episode entitled "The Man Trap."
Generally speaking, the series periodically shows non-whites actively participating in this mythical future, but their position in the social and economic hierarchy is clearly below that of white people, and not alongside them as equals as the self-promoting claims of the series would have us believe.\(^4\)

Still, similar to the inclusion of women as military officers, especially in such a white male dominated sphere of activity, Star Trek was fairly progressive for its time for featuring non-whites in most of its episodes. In fact, Kellner, in his own writings, heralds the series as one of the first to present people of color in heroic roles instead of featuring them in exclusively negative, stereotypical ones (Kellner 1990b, 51).

Based on the evidence, I contend that while the series often expresses, at least, latent racist ideology in many of its narratives, it is still not racist to the same degree to which it is sexist. While Star Trek does present non-whites in mostly unimportant, background roles, which may even be interpreted as "tokenism," it sometimes exhibits positive portrayals of them; moreover it does not consistently legitimate racist attitudes to the extent to which it does sexist ones.\(^5\) The position that Star Trek

\(^4\)The name "Uhura" actually derives from a Swahili word which roughly translates into English as freedom (Cohen 1986, 48).

\(^5\)For instance, in "The Savage Curtain," both Kirk and Uhura tell an Abraham Lincoln clone on the bridge that present-day Earth has exited its era of racial prejudice and instead learned to accept each other's physical differences, while the usage of non-white characters in the series appears to contradict this claim.

Sexism is rarely openly condemned in Star Trek, even in an obvious fashion, with the possible exceptions of two parody episodes entitled "Mudd's Women" and "I, Mudd." In the first, Harry Mudd, an intergalactic slave-trader, is transporting three attractive young women to sell as wives on a distant planet. Kirk, operating as the ideological focus in the narrative, originally opposes this sexist treatment of the women as "cargo" and/or "property," but when he discovers that the women are agreeable to the transaction, his opposition quickly ends. Moreover, Kirk is more concerned that the men "purchasing" these women are being deceived by their appearances.
advocates with respect to the racial issue is much more contradictory. This last assertion will be further clarified through the use of concrete examples.

In "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield," the Enterprise encounters a stolen Federation shuttlecraft with a lone humanoid on board, by the name of Lokai, whose face and body are black on the left side and white on the right. After taking Lokai into custody, Kirk discovers that the Enterprise is being pursued by an alien ship, with one passenger on board, travelling at a dangerously high velocity. Just before the small vessel disintegrates, however, it deposits a lone humanoid passenger on board the Enterprise. The newly-arrived alien, Bele, is physically similar to Lokai except that his face and body are black and white on the opposite sides. Bele claims to be a government official from the planet Cheron and that his quarry, Lokai, is a political traitor. He demands that Lokai be immediately turned over to him to face criminal charges on Cheron, but Kirk is reluctant to do so. Kirk soon discovers that the two men are mortal enemies who have been chasing one another throughout the galaxy. The captain eventually agrees to return both men to Cheron. However, when they arrive, all of the planet's inhabitants are dead and its surface is literally aflame. Apparently, the extreme racial hatred between Bele's and Lokai's factions has caused them to completely annihilate one another. At the end of the episode, the two aliens escape from the Enterprise and beam back down to the surface of Cheron to continue

due to their use of an illegal "venus" drug which allows them to remain attractive through artificial means, than with the "selling" of women as domestic and sexual slaves. Similarly, in "I. Mudd." Harry Mudd takes refuge on a planet of androids where he has the capability of producing them in unlimited quantities. Mudd creates a much greater number of "female" androids than male ones leading Kirk to half-jokingly question his motives. However, Kirk later views the attractive female androids as sex objects as well, along with numerous other male crew members, thus negating his original critical response. Ultimately, neither of these episodes can be regarded as much more than weak efforts to combat sexism, if even responses at all.
their pursuit of one another.

On the whole, this episode is a simplistic, thinly-veiled morality tale which comments upon the stupidity and potentially lethal aspects associated with the expression of racism. Its instruction begins with a striking, yet physically unlikely, contrast between the appearances of Lokai and Bele. The two men's skin colorations are black and white on the opposite sides to each other, and representative of the two races native to Cheron. Those similar in appearance to Bele belong to the dominant one and enjoy all of the social and economic privileges associated with being a member of the dominant group; while those similar in appearance to Lokai belong to the planet's subordinate one which does not enjoy many of these same privileges. As the episode progresses, we learn that this physical difference, which is the primary basis for the inequality and racism which exists on Cheron, has led to a violent race war between the two groups.

With Kirk functioning as the "moral" voice of reason, the episode comes across as extremely critical, in a simplistic, moralizing fashion, of racist attitudes like those expressed by Bele and Lokai. In fact, the subtle physical difference between the two men is presented as a superficial basis for prejudice with Kirk and the rest of the crew failing to even notice it until it is pointed out to them directly. After the revelation, Kirk implores the two men to set aside their contempt for one another and search for a peaceful solution to their dilemma, but is met with much resistance from both of them during the journey back to Cheron.

The worst outcome imaginable, due to the relentless expression of racial bigotry, is then heavy-handedly realized at the end of the episode when arresting images of fire and destruction, supposedly the burning surface of Cheron, are
superimposed over the figures of Bele and Lokai still chasing one another across the landscape of their doomed planet. Even though they represent the remaining survivors of their civilization, Bele and Lokai are still incessant in their hateful pursuit. The overall ideological message that the episode makes explicit here is that if racism is not somehow overcome, it will lead to the tragic destruction of all parties involved.

In numerous other episodes, *Star Trek* also vehemently attacks racism levelled against one’s own comrades, advocating instead the acceptance of these alien others, while simultaneously looking down upon those who exhibit racial bigotry. Perhaps the most memorable example of this phenomenon occurs in an episode entitled “Balance Of Terror.”

In this episode, the Enterprise is ordered to confront a Romulan vessel which is using a "cloaking device" to cross undetected into Federation space to destroy Earth outposts located alongside a treaty-created "Neutral Zone." When the Enterprise approaches the enemy vessel, it activates its "cloaking device," becoming invisible once again. To even the odds for the inevitable confrontation, Kirk orders all his ship’s systems shut down so that their exact position will be undetectable to the Romulan vessel. A long, tension-filled stand-off between both ships then ensues which lasts for most of the remaining portion of the episode.

The racial bigotry in this particular narrative is exhibited by Lieutenant Stiles, a young navigator who makes his sole appearance on *Star Trek*. The reason for this

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*Romulans are a mythical humanoid species, from the planet Romulus, who are Asiatic in appearance and, like the Klingons, a major oppositional power to the Federation.

*A cloaking device is a mythical technological innovation developed by the Romulans to create an invisible shield which can be used to conceal a starship.*
behaviour is established early on: apparently several of his relatives were killed in the last military confrontation with the Romulans over one hundred years ago. However, while his "perceived" enemy is the Romulans, his most direct expression of racism in the episode is aimed at Mr. Spock. This is due to the fact that Vulcans, which necessarily includes Spock, are similar in appearance to Romulans, and Stiles is filled with contempt for them.

As the tension mounts on the Enterprise during the episode, Stiles begins to exude increasingly overt racism towards Spock. Initially, it takes the form of snide remarks made under his breath regarding the Vulcan's loyalty. His behaviour slowly escalates and culminates in a heated confrontation between himself and Spock in the engine room, near the conclusion of the story, when the Vulcan enters to offer his assistance. When he does, Stiles replies that he and Tomlinson will handle their tasks without the assistance of a "Vulcan." In his response, Stiles spits out the word "Vulcan" with such distaste that he betrays his blatant contempt for Spock based solely on his heritage. The racist attitude displayed by Stiles, however, is defused near the end of the episode when he is trapped in a smoke-filled engine room and Spock risks his own life to save him. When he is later shown recovering in sickbay, the lieutenant concedes his misjudgment of Spock to Kirk and even commends him for his courageous actions.

On the whole, this sub-plot of "Balance of Terror" is, similar to the main plot of "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield," a morality tale which is critical of racism directed at one's own comrades. It begins by presenting Stiles as an unsympathetic and obsessive character who stands alone in his attitude towards Spock, since no one else seems particularly bothered by Spock's similar appearance to the Romulans.
With Kirk again operating as the moral voice of reason, Stiles is sharply chastised for his unfair behaviour, in a dramatic bridge scene, and told to leave his bigotry in his quarters. The position of the series regarding this brand of racism is then made clear at the end of the episode when Spock saves the life of Stiles and the lieutenant acknowledges his error in judgement. This sub-plot essentially demonstrates to the audience that racial hatred based solely on physical difference is unjust, a progressive message.

However, while Star Trek narratives appear critical of the expression of racial prejudice by an actor against one of his own comrades, usually based on essentially "superficial" physical differences, its texts frequently employ visual images and representations, which operate as cues to distinguish between "good" and "evil" forces, that are inherently racist. This is most clearly illustrated in the series through the appearances and depictions of the Klingons and the Romulans, the chief "enemies" of the Federation, who are the embodiment of "evil" in this mythical universe. There are nine Star Trek episodes which feature these oppositional powers: the Klingons appear in seven of them, while the Romulans appear in only two. By analyzing the images and representations of these two primary "nemeses" of the Federation, and contrasting them with the representations of the Federation in the episodes, I will provide evidence to support my contention that Star Trek texts use visual cues to portray the "enemy" in a specific manner which may be interpreted as racist.

In the Star Trek mythos, the side of "good" is represented by the crew of the Enterprise and, by extension, the Federation itself. In the series, the Federation is presented as a collection of planetary civilizations who are together by choice, thereby showing its democratic character, and promotes such values as peace, equality, and
justice. Its members will, however, engage in war if forced, usually in the name of self-defense and preservation. In order for these presumably "good" virtues to shine through in its texts, however, all myths of this sort require a force to stand in "opposition" to these values. On Star Trek, this opposition is provided by the Klingons and, to a lesser extent, the Romulans. Each "nemesis" will be analyzed separately.

On Star Trek, the Klingons unarguably represent the primary "evil" force. In it, they are characterized as a vile, brutal, war-like and untrustworthy race which frequently engages in loathsome acts. Their qualities are unmistakably exhibited in the seven episodes in which they appear. For example, in "Errand Of Mercy," peace treaty negotiations between the Federation and the Klingons are on the verge of breaking down, so the Enterprise is sent to Organia, a disputed area, to use whatever means necessary to ensure that the Klingons do not establish a military base there. Once the Enterprise takes orbit around the planet, inhabited by a benevolent and seemingly primitive culture, Kirk and Spock beam down to its surface to warn its citizens of the Klingon deployment and to offer Federation protection. The Organians, however, perceive no danger and graciously decline the offer. In fact, they seemingly have more fear for the safety of Kirk and Spock than for themselves, especially once the two officers become trapped on the surface of the planet as the Klingon forces arrive.

The vile and brutal nature of the Klingons is revealed early in this episode when Kor, the new self-imposed Klingon governor of Organia, arrives. When he enters the Organian council chambers, with Kirk and Spock present but dressed as citizens, he behaves in an unfriendly and insulting manner towards the entire group. At this time, Kor also announces his takeover of the planet and outlines the new rules
and guidelines all Organians must live by; the breaking of any of them is punishable by death. He then issues a threat to quell any resistance: for every Klingon officer killed during their occupation, one thousand Organians will be executed. Later in the episode, when Kirk and Spock are jailed after it is discovered they are Federation officers, and escape with the assistance of the Organians, Kor proceeds to execute two-hundred inhabitants and threatens to kill more every two hours until they are returned. ¹⁶ The Klingons commit a similarly vile act in "The Trouble With Tribbles." In this episode, the Enterprise is ordered to ensure the safe arrival of a shipment of "quadrotriticale," a special grain, to its destination. During its delivery, however, a Klingon espionage agent aboard the space station poisons the cargo. The contaminated grain is fortunately discovered before any humans ingest it. The Klingons commit similar acts of torture and violence in several other Star Trek episodes. ¹⁷

On Star Trek, Romulans are portrayed in a similar fashion to the Klingons; they too are characterized as an aggressive, brutal, and war-like race. For instance, in "Balance Of Terror," a Romulan vessel crosses into Federation space and, in an unprovoked attack, destroys Earth space stations located along the "Neutral Zone." In their only other appearance in a Star Trek episode, "The Enterprise Incident," they are portrayed in a more sympathetic fashion, yet still employ inhumane methods and practices, especially in their treatment of "enemies," which stand opposed to

¹⁶ No Organians are actually killed by Kor since it is later revealed that they are not corporeal entities, but merely energy beings that have merely taken humanoid form. The point here is that the Klingons truly believe that they are executing Organian citizens, a brutal act.

¹⁷ For further examples of Klingons committing detestable acts, see episodes 32, 45, 57, 66 and 77.
Federation values. For instance, they threaten to torture Captain Kirk with a painful "truth-seeking" device which could reduce him to a mindless being if he does not reveal his current mission to them. The Federation, with Kirk acting as its representative, is later presented as more humane than the Romulans in the episode when the Enterprise escapes their territory with a Romulan commander on board. Kirk achieves this moral superiority by having the commander escorted to guest quarters, instead of torturing her for information. She is then dropped off at the nearest Federation starbase and returned unharmed to her home world.

The point here is not to criticize the fact that both the Klingons and the Romulans are portrayed as "evil" or despicable characters in the narratives, since myths often require this sort of opposition to differentiate between "good" and "evil" people and actions. What I am critical of is that in addition to being the primary "enemies" of a white-male dominated Federation, the Klingons are also designed to physically resemble blacks, due to their dark complexions, while the Romulans are similar in appearance to Orientals. This represents a conscious choice on the part of Star Trek's creators to characterize "the enemy" in a specific fashion, using vivid visual images of "evil" to sharply contrast with those of "good," which could be perceived as intrinsically racist. Viewed in a contemporary sense, it seems to deliver a latent message that whites essentially stand for "good," while both blacks and Orientals often stand for "evil." Utilizing this imagery in television programs and other media may even intensify racist attitudes and behaviours whether or not the creators consciously intend to do so. Instead of using dark-skinned or Oriental-appearing characters as the principal "enemies" of the Federation, the creators of Star Trek could have just as easily created two white-skinned races or factions to act as
"evil" oppositions in the series.

On the whole, the ideological representations of race on Star Trek must be viewed as contradictory at best. On the one hand, the series is fairly progressive for frequently featuring both non-white recurring and guest characters in its narratives. It even occasionally presents some of them in well-respected occupations which are fairly high in the social hierarchy, including a medical doctor and a computer scientist. During the 1960s, these were rare sights on television. In this way, Star Trek, to some extent, exhibits positive images of non-whites which also anticipates a mythical future in which these individuals could play such a role.

On the other hand, one has to question whether Star Trek goes far enough towards promoting racial equality and is as daring as it professed to be in this regard. First of all, no Orientals were ever featured in any narratives with the exception of Lieutenant Sulu. As made evident in the preceding analysis, Sulu himself is never an essential character in any of Star Trek's episodes; he usually remains in the background. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of the black guest characters in the series are featured in small supporting roles as nameless crew members or minor security officers, and never as captains, commodores or admirals. Many of them have few, if any, lines of dialogue and usually appear in only one or two brief scenes.50 Therefore, their appearances in these narratives can arguably be interpreted as mere "tokenism." Finally, even the character of Lieutenant Uhura is used sparingly in most Star Trek narratives, rarely shown in off-duty segments, and never essential in any episodes. Due to these occurrences, one can assert that the series expresses a latent racism against non-white characters by, at the very least, casting mostly white

50For examples of black crew members appearing in brief, minor roles, see episodes 6, 50, 69.
characters in the privileged positions and roles.

The position of *Star Trek* regarding the issue of race is then further confused at the narrative level. Some episodes vehemently criticize the expression of racial hatred, especially if it is directed by a character against one of his own comrades and based solely on physical difference. However, this position is contradicted by the fact that the series employs racist visual images and representations by presenting the heroes, the Federation, as primarily white-skinned, while presenting its primary "enemies," namely the Klingons and Romulans, as either dark-skinned or Asian in appearance.

Since *Star Trek* is a popular contemporary myth, it can hardly avoid presenting morality plays which pit "good" against "evil." However, the series might have been more progressive by not representing the primary enemies of the Federation as non-white in appearance. It could have avoided this unfair and regressive imagistic generalization by creating both "good" and "evil" white and non-white primary enemies of the Federation. In this fashion, *Star Trek* would have at least acknowledged the more progressive message that "good" and "evil" are in no way associated with race or skin color.

4.10 CONTEXTUALIZING THE IDEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF RACE IN *STAR TREK*

Analyzing the ideological representations of race in *Star Trek* relationally and contextually, by situating them within the social and political climate of the 1960s, there are at least two types of struggles clearly represented in the narratives. Both of them will be examined separately and at some length.
The first is evident by the very conception of *Star Trek*: the series, according to Roddenberry himself, was designed to employ a multiracial cast, presenting non-whites in heroic roles, and integrating them with white crew members. These images are conveyed primarily through the characters of Sulu and Uhura, but also to a lesser degree through Dr. M'Benga. Each of these characters, discussed earlier, is characterized as competent and successful non-white individuals in their various fields of expertise. Due to this, I concur with Kellner's assessment of the series in *Television and the Crisis of Democracy* as basically promoting a liberal integrationist policy, where non-whites are shown enjoying many of the same distinguished careers as whites. However, it is still one which privileges whites over non-whites since the leader of this integrated crew on *Star Trek* is Captain Kirk, a white male (Kellner 1990b, 51). *Star Trek* also rarely deals metaphorically with contemporary minority issues such as urban crime, poverty and racial inequality. In fact, the series only really addresses the issue of inequality in indirect fashions, never acknowledging the possibility that its own placement of non-whites in the narratives could be interpreted as a latent form of racism.

This promise of complete and equal integration, a utopian ideal offered in the series, was, however, doomed to failure from the start, due mostly to the fact that the social and political climate of the 1960s would not allow its bald expression on television. This contradiction was most clearly demonstrated by the fact that *Star Trek*, on the one hand, was able to vehemently criticize racism exhibited between comrades in the narratives, thereby supporting the better treatment of non-whites, while on the other, it marginalized non-white characters by presenting them in mostly smaller and less significant roles than white characters, the precise treatment it was
often symbolically criticizing in its narratives. The blame for this situation must not rest solely with the creators of Star Trek; much of it must also lie with both the television network and society as a whole. It is probable that due to the social realities of the 1960s, the creators of the series were virtually forced to do so to appease commercial interests.\footnote{From the outset, business interests feared that an integrated crew on Star Trek would be problematical from an economic perspective. They feared that having a black in the cast would upset audiences in southern states, having a Mexican in the cast would upset audience members in Texas and Arizona, and that having a Chinese person in the cast would make the series difficult to market in Indonesia (Whitfield and Roddenberry 1968, 127).}

On the other hand, even though non-whites could rarely appear in primary roles in television programs during the 1960s, there is a potentially bright spot in this mostly unfair situation. For instance, even though Uhura is a secondary character on Star Trek, I must acknowledge that there is a positive side to her portrayal related to the issue of race. First, she represents one of the earliest black recurring characters in a network television series. More specifically, she is a non-white female, part of perhaps the most marginalized group in North American society. Early in the production of the series, Nichelle Nichols, the actress who portrays Uhura, was disappointed with her character’s lack of centrality in the narratives and considered resigning, but a chance meeting with Martin Luther King changed her mind. While King shared many of her concerns, he believed there was a momentous context she should consider. Her role on Star Trek, though a limited one, was important for black people because she portrayed a black heroine in a television series, a rare occurrence at the time (Parks 1988, C9-10). In the 1960s, black roles on television were often limited to guest appearances on programs which exhibited negative and stereotypical images of black people. Her continuing role on the series presented Nichols with the
historical opportunity to be a contributing factor towards the presentation of more favourable images of black people on television which could not only lead to subsequently larger roles for non-white actors and actresses, but also to the increased regard, acceptance and better treatment of non-white individuals in society.

A second more political contextualization of the series exposes it as a fairly obvious symbolization of the Cold War milieu of the 1950s and 1960s which is then used to support, in many ways, American ideological perspectives on militarism, war and the nature of the "enemy." These images can be exposed by comparing the political structures and alliances of the 1960s with Star Trek's own mythical ones.

First of all, the "Federation" is shortened term for the "United Federation of Planets," an unmistakable code for the United States of America, a capitalistic and democratic faction. Even the term "Federation" itself connotes the image of its members as democratically choosing to belong to this union while retaining their sovereignty. It is also seemingly a white-male dominated society with the planet Earth functioning as its primary base. Kirk and the crew of the Enterprise act as the agents of the Federation and the primary focus in Star Trek's narratives; all of them are presented from the Federation's point of view. They are ultimately presented as the "heroes" in these narratives, thereby reinforcing the notion that capitalistic countries necessarily stand for "good."

Reading the texts of Star Trek politically, the Klingons not only symbolically represent blacks, but their militaristic, "evil empire" also invites ideological comparisons to the Soviet Union of the 1960s, if one considers the context in which the series was created, an era in which the Soviet Union represented the primary "Cold War" enemy of the United States. This, along with the position of the Klingons
in *Star Trek* as the major political and ideological oppositional power to the Federation legitimates the comparison.\(^{52}\)

Furthermore, this is also made evident by the themes expressed in the episodes in which Klingons appear. For instance, in "The Trouble With Tribbles," a light-skinned Klingon infiltrates a Federation base and poisons a grain-like cargo. This episode seems to symbolically play on American fears of Russian espionage and terrorism. In "A Private Little War," Kirk discovers that the Klingons have supplied flintlock weaponry to one of two factions on a once peaceful planet. In order to create a "balance of power" Kirk takes it upon himself to supply the other side with equal weaponry. This establishes a thinly-veiled symbolic recreation of the Vietnam conflict of the 1960s with the Federation and the Klingons standing in for the Americans and Russians respectively, while the two factions on the planet symbolize the Vietnamese people.\(^{53}\) Finally, in "Friday's Child," the Enterprise travels to Capella IV to convince its inhabitants to join the Federation instead of the Klingon Empire which already has a delegate on the planet. This sets up a symbolic "capitalism" versus "communism" confrontation in the narrative which resembles political and ideological struggles for control of smaller countries between the Americans and the Soviets during the 1960s and beyond.

Secondly, the Romulans symbolically represent the Chinese in the *Star Trek* mythos. For instance, when we first meet them in "Balance Of Terror," supposedly

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\(^{52}\) The facial characteristics of the Klingons are also somewhat Mongolian in appearance which supports their contextual imaging as an "enemy" of the Federation in the *Star Trek* mythos which parallels the contemporary communist Chinese/capitalist American relationship.

\(^{53}\) Although it is obviously symbolized in the episode, I feel obligated to acknowledge that both Allan Asherman and Rick Worland interpreted the symbolic elements in this episode in a similar fashion to me (Asherman 1989, 90; Worland 1988, 113).
no one from the Federation had seen a Romulan face to face for nearly a century. This is comparable to the Chinese of the 1960s for the Americans. At that time, the United States had had little direct contact with the Chinese for quite some time, until Nixon visited the country to reopen relations. This, along with their Asiatic facial appearances, which includes their eyebrows and haircuts, their cool and unemotional mannerisms, and their violent natures invite these ideological comparisons as well. These are precisely the images of Asians conjured by American propaganda agencies during World War II and beyond. Furthermore, politically and ideologically the Chinese are similar to the Soviet Union in that they are both communist countries, as is true for the Klingons and Romulans in Star Trek's mythical universe. In fact, both the Klingon and the Romulan territories are extremely militaristic factions considered "empires," betraying both their imperialistic nature and their rule by force and domination.

The Vulcans in the Star Trek mythos are revealed to be distant brothers of the Romulans which is made obvious by their similar physical appearances. Due to this, the Vulcans in Star Trek invite ideological comparisons to the Japanese. This corresponds to the relationship between the Chinese and the Japanese who are also considered distant brothers. The Vulcans, like the ideological representations of the Japanese advanced by American propagandists, were once a violent race, but have since become peaceful people. Finally, the Vulcans are allies of the Federation, much

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"This fact is stated specifically in a third season episode entitled "The Enterprise Incident," although it is obvious from a first season one entitled "Balance of Terror."
like post-war Japan is an ally of the United States."

Following from this ideological structuring, the series encourages television viewers to hate the enemies of the Federation. As emphasized in the previous section, these narratives play on the mythical "good" versus "evil" motif where "good" is equated with the Federation, a democratic, capitalistic, white-dominated force, and "evil" equated with the Klingons and Romulans who are militaristic, dark-skinned or Asiatic "evil empires." In fact, Star Trek often legitimizes manifest hatred and racism levelled against these political enemies of the Federation, since they are presented to viewers as ugly, vile and brutal. This is conducted to such a great degree that hating them becomes a natural response. In this way, the rift between communist and capitalist countries is symbolically represented in the series, as well as between whites and other races, and used to legitimate white Americans as "good guys" in these adversarial relationships.

"Although I came to my conclusions independently, I feel compelled to acknowledge the work of both Rick Worland and Jay Goulding at this time. Worland's article entitled "Captain Kirk: Cold Warrior." contains many similarly contextualized interpretations of the texts of Star Trek which also perceives different factions in its narratives to be symbolic representations of 1960s political forces and alliances. For a more extensive analysis of these relationships than appears here, please see his work (Worland 1988, passim). Another published source which conducts an excellent political and ideological analysis of Star Trek and other science fiction series in a similar fashion is Jay Goulding's Empires, Aliens and Conquest (Goulding 1985, passim)."
CHAPTER V

EPILOGUE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will briefly analyze Star Trek: The Next Generation in the same way in which Star Trek was previously examined, while simultaneously comparing and contrasting the ideological representations of gender and race in it with those exhibited in the original series. I will then examine these same images and representations in Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, briefly comparing and contrasting them with those of the two earlier series, and emphasizing its vast differences from Star Trek's original pilot, "The Cage." Finally, this chapter will outline the conclusions which can be drawn as a result of this analysis, conduct a critical appraisal of Kellner's theoretical approach for examining the Star Trek phenomenon, and provide suggestions for further research.

5.2 IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER IN STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

The following analysis of Star Trek: The Next Generation will critique the images and treatment of the female gender through an examination of both recurring and guest female characters in its narratives. In this fashion, I will both uncover and delineate the progressive and regressive gender representations exhibited in the series and then compare them to those in the original one. Due to time and space constraints, this section will focus primarily on recurring characters.

On Star Trek: The Next Generation, there are basically six recurring female
characters: Counsellor Troi, Dr. Crusher, Dr. Pulaski, Lieutenant Yar, Guinan and Keiko O’Brien.\(^5^6\) Of these six recurring female characters, only Counsellor Troi and Dr. Crusher appear in most of the episodes and can be considered essential ones.\(^5^7\) By contrast, there are seven recurring male characters in Star Trek: The Next Generation: Captain Picard, Commander Riker, Commander Data, Commander La Forge, Chief O’Brien, Ensign Crusher, and Lieutenant Worf. Of these seven recurring male characters in the original series, all of them appear in a majority of the episodes.\(^5^8\) Although not a completely egalitarian situation, this is a vast improvement from the original series which contains only three recurring female characters, of which only one appears in a majority of its episodes. From the outset, then, the new series can still be interpreted as numerically sexist though not quite as one-sidedly so as Star Trek.

The roles and responsibilities of recurring female characters in Star Trek: The Next Generation are also, for the most part, almost as ideologically regressive and gender-biased as they are in Star Trek. For instance, similar to Star Trek, all of the primary command personnel in this new series are male: the captain, first officer, and

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\(^5^6\)Her name is originally Keiko Ishikawa until she marries Miles O’Brien.

\(^5^7\)Dr. Pulaski is only in the second season of the series, taking the place of Dr. Crusher. She appears in most of the second season episodes. Lieutenant Yar is killed near the end of the first season, but appears in nearly all of the episodes up until that point. Finally, Guinan is more of an intermittent character who joins the series for its second season. She appears in roughly one-quarter of the episodes from then on. Keiko O’Brien is introduced during the fourth season of the series when she becomes engaged to Miles O’Brien, the Chief Engineer. She only appears in a few fourth season episodes and several fifth season ones. During the sixth season of the series, she leaves with her husband to join Star Trek: Deep Space Nine.

\(^5^8\)Ensign Crusher appears in nearly all of the episodes up until the fifth season of the series. During the fifth season, he leaves for Starfleet Academy and only appears in a couple of episodes after that time. Similarly, Chief O’Brien leaves the series during its sixth season to join the cast of Star Trek: Deep Space Nine.
second officer on the Enterprise are all males with the highest ranking female on the Enterprise being Lieutenant Yar. She is only fourth or fifth in the command hierarchy and is never left in charge of the ship.™ This is somewhat similar to Uhura's predicament in Star Trek with the exception that Yar is killed near the end of the first season leaving no female character near the top of the command hierarchy from that point onward.™ Therefore, Star Trek: The Next Generation is hardly more progressive or liberating than the original series in this regard since female characters are still rarely displayed in command positions on Federation starships.

In fact, in two rare instances in which women are left in command of a Federation ship, both fail miserably at the task. In "Yesterday's Enterprise," the Enterprise-C is sent forward in time during a violent battle with the Romulans which alters history.™ Her commander is a female, Captain Garrett, who, according to the initial sequence of historical events, loses this battle and brings about the destruction of her vessel. In "Disaster," Counsellor Troi is forced to take command when a power outage traps all other high-ranking officers on various decks of the ship. Throughout the episode, Troi struggles with this duty, acting indecisively in the role for the most part. At the end of the episode, when power is finally restored to the Enterprise and the trapped crew members are freed, she is relieved and gladly relinquishes control of the ship to Picard stating explicitly that she never desires the responsibility of

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™Picard is the captain; Riker is his First Officer; and Commander Data is next in the command hierarchy. Moreover, Data is an android, but he is regarded as a sentient being and his gender identity is male.

™™Tasha Yar is killed in "Skin of Evil" by Armus, an alien being similar in appearance to an oil slick.

™™The Federation vessel Picard commands on Star Trek: The Next Generation is the USS Enterprise-D.
command again. Ideologically, the images and characterizations of both Troi and Captain Garrett in their respective episodes are regressive, seemingly reasserting the sexist notion that women are innately unqualified to hold command positions. Furthermore, Troi’s statement regarding her lack of desire to ever command again is even used to justify this discrimination by providing a convenient excuse which attempts to cover for the fact that *Star Trek: The Next Generation* displays very few positive images of female commanders in its episodes. It employs this image to legitimize the ideologically regressive notion that women are not only incapable of being successful leaders, but do not, as a rule, even desire command positions, leaving males to fill these so-called “unwanted” roles. In this way, these images can be interpreted as somewhat of a backlash to feminism and the expanding roles of women in contemporary society by refuting their ability to succeed in this traditionally male sphere.

This is further substantiated by the fact that the two most frequent recurring female characters on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, namely Counsellor Troi and Dr. Crusher, both perform fairly stereotypical female occupations. Troi, as suggested by her title, is the ship’s counsellor whose function is essentially the same as that of a psychologist. She cares for the mental and emotional well-being of the crew, a vocation which is traditionally considered an “appropriate” sphere for women. Similarly, from an ideological perspective, Doctor Crusher is actually only one step above that of a nurse since her occupation still legitimizes the stereotypical notion that women are best qualified for caring and nurturing roles. Neither of their occupations display female images which move far beyond those of Uhura on *Star Trek*. 
To be fair, however, the stereotypical images of women exhibited by the roles of Troi and Crusher are somewhat contradicted by several female characters who appear in the series, most notably Lieutenant Yar, whose role as chief of security during Star Trek: The Next Generation’s first season represents a break from two sexually stereotypical tendencies of the original series: first, the presentation of career women in almost exclusively traditional female occupations; and second, that women require male protection from physical danger. The first one is necessarily broken by Yar’s very role in the series as the chief of security, typically a masculine career. In the original Star Trek series, only male characters act as security personnel. The second one, that women need a male for protection from danger, is broken by Yar in the pilot episode entitled “Encounter At Farpoint.”

In this episode, an alien known only as “Q” places the crew of the Enterprise on trial for what he terms “the crimes of humanity.” He essentially views humanity as too violent to be permitted to spread out further into the galaxy. “Q” transports Picard, Troi, Data and Yar into his “kangaroo court” to stand trial for these so-called “crimes.” When he finds the party guilty and sentences them to death, Yar steps forward to physically defend herself and her shipmates. Granted, her struggles are in vain since she is then frozen solid by “Q,” however, the point here is that Yar is characterized as a courageous and heroic female protagonist who can defend herself in hand-to-hand combat situations, refusing to conjure the image of a stereotypical frail, helpless “damsel in distress” archetype, as nearly all women in the original Star

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*Two other competent and ambitious female characters who break these stereotypes in the series are Commander Shelby in "The Best Of Both Worlds I." and "The Best Of Both Worlds II" and Ensign Ro in "Ensign Ro." "Cause and Effect," and several other fifth season episodes.*
The *Star Trek* series are portrayed when confronted by physical danger.\(^{63}\)

Furthermore, female characters on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* are actively involved in landing parties, with a female one sometimes leading them,\(^{64}\) and advisory meetings held to resolve missions or emergencies arising on the ship.\(^{65}\) These more progressive images of female characters as competent contributors to the narratives and storylines never appear in the original *Star Trek* series. Therefore, both the opinions and expertise of women in their respective fields are more valued on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* than they are on *Star Trek*.

Moreover, unlike *Star Trek*, male characters in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* do not consistently represent the ideological center of the text. Admittedly, the Captain’s Logs are usually recorded by white males, usually Picard or Riker, and both are central forces in most narratives, but female characters are featured as the primary central focus in numerous episodes.\(^{66}\) Furthermore, on the bridge of the

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\(^{63}\) Yar also clearly exhibits her abilities to defend herself in “Code of Honour,” where she is kidnapped by the leader of Ligon II, Lutan, and challenged to fight a battle to the death with his wife Yarenn.

\(^{64}\) For instance, Lieutenant Commander Shelby, in “The Best of Both Worlds I,” leads a landing party to rescue Captain Picard. Lieutenant Commander Leitjen, in “Identity Crisis,” beams down to the planet Tarchannen III to help La Forge investigate the fate of a research colony. Finally, Ensign Ro in “Ensign Ro,” is an invaluable member of a landing party mission to locate the rebel leader of a Bajoran resistance movement.

\(^{65}\) For instance, Counsellor Troi leads the meeting to solve the mystery surrounding the fact that numerous crew members are experiencing episodes of "lost time" in "Schisms." Both Troi and Crusher actively participate in numerous other council meetings aboard the Enterprise throughout the series.

\(^{66}\) For example, Counsellor Troi is the central focus of the narratives “Haven,” where she must decide whether or not to proceed with her pre-arranged marriage; "The Child," where she is impregnated by an alien; "Man of the People," where she falls in love with a peace negotiator and "The Loss," where she tries to cope with losing her telepathic powers. Similarly, Dr. Crusher is the central focus of the narratives "The Host," where she falls in love with a Federation ambassador; "Remember Me," where she is accidentally trapped by Wesley in an alternate
Enterprise, where much of the action takes place, Picard, as captain, is not emphasized as the sole ideologically "central" character, as Kirk is in the original series. Due to this, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episodes are not uniformly presented from Picard's point of view. Moreover, utilizing the proxemic imagery from the previous chapter, Picard's chair is not elevated like a throne as Kirk's is in *Star Trek*, it is at floor level. He is also not isolated from the rest of the bridge personnel and the sole "center of attention" on it either, but flanked on both sides by his closest advisors. Riker, his First Officer, is on his right; while Troi, his mental and emotional advisor, is on his left. As a result, the image that Picard promotes is that he is a member of a team, and not acting entirely on his own as a completely autonomous entity. This represents a sharp contrast to the character of Kirk who often times acts solely on his own convictions, even when his staff members warn him of the foolhardiness of his actions.67

On the whole, however, the characterizations of the primary female characters on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* are not as sexist as the ones on the original series. While it is true that both Counsellor Troi and Dr. Crusher, the primary females in the series, perform fairly stereotypical roles, they are likewise presented as strong personalities who are not afraid to challenge the captain's decisions if they disagree with him. By contrast, no female crew members ever dare to question Kirk's decisions

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67For instance, see "The Savage Curtain," where Kirk decides to beam down to an unknown planet with an Abraham Lincoln clone, but no security personnel, even though Scotty and McCoy violently oppose his decision.
on *Star Trek.* Furthermore, the new series also features female characters such as Tasha Yar who perform roles traditionally considered primarily male vocations and, even though males do fill most of the primary command positions on the Enterprise in *Star Trek: The Next Generation,* unlike the original series, we occasionally encounter female Federation Admirals, starship commanders and other high-ranking officers and officials. In fact, female characters are more often displayed in a variety of non-traditional occupations in general, in which they excel, paying some homage to the expanding roles of women in contemporary society, with these instances much less rare than those on the first *Star Trek* series. All of these fairly progressive images on the new series acknowledge, to some extent, that women can enjoy successful careers in a white male-dominated Federation, as they do in our present society. Still, a number of these more progressive roles in the series are not recurring ones, with many of them likewise only marginally significant to their particular narratives. Therefore, claims of "tokenism" can be substantiated in some of these cases since women filling powerful non-traditional roles on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* can be interpreted as rare or unusual occurrences.

On the more regressive side, a handful of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*'s episodes do present women as mere sex objects and love interests for male

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6"For instance, Guinan strongly opposes Picard's decision to send a landing party aboard an enemy vessel in "Q Who?" and Beverly Crusher violently opposes Picard's initial decision (he ultimately does not carry out this decision) to murder an entire powerful enemy cyborg civilization by contaminating one of its members with a computer virus and returning him to his people in "I. Borg."

6"For specific examples, see Admiral Satie in "The Drumhead," an unnamed Admiral in "Unification One," and Captain Garrett in "Yesterday's Enterprise."

7"For specific examples, see Dr. Leah Brahms in "Galaxy's Child" and "Booby Trap."
protagonists in a fashion reminiscent of their treatment on the original Star Trek series.\textsuperscript{71} However, these regressive images are fairly rare, occurring most often during its first season, with many of the more progressive ones previously discussed contradicting them, making this second series, on average, much less sexist than Star Trek. Moreover, many of the women who appear in its narratives are attractive, but Star Trek: The Next Generation as a whole caters to a wider range of female representational types than does Star Trek, which features almost exclusively young, seductive and glamorous women with hourglass figures. These types include older and less seductive and glamorous women, which does acknowledge imagistically that women, like men, come in all shapes, sizes and ages.\textsuperscript{72} Female characters are also more three-dimensional in Star Trek: The Next Generation than in the original series.

For the most part, the objectification of the bodies of female Starfleet officers, a virtual constant in Star Trek, is likewise omitted in the new series. Mini-skirt uniforms are no longer employed in it, with the exception of the pilot episode, "Encounter At Farpoint," in which Counsellor Troi and numerous background female crew members appear wearing them. After viewing the pilot, the creators of the series likely recognized their exploitative nature and opted to eliminate them. Instead, female crew members are, for the most part, dressed in a similar fashion to their

\textsuperscript{71}For specific examples, see Kamala in "The Perfect Mate." Jenice Manheim in "We'll Always Have Paris," and Barclay's Troi hologram in "Hollow Pursuits." A hologram is a three-dimensional visual electronic replica of a physical thing or person. In this instance, a member of the crew, Barclay, creates a hologram of Counsellor Troi, the object of his affections in the episode.

\textsuperscript{72}For instance, "The Dauphin" features a short, somewhat unattractive aged alien named Anya, who is the protector of Salia, an alien princess. Furthermore, unlike Star Trek, older female characters such as Anne Jameson in "Too Short A Season," and several characters in "Unnatural Selection" are featured in Star Trek: The Next Generation.
male counterparts, a uniform consisting of a shirt and pair of pants, giving them a more professional appearance than those in the original series. In this way, they can be regarded more seriously as career-minded officers. In fact, the only female Starfleet officer generally not in uniform in the series is Counsellor Troi who normally wears a long dress during its first five seasons; however, she too begins to wear a uniform during its sixth one.\footnote{For specific examples of Troi wearing a standard Starfleet uniform, see "Schisms," "Chain of Command I," and "Chain of Command II."}

5.3 CONTEXTUALIZING THE IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER IN STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

Analyzing \textit{Star Trek: The Next Generation} both contextually and relationally in terms of gender representation, it is evident that the series is, at least in comparison to the original one, fairly progressive. Most of \textit{Star Trek: The Next Generation}'s differences from its predecessor exhibit advanced steps forward in terms of gender representation, even though it is not entirely egalitarian and must be viewed, at best, as continuing to remain somewhat contradictory in this regard. On the one hand, the new series displays images and conceptions of females as more active participants in narratives, performing some important non-traditional and non-stereotypical vocations, and in stronger, three-dimensional characterizations than does the original \textit{Star Trek} series. On the other hand, few recurring female characters are displayed in non-traditional occupations or command positions. In the few instances in which they are displayed in command roles, they are ultimately shown as failures. Therefore, while the series is a significant improvement from the original in this
regard, it still has far to go towards promoting complete gender equality. In Chapter IV, Star Trek is shown to be almost exclusively conservative, sexist and restrictive in its female representations. To a large degree, the new series acts as a corrective to this regressive imagery by acknowledging, but never really looking beyond, the gains women have made in terms of their expanding roles in contemporary Western society.

Star Trek: The Next Generation can be characterized generally as assuming a more liberal and progressive stance against the conservative and restrictive images and conceptions of women exhibited in the original series. It more readily embraces a liberal feminism, where women can join and participate in this mythical future in more of a significant fashion than those in Star Trek, but the series is still not completely egalitarian. On the whole, it displays numerous images of equality with a few sexist moments while the original series displays an opposite emphasis.

Finally, because Star Trek: The Next Generation is not a network series, but an independent one which is created and then sold to independent television stations in all markets, no blame or praise for its content can be attributed to network interference.

5.4 IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF RACE IN STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

Similar to section 5.2 which analyzes the ideological representations of gender in Star Trek: The Next Generation, this segment will examine race representation in the series. Similar to the previous section, this one will also focus primarily on recurring, as opposed to guest, non-white characters.

In Star Trek: The Next Generation, there are essentially four non-white
recurring characters: Commander La Forge, Lieutenant Worf, Keiko O'Brien and Guinan. Of these four characters, only two, namely La Forge and Worf, appear in a majority of the narratives and can be considered primary characters: the other two only appear on occasion. This is extremely close to the original series where only two non-white characters, namely Uhura and Sulu, appear in most of the episodes.

As is the case with female characters in Star Trek: The Next Generation, the ideological focus in the narratives is not consistently a white male as it is in Star Trek. This is apparent by the fact that numerous episodes revolve around the characters of La Forge and Worf\(^4\) who are both black males.\(^5\) Moreover, not only do particular narratives revolve around these two characters, but they are generally the "moving forces" of them, providing fairly strong evidence that non-white males are often central characters in Star Trek: The Next Generation. Due to this, they are not "marginalized" from the primary activity, unquestioningly following orders, as both Sulu and Uhura are in Star Trek, but contribute significantly to numerous storylines and narratives. Even in the episodes in which they are not the central focus, they are still more complete and three-dimensional characters than nearly all the non-white characters who appear on Star Trek.

The positions that both Worf and La Forge hold on the Enterprise display fairly progressive images of non-whites as well which pays tribute to their expanding roles

\(^4\) consider Lieutenant Worf to imagistically represent a black male, even though he is a Klingon, due to his dark complexion and the fact that he is portrayed by a black actor.

\(^5\) For instance, La Forge is arguably the central character and focus in the episodes "Booby Trap," "Samaritan Snare," and "The Enemy," while the same is true for Worf in "Redemption I," "Heart Of Glory," and "The Emissary." Moreover, the word "males" is underlined in this passage to emphasize that non-white females, such as Keiko and Guinan, are never the central ideological focus of an episode.
and increasing acceptance in contemporary society. However, this does not come about until close to the end of \textit{Star Trek: The Next Generation}'s first season for Worf and the beginning of the second for La Forge. Worf's role becomes more significant in the series due primarily to the death of Yar in "Skin of Evil." After this tragedy, he is promoted to Head of Security on the ship. At the beginning of the second season, La Forge is promoted to Chief of Engineering. Scotty's role in the original \textit{Star Trek} series. In this way, the new series is a progressive step forward from the original due to the fact that it features, from that point onward, two non-whites in primary departmental positions. By contrast, the original \textit{Star Trek} series features exclusively white males in these empowering positions. Nevertheless, only male crew members, whether white or non-white, fill the primary departmental positions following Yar's death in the series. However, similar to female images and representations in \textit{Star Trek: The Next Generation}, the highest ranking non-white officer on the Enterprise is La Forge who is still no higher than fourth or fifth in the command hierarchy following his promotion.

One occurrence in the series does somewhat break away from this tendency to exhibit white characters (mostly male ones) in command of Federation vessels and anticipates a future where non-whites can participate more actively. In a first season episode entitled "The Arsenal of Freedom," all of the Enterprise's primary command personnel are trapped on planet Minos after Captain Picard and Dr. Crusher fall into a large cavern. After this, Riker, Yar and Data beam down to its surface to search for the missing officers and are menaced by flying killer drones created by a sophisticated computerized weapons system. This system sends one of its drones into space to attack the Enterprise, with La Forge in command for the first time. In fact, it is the
first time in the history of any Star Trek television series that a non-white character actually delivers commands while captaining the Enterprise. 76 He faces the difficult task of defending the ship and her crew with the use of only inexperienced bridge personnel. La Forge’s stint as commander is unsteady at first; however, with the mental and emotional support of Troi, he gradually gains the necessary confidence to destroy the drone and return to the planet to pick up the stranded crew members. In essence, this image of La Forge in the narrative is progressive because he is ultimately portrayed as a successful non-white starship commander. This represents a sharp contrast to the ways in which women are characterized in the series when left in charge of Federation vessels. 77

The character of Guinan, even though she does not appear in Star Trek: The Next Generation until its second season, and then only intermittently, is perhaps the most interesting and ideologically complex non-white character. Her role on the series is essentially that of a bartender or hostess for “Ten Forward,” a recreational lounge on the Enterprise. At the surface level, this image seemingly advances the stereotype that blacks are best suited to fill servile roles; however, while this element of her role can be criticized for its possible exhibition of racist imagery, it is negated by the complexity of her characterization. In the series, Guinan is not a human black female, but a member of an advanced dark-skinned alien species. This image seemingly

76 A black female commander appears briefly in Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home, but this is in the film series; and Sulu is seated in the command chair in two episodes of the original Star Trek series, as noted in Chapter IV, but he does not actually deliver any commands in these instances. Therefore, La Forge represents the first non-white officer in a Star Trek television narrative to actively command the Enterprise or any Federation starship.

77 For specific instances, see pages 115-16 for descriptions of Counsellor Troi and Captain Garrett in command of a starship.
advances a progressive notion that just because she is a "minority" (both on the ship and due to the fact there are very few members of her race left alive), she is not, by extension, necessarily "inferior." In fact, the image promoted by her character actually overturns racist ideologies in that she is a member of a more "advanced" species than humanity, with a lifespan far exceeding that of any human,\(^7\) which can be interpreted as both ideologically and symbolically critical of the notion that blacks are an inferior race in our culture due to the fact they are not part of the dominant race. Moreover, on numerous occasions, Captain Picard relies upon the advice of Guinan, thereby identifying her as a "trusted" confidante of the white male captain.\(^8\)

Perhaps the largest step backwards that Star Trek: The Next Generation takes from the original series, in terms of race representation, is with reference to the images and treatment of Oriental characters advanced in its narratives. Unlike Star Trek which features Lieutenant Sulu as a primary character, Oriental characters in the new series are suspiciously absent, for the most part, until its fourth season when Keiko Ishikawa (later O'Brien when she marries Miles), a Japanese botanist, is introduced. Prior to that time, images of Orientals are limited to very minor roles,\(^9\)

\(^7\)This fact is brought out in "Time's Arrow I" when Data travels back in time to 19th Century Earth and surprisingly meets Guinan. She is therefore over 400 years old.

\(^8\)For instance, in "Yesterday's Enterprise," Guinan is the only character who senses that their history has somehow been altered by the appearance of the Enterprise-C from the past. After some reflection, Picard trusts her assessment of the situation and sends the vessel back into the past where it belongs.

\(^9\)During Star Trek: The Next Generation's first three seasons, Oriental characters only appear in brief minor roles. Instances include Jim Shimoda, an assistant engineer on the Enterprise in "The Naked Now," Lieutenant Chang who oversees the Starfleet entrance exams of Wesley Crusher and a few others in "Coming of Age," and Admiral Nakamura in "The Measure of a Man." Oriental characters also appear as nameless background crew members in numerous other episodes.
and even then I would hesitate to characterize Keiko as primary since she does not appear in many episodes and is never the central character or "driving force" of any of them. She remains, at best, a secondary or background character in the episodes in which she appears. This is a slight, but surprising step backwards from the original series which does, at least, feature Sulu in larger roles than those given to Keiko and other Orientals in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Moreover, with Keiko's exit from this series, to join Miles O'Brien on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, the images of Orientals exhibited in the series becomes as limited as it is when the series first begins.

On the whole, non-whites still remain in the background of much of the activity in the episodes, particularly non-white female characters, with only a scattered few non-whites displayed in command positions. Similar to *Star Trek*, white male characters fill most of the primary command positions on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. However, two non-whites, namely Worf and La Forge, are included more often as important contributing members of landing parties in the new series, with La Forge sometimes even leading them.41 Both Worf and La Forge also actively participate during meetings to resolve crises, providing their expertise, opinions and suggestions, more often than non-white characters on *Star Trek* who are occasionally included in them, but rarely offer much input during them.

5.5 CONTEXTUALIZING THE IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF RACE IN *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*

Analyzing the ideological representations of race in *Star Trek: The Next*

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41 For instance, La Forge leads landing parties in "Heart of Glory" and "Identity Crisis."
Generation contextually and relationally to the political milieu of the 1980s, it is obvious that the "Cold War" ideology expressed by its predecessor during the 1960s has nearly disappeared. Virtually all of its militarism and anti-communist sentiments have become diffused due mostly to the fact that the Klingon Empire, a thinly disguised code for the Soviet Union, is no longer the near monolithic enemy of the Federation. This is alluded to at the beginning of the series and is noteworthy because the ultra-conservative Ronald Reagan was still president of the United States during the first airing of its early episodes, spouting anti-communist and anti-Soviet sentiments.\(^2\) This change in Star Trek: The Next Generation happens gradually, almost mirroring the ever lessening political and ideological gap between the Soviet Union and the United States. For instance, there is a Klingon named Worf on the Enterprise as the series begins, who is even considered a vital member of the crew. In this way, mirroring the real world, a former enemy has been assimilated to some degree into the Federation.\(^3\) However, the most telling aspect of the series contextually speaking is this relationship which has slowly developed between the two mythical superpowers and its similarities to the American/Soviet Union relationship.

Moreover, the Romulans, who symbolically represent the other communist "Cold War" enemy of the United States during the 1960s, the Chinese, are still mostly

\(^2\)Throughout much of his administration, Reagan referred to the Soviet Union as the "Evil Empire," thus reflecting his characterization of them as the primary ideological enemy of the United States (Kellner 1990b, 142).

\(^3\)This assessment must be qualified somewhat by stating that Worf, similar to Spock in the original series, is the exception to the rule. Few, if any, other Klingons serve aboard Starfleet vessels on Star Trek: The Next Generation.
an "unseen" enemy in *Star Trek: The Next Generation.* This interpretation of their characterization even serves to legitimize their earlier comparison to the Chinese as a secondary "Cold War" enemy of the Federation. The Romulans are also still imagistically coded as Chinese by their appearances, in particular their sloping eyebrows and short, straight hair styles. Moreover, their images also seemingly reflect and support the political reality that at present the Chinese still represent a political and ideological opposition to the United States.

Replacing the Klingons and Romulans as the major oppositional forces to the Federation are primarily two radically different nemeses: the Ferengi and the Borg. Both shall now be examined briefly. In his reference guide on *Star Trek: The Next Generation,* Shane Johnson describes the Ferengi as a greedy, capitalistic race whose motives for most actions can be attributed to desires for both power and wealth. The Ferengi are also very patriarchal with a technological level similar to that of the Federation (Johnson 1989, 144). Considering their characterizations as enemies contextually, the series can be viewed as a self-reflective gloss, critical of the capitalistic business mentality taken to an extreme. With them presented as negative characters, the series manages to be critical of tendencies in contemporary American society. The critical stance of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* against greed and

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84This point is emphasized in a first season episode entitled "The Neutral Zone." In this narrative, the Romulans are again attacking Federation outposts along the Neutral Zone. It is the first time in over fifty years that the Federation has any contact with them.

85The Cardassians, who first appear in an episode entitled "Ensign Ro" may become a more prevalent enemy as the series progresses. However, at present, they are a fairly recent "nemesis" and it remains to be seen whether or not they will later become more prominent.

86As the series progresses, the Ferengi become more of a nuisance than a powerful and fearsome enemy.
the accumulation of obscene wealth is similarly conveyed in a first season episode entitled "The Neutral Zone."\textsuperscript{v}

The other major enemy of the Federation in Star Trek: The Next Generation in the Borg, whose name derives from the term "cyborg." This term makes reference to a being which is half-human and half-machine. Their appearance betrays this combination as well: human faces show, but the rest of their bodies are encased in armour and machinery. Members of the Borg are all parts of one collectively controlled whole, with a seeming hive mentality, and seek to assimilate other cultures and beings into their ranks while perceiving resistance of them to be futile. This also seems to be critical of both the mechanization and rationalization we experience in the post-modern world which is having the effect of dissolving humane qualities and cultural diversity. They first appear in Star Trek: The Next Generation in an episode entitled "Q Who?" and can also, in some ways, be interpreted as critical, in a parodic sense, of the political tendencies of the Federation in the original Star Trek series which often attempts to dominate and assimilate other cultures through ideological means. This notion is carried to an extreme in Star Trek: The Next Generation through the images displayed by the Borgs.

On the whole, the substitution of primary enemies from the original series for new ones in Star Trek: The Next Generation seems to show that "communism,"

\textsuperscript{v}The sub-plot of this episode revolves around three humans from the twentieth century that the Enterprise discovers frozen aboard a space ship. All three of them were frozen just prior to their imminent deaths so that their bodies could be preserved until a cure for their fatal physical conditions can be discovered. One of the humans is a stockbroker whose only concern once "thawed" is to locate his money, even though it has been hundreds of years. In an exchange with the man, Picard, who has finally lost all patience with him, finally explodes and tells him that much has changed since he was frozen. He essentially contends that mankind has long since outgrown its infantile needs for possessions and the accumulation of wealth.
embodied by both the Klingons and the Romulans and symbolically opposed in the first Star Trek series, is no longer the near monolithic enemy. The series essentially breaks away from these distinctions between good and evil based on contemporary political divisions between capitalism and communism. It could also reflect the current social struggles in which there is no one global monolithic enemy, but instead American political, ideological and military conflicts with smaller and more diverse factions almost mirroring the recent Middle East conflict between Iraq and the United States and its allies.

5.6 IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER AND RACE IN STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

The following critique of Star Trek: Deep Space Nine will be a condensed examination of the series focussing almost entirely on images and representations exhibited in its pilot episode entitled "The Emissary." Once outlined, the images with respect to gender and race expressed in it will be briefly compared to the other two Star Trek series, including the pilot episode entitled "The Cage," emphasizing both similarities to, and differences from, all of these productions. In this critique, I will focus on three primary characters to examine these representations in the series."

First of all, in Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, only two of the primary recurring characters are female, Major Kira Nerys, a Bajoran, and Lieutenant Jadzia Dax, a Trill. By contrast, there are six recurring male characters in the series: Commander Benjamin Sisko, Chief Miles O'Brien, Constable Odo, Dr. Julian Bashir, Quark, and

"Since it is quite early in the development of the series, its structure and character may both later change quite significantly."
Jake Sisko, the commander's son. From the outset again, this series also privileges male images and perspectives over female ones and can be interpreted as discriminatory in this respect.

However, if one studies closely the roles and responsibilities of these two recurring female characters, Star Trek: Deep Space Nine is potentially the most progressive Star Trek series to date. For instance, Major Kira Nerys is a former Bajoran freedom fighter, who can therefore physically defend herself much like the character of Yar in Star Trek: The Next Generation, who is enlisted by the Federation to function as Sisko's second-in-command on the space station. Unlike both earlier series, Kira is the station's first officer, a powerful position in the command hierarchy. In fact, this is the first time since "The Cage" that a recurring female character is the second highest ranking recurring character on a Star Trek series. Moreover, she is also portrayed as an assertive, career-oriented woman who comfortably assumes the role of commander when Sisko leaves the station with Dax to investigate a newly-discovered wormhole.\footnote{A wormhole is a portal in space which allows those who enter to travel to another part of the galaxy by way of a short-cut.}

Unfortunately, the progressive images invoked by her character are later contradicted by events occurring near the conclusion of the pilot. While Sisko is still in the wormhole, along with a Cardassian ship which enters it just before its collapse, more Cardassian forces, who are unaware of the wormhole, arrive at the space station demanding to know the whereabouts of their sister ship. Kira tells them the truth, yet they refuse to believe her. Instead, they assume that the crew of the space station has somehow managed to destroy their comrades, and they demand an unconditional
surrender. Fearing a Cardassian attack on the station, Kira attempts to convince the Cardassians that it is fully armed and they will protect themselves if necessary. Her bluff, however, is ultimately unsuccessful and the Cardassians begin to fire upon the space station. During the attack, Kira is ultimately rescued by a male, Sisko, who comes through the re-formed wormhole just as she is about to surrender the space station to the Cardassians. Therefore, while the series continues to acknowledge and reflect the ever-expanding roles of women in society, it still occasionally regresses to its sexist ways by, similar to its images of females exhibited in both other Star Trek series, presenting Kira as failing in her command responsibilities (to a male opponent). Moreover, even though she is a strong, confident woman, she still occasionally needs to be rescued by a man, emphasizing that complete sexual equality is yet unachieved.  

Lieutenant Jadzia Dax is the other recurring female character on Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. Dax also exhibits some fairly progressive images of females as she fills the sexually non-traditional and non-stereotypical role of science officer, a typically masculine vocation. It is generally a stereotypical belief that men excel in scientific and technical departments while women are more suited for nurturing roles and perhaps the arts. Throughout the pilot, Dax breaks this stereotype as Sisko relies on her to perform numerous important tasks including piloting the “runabout” into the wormhole and examining the mysterious orb he receives from Kai Opaka, one of Bajor’s leading religious figures. Finally, Dax is also characterized as extremely  

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Admittedly, a male would have also been forced to surrender the space station if placed in the same situation, since it was the only option left. However, I believe the important point to be made here is that a woman is, in this rare instance, left in charge and is ultimately characterized as a failure at the task, leaving this powerful image with the audience.
intelligent and Sisko's mentor and close friend."

Interestingly, if one were to combine the most dominant roles and characteristics of these two recurring female protagonists, the result would most likely resemble "Number One" from "The Cage." Kira has the leadership qualities and the second-in-command position exhibited by "Number One" in the original pilot but is not unusually intelligent or technically proficient. By contrast, Dax is extremely intelligent and efficient with a cool, detached demeanour, but lacks command experience. One way in which to contextually interpret this fascinating "splitting" of the "Number One" character into two females is that it is seemingly done to diffuse her impact on television audiences. Therefore, even in the 1990s, the creators of the new series were likely still concerned that exhibiting a female character who embodied all of these characteristics may not be accepted by, at least, the male segment of the viewing audience; she might be interpreted as "too perfect," thereby outshining the male characters, and providing too powerful a challenge to conservative male hegemony. As it stands, both of these female characters, individually, somewhat outshine the two white male characters, O'Brien and Bashir.

In summary, then, the series is fairly progressive through its display of not one, but two female characters who are both high in the command hierarchy. Star Trek: Deep Space Nine also breaks through female stereotypes with its exhibition of the characters of Kira and Dax in non-traditional occupations, thereby utilizing

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\(^{41}\)As stated earlier, the character Jadzia Dax is a Trill, a joined species. When Sisko knew Dax previously the "host" was actually a male, Curzon. Curzon was an old man who has since passed on; however, the Dax part of his being, the worm-like entity residing within him, was transplanted into Jadzia, taking all of the memories along as well.

\(^{42}\)In his original outline for the series, Gene Roddenberry described "Number One" as a "glacier-like, efficient female" (Whitfield and Roddenberry 1968, 24).
central characters to imaginistically acknowledge the expanding roles of women in society, instead of using peripheral ones, as Star Trek and Star Trek: The Next Generation are prone to do. The centrality of their strong characterizations appears to imply that women frequently fill these roles, unlike in the other two series, where only marginally significant characters fill them, suggesting these latter images are rare or unusual instances. Both Dax and Kira are also actively and autonomously involved in the narrative, and neither are objectified or exploited as mere sex objects. Finally, although Commander Sisko is the primary focus of the pilot episode, there are later ones which feature Dax and Kira as central focuses.\(^3\)

I will leave unexamined the complexities involved in each non-white non-human character in terms of race representation, even though it would be appropriate, since, although many of them are portrayed by white actors, they may still symbolically represent contemporary races. Instead, I will focus briefly on the character of Commander Sisko, the primary character in the series, and the implications of his image and characterization in the pilot.

By making Commander Sisko a black male character, which would have been virtually impossible for the original series, Star Trek: Deep Space Nine is displaying a clear progressive message: non-whites are capable of being effective leaders. However, some narrative elements appear in the pilot which point to the fact that they still receive unequal treatment. For instance, he is not the mythical archetypal hero in the narrative and series generally that Picard and Kirk are (albeit in differing fashions) in their particular series. In the prologue of the pilot, Sisko is shown to be

\(^3\)In the episode immediately following the pilot, Kira is the central focus when her loyalties are tested by a Bajoran rebel who comes to the station. In another episode, Jadzia Dax is the central focus when she is placed on trial for a murder committed when Dax's "host" was Curzon.
a man with a tragic past (his wife was killed by the Borg), which is then re-emphasized when he meets the non-corporeal aliens on the other side of the wormhole. At the beginning of the pilot, he has not yet come to grips with her death and it remains an unresolved portion of his life. He must ultimately overcome this personal tragedy in order clear his mind for the task at hand and become a dynamic leader.

Furthermore, Sisko's authority, autonomy and centrality are also somewhat undermined by the figure of Picard appearing intermittently throughout the Star Trek: Deep Space Nine pilot. Sisko's character is a new one in the Star Trek mythos, while most viewers of the pilot are familiar with Picard's character and the images that he invokes. Picard's appearance in the narrative, combined with his higher rank (captain) displays the image that although Sisko is about to become a leader in his own rank, he is still subject to white male authority and scrutiny (Picard even lectures him on the necessity of having a commander of the station who wants the task). In their last scene together, Picard and Sisko shake hands after he accepts the position as commander of the station, which is seemingly accepting him into the fold, but it remains a white-dominated one. Furthermore, even though he is the commander of the station, one must remember it is a much less prestigious position than a starship commander and that it is located in the outer reaches of the Federation. Due to this, he may still be symbolically interpreted as a "marginalized" character in this regard. Finally, when he was originally offered the position, the station is presented as a place no one really wants to be: it is an unclean, disorganized and uncomfortable environment. It might well symbolize what many non-whites have to endure to survive and advance in a white-dominated society.
5.7 CONTEXTUALIZING THE IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER AND RACE IN STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

On the whole, with Star Trek: Deep Space Nine the Star Trek phenomenon continues its trend of presenting increasingly progressive images of both women and non-whites in its narratives. For the first time, it exhibits a black male leader, Commander Benjamin Sisko, as the central ideological focus of the series. This is a sharp contrast to any other of Star Trek's television series. It follows this up by placing a female, Major Kira Nerys as second-in-command and Lieutenant Jadzia Dax as fourth or so in the command hierarchy. Interestingly, one has to look at least to the third or fourth rung of the command ladder before discovering a white-male character, Chief of Operations O'Brien. This appears to invert the tendencies of both previous Star Trek series, which habitually privileges white male characters, as well as provides somewhat of a challenge to the naturalized racist and sexist hierarchical ordering of contemporary society. However, this trend is still compromised by some negative elements which appear in the text including the occasional sexist characterizations of women as ineffectual leaders who sometimes require male assistance to resolve their difficulties.

5.8 CONCLUSIONS

From the outset, the purpose of this analysis was to employ the multidimensional and multiperspectival approach of Douglas Kellner to examine the ideological representations of gender and race in the Star Trek phenomenon. The reason for this, using the Star Trek phenomenon as an example, was to show that television programming does not provide, as many theorists perceive, "harmless
entertainment” or “objective information” for its audiences.” Instead, it is an instrument which generally serves the interests and perspectives of the ruling classes; in this case, white males. However, contrary to the perceptions of the original Critical Theorists, it is not purely a conservative ideological medium either which merely uncritically and exclusively reinforces the concerns and beliefs of the ruling powers. Instead, Kellner’s perspective contends that it is a much more contradictory and conflictual medium.

The purpose of Kellner’s perspective, in which he reconstructs ideology critique by combining its original Marxian interpretation with Gramsci’s hegemony theory and expands its content to include the critique of both ideological race and gender representations, is not to conclude whether a television program or other media production can be interpreted as purely progressive or regressive in these respects, since most are too complex and contradictory to make this determination with absolute certainty. Instead, the value of this approach lies in its ability to uncover both the progressive and regressive elements in these texts, and how they are played against one another, and then to contextualize them to show how their content is affected by their particular socio-historical contexts. In this instance, I utilize it to lay bare these struggles and contradictions with respect to gender and race which occur in the texts of the Star Trek phenomenon. On the whole, Kellner’s approach also encourages criticism of the privileging of white male perspectives and imaging in entertainment programming which, by extension, legitimizes white male privileging in society to the exclusion of alternative interests such as those of women and non-whites. Finally, his approach is useful to account for societal changes which occur.

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These notions are outlined on page 1.
over time due to social struggles and how they are represented in television programming. To illustrate these assertions let us now return to the example of Star Trek.

Star Trek's original pilot "The Cage" was created in the early 1960s and, although it does privilege white-male characters and perspectives in its narrative, as well as exhibit mostly sexist and regressive images of women, it displays a high-ranking, intelligent female through the character of "Number One." However, the pilot was ultimately rejected by the network, due at least in part to the fact that she was adjudged by highly conservative white-male network executives to be too strong and powerful a female character both in the narrative and the command structure for an audience to accept during that particular time period. Moreover, the issue of race is almost entirely neglected in "The Cage." Kellner's approach is quite helpful in alerting us to this phenomenon here as well as once one moves on to analyze the changes which occur in the following three Star Trek television series and how shifts in gender and race representations on these series mirror struggles and shifts with respect to these same issues in society.

More specifically, examined over time with respect to changing contexts, and with the exception of its representations of gender in the original Star Trek series, the phenomenon exhibits ever-increasingly progressive images of both women and non-whites in each of its successive series which pays some homage to their expanding roles in contemporary society, thus reflecting the many steps towards equality with white males these groups have made since the 1960s. This ultimately reaches its crescendo in 1993 with the creation of Star Trek: Deep Space Nine a series which not only features a black male as its central character, but also displays two competent
and intelligent women fairly high in the command hierarchy on the space station which serves as the setting for the series. In fact, the highest ranking white-male character is no higher than third or fourth in that hierarchy. For the most part, this overturns the general hierarchical ordering of the series, where white males were traditionally on top, and acknowledges the fact that both women and non-whites can enjoy positions of power, even over white males. In the end, however, even Star Trek: Deep Space Nine does not look beyond present society, but is merely trying to catch up to the times since many women and non-whites already fill similar positions of power in contemporary society.

The preceding evidence also strongly indicates that the Star Trek phenomenon, as a whole, functions in the way in which Mimi White contends that television functions generally: sometimes promoting adjustment to changes in society, while at other times merely reflecting, often in a disguised fashion, the social, cultural, political and economic realities of the times, including its contradictions and hegemonic struggles. This preceding analysis of race and gender in the Star Trek well illustrates Mimi White's contention that television is often used to promote adjustment to changes occurring in the present social structure while at the same time it is used to exhibit factional struggles over concrete issues. In the case of the Star Trek phenomenon, I believe that the increasing roles of women and non-whites in society reflected in its texts can be interpreted as assisting people to smoothly adjust to these similar changes in society. One must also realize that television smooths over contradictions in society by often presenting mixed messages in its programming. Moreover, although criticisms of the present social structure are part of that content, criticisms of it are still only allowed within certain restrictive limitations. This
further displays the heterogeneity of the medium and the multiplicity of complex images often present in television entertainment (White 1987, passim).

On the whole, I found the multidimensional and multiperspectival approach of Douglas Kellner quite useful for conducting this analysis. A large part of this is because it is both an open and flexible approach to studying media texts which allows the researcher using it to draw upon an almost limitless number of critical perspectives. However, while Kellner provides the general theoretical approach, the onus is on the researcher to decide which critical approaches are appropriate for the particular task at hand. For this reason, the success or failure of any applications must be attributed as much to the researcher as Kellner himself.

Finally, perhaps the primary criticism which can be levelled at Kellner's particular approach, and other similar ones, is that it is merely "speculative." This line of reasoning is considered by Clay Steinman in an unpublished paper entitled "Audience Research and the Wish For Science." In this work, Steinman criticizes ethnographic researchers who hold this viewpoint which he believes is unwarranted since it implies that they are not subject to the same criticism while he believes that they are to varying degrees (Steinman 1992, 8-11). Moreover, I would take his argument one step further by claiming that any and all research in which conclusions must be subjectively interpreted by a researcher, which includes nearly all research perspectives, is subject to the very same criticisms, thereby negating the legitimacy of this argument against Kellner's approach.

5.9 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are virtually a limitless number of analyses which could be conducted
in this particular research tradition. First, in the spirit of ideology-critique, one could conduct a class analysis of the Star Trek phenomenon, originally intended to be included in this thesis, in a similar fashion to my gender and race analysis. This variable could be studied in the texts of the original Star Trek series exclusively, or perhaps outlined and then compared to those in one or both of the other series. In terms of specific content, this analysis could examine specific episodes to critique the representations of class in them or look at the structure of the series as a whole. This last suggestion would entail viewing the command hierarchy on the Enterprise as a metaphorical representation of class, and focussing on the presentation and treatment of characters in the narratives and the relationship between their treatment and their positions in the hierarchy.

Furthermore, instead of focussing entirely on textual and/or contextual criticism, as I did in this analysis, one could analyze the audiences for these texts. How the audience views, interprets, and uses visual media texts is at least as important as the textual and contextual criticisms of them. These studies could also study specific audiences, not just a randomly selected viewing audience. For instance, in Chapter II, I discuss the work of Henry Jenkins III who investigates how audiences appropriate and use cultural texts for their own intents and purposes, as well as demonstrates that different people can interpret cultural texts in extremely diverse fashions. He also critiques the "fan literature" generated by fans of the series and what this implies about the nature of visual media as a whole. Studying these audience "interpretations" of cultural texts such as Star Trek is important since many of them seemingly subvert the implied content and meanings to suit particular interests.
In conducting my particular ideology critique, I used elements from myth analysis, Marxism and socialist feminism to analyze the *Star Trek* phenomenon. However, elements from an almost unlimited number of research strategies could have been applied to these texts and, depending on the ones selected, could have yielded a variety of different insights. Among these possible choices are genre theory, narrative theory, psychoanalysis, and a virtually limitless number of other approaches.

I believe that another potentially fruitful future project would be to examine both *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* in more detail using a similar theoretical approach. Finally, it should be obvious that the methods used here could be employed to analyze a host of other visual media texts, not just *Star Trek*. 
APPENDIX I

THE ORIGINAL STAR TREK SERIES EPISODES

THE PILOT

1. The Cage

SEASON ONE

2. Where No Man Has Gone Before
3. The Corbomite Maneuver
4. Mudd's Women
5. The Enemy Within
6. The Man Trap
7. The Naked Time
8. Charlie X
9. Balance of Terror
10. What Are Little Girls Made Of?
11. Dagger of the Mind
12. Miri
13. The Conscience of the King
14. The Galileo Seven
15. Court Martial
16. The Menagerie
17. Shore Leave
18. The Squire of Gothos
19. Arena
20. The Alternative Factor
21. Tomorrow Is Yesterday
22. The Return of the Archon
23. A Taste of Armageddon
24. Space Seed
25. This Side of Paradise
26. The Devil in the Dark
27. Errand of Mercy
28. City on the Edge of Forever
29. Operation-- Annihilate

SEASON TWO

30. Catspaw
31. Metamorphosis
32. Friday's Child
33. Who Mourns For Adonais?
34. Amok Time
35. The Doomsday Machine
36. Wolf in the Fold
37. The Changeling
38. The Apple
39. Mirror, Mirror
40. The Deadly Years
41. I, Mudd
42. The Trouble With Tribbles
43. Bread and Circuses
44. Journey To Babel
45. A Private Little War
46. The Gamesters of Triskelion
47. Obsession
48. The Immunity Syndrome
49. A Piece of the Action
50. By Any Other Name
51. Return To Tomorrow
52. Patterns of Force
53. The Ultimate Computer
54. The Omega Glory
55. Assignment Earth

SEASON THREE

56. Spectre of the Gun
57. Elaan of Troyius
58. The Paradise Syndrome
59. The Enterprise Incident
60. And the Children Shall Lead
61. Spock's Brain
62. Is There In Truth No Beauty?
63. The Empath
64. The Tholian Web
65. For the World Is Hollow and I Have Touched The Sky
66. Day of the Dove
67. Plato's Stepchildren
68. Wink of an Eye
69. That Which Survives
70. Let That Be Your Last Battlefield
71. Whom Gods Destroy
72. Mark of Gideon
73. The Lights of Zetar
74. The Cloud Minders
75. The Way To Eden
76. Requiem For Methuselah
77. The Savage Curtain
78. All Our Yesterdays
79. Turnabout Intruder
APPENDIX II

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION EPISODES

SEASON ONE

101. Encounter at Farpoint
102. The Naked Now
103. Code of Honor
104. The Last Outpost
105. Where No One Has Gone Before
106. Lonely Among Us
107. Justice
108. The Battle
109. Hide and Q
110. Haven
111. The Big Goodbye
112. Datalore
113. Angel One
114. 11001001
115. Too Short a Season
116. When the Bough Breaks
117. Home Soil
118. Coming of Age
119. Heart Of Glory
120. The Arsenal of Freedom
121. Symbiosis
122. Skin of Evil
123. We'll Always Have Paris
124. Conspiracy
125. The Neutral Zone

SEASON TWO

126. The Child
127. Where Silence Has Lease
128. Elementary, Dear Data
129. The Outrageous Okona
130. Loud as a Whisper
131. Unnatural Selection
132. A Matter of Honor
133. The Measure of a Man
134. The Schizoid Man
135. The Dauphin
136. Contagion
137. The Royale
138. Time Squared
139. The Icarus Factor
140. Pen Pals
141. Q Who?
142. Samaritan Snare
143. Up the Long Ladder
144. Manhunt
145. The Emissary
146. Peak Performance
147. Shades of Grey

**SEASON THREE**

148. Evolution
149. The Ensigns of Command
150. The Survivors
151. Who Watches the Watchers?
152. The Bonding
153. Booby Trap
154. The Enemy
155. The Price
156. The Vengeance Factor
157. The Defector
158. The Hunted
159. The High Ground
160. Deja Q
161. A Matter of Perspective
162. Yesterday's Enterprise
163. The Offspring
164. Sins of the Father
165. Allegiance
166. Captain's Holiday
167. Tin Man
168. Hollow Pursuits
169. The Most Toys
170. Sarek
171. Menage a Troi
172. Transfigurations
173. The Best of Both Worlds, Part I

**SEASON FOUR**

174. The Best of Both Worlds, Part II
175. Family
176. Brothers
177. Suddenly Human
178. Remember Me
179. Legacy
180. The Reunion
181. Future Imperfect
182. Final Mission
183. The Loss
184. Data’s Day
185. The Wounded
186. Devil’s Due
187. Clues
188. First Contact
189. Galaxy’s Child
190. Night Terrors
191. Identity Crisis
192. The Nth Degree
193. Q-Pid
194. The Drumhead
195. Half a Lie
196. The Host
197. The Mind’s Eye
198. In Theory
199. Redemption, Part I

SEASON FIVE

200. Redemption, Part II
201. Darmok
202. Ensign Ro
203. Silicon Avatar
204. Disaster
205. The Game
206. Unification I
207. Unification II
208. A Matter of Time
209. New Ground
210. Hero Worship
211. Violations
212. The Masterpiece Society
213. Conundrum
214. Power Play
215. Ethics
216. The Outcast
217. Cause and Effect
218. The First Duty
219. Cost of Living
220. The Perfect Mate
221. Imaginary Friend
222. I, Borg
223. The Next Phase
224. The Inner Light
225. Time’s Arrow, Part I
SEASON SIX

226. Time's Arrow, Part II
227. Realm of Fear
228. Relics
229. Schisms
230. True Q
231. The Quality Of Life
232. Man Of The People
233. Chain Of Command I
234. Chain Of Command II
235. Rascals
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