Among Us: Cross-Cultural Encounters in Science Fiction Media

by

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Abstract

Storytelling is an essential part of our experience as human beings. We turn to narrative to explain our own lives – casting ourselves as protagonists, others as secondary characters and antagonists, and the myriad of events that happen to us as a coherent, linear story. Fiction and metaphor are lenses for our collective imagination – a representation of how we see ourselves as a society, and how we see others outside of our culture. In the Western world, nowhere is this view more prominent than in the genre of science fiction. In the fictional interactions between humans and aliens – diplomacy, conflict, oppression, misunderstandings, and cultural sharing – we can see a reflection of our society's values, its moral prescriptions, and its warnings for the future. Anthropologists, as experts on extracting cultural rules from observation, and picking up on cross-cultural misunderstandings, have long been aware of the human tendency to exaggerate difference between cultures in order to define them as distinct. Thus, an anthropological study of science fiction is crucial for understanding how a society defines itself.

In this thesis, I undertake an analysis of the influential science fiction television serial, *Star Trek*. I seek to answer how the portrayal of specific alien societies in *Star Trek* inform and reflect the American society's understanding of both itself and "the other". Through film analysis and in creating a virtual ethnography, I suggest that *Star Trek* uses visual and textual symbolic choices to show a galactic and ever-changing society which tolerates a wide array of different cultures, but is still influenced heavily by Western ideals and stereotypes of "the other". I focus on the interaction between human and alien characters, as well as looking into how they have changed throughout the serial. I discuss both the visual choices (made in the form of costume, props, and body language) and the dialogue (in the form of tropes, metaphors, and other symbolic language) in order to extract broader patterns in the subtext that suggest American and Western cultural rules and attitudes. I delve into historical patterns of colonialism within ethnographic and fictional writing in order to suggest influence on modern science fiction. Finally, I suggest that the way these fictional alien societies are portrayed shows how the (so-called) real-world society sees itself, and what it considers to be an innately "human" way to behave. Through this project, I hope to show how an anthropological analysis of science fiction gives us valuable information about the stories our Western society tells about itself and others, and the hopes and fears it projects toward the future.

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Abbreviations

TOS: *Star Trek: The Original Series* (1966-69)

TNG: *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-94)

DS9: *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (1993-99)

VOY: *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001)

ENT: *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001-05)

DIS: *Star Trek: Discovery* (2017-present)

SF: Science Fiction

Glossary of Terms

Star Trek: The entirety of the serial, 1966-present

Canon: The aspects of the fictional universe that are accepted by the creators, and not based on fan conjecture.

Note on episode citations:

Episode citations use the following format: (Series name season.episode “episode name,” timestamp)

(e.g., TOS 2.5 “Amok Time,” 3:00)

As some episodes are shown in a different order over the fifty years of the serial, there may occasionally be some inconsistency regarding an episode’s number. Where there is disagreement, I favour the online encyclopedia Memory Alpha (memory-alpha.fandom.com), which features the original airing dates.

If one episode is referenced several times in a row, I omit the episode name.

Introduction: Seeking New Worlds

It barely feels as if I am moving against this backdrop of stars. The starship's artificial gravity works smoothly, and the machine is large enough that I forget I am not simply walking inside of a large, efficiently-run apartment complex. It is only when I find a port and look out into the vast expanse beyond – the void, the final frontier, the ultimate journey – that I remember the immensity of my voyage.

I am a lone anthropologist in the field, travelling between the stars amidst a giant crew of explorers. We orbit planets and negotiate with strange, alien societies; sometimes we find other explorers out here. I have been here for a couple of months now; I realize now that my next step is to leave the safety of the starship: to leave this safe, clean, bubble of a verandah, and step into the unknown on an alien world.

After all, is that not why we are all here?

- From the ethnography *The Final Frontier: A Year Aboard a Starfleet Vessel*. Ellen Burnham, 2431. San Francisco: Starfleet Academy Press.

Anthropology has deep conceptual ties with speculative fiction (the term that encompasses the genres of fantasy and science fiction). This concern is not a new concept: anthropologists have noted similarities between SF and anthropology; moreover, many seem to be fans of the genre. This interest has been noted on the side of the fiction writers as well: SF author Ursula LeGuin, daughter of anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, sees overlap between her writing and the work of studying other societies. She speaks of the process of creating new worlds, calling it "…a particularly skillful selection of fragments of cosmos…" (LeGuin 1989: 47) – that is, fragments that come from drawing on one's current experience. She states this point even more explicitly later: "To make a new world you start with an old one, certainly" (LeGuin 1989: 48). Anthropologists feature in various works of speculative fiction as well: in the (ethically suspect) archaeologist Indiana Jones; in the speculative novel *Dhalgren,* which uses fictional fieldnotes to convey an experimental, observational style that resembles an ethnography (Olson 2018); in the 2016 film *Arrival,* in which linguist Dr. Banks stops a world war by learning the aliens' way of

thinking (featuring references to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis); in TNG's Captain Jean-Luc Picard, who has an archaeological background and a commitment to cultural relativism.

In turn, anthropologists seem interested in the genre of SF in particular. In the December 2018 issue of *Cultural Anthropology,* focused entirely on the genre, anthropologists discuss and reflect on the overlap between the two, as well as what the former can learn from (and apply to) the latter. Most articles seem to agree that SF has the power to both reinforce existing power dynamics and show the potential for new ones, and that anthropology can use SF's speculative nature to explore potential futures. As a former academic of literary studies, Matthew Wolf-Meyer (Wolf-Meyer 2018) wonders why anthropologists take science fiction much more seriously than other literary genres. While to literary studies, SF is just another genre – "a curiosity, a genre that everyone seemed to accept the presence of, but that not many scholars took seriously" (Wolf-Meyer 2018: para. 1) – anthropology seems to take its ideas with gravitas. SF, more than other fantastical genres, crops up in anthropological courses even as early as the 1960s: fantastical stories appearing alongside anthropological works in textbooks, serving as jumping-off points to more academic concepts for new students to the subject (Collins 2005: 184). SF authors, even in the 20th century, have used the genre to critique contemporary views, as well as to show hopeful futures (or terrifying futures to be avoided).

Anthropologists of the mid-20th century enthusiastically looked to SF for thought experiments of societies less ethnocentric and more globally-minded. These works of fiction encourage students to exercise cultural relativism: for example, in "intimating that advancement may have little to do with technological development" or implying that "'our' [North American Western] culture is not yet advanced either" (Collins 2005: 183). As SF became more popular and more widely accepted in society in the 1970s, Collins adds, it was often seen paired with

anthropology in classes, with some universities even offering "anthropology and science fiction" courses (Collins 2005: 185) – something which still exists in our 21st century.

Anthropology has also used speculative fiction to address or question issues within the genre of ethnography. We can find elements of fiction in anthropology's niche "parody ethnography" genre. Works of this genre subvert and highlight specific realities of our world by showing them off as strange or alien; for example, Horace Miner's "Nacirema" looks at the American obsession with health, and playfully turns it into an alien ritual practice. Miner, parodying an anthropological description of a mysterious new tribe, describes the neurotic and obsessive Nacirema people: they are disgusted with their own delicate bodies, torture themselves at shrines dedicated to their teeth (Miner 1956: 504), worship the "Holy Mouth Men" who put metal instruments in their mouths in an attempt to prolong what they see as a continual process of decay, speak to "listeners" who exorcise the demons that their parents have placed into their minds at childhood (Miner 1956: 506), and participate in various harsh rituals at the *latipso* – despite being fully aware that some do not leave (Miner 1956: 505). In a similar ethnography, fictional anthropologist Professor Widjojo, hailing from a generalized African nation, follows his research participants to "koktel partis" – a ritual in which the host shows off their social powers (La Barre 1956: 31) – and "futbol games," where young Usans from different totem-animal groups participate in mock battles while chasing around a "sacred pigskin" (La Barre 1956: 32). Both of these articles parody the idea of the exotic other, defamiliarizing the readers to their own society while bringing anthropology's colonialist roots to the forefront.

It seems, then, that SF can be used as an easily-accessible thought experiment, to "serve as a way into otherwise difficult topics" (Wolf-Meyer 2018: para. 9). Yet Wolf-Meyer wonders if there is a deeper, more methodological reason that anthropologists hold SF so closely. He thinks

that anthropology and SF strive to answer a similar question: what is life like in settings unfamiliar to us, its audience? (Wolf-Meyer 2018). Where anthropologists describe existing worlds, SF authors invent and speculate about fictional societies. SF excels at writing about people living their lives in a fantastical setting, and this setting provides an enticing theoretical "laboratory" for the anthropologist. While this approach can be beneficial, Wolf-Meyer sees the similarity between fiction and anthropology's projects as a potential pitfall: "anthropologists want SF to serve as evidence of other forms of life and alternative everyday orders" (Wolf-Meyer 2018: para. 9) – that is, anthropologists may forget that the worlds of science fiction are fictional, and use the genre's works as evidence of real social phenomena. Wolf-Meyer cautions that speculative fiction is ultimately just conjecture, and that it should not replace real examples of social science done in the real world.

SF has also fallen under scrutiny and criticism from various scholars over the years. Classical SF (with its background populated mostly by white male authors) has been criticized for enforcing and assuming old power structures in the real world. *Star Trek*'s famous creator Gene Roddenberry, formerly in the air force as well as law enforcement, used his experience to give his show a military flavour and a feeling of an "American Way" existing even in the future (Applin 2018) – this connection between American (or more broadly, Western) values and *Star Trek* will be explored throughout this thesis.

Collins (2018) seems to be of a similar critical opinion of classic SF: "SF that merely recapitulates the inequalities of the present needs to give way to possibilities that imagine the modern along radically different axes of power and possibility" (Collins 2018: para. 6). He argues that anthropology, and society at large, needs more stories about the future from non-Western perspectives, so that foundational Western values are called into question. Certain

genres of SF can, indeed, use its powers of subversion to expose power structures and showcase these non-Western perspectives. The newer genre of Afrofuturism (African SF) draws on both history and contemporary society to explore power dynamics in the real world, in a more direct way than the subversive metaphor which is present in more classical SF (Colón-Cabrera 2018).

The purpose of this thesis is not to argue what SF should be, or what anthropology must take from it. Yet I do wish to question the idea that anthropology deriving ideas from fictional worlds is a dangerous or foolish act. Fiction authors must draw on their external experience in order to invent these new worlds – one cannot create a cohesive society otherwise. In tuning into these underlying experiences and ideas that populate fiction, an anthropologist can glean insights into the society from which the author came (and those society's values, images, and ideas which are taken for granted) that may not be evident from a more cursory glance. This deeper look into SF is my project with this thesis.

Anthropology, in particular, is a unique lens with which to study SF, in part because of their similar methodologies. Alfred Gell pokes fun at philosophers who use fiction to invent new societies to prove a point in thought experiments. Why invent fictional African tribes, he asks, instead of "the obvious course of turning to the tomes upon tomes that have been written on material culture in Africa"? (Gell 2006: 223). Although, like Wolf-Meyer, he is gently reminding philosophers not to forget about empirical evidence before inventing a new world, he also seems to be suggesting a similarity between the two disciplines: that philosophers turn to fictional "wise men" (Gell 2006: 224), while anthropologists rely on the tomes from real wise men (Gell 2006: 225) to derive truths about society. Anthropology, following this line of thought, is a thought experiment with empirical evidence, while fiction is a speculative thought experiment – although it, too, derives its ideas from the real world (Gell 2006: 224).

Yet SF differs from most anthropology in the way that it alters its ideas. In creating a fictional world, SF uses a variety of devices to distort and alter them to create something new. Wolf-Meyer identifies these techniques as "*extrapolation*, *intensification*, and *mutation*" (Wolf-Meyer 2018: para. 4): extrapolation to project a particular aspect of our society (relatively unchanged) into the future (e.g., placing the 20th century capitalist mindset into the profit-obsessed aliens, the Ferengi), intensification to take an aspect of our world to a more extreme conclusion (e.g., the space-Roman empire of the Romulans), and mutation to radically change the status quo to see what would happen (e.g., the Mirror Universe, where human society has turned into an evil empire instead of a highly moral Federation of Planets). SF uses a distorting mirror to discuss its own ideas while creating new worlds. I will examine this process further in future chapters, featuring concepts from other anthropologists.

I also argue against the notion that we must dismiss the non-radical, classical works of SF, particularly those that were historically significant. As a television serial, *Star Trek* is decidedly mainstream, especially compared to powerfully subversive genres such as Afrofuturism. This difference is in part because of the constraints from the production company. Starting with the TOS era, *Star Trek* was pressured by the network NBC to play to a conservative audience. When televisions had only a few channels – the classical network era (Pearson and Davis 2014: 17) – networks employed a conservative model in order to appeal to the general masses, to ensure that viewers would not tune away from the station. Only by the 1980s, when more channels appeared, was the concept of the niche audience introduced to television (Pearson and Davis 2014: 31); with the increase in channels, creators were given more freedom to experiment with ideas. Yet because of their constraints, TOS often disguised its political and social commentary as allegory. It also chose to include a multi-racial cast on the bridge of the starship *Enterprise*, to highlight

the idea of tolerance and acceptance in the future. Such characters include the Russian Chekov, African-American Uhura, and Japanese Sulu. While I agree with Applin's and Collins' critiques, I think that SF often rides the line between subtly subversive and radical, and while the latter is crucial for advocating for new voices, the former can be used by anthropologists as an indicator of concepts and ideas present in the population who consumes it.

My focus is on these ideas and concepts that we can find in the serial itself. For my research, I did not look closely at the direct effects of *Star Trek* on its audience. Instead, I looked at the serial as an ethnography, to understand what messages the creators are trying to convey. The guiding question, which I hope to answer throughout this thesis, is: **how does the portrayal of specific aliens in *Star Trek*, as an influential example of SF, inform and reflect the American society's understanding of real-world societies?**

My own interest in this topic is partially personal. I am interested as both a writer of speculative fiction and as an anthropologist. SF drew me to anthropology in the first place: I wanted to study aliens and their societies; while first contact remains elusive, I had to shift my focus to studying humans (and the way they write about aliens). I was interested in the origin of these fictional worlds – no matter how creative an author or screenplay writer must be, ideas of other societies (even if they are wildly alien and unlike ours) must come from somewhere. Thus, I will investigate the portrayal of specific aliens in SF in order to understand how they inform and reflect a society's understanding of real-world societies.

Ideally, I would want to conduct an entire literature review of SF film throughout history; with time as a limitation, I have narrowed my focus to a selection of the famous serial, *Star Trek.* This is an iconic franchise, well known in various parts of the world (especially in North America). My choice of this series is threefold. The first reason is the prevalence of the series in

the Western world. Even those who have not seen the show can still recognize some of the well-known aspects of the television show: the logical alien Mr. Spock, the flagship *Enterprise* flying through space to triumphant orchestral music, the phrase "Beam me up, Scotty" (which was never actually uttered in the show), actors in heavy makeup or rubber heads. A short skit from February 3, 2019, highlighting the Super Bowl on the talk show *The Colbert Report* featured Sir Patrick Stewart (actor for Captain Picard in TNG) accusing a mascot of violating the "Prime Directive" – a stance of non-interference mentioned frequently in the show. The fanbase has, in turn, greatly influenced the direction *Star Trek* has taken as well. The story of fans writing to the studio upon hearing of *Star Trek: The Original Series'* cancellation is well-known in the community, and several of the writers ended up on the show because they were fans of earlier series (Pearson and Davies 2014: 31).

Second, the serial is a particularly powerful subject matter because of how long it has existed. Beginning in 1966 with TOS, the serial has seen seven series (the latest of which, DIS, is still ongoing at the time of writing), a movie franchise, and a large number of spin-off media including books and board games. For the purposes of my thesis, I will be looking almost exclusively at the live-action television serial, with a couple of brief mentions of the films: this restriction is because the series are the most iconic, and the films (because they are less focused on world-building and more on a compelling story) tend to only echo what has already been said in the serial. Furthermore, my interest in the serial is partially in the visual choices that the creators made in the interests of practicality – this factor is why I am not including the books or the short-lived animated series, some of which have tenuous canonicity.

My approach to this project has been to construct a kind of ethnography, using as close to participant-observation as I could for a fictional serial. This approach meant watching the show

and taking notes on details which I observed throughout the experience. As I had fifty years of episodes to parse through, I had to make further choices to narrow my scope in order to create a manageable project. I chose to focus on four alien species in particular that showed up throughout *Star Trek,* with a couple of extras, when they serve to illustrate a particular idea. My primary aliens are the Vulcans, Romulans, Ferengi, and Klingons. My interest in these four species lies in their prominence within the canon. They appear early in the history of the show, with all but the Ferengi present in TOS. Furthermore, they all reappear regularly, and are given distinct appearances and clear personality types. A larger-scope project could easily encompass species like the Bajorans and Cardassians, who appear in TNG but feature most prominently in DS9. However, because their prominence was mostly limited to one series, I chose to exclude them. I do dwell briefly on the techno-zombie species, the Borg, because they represent very clear fears of the future. In chapter three, I also focus on the Tamarians, from an episode which seems to be a favourite among anthropologists (TNG 5.2 "Darmok"). Both the Borg and the Tamarians are especially interesting in what their presence says about the humans with whom they interact, and less as societies in their own right – thus, they are honorary mentions.

For identifying which episodes to watch, I relied on the detailed episode summaries of Memory Alpha – an online encyclopedia edited and run by dedicated fans, which has lists on appearances of each species. Some series have regular characters that are from my exemplar species (e.g., Spock from TOS, Worf from TNG and DS9, Tuvok from VOY), but I did not include episodes that were solely focused on their personal struggles, as I was interested in the society rather than any one individual. I divided the relevant episodes into the separate species which they focus on, and viewed them in roughly chronological order.

While I considered doing more quantitative analysis – for example, the appearance of particular phrases or gestures – I ran into a classic ethnographic problem: not knowing what constituted as important until I had already gone through the serial. Thus, my work was focused on qualitative observations: the costumes and colour-schemes of each society, gestures and particular ways of behaving, comments from the characters about each other or themselves. I noted comments throughout each episode about the "way" or "nature" of each species, as well as any particular body language or visual choices.

Although there was an unfortunate barrier which prevented me from interacting with fictional characters and engaging in true *participant*-observation, I did have two advantages to working with fictional material. First of all, the fact that I could pause and rewind dialogue meant that I could write down lines accurately, and take screenshots of any visual choices. Second, the fact that it was a fictional show that ran on a tight time budget meant that most choices were deliberate and meant to convey a particular point.

The following three chapters will detail three major interrelated themes which are especially evident through my viewing of *Star Trek*. The first chapter discusses the idea of metaphor as a whole, how fiction can be used to discuss other societies, and how *Star Trek* in particular achieves this objective. The second chapter discusses the idea of fictional societies as foreigners, how the West perceives other societies, and the tropes that *Star Trek* draws on to convey similar ideas. The last chapter examines the fictional humans of this serial as their own "alien species," discussing the elements that they are missing that we have in our world, and what their society could be suggesting to its audience. The conclusion will discuss the way all of the above ideas can be fit together into an overall picture of the *Star Trek* universe. While I do

not attempt to understand every concept featured in *Star Trek's* aliens, I hope to shed some light on some of these concepts, as well on the process of how such concepts can be discussed.

Chapter One: Visual Choices and the Galactic Hierarchy

The Klingons seem to have a wide variety of clothing, but in the end it all evokes some semblance of battle gear. Yet some of this clothing is clearly too impractical to be armour. I have tried asking individuals if there is a symbolic purpose associated with this form of dress, but I have learned well that they do not like answering human questions. More than once, I have had myself and my entire lineage threatened with bodily harm.

- From the ethnography *The Final Frontier: A Year Aboard a Starfleet Vessel*. Ellen Burnham, 2431. San Francisco: Starfleet Academy Press.

Star Trek is, by nature, an episodic show. Although there are some story arcs that carry through multiple episodes, especially in DS9 onwards, there is still the necessity of helping the audience follow plotlines that they may be coming into late. It is also important to convey the feelings of the various cultures featured: the humans and Romulans are enemies, the Ferengi are shifty merchants, the Klingons are warriors. In this medium of hour-long episodes, quick identifiers and visual cues are added to assist viewers' understanding and memory. These cues also exist to show the general characters of the aliens, and their relations to all the other species in the overarching galactic society. How these identifiers (metaphors, both visual and verbal) function is the topic of our next discussion. This chapter will look more closely at how *Star Trek* communicates these ideas by drawing on common cultural understanding through the use of metaphor, and the application of these metaphors to various fictional cultures. I will look at how the authors of fiction and anthropologists both use a conceptual landscape in their attempt to convey the "other". Finally, I will apply these concepts to discuss how *Star Trek* conveys similar meanings, and I will begin the process of discussing which ideas the various alien species are meant to represent.

The Structure of Metaphor

It seems that metaphor as a topic is more easily intuitively grasped than precisely explained; nevertheless, various authors have tried, and I will discuss these definitions to define my particular approach to metaphor in *Star Trek*. Many of these focus on either written (requiring an author and a reader) or conversational metaphors (requiring a speaker and a listener), but their points are applicable to the visual and dialogue-based metaphors found in television series and films.

David Sapir defines metaphor (or more, broadly, any kind of allegorical language) as a kind of trope which identifies relationships between multiple subjects or terms (Sapir 1977: 3). These relationships come in different forms. Sapir sees analogy as taking two forms: internal and external; "metaphor" itself belongs to a category of four specific terms: **metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche,** and **irony**.[1] The following is a brief summary of these terms, which will be a useful tool to gain a specific understanding of the symbolism used in *Star Trek*.

Sapir identifies two overarching categories of analogy-based language: internal and external. Internal analogy points out shared features between two subjects, ignoring the conceptual category to which they belong (what Sapir calls the semantic **domain**). Internal symbolism is focused on its own logic, rather than in comparison with something else; as such, these symbols are taken in isolation. An example would be "George is a lion" – in this context, this statement is not literally suggesting that George is a lion; rather, that he and lions share characteristics, even as they occupy different domains (the animal world and the human world) (Sapir 1977: 23). External analogy, in contrast, points out subjects that occupy analogous

[1] Here, and elsewhere, I use bold lettering to highlight the introduction of important concepts from other authors to which I will be referring later.

positions in different semantic domains. There is an implication of a further analogy (whether it is outright stated or only implied) in external metaphor. In external metaphor, the relationship is created by looking at the respective positions of two terms within each domain. In the case of "George is a lion," the expression would be like saying that "George is to people as lions are to animals" (Sapir 1977: 24). In external analogy, there are no shared features between subjects; instead, they are connected by their relationship. For example, in clan groups which have totem animals, the only shared feature is the "abstract notion of difference" – the two groups of people are not alike, because their representative animals are also not alike (Sapir 1977: 23). As is made clear by the fact that the same example (George the lion) is used to illustrate both concepts, metaphors can be (but are not necessarily) mixes of internal and external analogy, and can be interpreted multiple ways.

Metaphor itself is part of a group of four related devices: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. In metaphor, the subjects in question come from different semantic domains, but are united by their shared features. The topic of conversation is the "continuous term," while the "discontinuous term" (the imagery) supplies the common features that a reader would apply to the continuous term. Again, to use "George is a lion": if the topic is about George, he is the continuous term, and a reader searches for shared traits between him and lions – the discontinuous term (e.g., brave/strong/fierce like a lion). Synecdoche is the substitution of part for a whole or whole for a part within the same domain – for example, "all hands on deck" where the term "hands" replaces entire people (Sapir 1977: 15). Like metaphor, synecdoche picks out the essential features of a subject for the topic at hand. Synecdoche can also function as building blocks, adding onto each other to create more complex imagery (Sapir 1977, 19). Metonymy is substituting one subject for another in order to suggest they are both part of the

same semantic domain: for example, of saying "have you read Homer" instead of the specific work *The Iliad* to suggest that the epic poem is part of the domain of its author. Unlike synecdoche, which finds essential elements of specific terms, metonymy implies an overarching domain to which the terms belong – for example, of both author and book under the domain of literature (Sapir 1977: 21). Metonymy is used in creating metaphor as well: the metonymic relation between the unlike features of two subjects is what gives the "colour" to metaphor, asking the readers to associate two different things in creative ways. Irony functions similarly to metonymy, but it juxtaposes contradictory subjects (from either the same or different domains) specifically to create a humorous effect (Sapir 1977: 5).

Max Black (1962) also thinks of metaphor as a relationship between two terms. While he has a similar approach to Sapir, he uses "metaphor" as an overarching term for any symbolic language. He breaks a metaphor up into component pieces: the focus (the discontinuous term, or the imagery in question that actually suggests a metaphor) and the frame (the continuous term, or the sentence surrounding the imagery, which is meant to be taken more literally) (Black 1962: 28). Many authors, he says, define a metaphor simply as a phrase in which one subject is used in place of another, more literal subject (Black 1962: 31). For example, saying that "the chairman plowed through the discussion" (Black 1962: 30) is to substitute the act of pushing through crops in farming in place of a more literal explanation – that the chairman behaved assertively and bluntly throughout the conversation. A related view is the comparison view (Black 1962: 35), which closely resembles Sapir's internal metaphor: this view says that a metaphor points out similarities between the imagery and the situation mentioned in the frame. For example, "the chairman plowed through the discussion" points out the inherent similarity between the chairman's behaviour and plowing a field.

Black moves beyond the components of a metaphor, trying to convey why we use metaphors at all. While Black thinks that both the substitution and comparison views have merit for some metaphors, he argues that these views do not fully depict what metaphors achieve that more literal methods of communication do not. The comparison view assumes an inherent similarity between two subjects – yet a metaphor is not just meant to draw a pre-existing, given comparison between two things, or else they would not be saying anything novel (Black 1962: 37). For example, a metaphor does not say that there is an inherent, constant similarity between chairmen and farmers (or their equipment); instead, Black advocates for an "interaction view" of metaphor, in which a metaphor asks the participant (reader, listener, or audience) to actively search for and find a connection between two subjects (Black 1962: 38) – that is, to analyze the metonymic colour of a metaphor in order to find novel connections.

The interaction view highlights the active thought process involved in comprehending a metaphor, and resembles more closely what Sapir calls an external metaphor. Participants comprehend what a metaphor means by drawing on a common understanding of a subject, or what Black calls a "system of associated commonplaces" (Black 1962: 40). For example, when he says that "man is a wolf," he is asking the readers to draw on a common understanding of what a wolf is (Black 1962: 41) (e.g., wild predators, pack hunters, etc.) as well as which of these qualities can be applied to humankind (e.g., wild at heart, cooperative but cutthroat). These commonplaces need not be truthful (wolves are often associated with more viciousness in Western society than they actually possess in nature); in order for the metaphor to be effective, it must be shared to the point at which the participant can understand the speaker's meaning (Black 1962: 40). Black does not outright state use the term "cultural context," but it is easy to draw this connection: the broader the intended audience, the more the metaphor must resemble a common

cultural understanding of a subject. The interaction view, then, emphasizes communication between the speaker and participant.

Ted Cohen (1979) and Wayne Booth (1979) also highlight the importance of interaction between speaker and audience, and can give us an idea of how metaphor can be used strategically. For a metaphor to be effective, it involves an implicit connection between the two people in communication (Booth 1979: 52). For Cohen, metaphor is an invitation for intimacy between author and reader (Cohen 1979: 7). In drawing on common beliefs between both people involved, the author is inviting the reader to engage in empathy in order to understand what the former is saying. In this way, metaphors are similar to jokes: both require comprehension, and create a personal connection between both parties involved if they achieve mutual understanding (Cohen 1979: 8). This act of creating a personal bond through shared understanding is what Cohen calls selecting a community (Cohen 1979: 9) – metaphors (and jokes) invoke the shared knowledge common in a particular community to communicate the same idea.

Cohen adds that the intimacy created by author and reader are not always benevolent, but can be hostile too (Cohen 1979: 10). Metaphor can function as personal attack, because selecting a community can also point out a specific group, or bring up an association that a participant does not want to make. The selected community can be alienating, pointing out a fundamental difference between the speaker and the listener. Additionally, metaphors themselves bring out emotional connotations. Using shared knowledge, metaphors act as a filter, organizing our understanding of the subjects and bringing certain aspects to the forefront (Black 1962: 41). For example, the phrase “War is chess” talks about strategy and tactics, but ignores the traumatic component of violence (Black 1962: 42). The metaphor has brought the “colour” (to use Sapir’s concept) to the idea of war: war as sport, war as a game. To think of war as a tactical game in

this way – such as, for example, the way the TOS Klingons and Romulans do – implies the dry and calculating way that these enemies think.

James Fernandez (1986) further articulates how metaphor is used strategically. He sees metaphor similarly to the authors previously discussed – as an act of linking two concepts – but he further emphasizes the importance of the context in which these metaphors exist. In using metaphor, the speaker is looking to compare two terms from two different domains, usually in order to bolster or put down the subject. The strategic act of metaphor puts the subjects on a linked continuum, which functions as the true "meaning" behind the metaphor. For example, he says, when someone derisively compares a politician to a jellyfish, this expression is not a simple statement of similarity. The speaker is, in fact, linking two subjects (a person, from the social domain, and an animal, from the sea creature domain) on the continuum of *strong will* or *decisiveness* – the speaker is "really saying" that the politician lacks resolve (Fernandez 1986: 13). Metaphor also plays an important role in people's development and action within a society: from childhood, people try out different roles (whether in play, ritual, or work) and construct a sense of self from these comparisons (Fernandez 1986: 35). All of these metaphors and continua can be conceptualized as existing alongside each other within a metaphorical landscape which Fernandez calls **Quality Space** (Fernandez 1986: 41). We will see more of *Star Trek'*s continua throughout the next chapters.

Although these authors use different terms and emphasise different aspects of metaphor, a major connecting factor seems to be that metaphorical language is a participatory experience which expresses to its audience a connection between two subjects and gives the reader insight that more direct language might not be able to express. Because of this feature, when I use the term "metaphor," I will be using Black's interaction view primarily. I will also use Sapir's

extended definition of internal and external analogy. For other kinds of language that use imagery, I will either use the Sapir terms (synecdoche, metonymy, irony) or the more general term "trope".

What of more complex symbolic imagery, such as allegory? Booth and Sapir both look to the extended and complex metaphors one finds in literature. Booth's interest is in the kinds of commonplaces (or communities) one can create through the use of metaphor. He says that, when using metaphor, pointing out a shared understanding between people can persuade more powerfully than a literal statement. Because they reference a common understanding, metaphors can unite people and suggest a common viewpoint or way of thinking. Extended metaphors can suggest an entire ethos: national character (Booth 1978: 59), a vision of the world (Booth 1978: 64), the foundation of philosophical inquiry (Booth 1978: 66), universal truths about how the world is (or should be) (Booth 1978: 68). Sapir also mentions how simple description in a literary work can have an underlying message, meant to convey a kind of character through the use of language: a series of synecdoche of a woman with a "…smudged, pouty mouth open and the dark roots showing in her yellow hair" can convey the idea of "the girl who set the style for modern girls to look like teen-age whores," given the right understanding of the context (Sapir 1977: 17). Booth claims that, because of this function of metaphors, it is not possible to have "innocent" art (Booth 1978: 69); I would prefer to use the term objective, as it implies a less politicized approach, and implies instead that the creation of art always conveys some kind of message or viewpoint.

How do fictional characters fit into the idea of metaphor? In folk tale, Sapir says, characters can function as internal or external metaphors in order to convey a particular message. Characters are conglomerates of various traits, echoing ideas (aspects of society, modes of

behaviour, or any other semantic domain), but they are still unique "new entities" in their own right. Sapir uses the example of Hyena and Hare of Kaguru from Tanzanian folklore (Sapir 1977: 12). These characters are not quite the same as their real-world animal counterparts, but they are not simply the social roles that they represent, either. Hyena, for example, represents some animal characteristics as well as behaviours that suggest bad social behaviour – in other words, it relies more heavily on internal metaphor than Hare. Hyena as a metaphor functions like the "George the Lion example" – it draws an internal connection between specific people (behaving badly or stupidly) and the behaviour of the animal (a scavenger, aggressive, scrappy) – or, at least, the commonplace view which is associated with hyenas. Hare, in contrast, more closely resembles its social role than the animal, exhibiting very few hare-like features (Sapir 1977: 12). Hare relies more solidly on external metaphor because its entire existence depends on the comparison between it and Hyena. The comparison between Hare and Hyena is a metaphor for the comparison between clever people and stupid/bad people (Sapir 1977: 27).

While Sapir talks about folklore, we can use this understanding to talk about *Star Trek*'s aliens. These characters are also new entities, representing specific concepts (which we will discuss in further chapters), but also taking on their own life. These metaphorical features are highlighted in different ways throughout the show in order to draw different comparisons between humans and these alien foreigners. Like Hare and Hyena, these aliens are conglomerates of features of other Earth societies (shared traits), existing as comparisons to each other and to humans. They function something like the totem animal groups which Sapir discusses, as they exist in contrast with each other – however, these aliens do have features that differ from each other that are not simply based on the idea of difference. *Star Trek* thus uses both external and

internal analogy: internal to isolate the essentials of aliens, and external to compare between each other and to humans.

I have argued that *Star Trek*, like other SF, uses metaphor and other tropes which draw on common cultural knowledge in order to convey a particular message. This position leads us to the question of the message itself – if there is no "truly innocent" art, what is the message being conveyed in *Star Trek*? We are now in a position to begin a discussion of its metaphors.

It helps to look to our understanding of other societies. Many people look at other societies to contrast with their own, using "a different 'them' to define different parts of what is 'us.'" (Plath 1980: 20). Certain aspects of other societies are frequently contrasted with our own (Western, in this case): musical styles, cuisines, religions.[2] Yet as with Black's systems of commonplaces, these standard cultural opposites need not adhere to reality. In fact, Plath says, fictional understandings of other societies are often more extreme in their opposition to ours. This view is because cultural opposites remind us of the commonly-accepted beliefs that are taken for granted in our own society. Plath uses the example of a fictionalized Japan, which he calls "Jawpen". Westerners have created this mythical land Jawpen in their minds – perhaps a blend of technology and Eastern mysticism. Plath writes about the disappointment that he has seen on the faces of travellers in Tokyo upon realizing that they are in an ordinary large city (Plath 1980: 21), implying that they were expecting something different – Jawpen, that fictional cultural opposite that we use to contrast with our Western world. The cultural opposite has to remain distant and unfamiliar in order to seem like an opposite (Plath 1980: 22), or the essential contrast will not work as effectively. Alien worlds in SF are great examples of this kind of

[2] A common, sweeping contrast of cultures is the East/West divide. We will further discuss this dichotomy in chapter two.

contrast – they are distant by their very nature, and function as excellent cultural opposites. These fully-fictional cultures are a conglomerate of various metaphors intended to show us who we are via contrast, whether this "we" is humans, Americans, Westerners, or other societies.

We know from Sapir that symbolic language can both pick out essential features of two subjects, and show subjects from different conceptual domains as occupying comparable positions. The next section will look at how these essentializing features shows up in academic writing in the context of anthropology. Ethnographers are often tasked with the challenge of conveying the feeling of an entirely different society while also remaining sensitive to the people about whom they are writing. In fiction, authors have a similar challenge: aliens are by necessity "the other," yet there is a danger of making them seem too alien to comprehend (and thus uninteresting or unrelatable to the readers). Television series and films are also limited by practical effects: it is easier and more cost-effective to have a humanoid alien that can be played by an actor in makeup, especially before the rise of CGI. Thus, serials like *Star Trek* choose to solve these issues by giving their aliens distinct (and fairly homogenous) cultures and patterns of behaviour rather than highly-non human appearances. In doing so, they use similar techniques which anthropologists use in the field to discuss the societies which they study. Let us turn to some examples of these techniques.

(Mis)representing the Other in Academia

Marilyn Strathern (1988) is part of the reflexive turn of anthropology, where the discipline began to question some of its own cultural traditions. Although Strathern writes specifically about the difficulties of translating personal experience of fieldwork into an academic work, the devices that she discusses can readily be translated into fiction as well. When an ethnographer is confronted with writing about any culture (that is, a contradictory,

interconnected, and complex thing), they are forced to distill what they experience into a single account – one that also comes with the expectation of making an insightful statement about a society, as if it were possible to look at a culture on its own. The question becomes: which characteristics of a society matter enough to feature in an ethnography? Aware of these difficulties, and armed with the anthropological literature, ethnographers go into the field with pre-formed conceptions and ideas, which originate from the literature and from biases that are inherent to living in any society (Strathern 1988: 90). These researchers draw on their understanding as a filter to interpret situations, picking out essential features. The researcher's personal experience will inevitably show up in their writing, which gives readers a glimpse into the mental landscape of the writer.

While the external, real world exists in its own landscape, Strathern (1988) notes that writing about societies creates a theoretical landscape, made up of the ideas of researchers building upon one another, that informs future readers' opinions about a place: an internal topography (Strathern 1988: 89). A side effect of this internal topography is that places themselves begin to stand for concepts in the literature. For example, the idea of "gift exchange," as famously defined in Malinowski's Kula Ring, conceptually belongs to Melanesia in the academic landscape (Strathern 1988: 89). Melanesia thus becomes an **exemplar** for gift exchange, as the two become metonymically linked. Anthropologists frequently compare other societies to Melanesia when discussing gift exchange, almost as if the concept is an import from Melanesia, even if these two societies have nothing to do with one another. These societies, although not tied together in the real world, are related via external analogy: they occupy the same roles (for example, distributed/collectivized wealth) in relation to other societies (individualized/personal wealth).

Societal exemplars are especially useful when one can use them in contrast, to illustrate how other societies function. The more one can contrast an unfamiliar concept with familiar societies – especially the anthropologist's own – the more obvious this concept becomes. Just as "Jawpen" is used as a cultural opposite to highlight features of Western society, Gift Exchange Melanesia becomes the cultural opposite of the Independence-Oriented Western world. Strathern calls this concept duality via negation. Researchers are especially drawn to concepts that create a strong sense of difference between two societies. For example, class and caste are not frequently contrasted, because they do not fit into a neat inversion, and are ultimately somewhat similar (Strathern 1988: 91). However, gift exchange societies are frequently contrasted with the commodity exchange of the Western world – these contrasts "derive power from inverting already existing conceptual relationships" (Strathern 1988: 93). Contrasts and exemplars make up part of the internal topography that anthropologists draw on for their research – and SF writers for their fictional worlds.

We see other authors documenting similar ideas in their writing. Fernandez (1988) discusses what he calls **metonymic misrepresentation**. Through this process, a small part of a society comes to stand for the whole of a society – a type of synecdoche. "One demon I can't escape as a Hispanist is the demon of Andalusia," he writes, referring to the southern Spanish province. Andalusia is a province of "such powerful and compelling character that it is hard to convince those foreign to the cultural complexity of Iberia that this part of Spain and its characteristics are not the whole of Spain" (Fernandez 1988: 22). Andalusian cultural traits (such as bullfighting, flamenco, olive oil, and "macho") are taken as the exemplar for all of Spain. Fernandez says this tendency of metonymic representation is tied to a particular "North/South dynamic," wherein places are associated with contrasting stereotypes (for example, passion and

laziness in the south, efficiency and bluntness in the north). When contrasting north and south, it is easy to take the southern part of a southern nation to stand for the whole of the nation – to do the opposite would be to "confuse the clear and simple identity-confirming difference that stereotyping achieves" (Fernandez 1988: 23). Through this process, the southern province of Andalusia stands for the whole southern-European country of Spain. Like Strathern and Plath, Fernandez thinks that metonymic representation happens in part because of the desire for contrast, to find differences between one's own home and that of "the other". Understanding a society in terms of being unlike another is thinking "contrastive place" (Fernandez 1988: 32). It is difficult to understand another society without a contrast to a familiar one, for untrained traveller and anthropologist alike. The general goal of the anthropologist, then, becomes to develop culturally-specific understandings about other places. Fernandez ends by arguing for an even more specific goal: showing the complex human condition via "complementary place" – showing local differences as all part of the complex geography of human experience, without relying on binary oppositions (Fernandez 1988: 32).

Gal and Irvine (1995) write about a different but related kind of essentialism, also based in synecdoche: the idea of a particular tradition or method of speaking (linguistic practice) coming to stand for the essence of a group. They use the terms **Index** and **Icon** as applied to essentialism in ethnographic writing. They note that certain cultural practices which merely distinguish one group from another – that is, by pointing out or Indexing a particular group – can sometimes be taken as the very nature or essence for that group. In other words, the practice becomes Iconic for that group (Gal and Irvine 1995: 973). For example, in the Wolof village where Irvine conducted fieldwork, slow and restrained speech indexed a noble, upper-class way of speaking – this speech pattern was meant to reflect the restrained and unflappable nature of

being a person of high rank (Gal and Irvine 1995: 976). Through this process of **Iconicity**, the connection between practice and meaning thus seems inherent; "the 'other,' or simply the other side of the contrast, is often essentialized and imagined as homogeneous" (Gal and Irvine 1995: 974). In academia, thinking in terms of essences can lead scholars to either omit outliers, or assume behaviour that does not strictly adhere to the place's "nature" comes from elsewhere. Gal and Irvine call this tendency **Erasure** (Gal and Irvine 1995: 974). Another tendency – **Recursion** – begins to show up when these place-based icons begin to interact with one another. Recursion is the replicating of a binary on a smaller scale, similar to the North/South dynamic which Fernandez discusses. For example, the "calm North and passionate South" is seen in the descriptions of Europe and the Middle-East, Northern and Southern Europe, and Andalusia and Iberia. The same binaries can be recreated multiple times, even down to the level of the individual.

Star Trek frequently uses iconicity, attributing alien practices and behaviours to their very nature – e.g., the Klingons fight; therefore, they *are* fighters. In a fictional medium, outliers are far more pointed and obvious, and often serve a particular purpose rather than being erased out (we will discuss these individuals in the next chapter). We will also discuss recursion as it applies to *Star Trek* in relation to the Vulcans and Romulans in chapter two, but for now it will suffice to say that this tendency does exist in fiction as well. The next step is to discuss the specific examples of metaphor that *Star Trek* uses in regards to its aliens, as well as beginning the journey of piecing together what it is saying about Western society.

Visual Cues in Star Trek

Because SF authors are free to invent societies, they have full creative freedom to choose any concepts to serve as societal exemplars or cultural opposites. In using alien or otherwise non-

human beings, inversion can be applied more broadly than in ethnography, looking not just at "what it means to be a specific culture" but rather at "what it means to be the human species". In *Star Trek,* inversion, iconicity, and metonymic misrepresentation are employed to highlight differences between humans and their alien counterparts. Limited to human actors, practical (and some digital) effects, and hour-long episodes, these differences have to be pointed and easy to identify. Some of this work is done in the script: there is often talk of a "way of my people" (iconicity) to show contrast between cultures. Some of this work is echoed in the visuals. Looking at these specifics will be the purpose of this section, using the exemplar alien species previously discussed.

The Vulcans are a spiritual and rigidly logical ambassador-species who made first official contact with humans upon the latter's development of faster-than-light travel. Alongside the humans and two other species, they are one of the founding members of the "Federation of Planets" – a conglomerate of allied planets that function as one political body on the galactic stage, generally represented in *Star Trek* by the human exploratory force, Starfleet. Vulcans are frequent parts of the humans' exploratory endeavours. The half-Vulcan half-human Mr. Spock works on TOS' *Enterprise* as the first officer, giving logical advice, judging his emotional crewmates, and occasionally surprising them with dry wit. In ENT, the Vulcans are shown in a less favourable light: stoic and intelligent but arrogant, and suspicious of the humans' eagerness to get involved in the galactic scene. Yet despite any differences, the humans of the Federation almost always show (at least a grudging) respect to their alien mentors.

In the Vulcans, we can see the tropes of aristocratic, philosophical mentors in both language and appearance. While class hierarchy is not the only metaphorical axis which exists in *Star Trek*, it is helpful to turn to it now, with a brief look at Pierre Bourdieu's hierarchy of

classes in Western society. Bourdieu is famous for outlining the "**game of distinction**" in which all social actors necessarily participate (Bourdieu 1984: 12). After studying music preferences in a wide variety of socioeconomic classes, he noted that there was an important connection between educational level and participating in "high class" activities (Bourdieu 1984: 13). An education provides a uniform cultural understanding of these activities (e.g., history of art, awareness of fashion, etc.), a feature which means that more educated people are given the understanding necessary to enjoy them. These activities, in turn, become associated with sophistication or "culture".

For example, works such as post-modern art or free-form jazz (both of which are enhanced with the context provided by an arts education) are considered more "cultured" than works of art that are easier to understand and have more mass appeal. The more sophisticated works of art are considered more "legitimate" or "pure" – that is, enjoyed as art for the sake of art – and appreciating them gives a participant more status, or **cultural capital.** Works lower on the hierarchy are considered "popular" or common (Bourdieu 1984: 14). The lower classes participate in activities with high cultural capital in order to increase their own standing, while the higher classes seek out new activities for their own in order to distinguish themselves from the encroaching masses. This cycle of cultural capital and drawing new distinctions between what is more or less sophisticated (phrased as more or less legitimate) is the game of distinction (Bourdieu 1984: 31). This cultural gatekeeping in order to distinguish oneself from the masses involves a level of control and restraint. Thus, the upper classes must appear able to control *themselves* (e.g., through stillness, emotional restraint, and avoiding behaviour that could be considered "low-brow" or uncontrolled) in order to legitimize their power over the lower classes. The Vulcans, in their ability to keep their own strong emotions in check, show themselves to be

symbolically part of a galactic upper-class – they have cultural capital, and by extension their art and philosophies are considered sophisticated.

Fashion and clothing play a large role in visually evoking cultural capital – this feature is evident in everyday life, and shows up in fiction. Edward Sapir (1931) and Marshall Sahlins (2005) both discuss fashion's role in maintaining social groups. Sapir (1931: 139) defines fashion (especially of something as close to the self as clothing) as individual application of the broader norms of a society, also known as custom. Like other aspects of taste and sophistication, one's choice of clothing depends on individual preference; yet ultimately following custom is important to gain social approval. Additionally, Sahlins (2005: 177) says that clothing choice is dictated by the context of the occasion (that is, where you choose to wear a garment). What one chooses to wear (and when they choose to wear it) speaks to both the social occasion and the wearer's status. For example, choosing to wear a formal suit to a concert indicates the high status of the event and the wearer – although strictly adhering to a norm might also be an indication of a lower-class individual trying to gain more cultural capital. This is not a one-way process; Sahlins says that clothing comes to define a category as much as the category dictates what clothing one wears – that is, the two terms become metonymically linked.

For example, if fashion dictates that women wear silk, the fabric becomes associated with feminine characteristics at the same time as women are seen as "silky" in their behaviour or physicality (Sahlins 2005: 179). It need not be an entire outfit, either: cloth (Sahlins 2005: 187) and even something as simple as lines and shapes (Sahlins 2005: 190) can be enough to create such associations. These associations are, in part, what define ideas of sophistication and hierarchy as well.

Like Bourdieu, Sapir notes that the lower classes tend to take on elements of the higher class (Sapir 1931: 142). He stresses that this practice is done discretely, because of the overarching desire (by most members of a society) to maintain social norms. This desire, in combination with the upper class' desire to maintain their power, describes a rigid but ever-changing system. Sapir seems to regard social classes as distinct groups rather than (solely) economic or educational brackets, as he notes that the broad category of "women" often becomes a distinct class (Sapir 1931: 142), in part because of the fashion industry. Although the difference between men's and women's fashion is not my focus, this element is important for *Star Trek* because it shows us that the game of distinction can be played across different categories than simply a class hierarchy.

The process of social groups being associated with their choices extends further than clothing or artform as well, as detailed by historian Peter Burke (1991). Burke, in his study of the etiquette manuals of Renaissance Italy, suggests that there are particular types of body language that are considered befitting of high social status, while other types of gesture are common to the lower classes. In Renaissance Europe, people that tended toward stillness and stateliness reflected higher class (in other words, gained more cultural capital); these were the nobility, clergy, and dignitaries. In contrast, Renaissance Europeans associated wild and animated gestures with the lower class, and excessive gesture was even considered "apelike" (Burke 1991: 77). The Spanish (particularly the dignitaries who visited Italy) were a gestural exemplar for the Italians to follow because of their stillness and lack of gesture. At the same time, the Italians also saw the Spanish as too stiff, a behaviour which evoked arrogance and stiffness of personality. Italian theatre exaggerated abrupt, aggressive gestures in order to mock the "macho" Spanish in comical characters like the "Capitano" archetype (Burke 1991: 78). This interpretation suggests

that (successful) upper class Italians sought to attain the ideal middle ground between the stiffness of arrogance and the wild animation of the "apelike".

Star Trek does not solely work with a class hierarchy, as it specifically portrays people from different societies; the clothing and gesture used by the different alien characters still echo certain social groups within Western society, and can help us understand how much respect they are given on the galactic stage. Vulcan dignitaries, for example, wear heavy and flowing robes which fit loosely around their body. This kind of fabric emphasizes their deliberate body language, while the flowing lines suggests a lack of severity. The robes, evocative of the clergy in the minds of the North American audience, as well as of Ancient Greek philosophers, gives these people both spiritual authority and the idea of the aristocracy. Their uniforms are muted earthy colours and pastels. Their writing mimics their flowing robes: decorative vertical spirals, elegant yet contained and precise. The Vulcans' body language conveys the gravity of their social position in the *Star Trek* universe as well. Many of them walk methodically, but not slowly, often with their hands clasped. It is established that the Vulcans have passionate and often violent emotions; yet like the noble Italians, the Vulcans are philosophically motivated to keep their composure, eschewing their feelings for calm reasoning. Like "proper" nobility, they have composed expressions, rarely gesture, and are not rushed.

The Vulcan use of language echoes the idea that they are the exemplar of Western enlightenment.[3] The terms "philosophy," "sophistication," and "enlightenment" are used frequently when applied to their beliefs and behaviours. As Ambassador Sarek explains in "Journey to Babel": "[being Vulcan] means to adopt a philosophy, a way of life which is logical

[3] The Vulcans are also metaphorically linked with a Western idea of Eastern mysticism and inscrutability. This concept is a topic of discussion in the following chapter.

and beneficial. We cannot disregard that philosophy merely for personal gain, no matter how important that gain might be" (TOS 2.15, 33:10). In TNG, Spock believes that, "An inexorable evolution toward Vulcan philosophy has begun," among some more pacifistic Romulans, which will lead to a "new enlightenment" (TNG 5.8 "Unification II" 43:20). Even in ENT, where the human characters are more easily frustrated with the Vulcans' behaviour, the same sentiment persists: Captain Archer complains that "You people think you're so damned enlightened…" (ENT 1.7 "The Andorian Incident," 27:13). In "Broken Bow," Vulcan T'Pol talks about how "Vulcan children play with toys that are more sophisticated [than humans toys]," to which human Trip replies that, "You know, some people say you Vulcans do nothing but patronize us…" (ENT 1.1-2 "Broken Bow," 34:08).

The constant use of "philosophy," "enlightenment," and other intellectual terms evokes the Ancient Greeks – a model of intellect in the Western world. These traits suggest that the Vulcans are a people with high cultural capital. The Vulcan (and non-Vulcan) characters often refer to their emotional and physical restraint as a cornerstone of their philosophical achievements – again, a common symbol of the upper class. According to Spock, the original founder of Vulcan logic, Surak, "…is revered as the father of our civilization" (TOS 3.22 "The Savage Curtain," 38:46). Vulcan characters turn to these principles when struggling with their emotions: "…Logic is the foundation of function. Function is the essence of control. I am in control. I am in control." (Tuvok in VOY 3.2 "Flashback," 9:00). Spock, on the verge of a breakdown in "The Naked Time," yells to himself that "I am in control of my emotions!" (TOS 1.6, 36:28). The Vulcans physically restrain their body language, not partaking in activities that a Westerner might consider closer to "animal." They eat only with cutlery – "Vulcans don't touch food with their hands," T'Pol tells her human crewmates (ENT 1.1-2 "Broken Bow," 24:55) –

they choose to be vegetarian, they tend to avoid alcohol (although the appearance of Vulcan port in DS9 suggests this taboo is not a universal), and they do not feel the effects of caffeine (ENT 1.8 "Breaking the Ice," 4:27). This physical and emotional restraint combines to form something that the Western humans generally find admirable.

However, their restraint and logic is also shown to be the Vulcans' downfall throughout the show: for example, Spock is not a very successful acting captain because he does not inspire the crew (TOS 1.13 "The Galileo Seven"), and the Vulcans nearly start a war with the Andorians when they are unremorseful for spying on the willful aliens (seeing their actions as, of course, only logical) (ENT 1.7 "The Andorian Incident"). Through inversion in comparison to the Vulcans, the humans are seen as emotional and irrational (a fact that Spock frequently points out); yet they are also compassionate, creative, and cooperative. Spock and other Vulcans are constantly confused by their chaotic crewmates, but are generally at least vaguely respectful of humans.

The Vulcans are not only compared to the humans. As early as the Romulans' first appearance in "Balance of Terror," (TOS 1.8) the two species are frequently contrasted with one another. In TOS, both Vulcans and Romulans have the same pointy-eared appearance and sleek dark hair, and are even called "distant brothers" as they apparently share a common ancestor (TOS 3.4 "The Enterprise Incident," 12:20). In "Balance of Terror," Spock notes that the Romulans have retained the traits of Vulcans past, before their philosophical logic became prominent (TOS 1.8, 23:32). Like the shared traits between Ancient Greece and Vulcans, the Romulans were initially based on ancient Rome (Memory Alpha, 2019). In addition to their name clearly being a derivative of the mythical founder of Rome, they also use ancient Roman leadership terms: "Commander," "Centurion," and "Praetor," "Senator," to list some examples.

Additionally, they are all loyal to an Empire, something which they reference throughout the series.

From their first appearance, the Romulans are portrayed as a stern, noble, and well-spoken people. The word choice in reference to them highlights their personalities. They are powerful: enemy outposts are "completely destroyed," having been "hit by enormous power" and "high energy" (TOS 1.8 "Balance of Terror," 9:12 and 10:50). They act with a tactical caution, their ships possessing the ability to go invisible and sneak right up to destroy their enemies. They have a calculating intelligence: the unnamed Romulan Commander calmly states that he intends to "study the enemy" in order to "seek weakness" (TOS 1.8, 18:30), and the humans even use the "chess as war" metaphor in reference to these aliens: "It's always a game of chess with them, isn't it?" (Picard in TNG 3.10 "The Defector," 10:35). By their first appearance in TNG, they are described as "…creatures of extremes. One moment, violent beyond description. The next, tender" (TNG 1.26 "The Neutral Zone," 17:20). While we begin to see further aspects of their society in TNG – civilian life (TNG 5.7 "Unification I" and 5.8 "Unification II"), individuals who reject the totalitarian empire (TNG 3.10 "The Defector"), and descriptions of a home world of "awesome beauty" (TNG 3.10 "The Defector," 27:23) – the Romulans only grow more severe and based in secrecy, sending their highly trained spies (the *Tal Shiar*) to the Federation, and playing polite mind games with anyone who speaks to them. This behaviour is shown in contrast to the calm and philosophical Vulcans – friends and allies to the humans – who are selfless and interested in the well-being of the many.

At the same time, Romulans and humans are said to share traits. Throughout "Balance of Terror," there are multiple scenes of Kirk and the enemy Commander on their respective ships as they try to outguess each other, and admit respect for each other's actions. "He did exactly what I

would have done," Kirk notes, upon being outwitted. "I won't underestimate him again" (TOS 1.8, 27:33). The Romulans, too, respect the humans. "For some reason, they have exhibited a fascination with humans…" (Troi in TNG 1.26 "The Neutral Zone," 17:20). They also show respect to the Vulcans – as the Romulan Commander says to Spock: "We can appreciate the Vulcans. Our distant brothers…I have heard of Vulcan integrity and personal honor." (TOS 3.4 "The Enterprise Incident," 12:20). These instances indicate that the Romulans and humans are shown to be matched in tactical prowess, with respect for one another. Yet the humans are morally superior, as are the Vulcans for overcoming their violent past and founding the Federation. We can use the Romulans as a cultural opposite to the humans using inversion: by highlighting the brutality, caution, focus on duty, and strong emotions of the Romulans, the humans are implied to be *less* emotional and more curious.

As with the Vulcans, these personality traits of the Romulans are echoed in their clothing and gesture. While certain individuals (primarily government officials) wear robes similar to that of the Vulcan dignitaries, the vast majority of the individuals with whom the humans interact are military – and their clothing is of a different style to the Vulcan robe. Their clothing is stiffer, and has prominent shoulder-pads (especially in TNG); this feature gives them a triangular and strait-laced appearance, and further emphasizes their wide and confident stance.

Unlike the sweeping lines of the Vulcans, the Romulan script is angular and sharp. As Sahlins (2005) points out, even a line can suggest a particular character. He notes that a vertical line suggests "poise, balance and strong support." The vertical line is "severe and austere," while a rapidly-upward-sweeping line suggests agitation or even fury (Sahlins 2005, 191). The triangular shapes of Romulan writing, as well as of the Romulans themselves, matches their character.

Their food is apparently assertive and passionate as well: in "In the Pale Moonlight," The Romulan senator criticizes the computer-synthesized version of Romulan ale for being bland, saying that "Real *kali-fal* should forcibly open one's sinuses well before the first sip" (DS9 6.19, 31:36). In another instance, a different senator exchanges opinion on Earth popsicles with crewmember Kira Nerys; she comments that, if Kira thinks it is too sweet, "…you should try a Romulan Osol twist. Very tart" (DS9 7.1 "Image in the Sand," 25:57).

Romulan gestures match the severity of their clothing. These people do not gesture frequently, although they move more decisively than the Vulcans. Unlike the more relaxed, clasped hands of the Vulcans, the Romulans hold their arms straight at their sides, and often have clenched or tensed hands. Their expressions are generally more visible, but they still have a contained and clipped manner that suggests holding back active aggression. Like the Vulcans, their eyebrows are angled in such a way as to suggest severity; yet this feature is further emphasized by the V-shaped ridges on their foreheads, which first make an appearance in TNG. These physical features give the Romulans the impression of intense dignity. Their stillness and rich-looking clothing evoke the idea of nobility and high cultural capital, and the respect with which the humans regard them suggests that they (like the Vulcans) occupy a high rank in the galactic stage. Although the humans clearly fear the Romulans for their tactics and power, they also respect them for their intelligence and dignity.

While the first two of these species seem to garner respect to a North American audience, the next two occupy a more complex niche. The other aspect of the Spanish dignitaries according to Burke – the "macho," aggressive stance which is mocked in Renaissance Italian theatre – is featured in the Klingon species, particularly the males. The Klingons – one of the most recognizable species in *Star Trek* – have undergone a number of changes and redesigns

throughout the years, although the period from TNG to VOY features the most well-known version of this species. The Klingons were originally introduced as another enemy of the humans in TOS. Their military dictatorship society, brutal "State," and vaguely Eastern appearance was meant to evoke the USSR to the viewers of the 1960s (Memory Alpha, 2019), but they were redesigned for TNG as an honourable but warlike ally to the Federation.

Where the Romulans are clipped and assertive, the Klingons are animated and aggressive – these are not a restrained people. Like the Spanish Capitano character, the Klingons are characterized by sharp movements. They lean forward or stay proudly upright, laugh heartily, snarl and sneer at each other. The females take on aspects of the same behaviour, although their aggression tends to be more toward scheming rather than outright fighting (more on this in the next chapter). Their movements are slower, and they hiss rather than actively snarling. Although sometimes portrayed as bullheaded and over-the-top in personality, in constant conflict with one another's clans and not very efficient, the Klingons are generally seen as powerful allies.

The aesthetic of the Klingons echoes this aggressive and chaotic power. Klingon food looks unpalatable, filled with raw chunks of meat, slimy and wriggling small organisms – and, of course, Gagh: a worm-looking critter which is "…always best when served live" (TNG 2.8 "A Matter of Honor," 22:00). Worf, a human-raised Klingon working with the humans, is an exception to the outwardly aggressive "macho" stance, behaving in a more contained fashion than his comrades. Nevertheless, he is treated as an exception within the serial, shown to be an outsider within the sometimes-irrational Klingon society. Yet even Worf chooses to wear an extra sash that is representative of his heritage rather than his rank in the Federation. While their clothing choices change throughout the show, their uniforms often resemble armor, made up of many pieces layered on top of each other, a mix of metal, cloth, and leather. Following Sahlins'

definition of feminine clothing in the American 1970s (a decade that comes after TOS and only slightly predates TNG), Klingon clothing would suggest masculinity: square, angular, and dark as opposed to light, curving, and "fluffy" (Sahlins 2005, 187). This feature ties in with the "macho" behaviour exhibited by this species. Like the previous two species, their writing system echoes their personalities – in this case, blunt and aggressive.

The expressive gestures and boisterous behaviour of these people suggests that they occupy a lower status in the Federation than the Vulcans. This interpretation is backed up in the serial, as they are portrayed as internally disorganized in TNG, passionate to the point of dying for their cause rather than tactically retreating, and therefore less of a strong military force than the Federation. By DS9, they are described as a decaying empire, with a corrupt government and members that are too preoccupied with drinking, fighting amongst themselves, and telling stories about the honourable past to care about garnering respect.

In DIS – the prequel series to TOS – the Klingons are again enemies to the Federation, and they are portrayed as predatory and downright menacing, like ritualized hunters (albeit without the totalitarian overtones featured in TOS). Through inversion, the humans again appear far more moderate and reasonable, with palatable food and moderate negotiation tactics. The Klingons, in turn, respect the human ability to be macho and aggressive, but do not see the human species as generally an honourable one. The other aliens seem to echo this idea. The cautious, severe Romulans are sworn enemies to the combative Klingons: the former considers the latter a lower lifeform, while the latter thinks they are completely without honour. The Ferengi also think they are violent and unsophisticated – bartender Quark from DS9 has many instances of criticizing the Klingons, including his commentary on their love of holographic

battle simulations: “It’s brutal. It’s violent. It’s bloody. But to the Klingons, it’s entertainment.” (DS9 2.19 “Blood Oath,” 0:51).

The Ferengi first appeared in TNG, as a replacement for the enemy Klingons (who had since become an ally to the Federation). From their first appearance in “The Last Outpost,” the Enterprise crew compares them to the human past. They are likened to “the ocean-going Yankee traders of 18th and 19th century America” (TNG 1.5 “The Last Outpost,” 7:00). In reality, the creators of these aliens, Roddenberry and Wright, both cite that they were primarily inspired by the common fear of corruption in the financial sector in the 1980s (Memory Alpha, 2019). Although they are born of a very Western fear, in their first few appearances there is an emphasis on portraying these beings as inhuman and almost animal. Just as the lower classes are associated with lack of control, exaggerated gesture, and non-sophisticated activities, the Ferengi exemplify these traits with many of their actions. This is a society focused on trade, with many connections amongst the other species of the *Star Trek* universe, although with no real political sway.

Much of their body language would suggest the lower class, even to the Renaissance Italians. In the first two seasons of TNG they are particularly “apelike.” In “The Last Outpost,” their blatantly manipulative and suspicious behaviour is paired with the actors being constantly in motion: jumping around, hunching and crouching like goblins, swaying in place and gesturing wildly, hunched over and wearing furs.[4] Although they were established as a threat, they were also meant to be pitiable if not outright comical: their dancing is ridiculous, they are small people, and they are finally dismissed by the *Enterprise* crew as they look back at this apparent

[4] The connection between goblins (and other fantasy creatures) and the Ferengi goes deeper than just this episode. We will discuss this further in chapter two.

reminder to what humans once were. They are, as the android Data calmly puts it, “the worst qualities of capitalists” (TNG 1.5 “The Last Outpost,” 7:18).

By the third season, they have straightened in posture and their uniforms have begun to resemble sparkling business suits, but their behaviour takes on more rodent-like characteristics: rubbing their clawed hands together and scurrying back and forth. Like small animals, they are highly sensitive to sound: estimating the amount of decibels a sound makes (such as Ferengi Nog does in DS9 5.23 “Blaze of Glory,” 20:51), detecting higher ranges than other hominid species (they are disabled by a high-pitched sound in ENT 1.19 “Acquisition,” 24:39), and able to discern subtle differences between sounds (DS9 5.9 “The Ascent,” 13:39). Throughout the serial, they are far more interested in acquiring economic rather than cultural capital, unless the latter leads to the former.

After fading into the background in TNG, their role and society are vastly expanded in DS9, which features Ferengi bartender Quark and his family as part of the regular cast. Here, these people follow a strict code of business and life, with over two hundred “Rules of Acquisition” which they consider a guidebook to happiness. Their desire for wealth is explained as a spiritual quest, try to acquire wealth in order to buy their way to a better afterlife (DS9 7.6 “Treachery, Faith, and the Great River”). Even so, despite some exceptions, they are sneaky and conniving, more focused on obtaining a profit than any moral and political situations.

The Ferengi are meant to highlight how far the Federation humans have come from the “old days” of currency, capitalism, and corruption. In highlighting similarities between modern-day, real-world humans, this inversion actually makes the Federation appear more alien, having overcome the societal issues that we see in our society (this will be a topic of further discussion

in the third chapter). At the same time, this is a hopeful vision, telling us that we can aspire to the noble ideals of the humans in TNG.

In addition to their behaviour, the treatment of the Ferengi by their fellow alien species seems to indicate their low status. They are called "trolls" (TNG 3.24 "Ménage à Troi," 4:40), their hands are called "paws" (TNG 1.5 "The Last Outpost," 38:30), and they apparently have a distinctive (perhaps even unpleasant) smell (TNG 3.24 "Ménage à Troi," 15:30). In DS9, they are shown to use "very accurate and very deadly" explosives that lock onto a target's pheromones (DS9 1.11 "The Nagus," 29:36). Even the Klingons, themselves known for being wild, call the Ferengi animals: "Do we fall upon ourselves like a pack of Ferengi?" (Worf in TNG 5.1 "Redemption II" 16:23). In one episode, the typically-benevolent human captain Picard abandons two Ferengi individuals alone in deep space without any means of return (TNG 3.8 "The Price"), and it is presented comically. They reappear in VOY years later, having taken advantage of a planet, in "False Profits" (VOY 3.5) – although it is unlikely that the creators planned that far in advance – and they disappear just as unceremoniously down another wormhole. If we take all of the symbolism into account, it seems that this species belongs to a lower class (perhaps in an ethical sense, if not in a literal sense) in a society that purports itself to being egalitarian.

While these four species can be mapped on a galactic hierarchy, it is important to remember that this is not the only axis within the Quality Space of *Star Trek.* There are aliens where the divide between themselves and the humans are on a more fundamental ideological level than simple societal differences. For example, the four species mentioned above are portrayed very similarly when contrasted with the Borg. The Borg are, in some ways, far more alien than most of the Federation's other enemies. While the humans have a chance to fight

against the others (and in some cases, particularly with the Ferengi, are seen as superior to them), the Borg are technologically superior and are a lethal threat, in part because of their brutally collectivistic mindset. Their first appearance (TNG 2.16, "Q Who") differs slightly from their later appearances, where they have developed from a generalized collective to a hive-like swarm with a queen and drones; yet their collectivized mindset is always seen as a dire threat to the Federation. They are a linked mind of technologically-enhanced aliens who travel between the stars in giant cube-shaped spaceships and leave giant gashes in planets as they strip civilizations of technology and individuals of their identity.

The Borg lack any concept of individuality – each Borg member is expendable, and they similarly ignore the crew of the *Enterprise* (even when they board the Borg ship), unless they are directly trying to "assimilate" them into their collective. Their ships are generalized, lacking any distinct command centre; the factory-like inside echoes this concept. While the *Enterprise* crew is successful at damaging both the ship and some of its crew, the aliens are shown to adapt within minutes. Throughout the introductory episode "Q Who" (TNG 2.16), word choice used to describe these people suggest pluralism and violence: "swarm" (TNG 2.16 "Q Who," 24:30), "relentless" (TNG 2.16, 39:33), "destroy" (TNG 2.16, 20:39), and, rather pointedly: "the ultimate user" (TNG 2.16, 29:18). In being ultimately impersonal and uninterested in the individual human, the Borg show how ultimately individual we humans are. Instead of showing elements of upper or lower class, they tap into the fears of 20th century North America: the fear of encroaching technology ("the ultimate user") permeating everyone's lives and turning them into its slaves; the impersonality of socialist nations, still a factor since the 1960s; and even the resilient "superbugs" which could adapt to immunizations and impersonally destroy society

without even being aware of it. The humans of *Star Trek* are clearly intimidated by this threat, but also respectful; they even somewhat admire the efficiency of these aliens.

Analysis of the Galactic Stage

We have determined that the aliens mentioned are part of a complex system of metaphor, showcasing different interrelations and hierarchies between themselves and the humans. I will now look briefly at what this system seems to say overall about the landscape of *Star Trek*.

First of all, it is important that these aliens were (at least at one point or another) antagonistic to the human characters. The Klingons and Ferengi were all originally enemies to the Federation, while the Romulans and Borg remain so throughout the show. Even the pacifistic Vulcans are shown to be like overbearing, stern parents in ENT, to whom the humans have to prove their worth in order to establish themselves on the galactic scene. These relations seem to indicate that the comparisons to humans are generally meant to put the latter in a good light, rather than as a criticism of human society. This interpretation is backed up by the overall positive and idealistic attitude that the humans have toward their Federation and its values (equality, societal progress, negotiation over violence, scientific exploration). The fact that the tension is usually portrayed as conflicting societal philosophies suggests a dichotomy of cultural opposites, in the sense that Plath has discussed, with the "human" (Western, American) ideals ending up as the victor. The negative aspects of the aliens are meant to show, through an implied inversion, the positive traits of the humans: Romulans are destructive and treacherous (humans are constructive and honourable), Klingons are predatory and extreme (humans are peaceful and moderate), Vulcans are condescending and cold (humans are fair and compassionate), Ferengi are conniving and opportunistic (humans are idealistic), Borg are mindless and impersonal

(humans are independent individuals). While the Federation is criticized from time to time, its values remain unchanged.

Additionally, the aliens all have factions (or individuals) that side with the humans at one point or another. In "The Chase" (TNG 6.20), after discovering that several species – including the Klingons, humans, and Romulans – may have a common alien ancestor, the Romulan captain says to Picard that there may be hope for peace in the future between their two peoples (TNG 6.20 "The Chase," 43:16). In DS9, the Romulans ally with the Federation to fight a common enemy, although they still continue to be suspicious and secretive. The Klingons, after their war with the Federation (shown in both TOS and DIS), become its allies. The Vulcans are one of the founding members of the Federation, and a longstanding ally to the humans. The Ferengi grow from being outright threats to neutral merchants. Even the Borg, although generally single-mindedly out to destroy the individuality of all sapient life in their attempt to assimilate, ends up with splinter factions who learn individuality from the *Enterprise* (e.g., Third of Five, AKA Hugh, in TNG 6.26 "Descent" and TNG 7.1 "Descent, Part II"). This interpretation further suggests that the humans are the negotiators of the galaxy, possessing ideals with which most (reasonable) others can agree. As Captain Archer says in frustration after trying to convince the rival Andorians and Tellerites to get along: "Why don't you two try behaving like humans for a change [instead of me behaving like both of you]?" (ENT 4.13 "United," 11:17).

However, *Star Trek* is not simply showing a dichotomy of humans versus aliens. All of the alien species see each other in different ways. In setting each other up as cultural opposites, the storyline further highlights their essential/iconic qualities; such essential qualities can imply moderation and complexity in humans. This interpretation also shows that the galactic stage is more than just a simple class hierarchy. The Ferengi and Klingons consider each other to be

barbarians, and themselves to be (at least more) sophisticated. Romulans tend to hate Vulcan logic, and see the Klingons as lesser beings. The Borg set themselves apart from everyone else, seeing themselves as the ultimate in perfection. These perspectives could imply that there is no one right way to see any of the aliens. Yet because the human perspective is still emphasized the most often (partially because most of the characters are human), their mediating stance tends to look like the most correct one.

Through the process of inversion, then, we have seen that the various alien species of *Star Trek* represent different kinds of extremes, with the humans occupying a logical and relatable middle ground, while in negotiation with all of them. Through visual and textual metaphor, *Star Trek* suggests that each alien species has an "essence" in order to compare (through inversion) with both humans and the rest of the aliens.

Through our understanding of metaphor, we have begun to explore the way in which the alien societies of SF can highlight aspects of society that may go overlooked in the real world. These fictional cultures are a conglomerate of various metaphors intended to show us a fictional ethos and establish a cultural opposite. Through inversion, these metaphors show us who "we" are, and what that term even means. The next chapter will look more deeply at who the "we" of Western society is, who is the "other" to whom we compare ourselves, and how these ideas are echoed in the metaphors of *Star Trek.*

Chapter Two: The Essence of the Alien

As I watch the Vulcans, I cannot help but think of the ancient philosophers of our own civilization: stoic, infinitely calm, focused on argumentation and rational thought and rising above the confines of emotions. I catch myself wondering if they are missing something in entirely eschewing emotions: the passion of life, the beauty that exists in irrationality. Yet I must remind myself that I cannot fall into this trap: these are not humans. Their experiences – no matter how profound or lacking – are not ours.

- From the ethnography *The Final Frontier: A Year Aboard a Starfleet Vessel*. Ellen Burnham, 2431. San Francisco: Starfleet Academy Press.

In the popular episode "Amok Time" (TOS 2.5), we are given the first view of the planet Vulcan, from which the stoic and spiritual Vulcans hail. The planet is a deep orange, with hazy skies and tall cliffs. On the top of one of these cliffs, a ceremony is being held: an ancient marriage ritual. Accompanied by the sounds of chimes and gongs, a group of severe people in elaborate robes watch a violent duel happen between two individuals. One is the normally-collected Spock, science officer on the *Enterprise*. He is affected by the Pon Farr – "a madness which rips away our veneer of civilization" every seven years (Spock in TOS 2.5 "Amok Time," 15:28), and forces Vulcans to return to their planet to fight for their mates. The other combatant is his friend and captain, Kirk, who has stepped in to fight instead of Spock's expected opponent and is trying to ensure that he is not killed in the process. The overseer of the challenge is an older woman carrying a staff and wearing an elaborate headpiece, and she explains the challenge to the onlookers: "What you are about to see comes down from the time of the beginning. Without change. This is the Vulcan heart. This is the Vulcan soul. This is our way" (TOS 2.5, 29:00).

It does not take an anthropologist to note that Vulcans draw on elements of a conglomerate of cultures, filtered through an American understanding. Some of these are Asian

stereotypes: dark, sleek hair and formal, flowing robes, an air of inscrutability and mystery. Another influence are the Ancient Greek philosophers, famous for their rhetoric and method of reasoning – Vulcans are intensely committed to their logical principles, which elevated their society out of a violent past. The Vulcans are clearly aliens, yet in borrowing from other societies archetypes, *Star Trek* sets up the possibility of a conversation about colonialism, Orientalism, and the modern academic understanding of other parts of the world. In the previous chapter, we have discussed the way in which the creators of *Star Trek* use visual metaphors to illustrate particular concepts. In this chapter, we will look deeper into some of these concepts themselves, and in particular how they connect back to the real world.

As discussed in Strathern (1988), preconceived notions about other places create a personal, fictional landscape of places within people's minds (an internal topography). What about places or people that are not well-established "commonplaces"? Mary Helms' work (1988) looks at historical contact between Europeans and others (especially in the New World). She discusses how this notion of the internal topography is influenced by the philosophical, spiritual, and moral understanding of the world: while strangers impart new information, the way they are perceived comes from the beliefs of the home society (Helms 1988: 173). In fact, the very concept of distance itself affects the way people perceive places. These conceptions are so strong that many of them persist today, either in fiction or reality (sometimes both), even when the societies in question are well-known.

One of the more well-known ways that Europeans historically perceived other places is Orientalism. This concept encompasses a broad area from the Near-East (the Arabic and Islamic countries, etc.) to the Far-East (China, Japan, etc.); it has been suggested by anthropologists in various media: from academic writing, to fiction, to advertising. At its core, Orientalism is a way

of understanding how the Western world sees what it considers "the other". This chapter will look into how Orientalism and other concepts of "the other" shows up in *Star Trek*. I will use Edward Said (1979) and Helms (1988) in particular to discuss both the earliest and latest iteration of the Klingons, and to several authors in the field of Japan studies to discuss the Vulcans and Romulans. I will look at the Ferengi, who evoke both folklore and antisemitic tropes from closer to home than the East. I will discuss how *Star Trek's* Federation of Planets draws on some of the fascination with the Orient in its exploration of the "Final Frontier," and how this fascination manifests in the presentation of the various alien species. Finally, I will discuss the mediating position that *Star Trek* puts some of the part-human characters, similar to the Japanologist detailed by Moeran (1996).

Metaphorical Conceptions of Distance

As previously discussed, writers on other places (fictional or non-fictional) create a landscape internal to the work they are producing. This effect is accomplished through various rhetoric strategies. Iconicity and erasure can be used to invent an "essence" of a particular society, which functions as an exemplar within the genre's internal topography. In fiction especially, visual and textual tropes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony) are introduced to echo and evoke this iconic essence of a society, usually in opposition to another (the writer's home) society. Metonymic misrepresentation uses this essence to stand for broader parts of a society, and recursion recreates this essence on an ever-smaller scale within the society. All of these devices together can create either a cohesive-feeling fictional world, or heavily enforce existing stereotypes.

Carrier (1992) goes into further detail about how internalized stereotypes contribute to the kind of essentialism we see in Orientalism. He identifies **essentialism** as the process of

attributing a timeless and eternal "essence" to a place or society (Carrier 1992: 195). In ethnography, this feature shows up in the desire to portray an idealized version of societal life – not "what is it like to be *these* Nuer people?" but rather "what is it like to be A Nuer"? (Carrier 1992: 196). Objects or acts become portrayed as what they are *because* of their nature – in other words, a very similar concept to Gal and Irvine's iconicity. Exceptions to the essence are either ignored (erasure), or seen as "aberrations or distortions" to the true nature. Readers are thus led to believe that these absolute statements come from ethnographic evidence, rather than the conjecture of the researcher (Carrier 1992: 204).

Helms (1988: 49) also discusses how distance itself carries moral connotations. While she discusses the attitudes of various societies toward foreigners and distance, we will focus on her commentary on the European, as this viewpoint has the most influence on the modern American attitude. The European attitude towards distance/the world has deep roots, even as early as Ancient Greece (Helms 1988: 212). Mostly unknown lands like Africa were populated by various fantastical creatures that echo SF today: "…people with no heads or with feet like thongs, creatures with the bodies of men but living the life of beasts…" (Helms 1988: 235). Before the secularization of Europe, the understanding of foreigners was steeped in Christianity. In the Middle Ages, maps detailing the world – these more symbolic than literal – were based on descriptions of the Bible, and divided into four quadrants (based on Christ's cross) (Helms 1988: 212). The European understanding of distance came from trying to place the location of Biblical lands. East (i.e., the Middle-East, India, Asia) was an extreme place: mythical and filled with danger, but also containing treasures. It was also a land of extreme time: the home of the future, from where savage tribes would swarm into Europe at the end of the world, and the home of the past (perhaps the mythical Garden of Eden) (Helms 1988: 213-6).

Until the Americas became better-known to the Europeans, the far west remained mystical and vague – not as extremely dangerous as the East, but perhaps home to Utopian islands. Once Europeans began exploring the New World, and it became a true place in their internal topography, the west was also rooted in the past: a place from before Christianity, "not yet corrupt" – both wilderness and paradise (Helms 1988: 220-6). The people living both east and west were not exempt from the internal topography. People lacking Christian (or, more generally, the home) values were labeled as various kinds of inhuman: barbarians, wild men (Helms 1988: 50-1), demons (Helms 1988: 232). These people did not have to be far away to fall under this "foreigner"/other category – the important thing was that they were foreign to the moral or political rule of the home nation. Sometimes, access to resources from the foreign place was restricted to keep the feeling of distance, and maintain the powers of the home nation (Helms 1988: 50-2).

Distance itself served a symbolic role: the farther from home, the more abnormal the place was – but, simultaneously, the less of a threat the people generally were. The more distant the people were, the more they were regarded as separate from the human: thus, they were used as a simple contrast to the European way of life rather than a direct threat (Helms 1988, 227). Again, we see the concept of Strathern's inversion (1988) or Plath's creation of cultural opposition (1980) used to showcase the values of the home nation. **Barbarians** were close to home, and were thus a more potential threat to home morals. They were regarded as lesser humans, who could be tested for proper values – either they were redeemable, or they were dangerous and evil (Helms 1988: 228). In the times of classical antiquity (that is, Greece and Rome – again, an influence on later European thought), they were human (or close enough), but they represented all the negative and threatening aspects of humanity: "warlike and predatory,

ferocious and treacherous, unpredictable and cruel…" (Helms 1988: 226-7). In contrast with the barbarians are the **Wild Men**: unredeemable but not actually evil, simple and beastlike; yet with a wild cunning, natural knowledge, and physical prowess (Helms 1988: 51). Originally, these were mythical people that lived on the fringes of society (close to home like the barbarians). However, upon European exploration of the Americas, the New World and inhabitants were associated with similar tropes to the wild men – sometimes with admiration, as we see in the idea of the Noble Savage. The less friendly Americans, however, were potentially "agents of the devil" – evil, dangerous, awe-inspiring in their power, and definitely far away from being human. According to Helms, the symbolic understanding of others played a part in the uneven power dynamic between Europe and the colonized. Natives often saw Europeans as the "spiritual aspect of human experience" – that is, ancestors and spirits – while the Europeans saw the natives as subhuman "denizens of a supernatural world" who were less than human (Helms 1988: 232-6).

To return from the west to the east: as Europe became more secularized and explored more parts of the world, the Christian tropes remained, but became less tied with Biblical imagery. From this worldview, we see the appearance of Orientalism – a topic into which we will now delve further.

The Romanticized Orient

First, a brief explanation of what Orientalism is for our purposes. The Orient is part of the internal topography of academic and colonialist writing. European colonisation in the 18th and 19th centuries brought attention to countries that we would now consider the Middle-East. Orientalism, and the essentialism of the West (by the West), Occidentalism, are an example of the binary opposition mentioned in both Strathern (1988) and Plath (1980). Because of

academia's tendency to categorize, which was especially prevalent in the 19th century (Said 1979: 119), scholars would describe the Orient as standing for a specific set of ideas and images in the West. Via inversion, these ideas helped shape the West's conception of itself by contrast with an East, forming a set of ideas of the Occident (Said 1979: 1). Although this binary is not inherently harmful, colonization complicates the situation: because of the uneven power balance between colonizer and colonized, the Orient became a passive object to be discovered by explorers, academics, and travellers.

European explorers attributed to the Orient an unchanging, eternal essence (Said 1979, 208) with alluring, feminine characteristics (Said 1979: 219). Its men were regarded as steeped in tradition, irrational (Said 1979: 38), and easily swayed by the charismatic ways of the more romantic Europeans (at least, according to the British when discussing the French) (Said 1979: 211). Its women were regarded with fascination, seen as mysterious and sexualized, without the hang-ups of European society, yet of a "mindless coarseness" (Said 1979: 186).

These ideas were perpetuated in various writing: academic and travel writing, fiction and visual art. The media further ingrained these ideas, building on and cementing in the popular imagination what began solely in the academic field (Said 1979: 26). In addition to this idealized, eternal East, the West further romanticized the idea of exploration and mapping the unconquered world: exploring was a courageous and exciting act (Said 1979: 216) and being in the Orient built a white man's character (Said 1979: 193). Although the Middle-East is no longer colonized by Europe and academia is more aware of the harmful affects of putting human societies into categories, the ideas and images perpetuated during this time still exist today.

This idea of romanticized exploration of the uncharted world appears in *Star Trek*. The famous opening lines of both TOS and TNG, recited by the captains of each series respectively

and transitioning into triumphant orchestral music, state that the mission of the *Enterprise* is of exploration on the frontier of known space: to "explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations…" and to "boldly go" where no human has tread. In this way, the humans are the familiar, and the vast reaches of space become the other, to be explored by the brave travellers. Yet there are further, deeper connections to Orientalism in this attitude than the humans/space binary. In fact, there are many references to the human world in *Star Trek* being heavily Westernized, and even more specifically American. The downtime of many of the cast feature Western activities, such as the highly-American sport baseball in DS9. The "universal standard" language of the Federation is American English, as is referenced various times in the serial (Memory Alpha 2019). Many of the human characters hail from different American states, including Captain Kirk (Iowa), Commander Riker (Alaska), and Captain Archer (California). The headquarters of Starfleet are in San Francisco, and all ship designations feature the title "USS"; while this stands for "United Star/Space Ship," the acronym could easily be read as "United States Ship" – something which Roddenberry tried to argue against when pitching the initial idea of the show to producers, but which is still an easy assumption to make (Memory Alpha 2019).

Although apparently an organization of explorers, Starfleet uses terms of rank borrowed from the American navy: Starfleet is a world of cadets, lieutenants (pronounced the American English way), captains, and admirals. The American focus is symbolically emphasized in the montage at the beginning of ENT's intro, which shows a series of historical innovations that end with the eponymous *Enterprise* soaring offscreen to new adventures. Of the non-fictional historical exploratory equipment, many of the innovations featured are American (the Wright brothers' airplane, Amelia Earhart, the original space shuttle named *Enterprise*), and only one

(the Polynesian outrigger canoes) is non-Western. The images of exploring the "final frontier" in *Star Trek* come from a long history of Western (i.e., European) exploration and colonization. The next section will look at the explored: the Klingons in their various iterations, and their connections to the Middle-East in the minds of the Western viewers.

The Klingon Way

The Klingons are one of the more iconic races of *Star Trek*. Wearing armour-like uniforms, singing war songs, and speaking of a glorious past age, with an aggressive and over-the-top demeanor, these people make a distinctive society which shows up throughout all fifty years of the series. The Klingon language is well-developed, with a translation of Hamlet and a Klingon dictionary in publication. Out of the species I have focused on, the Klingons have also changed the most throughout the show: from the State-oriented, bronzed soldiers of the TOS era, to the ominous warriors covered in both natural and artificial armor of DIS, with four redesigns in total. Now that we have examined the visual tropes and metaphors that contribute to their portrayal in the previous chapter, we can look at what these tropes represent as they change throughout the show.

The Klingons appeared in TOS as an arch-enemy to the ambassadorial Federation. In the five episodes in which they appear, the Klingons are charismatic but manipulative. These are a species for whom "war is a way of life," having come from a military dictatorship (TOS 1.27 "Errand of Mercy," 7:45). They subjugate species, taking prisoners into "vast slave labour camps" (TOS 1.27, "Errand of Mercy," 8:43); and individuals take command of entire planets (TOS 2.16, "A Private Little War"). As one of the nemeses of the humans in the 1960s series, the Klingons are meant to echo the concerns of the 1960s Cold War (Memory Alpha 2019). As such, the Klingons resemble how the American creators viewed the Soviet Union and other communist

societies. The TOS Klingons have the appearance of vaguely Oriental soldiers – perhaps to echo communist China – stoically carrying out orders and displaying very little personality (with the exception of the captains). Their word choice backs up the idea of a military dictatorship. In "Errand of Mercy," the Klingon Captain Kor uses the term "State," emphasizes the importance of "order" and "control" among the people, and even threatens the others with brainwashing and of being "dissected" for experiments (TOS 1.27, 19:00). In "Day of the Dove," the human crew of the Enterprise succumbs to a psychically-influenced paranoia and worry that the Klingons will experiment on them (TOS 3.11, 26:02). Similarly, the Klingons are shown to have propaganda reflecting the Federation negatively: Science Officer Mara mentions nervously to her husband Kang that she has heard of the Federation's "death's camps" (TOS 3.11 "Day of the Dove," 9:20).

In addition to the political commentary in comparison with the USSR, the Klingons feature elements of both Wild Men and barbarians as early as TOS. As barbarians, they may be far away from the morals of the Federation, but they are still worthy and intelligent opponents – who are, in fact, redeemed by TNG as they ally with the Federation. Their word choices seem to indicate that they see war and conflict as a game – a metaphor we have already discussed which showcases the tactical side of warfare over the traumatic violence. Through their language use, it is clear that they focus on patience, balance, the thrill of the challenge, winning, and having worthy opponents.

In both "Day of the Dove" and "Errand of Mercy," the humans anticipate sneak attacks from the Klingons, implying that the species is known for such trickery. The Klingons do not look for an opportunity to fight if there is no need. For example, Captain Kang from "Day of the Dove" does not participate in the attacks against the *Enterprise* crew, and instead locks himself

with several of his crewmembers in the engineering section and threatens the entire ship. He has no desire to die in battle, but he has no qualms against destroying the ship in order to win. He encourages his restless crew to wait: "Patience, vigilance. They will make their mistake" (TOS 3.11 "Day of the Dove," 12:04). While he wants to win and shows the classic brutality that is characteristic of his society – "A Klingon would never have surrendered" (TOS 3.11, 6:50) – he also acknowledges when it is time to step down, saying that "…Only a fool fights in a burning house" (TOS 3.11, 49:29) once he learns of a mind-controlling alien threat affecting both his and Captain Kirk's crew. In "Errand of Mercy," the Klingon captain Kor says that "[war is] a game we Klingons play to win" (TOS 1.27, 30:16); yet he also says that "Obviously you do not know the difference between courage and foolhardiness" (TOS 1.27, 25:00) and – in a sad tone – "Always it is the brave ones who die" (TOS 1.27, 25:14). While they seem to lack respect for humans generally, both captains accept Kirk as a brave, worthy adversary in their games.

The Klingons are also associated with a primal nature and a wild cunning, similar to the Wild Men described in Helms (1988: 51). In TOS, the Klingons are associated with stalking-predators or hunters. Mara, in "Day of the Dove," uses such terms to explain why her species is expansionist: "We have always fought. We must. We are hunters, Captain, tracking and taking what we need…We must push outward if we are to survive" (TOS 3.11, 41:20). Kang is derisive toward the humans for choosing to negotiate instead of fight. When one of the human crew calls them "animals," he tosses the insult back to them: "Your captain crawls like one" (TOS 3.11, 6:33). Interestingly, Kang is using Fernandez's strategic use of metaphor: by implying that Captain Kirk is a lower, prey-form of animal in the domain of the animal kingdom, he is placing himself as a predator on the metaphorical axis. Kor, from "Errand of Mercy," sees the unworthy, submissive Organians as sheep, while telling a reluctant Captain Kirk that "…We are similar as a

species. Hunters, predators. Killers…" (TOS 1.27, 28:33). Kahless the Unforgettable, who in TNG onwards is known as the spiritual leader and messiah-figure of the Klingons, is portrayed in TOS as a tyrant, sneaky and focused on violence (TOS 3.22 "The Savage Curtain"). While he seems more opportunistic than strategic, eagerly suggesting violence rather than making elaborate plans (TOS 3.22, 38:10), he has the cunning wisdom of a Wild Man: setting traps (TOS 3.22, 32:02) and excelling at imitating other's voices (TOS 3.22, 44:30).

By TNG, the Klingons were redesigned to look more alien, and their behaviour shifted to the more well-known warrior race which they understood to be today. The term "State" is replaced entirely by "Empire," led by a council of elders instead of unknown military dictators. The metaphor of "war as game" via ruthless battle tactics is overshadowed by metaphors and tropes which glorify violence. Conflict becomes a glorious battle rather than a game, with the Klingon warrior striving above all else to make a name for themselves and to be appropriately courageous. In "Heart of Glory" (TNG 1.20) a small group of Klingon fugitives who violently take over the *Enterprise* idealize a time in their past when the empire was more focused on battle; they feel that the modern empire has become corrupted from the long peace with the Federation. Lieutenant Worf – the first Klingon in Starfleet, who works on the *Enterprise* in TNG – reminds them that they must not forget the terms "honour" and "duty" as equally important Klingon values (TNG 1.20 "Heart of Glory," 39:21).

For the Klingon in TNG onwards, survival is not as important as living an honourable life (and eventually dying like a warrior – in battle, rather than to illness). They often speak of death and killing, both honourable and dishonorable; and have many rituals to accompany these concepts. In "Heart of Glory," when one of the fugitives dies, Worf and the others enact a battle cry, howling at the sky to apparently warn the dead of a warrior's approach (TNG 1.20, 20:52).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, their body language and clothing are visual metaphors that reflects this idea.

Rather than the reserved and arrogant Klingons of TOS, these are an impatient, straightforward, and physical people. In official meetings hosted on the Klingon home planet, they shout and challenge each other, using their bodies to embody their decisions (standing, turning their backs on traitors, physically standing behind the people they support). In DS9 and VOY, the Klingons retain many of these traits, but their Glorious Empire seems rather more decayed and less glorious than before. I have already discussed how control (or lack thereof) is an indicator in the West for the amount of social status one has. In DS9 onwards, the Klingons show far less personal restraint, implying that they have fallen to the lower classes on the galactic hierarchy. Their commitment to the warrior lifestyle is less respected and more dismissed – "If I have to listen to another ballad about the honoured dead, I'll go stark-raving mad" (two humans in DS9 6.3 "Sons and Daughters," 2:27). Klingons posture and brawl rather than battle, get drunk on blood wine, and sing about the past. In "Blood Oath" (DS9 2.19), Kor is a drunken old man (complete with the forehead ridges of a post-TNG Klingon), desperately trying to reclaim the glory he had in his youth by going with his friends on a suicide revenge mission. One of these friends – Kang – remembers how "There was a time, when I was a young man, when the mere mention of the Klingon Empire made worlds tremble" (DS9 2.19, 14:52). Ezri Dax, a Federation member, succinctly summarizes this underlying criticism of the current state of their empire:

> "The Klingon Empire is dying. And I think it deserves to die…I see a society that is in deep denial about itself. We're talking about a warrior culture that prides itself on maintaining centuries-old traditions of honor and integrity, but in reality, it's willing to accept corruption at the highest levels." (DS9 7.22 "Tacking into the Wind," 26:39)

ENT, although set in an earlier time period than DS9, echoes this sentiment with the introduction of non-warrior Klingons who are frustrated with the "warrior caste": apparently, these warriors have "little use for social protocols" (ENT 4.15 "Affliction," 14:44), are uninterested in medical research (ENT 4.15 "Affliction," 21:30), and have corrupt leaders (ENT 4.16 "Divergence).

After TOS, the Klingon use some of the Orientalist tropes described in Said (1979). As I have already discussed, Western (in particular, French) fascination with the Orient tended to attribute the East with alluring feminine characteristics. Said describes how French author Flaubert travelled to Egypt, and how his encounters with a courtesan inspired similar characters in his novels (Said 1979: 186). Flaubert writes about these women (real and fictional) with both disgust and fascination with their apparently earthy qualities: the smells of bedbugs and sandalwood mixing together, "snoring" but "beautiful" as she sleeps next to the protagonist, not distinguishing between men in their sexual activities (in fact, "no more than a machine"), their haunting songs that (for the Westerner) are "without meaning and even without distinguishable words" (Said 1979: 187). This immediacy, this connection to the physical, Flaubert thinks, is missing for the Europeans in their sophisticated but empty culture. Westerners have "a variety of resources" and know many "tricks and dodges," but they lack "an intrinsic principle" (Said 1979: 187) – "the heart, the verve, the sap" (Said 1979: 188) – that the Orient has. As such, Flaubert sets up a dichotomy between the earthy but coarse Orient and the charming but ultimately empty Europe. Can we say that this character is applied to *Star Trek*? In fact, there are some similar references to the visceral nature of the Oriental female in the show, the most pointed being the Klingons.

While Klingon men are known for being boisterous and loud, the women especially seem to be influenced by Orientalist tropes. They are not exempt from the aggression exhibited by the males of their species: K'Ehleyr the half-Klingon expresses rueful concern at her wild, Klingon side, calling it a monster (TNG 2.20 "The Emissary," 15:35). Many Klingon women also display a visceral, silent sexuality that suggests an animal "earthiness" that is not unlike Flaubert's courtesans. During a romantic moment between K'Ehleyr and another Klingon, she shows passion by sensually (and silently) sniffing at his arms, face, and neck, while the two of them grip hands hard enough that her palm bleeds ("The Emissary," 26:10). In "Redemption II," B'Etor tries to seduce Worf by climbing onto him, also sniffing at his hand and face and hissing (TNG 5.1, 28:13). B'Elanna, another half-Klingon, has a similar experience to K'Ehleyr with her "monster" aggression. In "Blood Fever" (VOY 3.16), she is affected by a Vulcan crewmate's Pon Farr (the same loss of control that affects Spock in TOS 2.5, "Amok Time") when he accidentally engages in a mental link with her. While her Vulcan crewmate hides and tries to meditate the emotions away, B'Elanna begins to act aggressively and erratically. At one point, she bites her human co-worker, Tom Paris; as Paris says, "…she seemed to be enjoying it, in a – Klingon kind of way" (VOY 3.16 "Blood Fever," 15:15). As her condition worsens, she finally admits that she has feelings for Paris, and that the bite was part of her sexual frustration: "I've picked up your scent, Tom. I've tasted your blood" (VOY 3.16 "Blood Fever," 29:30). Like the smell of sandalwood and bedbugs ascribed to the courtesan by Flaubert, Klingons are also said to have an earthy (and generally unpleasant) smell. In "Trials and Tribble-ations," after a character mentions off-hand that Klingons are "foul-smelling barbarians" (DS9 5.6, 2:43) in earshot of Worf, humans Bashir and O'Brien try to support their co-worker:

"I rather like the way you smell."

"Yeah. Sort of an earthy, peaty aroma."

"With a touch of lilac."

(DS9 5.6 "Trials and Tribble-ations," 2:43)

In "Prophecy" the smell is described as "a kind of musky aroma" (VOY 7.14, 11:06), and in "Sleeping Dogs" it is regarded as unpleasant by both human Hoshi and Vulcan T'Pol (ENT 1.14, 9:45).

Despite the running joke throughout the series that Klingon women throw things at the men during courtship while the man "reads love poetry…he ducks a lot" (Worf in TNG 2.10 "The Dauphin," 12:18), the women are more scheming than their male counterparts. In addition to the hissing, raw sexuality, their aggression comes out in a softer, hissing, scheming way. The Duras sisters are constantly plotting to get their family into power, speaking in soft tones and not posturing or being outwardly aggressive in most situations, such as when one of them hisses in anger Worf in "Firstborn" (TNG 7.21, 36:05).[5] In "The House of Quark" (DS9 3.3), Grillka specifically arranges a marriage of convenience (by kidnapping the groom, the Ferengi Quark) to keep her brother-in-law from getting power over her household. When she threatens Quark for his unwanted advances, it is with a menacing smile and a laugh rather than aggressive posturing: "I'm very grateful for all you've done, Quark. That is why I'm going to let you take your hand off my thigh instead of shattering every bone in your body" (DS9 3.3 "The House of Quark," 31:55).

[5] It is of note that the sisters are not only schemers: they are portrayed as more aggressive in DS9, such as in "Past Prologue," when they knock over a security guard for trying to take their weapons away (DS9 1.3 "Past Prologue," 17:20). In the same episode, when Garak the tailor jokingly suggests that the Duras sisters take a look at the lingerie selection of his shop, B'Etor tells him to "Watch your tongue, Cardassian, or I'll rip it out and eat it!" (DS9 1.3, 23:54) Still, she chooses to hiss rather than growl. In addition, the posturing Klingon behaviour is still not as frequent as among many of the male characters.

In DIS, L'Rell's scheming and pretending to switch sides throughout the first season is a crucial plot point for the series. When we first meet her, she is a follower of a religious group attempting to unify the warring Klingon houses. After their first leader dies and their second is captured, she pretends to ally with the Klingon who took over in order to avoid being killed, as well as to continue to promote her cause. She explains that she comes from a family of spies (DIS 1.4 "The Butcher's Knife Cares Not for the Lamb's Cry," 12:00). She also organizes a complicated ruse to hide her order's new leader, Voq, amidst the humans, by implanting his mind into that of a human (DIS 1.11 "The Wolf Inside").

As a side note: on the side of the Federation, the final frontier does not have any absence of romance either, mimicking the Flauber-like experiences as they explore other worlds and races. Between the famous exploits of Captain Kirk of TOS, Commander Riker of TNG, and various other human characters, inter-species sexual activity seems to be common. In the scantily-clad green dancers of Orion, the "pleasure colony" of Risa, and the various inter-species romances, the implication is that space is, like the Orient, a place of wild and unique experiences.

On the production side, the Klingons were described throughout the years using specifically Oriental terms: in the script for their first appearance, the Klingons were called "Oriental, hard-faced," and the (originally all-Caucasian) actors wore bronzed makeup to give them a darker appearance. Kor, the Klingon from "Errand of Mercy," was specifically made-up to look like a mix of Genghis Kahn and an eastern European ("STAR TREK 1.9 & 1.10 VHS Intros," 5:50). In DIS, the Klingons are even more heavily inspired by the Middle-East: their religious ship is called the "Sarcophagus" or the "Ship of the Dead," their bodies are preserved in sarcophagi rather than discarded like in TNG; both of these practices echo ancient Egyptian burials. The ship's architecture is inspired by various ancient societies, many of which fall under

the category of the Orient: "…Islamic, Turkish, Sumerian, Byzantine, and Medieval architecture" ("Inside Star Trek: Discovery's striking Klingon redesign," 0:15). Although Klingon writing was not based on any particular language ("Development and Use of Klingon Language"), it seems to evoke the writing of several Eastern writing systems such as Tibetan, Hebrew, and Arabic.

The 21st century redesigns – both that of the 2009 film and DIS – leans more heavily on the "monster" aspect of their personalities, suggesting the more distant Wild Man that could even be associated with the demonic: extreme ridges covering their entire head, sharp teeth and nails, vicious eyes. Neville Page, designer of this new look, specifically sought to explain the forehead ridges as sensory organs, meant to suggest the heightened senses of an apex predator (Weaver 2018). Producer Aaron Harberts adds the importance that these Klingons "not be the thugs of the universe" (Weaver 2018). DIS, taking place just shortly before TOS in the canon's timeline, portrays the Klingons not as the near-other barbarians, but the distant Wild Man – inhuman, terrifying, with entirely different values than our own; closer to their primal nature than the humans are to theirs.

Other scholars have expanded on Said's ideas to look past the Middle-East, and to talk about the Far-East (Asia and similar parts of the world). While Said and Helms both discuss how the uneven power dynamics between the West and other parts of the world are crucial in creating the binary of colonizer vs. colonized, Minear (1980) argues that a similar mindset is present in less heavily-colonized societies, which have nevertheless had contact with the Western world. His exemplar is farther east, in Japan. While the Middle-East saw both military and academic presence, Japan was not heavily affected by Western colonization. Nevertheless, even without the power of colonialism to back them up, scholars applied some of the same binaries to Japan as

well (Minear 1980: 515). Minear wonders if the phenomenon of Orientalism is because of the objectifying nature of the academic gaze itself – an effect of describing any culture other than one's own (Minear 1980: 516). Western scholars have attributed an unchanging essence to the Far East, much like the Middle-East; this essence is often accompanied by the idea that the Japanese have lost a "golden past" in the process of modernization (Minear 1980: 507). Even though since the late 20th century, anthropology and sociological writing has become far more self-aware, popular media such as advertising and television has perpetuated this "Far-Eastern essence" to the Western world. These stereotypes will be the focus of the next section.

Romulans, Vulcans, and the Mystery of Japan

While Orientalism (as described in Said) attributes an earthy, mystical, feminine quality to the Middle-East, the stereotypes associated with the Far-East are rather different. Academics have also applied an unchanging "essence" to Asia. In the case of Japan, which did see obvious societal change, this essence is seen as part of an ideal, golden past, which has been lost to current modern degradation (Minear 1980: 509). As with the Middle-East, Westerners attributed feminine characteristics to the Japanese – but this femininity is of a hidden, clothed variety. The alluring qualities of these women lie in their air of mystery, coming from their draped clothing and inscrutable expressions (Moeran 1996: 85). Much like the land where they live – the famous Mt. Fuji hidden by mist and "vapoury light" (Moeran 1996: 86) – the Japanese apparently keep their emotions obscured. Yet, while they are inscrutable to all but the most learned of Westerners, past this layer of stoicism lie strong, pent up-emotions (Moeran 1996: 86). These irrational, volatile emotions help the Japanese achieve greater subtlety and sensitivity than the straightforward, clear-minded Westerners. The subtlety is echoed in the flowing, fluid script of their writing system (Moeran 1996: 89). Yet such strong emotions are likely to be dangerous and

even “explosive” when not contained (Minear 1980: 512). Perhaps, scholars may think, some of these dangers can be seen in Japan’s aggressive modernization; and in the success of their economic and business success, taking over the Western market with their technology and effective practices. Understanding the complexities of this emotional/stoic duality is not easy, especially because the Japanese are apparently not as clear as the Westerners; thus, it falls to certain individuals to function as interpreters. This task is usually the job of Western academics, who use the term “Japanologists” instead of the older term “Orientalists” (Raz and Raz 1996: 153). In interpreting the mystery of the Japanese, these scholars attempt to explain the “Japanese way”, yet also perpetuate the stereotypes mentioned above.

It is also worth noting that the West is not the only society creating academic stereotypes of other societies. The Japanese themselves also look back to their golden past, and they also perpetuate these East/West distinctions in their own version of Japanology. They also seek to capture an essence of their own people, although their view of this essence is of their superiority over the West (Moeran 1996: 95). In their case, looking back to the past and reclaiming nationalism accompanies (and hopes to encourage more) economic achievements rather than for sociological study as in the West (Moeran 1996: 95).

Similarly, the West does not only stereotype *others*. Anthropologists and other academics are prone to stereotyping the West in their academic writing as well. Untrained in studying one’s own culture, an anthropologist is more likely to make sweeping generalizations about their home society when comparing it to their culture of study. Carrier (1992) discusses this issue, using the famous comparison of commodity exchange vs. gift exchange between Western and other countries. Western societies are not fully reliant on objective commodity exchange, and in fact have types of exchange that are reliant on personal relationships: for example, credit with small

local businesses, or trade between friends and family (Carrier 1992: 200). Yet in academic writing, these subtleties can be lost in order to make a point – another example of erasure, as discussed by Gal and Irvine. As I have previously mentioned, this situation is not entirely the fault of academia, as one must make sacrifices in order to portray a society with any clarity, and to contribute to the internal topography. Yet these topographies become a problem when they are perceived by the public to be the entirety of a society, and make their way into popular media without the subtlety of analysis.

To return to the topic of media: the stereotypes which scholars apply to Japan and the Far-East are also prominent in the space-Orient of *Star Trek.* The Vulcans, in particular, share many of the same characteristics applied to Japan. The Vulcans are known for being stoic, inscrutable, and even cold in their outward behaviour. They follow ancient philosophies (a golden past) that are dictated by logical principles. They practice this philosophy through various ritual acts: lighting candles, ringing gongs, meditating, drinking tea, avoiding meat, and something that resembles martial arts. Much like the mysterious and clothed Japanese women, the Vulcans tend to wear flowing clothing that covers much of the body, especially on their home planet. Their writing (read vertically) is also flowing and curved. Their planet is hot and desert-like, but the heavy cloud cover and diffused light still evokes a hint of the misty aesthetic attributed to Japan.

The Vulcans' logic-centred outlook hides the fact that these people have volatile and violent emotions, which negatively impact themselves and others if they are let free. In their distant past, Vulcans were aggressive and warlike, as Kirk explains in "Amok Time" (TOS 2.5): "In the distant past, Vulcans killed to win their mates" (TOS 2.5, 24:50). In "Savage Curtain" (TOS 3.22), a simulated version of the founder of Vulcan logic speaks about this time as well:

"…We'd suffered devastating wars which nearly destroyed our planet…" (TOS 3.22, 33:58). The Pon Farr – the crazed state that adult Vulcans undergo every seven years, where they return to their planet to claim mates and fight – is another, very clear indication of these violent emotions that exist under the surface. In "Amok Time," (TOS 2.5) as Spock begins to succumb to the Pon Farr, he throws things, breaks a computer, and yells at his fellow crewmembers. Being out-of-control is even deadly for these people. Later in the episode, it is revealed that Spock will die from the emotional stress of the Pon Farr if not taken back to his planet (TOS 2.5 "Amok Time," 11:56). In the episode "Flashback" (VOY 3.2), Vulcan Tuvok narrowly avoids death via degraded neural pathways as his brain attempts to avoid a repressed memory (VOY 3.2, 13:48). In fact, the most embarrassing form of senility to the Vulcans is a loss of emotional control (TNG 3.23 "Sarek").

These dangerous emotions are accompanied by greater sensitivity and awareness. The most obvious of these is the Vulcans' psychic ability, able to read the thoughts of others through touch; and even link their souls to others over long distances. The Vulcans become, as described by Raz and Raz (1996), "the Asian eye that sees the truth" that the humans (or Westerners) cannot comprehend (Raz and Raz 1996: 160). The Vulcans are also stronger and faster than humans, and have better hearing. In ENT, Vulcan females specifically possess the ability (and curse) of a strong sense of smell (ENT 1.1-2 "Broken Bow," 16:11). In "The Andorian Incident," (ENT 1.7) a Vulcan monk comments to fellow Vulcan T'Pol that "the smell [on *Enterprise*] must be intolerable," specifically referring to the humans. She replies coldly that, "You get used to it. And I was given a nasal numbing agent" (ENT 1.7, 19:19). It seems to suggest that, to the detached, upper-class Vulcans, the humans are the "earthy" and physically-grounded beings.

There are a few differences between the Vulcans and the Japanese, of course. Moeran mentions that, alongside femininity, the Japanese are seen as childlike (Moeran 1996: 80), while the Vulcans are often seen as more mature than most of their crewmates. Missing also is the societal degradation and threatening technological innovation attributed to Japan, as well as the business success and lack of individuality which threatens the West. Instead, the Vulcans play more into the "golden past" of Japan: they are an older civilization than the humans, they have been at peace for centuries, and they function as mentors to the humans – whether this position is appreciated (in TOS and TNG) or seen as condescending (DS9, ENT).[6] The Vulcans are the "golden age" that Japan apparently lost in the rise of modernity: spiritual, artistic, sensitive but inscrutable. Yet the Vulcans also borrow elements from other societies, and are not solely based on Japanese stereotypes. For example, the focus on logic and order can also be tied to Classical Greek philosophy. Scholars have written about how geometry, and its concept of deduction from self-evident axioms, heavily influenced Ancient Greek (specifically Athenian) rhetoric (Lloyd 1996). Athenian society valued seeking out self-evident truths, and swaying an audience through impenetrable argumentation (Lloyd 1996: 306). These core ideas of philosophy and geometry are often tied to the development of modern science in the Western world. They are also often contrasted with the Chinese methods, which (roughly speaking) focused more on utilitarian proofs, as well as on persuading a single politician rather than an entire audience of people (Lloyd 1996: 307). Rather than psychology and utility, the Vulcans follow deduction-based logic and argumentation attributed to the Ancient Greeks. This tight control of reasoning shows, again, their control of themselves, which establishes them as upper-class individuals to a Western audience.

[6] *Star Trek* evokes these ideas in the Borg, as we have seen in chapter one.

Because the Vulcans are frequently compared to the Romulans, I mention them in this same section. Where the Vulcans borrow heavily from "golden age" Asian and Ancient Greek stereotypes, the Romulans borrow from Ancient Rome. Because they are similar to the Vulcans – possessing similar upswept eyebrows, dark sleek hair, green blood, and "upper class-like" stillness in their body language – they can be tied to some of the same Asian stereotypes as the Vulcans. They also have a stoic (inscrutable) appearance, and are aggressive like Vulcans used to be – "Our people are warriors. Often savage. But we are also many pleasant things" (TOS 3.4 "The Enterprise Incident," 30:47). In TOS, their names are rarely revealed, making the individuals relatively unknown and mysterious, in addition to being cold and treacherous. A connection that could be drawn is the comparison to "bad Asians" as described in Raz and Raz (1996). In the 1960s, positively-valued images of Japan's successful modernization were prevalent in American media (such as *National Geographic*), while images of Vietnam and Southeast Asia disappeared – Raz and Raz suggest this shift is because of the Vietnam War. They note that the positive portrayal of the Japanese at this time was partially motivated by the desire to have "an antidote to the bad Asians" (Raz and Raz 1996: 166). The Japanese are thus placed on a binary, the "civilized alien as opposed to the savage alien" (Raz and Raz 1996: 166). The Romulans and Vulcans, while compared to one another, are also placed on a binary: one peaceful and unemotional, the other violent and aggressive.

The comparison of the Romulans to both the humans and the Vulcans seems to put them, like the TOS Klingons, solidly in the "barbarians" category discussed in Helms: almost human, capable of redemption. The overlap between human and Romulan seems to suggest their underlying similarity: Federation members (including humans) undergo surgery to pretend to be Romulan in episodes like "The Enterprise Incident" (TOS 3.4), "Unification I" (TNG 5.7), and

"Face of the Enemy," (TNG 6.14). Romulans and Vulcans also disguise themselves as one another in "Data's Day" (TNG 4.11) and the two-parter "Gambit" (DS9 7.4-5). Finally, as I have already discussed, Kirk and the Romulan Commander spend much of "Balance of Terror" realizing that they think in the same way. This fluidity of form and behaviour is not a focus with any other of the four species, with the exception of the TOS Klingons – also barbarian-like people.[7] The comparison to the humans implies that they are more humanlike than the Vulcans, but (like all of the aliens mentioned so far) more extreme in their behaviour and values than the humans: paranoid and xenophobic, proud and stubborn, severe. Compared to the Vulcans, they are more materialist and warlike. Yet compared to the humans, the Romulans and Vulcans are both more stoic and rigidly ideological. Romulans are close enough to be almost humans; yet choosing their totalitarian empire suggests they are "evil" people – barbarians.

Interestingly, we see an example of Gal and Irvine's (1995) recursion when looking at the Romulans. Relatively late in the series – in fact, only in one film (*Star Trek: Nemesis*) and briefly in one episode (ENT 4.13 "United") – it is established that the Romulans have slaves which they use as foot soldiers and guards: the Reman species, fittingly. These people apparently evolved on a tidally-locked neighbour planet to Romulus. They are an extreme version of the Romulans: xenophobic and violent, ghoul-like in their appearance, sensitive to the light. The Remans, then, are to the Romulans as the Romulans are to the Vulcans – an implied recursion. This is not a neat binary, as the Remans have psychic abilities like the Vulcans; additionally, they are subjugated rather than having a more extreme empire than the Romulans – yet perhaps,

[7] There is also the example of a Klingon personality being imprinted onto a human body in DIS. Because this is an unusual procedure, not appearing in any other case at the time of writing, and because the person's two identities (human and Klingon) are constantly at war with each other, I argue that the implication is one of distance rather than similarity.

if they reappear in the serial after they have begun to find liberation in *Nemesis*, more comparisons can be drawn.

I have argued that the Vulcans and Romulans both draw on a combination of Asian and classical European tropes using Helms' understanding of near and far: in the case of the Vulcans, the unchanging golden past and the devotion to logic; in the case of the Romulans, the "near other" danger and the inscrutable but intense emotions. The next section will cover the last exemplar species, which has different origins that are not related as strongly to Orientalism: the Ferengi.

Ferengi as Humans and Fey

As discussed in chapter one, the Ferengi were created as a new arch-enemy for the Federation. To the idealistic humans of the future, these aliens are a distant other: too concerned with worthless gold to be a real threat, too small and conniving to be taken seriously. They serve as an unpleasant inversion to contrast with the Federation, which has the moral high ground. By DS9, these aliens are not an arch-enemy, and are shown to be fairly harmless: they purchased much of their space-faring technology, and are not the powerful enemies originally shown in TNG. In fact, they are mostly peaceful; they do not get involved in conflicts of other species. Episodes focused on the Ferengi have a more comedic tone and individual-focused subject matter: family dynamics, personal stories, farcical adventures. Their beliefs were further developed to be highly motivated (whether their goals are acquiring wealth or other kinds of personal achievement), including a religion which believes that one must navigate the "waters of fortune" successfully in order to achieve happiness and wealth (DS9 7.6 "Treachery, Faith, and the Great River"). Quark, a regularly recurring character from DS9, often provides a Ferengi

perspective on the Federation: criticizing them, trying to sneak past Starfleet law, and standing up for his people's beliefs.

From the beginning, the Ferengi are meant to evoke the idea of corrupt 20th century businessmen. Their name is based on the Persian and Arabic term *faranji* or "foreigner," which was used specifically to talk about Europeans (Memory Alpha 2019). Carrier (1992) talks about how Orientalism would not be possible without the cultural opposite of Occidentalism. In describing the Orient, scholars stereotype and essentialize the West as well as the East (Carrier 1992: 196). According to Occidental tropes, the West is characterized by heavy capitalization, and alienation of the individual from any kind of personal connection (family, friends, etc.) (Carrier 1992: 200). In creating the Ferengi, the writers drew on some of these same ideas: the Ferengi have family units, but they are ultimately motivated by wealth and personal success; it is a cultural value to sacrifice family for the sake of profit, whether or not such a sacrifice truly happens often.

Yet, when looking at the Ferengi, it is difficult not to also see the connection to a more specific trope – to Jewish stereotypes. These are sneaky, big-nosed, short, corrupt merchants of the galaxy who hoard wealth. The Ferengi are not the only fictional creature which seem to borrow from the same tropes as used in antisemitic imagery: these stereotypes appear in other types of fiction, SF and otherwise.[8] This is not a new phenomenon, either: in researching this chapter, I found that there are mythological creatures in European folklore that draw on these same tropes. Certain fairy creatures have been linked to Jewish stereotypes, such as the Knockers. In Cornish mythology, these are mining spirits who can bring both misfortune and

[8] Examples in speculative fiction which have been criticized for the same stereotypes include Watto from *Star Wars*, the goblin bankers from the film version of the *Harry Potter* series, and the Dwarves from Tolkien's *The Hobbit*.

wealth to those spending time underground, as they guard hidden treasure. Prior to mining entering the Americas, Cornish miners associated the Knockers specifically with old Jewish men (Manning 2005: 219).

Fey folk (rather like aliens), function as "cosmological others" (Manning 2005: 234) – similar to humans, but permanently distant. They occupy liminal spaces which lie near – but not quite within – human civilization, as in mines, swamps, and meadows (Manning 2005: 235). Fey also sometimes represent "occupational inversions" (Manning 2005: 239), each existing in a particular domain, interacting with particular occupations in 20th century Europe: e.g., mermaids with sailors, pixies with agriculture and domestic work. Knockers, themselves a liminal being between ghost and fairy, were a kind of "capitalist spirit," involved in both production and exchange (Manning 2005: 241). They were specifically associate with miners who worked for tribute rather than wages – that is, by wealth accrued in trading their finds (Manning 2005: 240). Antisemitic attitudes were influenced by the capitalist system in the Victorian age: they divided the capitalist system into production and exchange, and saw the latter as parasitic to the former (Manning 2005: 226). As Jewish people were specifically involved in the exchange portion, they were quickly associated with parasites at this time. Knockers also resembled Jewish stereotypes: short and "withered" looking beings, with "big ugly heads," squinted eyes, and "hook noses" (Manning 2005: 238-9). Although in the New World, the Knockers transformed into ghosts of miners rather than Jewish spirits or fey, these fairy stories did end up influencing both the genres of fantasy and SF in the Americas as well.

This observation is especially important for our purposes when we consider how the Ferengi are also associated with fey. In addition to also being short creatures with big ugly heads, beady eyes, and prominent noses, they live on a rainy, swampy planet: a place normally

associated with the fey. Throughout the show, other characters associate the Ferengi with either vermin, small creatures, or fey: they are called "trolls" (TNG 3.24 "Ménage à Troi," 4:40, and DS9 2.7 "Rules of Acquisition," 17:22), and their term for captain ("*Daimon*") is mispronounced as "Demon" (TNG 3.24 "Ménage à Troi," 14:00). Non-Ferengi of various species use the term "little Ferengi" (DS9 1.12 "Vortex," 29:07, DS9 2.7 "Rules of Acquisition," 28:44, DS9 2.8 "Necessary Evil," 27:20), or even variations of "little animal" (DS9 2.10 "Sanctuary," 5:21, DS9 2.19 "Blood Oath," 21:51, and DS9 3.3 "The House of Quark," 1:20). It is used as a derogatory term, but one can also draw a connection to the fey as being small creatures. Additionally, the Ferengi's diet of arthropods metonymically tie them to the idea of parasites as a whole. Like the association of Jewish people with exchange and therefore being parasites of production, the Ferengi are traders and therefore parasites of other societies. These associations suggest that the Ferengi have a dual connection to antisemitic stereotypes: as fey, and as capitalists.

To the Federation, the Ferengi function as a similar occupational inversion as the fey do to humans. As merchants, they function as mediators like the Federation. Their collective is called the Ferengi Alliance – a similar term to a "Federation". They are curious and exploratory, and adapt to their problems like the humans. As such, the Ferengi Alliance and the Federation function as external analogies of each other, perhaps evoking different aspects of human nature: one idealistic and noble, one cynical and opportunistic. There is also a broader connection between the Ferengi and 20th/21st century humans, some of which will be explored in chapter three.

The Ferengi are unique compared to the other species in that they are closer to the West in the concepts they draw from than the other societies. Yet despite their mediating tendencies, their extreme philosophes make them more alien than the adaptable humans. The next section

will look at the individuals in *Star Trek* that attempt to explain and interpret for the various alien societies in the work, which function somewhat like anthropologists in their own right.

Hybrids as Interpreters

How does one understand the violent tendencies of the Klingons, or the detached inscrutability of the Vulcans? Like the Orientalist and the Japanologist, there are individuals in *Star Trek* who function as intermediaries and interpreters of the other. Raz and Raz (1996) describe the interpreter as a "middle man" who explains the behaviour of the other by unlocking a secret Japanese "essence" (Raz and Raz 1996: 161), usually by playing up the importance of "national character" over personality in shaping behaviour (Raz and Raz 1996, 164). By their existence, these mediators must also emphasize the mysterious nature of the other, or else they would not need to exist at all (Raz and Raz 1996: 161). There are scholars in *Star Trek* that are trained in the study of other cultures (Michael Burnham in DIS is specifically trained in "Xeno-Anthropology"), but for this section I would like to turn to the characters that occupy an interpretive role in the narrative itself.

Among the mostly-human casts of the various series are individuals with alien heritage. These characters are either full-blooded alien or part-human, but they always occupy a liminal position between human and alien in some way. They are seen as apart from human society (either by blood or experience), but they either take on or exhibit human-like traits throughout the show. They mediate the alien experience in the same way that the Japanologists and Orientalists are meant to do, and they often highlight the "human essence" by comparison. Examples of this character type include Spock (half-Vulcan, half-human), T'Pol and Tuvok (Vulcans working with a mostly-human crew), Worf (a Klingon orphaned at a young age and raised by humans), and B'Elanna (half-Klingon, half-human). These people usually have (or

gain) a better understanding of humans than their fully-alien counterparts, a situation which is often a cause for stress and existential crisis for them. Worf, after spending years reclaiming his Klingon heritage, realizes that he does not feel at home with the warrior race; additionally, he has been shaped by working and living with humans for the majority of his life (DS9 4.15 "Sons of Mogh"). T'Pol, although originally a very reluctant member aboard the *Enterprise* crew, cultivates close relationships with many of the human members, adopting some of their ways, and even courting one of them.

At the same time, these characters are seen as apart from the humans. One way that this situation occurs is because the hybrids are always referred-to by their alien side, while the human side is downplayed. Spock is called a Vulcan, even though he could just as easily be considered a human. B'Elanna always struggles with her tempestuous Klingon side, and does not frequently mention her human side. These mediators bring up the "Klingon" and "Vulcan" way, thereby describing an essence that is unique to the national (or planetary) character of each species. It is also important to note that these people are always tied to humans (and not any other alien) in some way. Very rarely does one see a hybrid of two non-human species, and none of them are regular cast members. Even though the humans are meant to be one of many species in the Federation, they are frequently the background to the "essences" of these aliens. The audience is meant to identify with the human characters, as they mediate between the extreme personalities of the alien characters.

Concluding Thoughts on the Orient

Orientalism is a famous, often-used binary of East and West. It is enforced by uneven power dynamics and the writings of many European travellers, from times of extreme colonialism. Yet there are many other examples of an us/other binary in Western writing,

including the West and Japan. As we have discussed throughout this chapter, the human/alien binary is very similar to the West/East binary as described by various academics over the years. Space itself can be seen as the Orient, with its human explorers going out to conquer space and understand the mysterious and alluring ways of the aliens. In the human/Klingon binary, we see similarities to the Europe/Middle-East binary that Said described. In the human/Vulcan binary, the similarities are with the Far-East and the West's past. In the Romulans, the audience sees the dangerously-close barbarians who are almost human, but not quite. In the Ferengi, the audience sees a stereotyped version of themselves, yet distant to the Federation. The Federation, then, functions as both the 19th/20th century explorers described by Said, and the modern anthropologist, exploring new worlds and establishing the necessity of their mediation between various alien extremes (Moeran 1996). The hybrid characters function as mediators in the same way as scholars of the "other" (Orientalists, Japanologists, etc.); and they try to reveal the mysterious "essence" of the species they represent, while also keeping it obscure to imply the necessity of their existence (Raz and Raz 1996).

This chapter has been a showcase of the images and stereotypes of foreigners – already present in the Western world from a history of colonialism – from which *Star Trek's* creators draw in order to create alien societies. The next, and final, chapter will look at the humans themselves as part of the galactic landscape of the serial.

Chapter Three: Storytellers and the Future of Humanity

I hear rather more about the Tamarians in the stories of the ship's crew than from the diplomatic records I have been allowed to read by Starfleet. Although the Tamarians have rarely had dealings with the Federation (certainly, I never encountered a single Child of Tama myself), it is as if they have become part of the Federation's storytelling tradition. Perhaps – if I am to understand these mysterious people correctly – this is what they would have wanted.

- From the ethnography *The Final Frontier: A Year Aboard a Starfleet Vessel*. Ellen Burnham, 2431. San Francisco: Starfleet Academy Press.

The hall is dim, lit by the glow of torches. A stocky man stands in front of a throne; apparently, he is the ancient spiritual leader Kahless the Unforgettable, finally returned to the Klingons after centuries of absence. Amidst his group of followers, he speaks to the one skeptic in the room – Gowron, political leader of the Klingons, who has been vocal about his mistrust of the situation. Kahless tells a story about a man he knew once, who tried to fight a storm on top of the walls of a city, and who was ultimately killed by the heavy winds. "The wind does not respect a fool," he concludes. He does not have to explain who is the target of this story – it is evident in Gowron's expression.

This scene from TNG (6.23 "Rightful Heir") is an illustration of the power of oral storytelling, and it is one of many humanizing moments of the Klingons from TNG and DS9. It depicts a fictional society which uses these stories to make arguments, to heighten an emotional moment, and to teach one other what it means to be a member of their society. Is there significance behind the fact that these stories come from an alien race? Would such a scene be possible or as poignant if it came from members of the human species? We have spent the past two chapters analyzing famous aliens from the *Star Trek* serial, and using the concept of inversion to suggest what the creators might wish to convey to its audience about their own real-

world society. For this final chapter, I aim to look more closely at the humans as a society from *Star Trek*, in order to see how they function as an alien species in their own right.

My focus is on a couple of topics. First of all: the human elements of the alien species, through the lens of storytelling in the case of the Tamarians and Klingons, and through the dysfunctional elements of capitalism in the case of the Ferengi. Next, how the Federation humans are distanced from our real-world human traditions (such as oral storytelling). Thirdly, to look more closely at the alien opinions of the Federation, and what this says about the humans as a society. Using these guiding topics, I will discuss several major differences between the human Federation and the real-world humans who watched and created this serial, as well as what the aliens think of them. I will discuss the aspects that the *Star Trek* aliens share with real-world humans. Finally, I will suggest what *Star Trek* aims to say about our own human society by its presentation of the humans.

Please note that, for this chapter, I will be using the terms “Federation” and “humans” interchangeably. This is a conscious metonymic misrepresentation of the entire Federation of Planets, which also includes the Vulcans and other alien planets, as well as various human colony planets. However, I feel justified in taking this approach because *Star Trek* usually uses the same synecdoche: rarely do we see species like the Andorians speaking for the Federation as a whole, and the Federation characters are mostly human – moreover, they are mostly Starfleet personnel. As we have discussed previously, the choices in a fictional medium are much more deliberate than one would see in the real world, and so the creators likely also saw the humans as standing for the values of the Federation. I also show preference to the humans as representing the Federation over the Vulcans for a second reason: the Vulcans have an oral storytelling tradition as well, and are similarly spiritual to the Klingons. However, this tradition is not

purported as a Federation trait; rather, it is shown to be a personal or cultural choice. The Federation itself seems to be tolerant of other religions, but overall secular and materialistic, following in the Western tradition of modern positivism. As such, even when individual alien characters from the Federation follow a Federation point of view, I will consider this behaviour as these individuals echoing the representative human point of view. Finally, when discussing the Federation humans, I will be focusing specifically on the humans who originate from Earth, rather than those of other colonies. There are human colonies in the Federation, which all seem to have vastly differing societies and traditions. However, throughout the serial, these colonies are often treated as separate from the human characters: the majority of recurring human characters come from Earth, and Starfleet headquarters is on Earth, while the colonies tend to matter only on an episodic basis. As such, Earth functions as a "dominant" society among humans within the canon, and I will focus on it specifically.

I will begin my analysis at looking at two alien storytelling traditions, and comparing them to oral traditions that exist in the "real world." The first species is a familiar one: the Klingons. The second is the Tamarians, who have not been mentioned until now, but who nevertheless function as a powerful and useful example for my discussion.

Klingons as Storytellers

As discussed in chapter one, storytelling is a powerful use of extended metaphor which can be used to illustrate points in a way that could fall flat with a literal interpretation. We can recall Sapir's mention of folklore characters to see the power of these devices: these characters metonymically take the places of various social positions to show off correct or incorrect behaviour to their audience. Throughout *Star Trek,* however, it is often the aliens that use story,

while the humans seem distanced from it. Let us turn to some examples of the way storytelling is employed in this serial.

To start with, let us look at a couple of real-world storytelling traditions, in order to draw comparisons with our exemplar aliens. Basso (1996) writes about the Apache's use of storytelling: how they connect life lessons, fiction, history, and the power of the landscape all in their personal experience. "The land is always stalking people," Elder Annie Peaches tells him. Another, Benson Lewis, says that "Stories go to work on you like arrows. Stories make you live right. Stories make you replace yourself" (Basso 1996: 38). The rest of the chapter unpacks what these metaphors mean to the people who use them, and attempts to explain how story matters to the Apache. Among the Apache, stories come in several forms, but the ones that "work on you like arrows" are what Basso calls Historical Tales. These follow a particular formula, starting and ending with naming a place where the story occurred (Basso 1996: 51), and their protagonists often learn lessons of social propriety. These stories are framed as lessons on the correct way to behave; and even more profoundly, what it means to be an Apache (Basso 1996: 52). For the Apache, stories are useful in situations when it may not be appropriate to chastise someone directly, but when it is important to be mindful of one's behaviour. As elder Nick Thompson explains, "nobody says anything about you, only that story is all…" (Basso 1996: 59). A carefully-chosen story behaves like an arrow, and "shooting" someone asks the listener to suddenly be aware of their own behaviour. It calls on the listener to engage their empathy, encouraging them to relate to the protagonists of the story, as well as to the people around them who are telling it.

A key element of the Historical Tale is the place where it occurred. When someone sees a place, they recall the story again – and they remember the admonition they were given. This is a

two-way process, as well: simply the name of a place can evoke the idea of a story in someone's head. As such, it is possible to have a whole conversation with only references to place names – for example, as Basso's collaborators do to comfort and gently chastise their friend: "Yes. It happened at Whiteness Spreads Out Descending To Water, at this very place…Truly. It happened at Trail Extends Across A Red Ridge with Alder Trees, at this very place…Pleasantness and goodness will be forthcoming" (Basso 1996: 79). The place name itself is descriptive, referencing a time when ancestors stood in a particular spot and looked on the land; the name suggests the deep ties that people have to their world (Basso 1996: 91); in fact, sometimes people will recite these place names for the sheer enjoyment, mentally traversing the landscape with their words (Basso 1996: 45). This view is a wildly different understanding of the land than what we saw from many anthropologists at the time, Basso adds: most interest in the land is materialist – speaking in terms of subsistence patterns and migration – rather than on what the land means to the people (Basso 1996: 66). Using meaningful story, the landscape is transformed from a simple place: the name of a place, the story, the storyteller, and the place itself "stalks" (or reminds) the listeners how to live correctly throughout their lives.

Of course, this kind of storytelling is not limited to the Apache, but this brief mention is sufficient for the purposes of this chapter. The Apache-style "stalking with stories" also shows up in *Star Trek* with the Klingons. As previously discussed, after the TNG redesign, these people became warlike and noble allies to the Federation. The Klingons are known for their love of the thrill of battle, their striving for personal and familial honour above all else, and their complex rituals and many stories recounting events of the past. They look back to their glory days, and in particular to a time when all clans and classes were united under the Christ-like figure known as Kahless the Unforgettable. By TNG, this Kahless is no longer the devious voice-imitator from

"The Savage Curtain" (TOS 3.22); rather, he is a noble and boisterous warrior, depicted with white robes and long brown hair in the artwork of "Rightful Heir" (TNG 6.23).

The Klingons use oral storytelling to accompany many of their rituals, and clearly value their oral tradition. Like the Apache historical tales, these stories are portrayed as historical. Additionally, they are told in a particular serious tone of voice, and are meant to evoke a particular reaction from the listener. In "Rightful Heir," Kahless himself seems to appear (after many centuries of absence) to the Klingon people at a monastery. He is received with varying reactions of skepticism and faith: the clerics of the monastery believe that he is the true messiah returned, the politician Gowron thinks this is an elaborate trick, and human-raised Worf wants to believe despite his own doubts. Worf, who was visiting the monastery to rekindle his faith, initially tries to use materialist tests and Federation technology to prove whether Kahless is real, scanning him with a computer and facilitating a DNA test. Yet many of the other Klingons are uninterested in helping him with this process, or even in listening to the results. Instead, Kahless' knowledge of the oral stories told about him are taken as ultimate proof of his being real. He tells the people a story of how his sword was forged in order to prove his existence – apparently, a secret story known only to the high clerics (TNG 6.23 "Rightful Heir," 13:06). The very fact that Kahless knows this story is enough proof for many, and it shows the value that the Klingons place on their stories.

Early on in the episode, one of the clerics walks in on a frustrated Worf, who is packing up to leave the monastery, having not had any religious awakenings. Instead of directly telling Worf to be patient, that he cannot rush a spiritual experience – perhaps not feeling that it is his place – the cleric asks Worf to recount "the story of the promise" (TNG 6.23, 9:08). The story details Kahless' original departure from the Klingon people, telling them that he will return one

day. Fifteen centuries later, the people still wait for him, and "What are ten days in the life of one Klingon compared to that?" (TNG 6.23, 10:14). Having remembered and recounted the story out loud, Worf decides to stay; and Kahless himself appears not long after.

The clerics are not the only ones who use stalking with stories: Kahless uses story in the same way throughout the episode. When faced with the vocal and aggressive skeptic Gowron, Kahless tells a story about a man he witnessed centuries ago who tried to battle a storm. The man died in the storm – a point that Kahless uses to say that it is pointless to fight the change that his appearance will cause among Klingon society. While he does not outright state this point – drawing a metaphorical connection between both situations – the unspoken meaning is clear. "The wind does not respect a fool," he says, looking pointedly at Gowron (TNG 6.23, 28:58).

The Klingons use a storytelling tradition that appears in the real world in various societies. The stories told about Kahless and his miraculous acts are likely meant to evoke the idea of Biblical tales told about Christ, as is the imagery of white robes (although his are furs – we must not forget that he is a Klingon) and long hair. These images evoke an internal metaphor: us humans and our religion are similar to the alien Klingons and their religion. Yet the very fact that these stories are used by an alien species, and not humans, is making a second point: these are aliens, and therefore there is something distant about this storytelling tradition. We can see some of this distance in Worf's insistence on finding materialist proof for Kahless' return.

Similarly, in the episode "Barge of the Dead" (VOY 6.3), B'Elanna rages about having to embrace her Klingon heritage, thinking of it as over-the-top, overly spiritual, and not relevant to her experiences. "I inherited the forehead and the bad attitude – that's it," she tells her crewmates (VOY 6.3 "Barge of the Dead," 11:46). She prefers to play to her human side, which seems to be pragmatic and focused on the world of the senses. It is only after she goes into a coma and

experiences dreams of herself and her mother on the Barge of the Dead – a ship meant to take Klingons to the afterlife – that she worries that she has dismissed her tradition too early. As when Worf gravitates toward physical proof of Kahless' existence, the materialistic Federation perspective asserts itself in B'Elanna's behaviour: she does not even think to follow a spiritual tradition until she directly experiences it.

In the episode "You are Cordially Invited" (DS9 6.7), we see a similar emphasis by the Klingons on oral storytelling; in fact, part of the plotline is the clash between the ritualistic, story-focused Klingons and the materialist Federation. In this episode, Worf is getting married to co-worker Jadzia. Jadzia is neither a Klingon nor a human, but she plays the role of an outsider in a human-like way; she is also an irreverent and playful character compared to her strait-laced fiancée. Because family is very important to the Klingons, getting married involves several trials to assure that the person marrying into the Klingon family is worthy. Jadzia undergoes these tests, despite finding the rituals excessive, under the critical supervision of the head of the family, Sirella. One of the tests involves recounting the oral history of the noble family, tracing their lineage back to heroes of the past (DS9 6.7 "You are Cordially Invited," 20:40). Part of the way through, Jadzia strays from the story, adding that she has read up on the family, and learned some facts that differed from the normal saga – specifically, that Sirella's distant great-grandmother was not of noble birth. Sirella admonishes her from straying from the saga, insisting that the oral history is the true story of the family. She says she knows her written history, and she wants the truth, rather than whatever Jadzia has learned from alternate sources. Jadzia confidently states that "[your version] may be what's passed down from generation to generation, but it has no basis in fact" (DS9 6.7, 22:09), clearly implying that she sees the oral history as lesser than the written history. While she is not a human, here she plays the role of the

skeptical Federation (and more specifically, the humans) that Worf did in the episode "Rightful Heir" – providing a materialist and critical eye to an oral story tradition. Although Jadzia does relent, it is clear that she does so because she is motivated to complete the challenges so she can get on with the wedding. "But who cares about facts?" she adds. "The chronicle says that you have imperial blood in your veins, and that's exactly what we'll keep telling everyone" (DS9 6.7, 22:35). The Federation perspective echoes the materialist perspective of the Western world, and the storytelling traditions – while based clearly in real-world traditions – are displayed by aliens.

Thus, we can see examples of storytelling for the purposes of teaching in the Klingons in *Star Trek*, in the style of the Apache as described in Basso. The fact that these are put into the words of aliens is perhaps meant to be a uniting factor between the aliens and us viewers, but it seems distant when compared to the Federation humans. We will now turn to the structure of oral storytelling in another real-world society, and compare it to a fictional counterpart in *Star Trek.*

The Tamarian Puzzle

The episode "Darmok" (TNG 5.2) is a popular one in anthropological and linguistic circles. This prevalence is likely because it depicts a culture clash which is resolved through the use of storytelling and empathy, and because it features a unique use of language. While the Tamarians appear only once in the entire serial, their single episode is powerful; it also provides a useful background to discussing human/alien differences for this chapter. In "Darmok," the Federation crew is faced with a perplexing issue: an apparently-incomprehensible alien species known as the Tamarians, or Children of Tama. The words of these aliens are being translated through their universal translator, but their meaning is still obscure. As the two peoples attempt to communicate, the Tamarians seem to simply be listing names of places and people, often

accompanied by a descriptor: “Rai and Jiri at Lungha,” “Temba, his arms open,” “Shaka, when the walls fell” (TNG 5.2, 1:42). Eventually, the Tamarian Captain Dathon and human Captain Picard are teleported down to a hostile alien planet, forced to survive the elements and fight against a beast. After a couple of these fights, Captain Dathon is mortally wounded. The two of them rest around a campfire and tell each other stories of their ancient past. Through this multi-day process, Captain Picard realizes that the Tamarians speak through metaphor: by reference to their mythology, citing names of stories and situations in order to evoke ideas and similar situations in the mind of the hearer. In fact, the entire reason that the two of them are trapped on a planet is to reference a mythological situation: the story of “Darmok and Jalad at Tanagra” – where two people meet and become friends through adversity and challenge in a hostile environment. In turn, Picard retells a dying Dathon the story of Gilgamesh, reframing it to emphasize the friendship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu – as well as the loss Gilgamesh feels upon losing his friend. This powerful scene highlights the connection that two individuals from different societies have through storytelling.

While these aliens are obviously a caricaturized society, they still borrow traits that we see from oral storytelling societies around the globe. We have already discussed the Apache use of stalking with stories; now we will turn to a form of storytelling, with more rigid formulas as dictated by its medium, that better echoes the Tamarian thought process. Albert Lord (2000) writes about the traditions of oral storytelling and its performers, specifically focusing on the former Yugoslavia and surrounding areas. These folk performers – usually illiterate men from various working professions – sing in front of an audience, and accompany themselves on a traditional instrument. They tell stories about heroic figures and fantastical characters, of ancient history and exploits of the past. These singers do not write down or memorize their stories; and

are known for their rapid delivery, quick memorization of new stories, and improvisational mastery (Lord 2000: 17).

Lord investigates how they achieve these performances using primarily-oral devices. As children growing up in the same society, singers (and audience as well) grow up surrounded by traditional music and storytelling. As they learn to speak, they absorb the formulas inherent in their oral tradition. As with any first language, they are not formally taught; rather, they pick up on the formulas and what sounds right, training both their ears and their memory. The formulas are specific phrases, which are used and reused in various stories, altered and rearranged to fit the meter of the song – usually, a very specific ten-syllable meter. For example, the phrase "he said" can be sung simply, but can also be drawn out in order to fill up a line: "he spoke, he uttered a word" (Lord 2000: 34).

Formulas continue to exist because of the necessity of rapid delivery and easy memorization. As beginner singers, these young men listen to other performers in their area, picking up phrases from their mentors, and practice reciting the songs on their own (Lord 2000: 24). As they learn more songs and improve their delivery, they will begin to perform in front of audiences; the interests of the audience further shape the singer's personal style (Lord 2000: 25). They add their own flair as they improve at learning songs; what they cannot remember, they reconstruct using their own knowledge of the formulas. Once the singers have achieved mastery, they have learned the formulas and meter to the point that they can reproduce songs by just hearing them once, or create songs just by hearing stories. Formulas are easier to rearrange than entirely new sentences; moreover, they work together for greater efficiency or to heighten the narrative (Lord 2000: 54). Important formulaic phrases and ideas become more fixed in the singer's mind, because necessity ensures that these come up often. New words are added into the

formula as well, allowing for improvisation and innovation. Lord stresses that these formulas, although requiring some memory, are not as rigid as they may sound; in fact, they allow for flexibility and personal embellishment, once the performer has learned the craft (Lord 2000: 43).

Walter Ong (2002) also writes about the difference in memorization between oral and literate thinking. While he is not a fieldworker himself, Ong draws on the knowledge of Lord and other folklorists in formulating his theories. He makes the argument that the way we humans use memory in primarily oral and heavily literate societies is not only very different, but profoundly affects the way people think in these respective societies. He claims that orality, as it is based on sound, is an ephemeral and temporally-based medium, disappearing as soon as one has finished speaking (Ong 2002: 31). As such, memory in a society in which one can never write something down encourages a particular kind of mindset. To preserve ideas, one must "think memorable thoughts" (Ong 2002: 34) – that is, thoughts that fit within a pre-established framework or mnemonic device.

Ong outlines several characteristics that he thinks are prevalent in all oral societies, drawing on his readings of anthropologists, folklorists, and Western historians. He notes that oral societies use formulaic descriptions of people and places (such as "wily Odysseus," or '"the beautiful princess"). Because they are motivated to preserve their formulas, oral societies are focused on preserving tradition and maintaining the current status quo of society (Ong 2002: 39). Their performative delivery and stylized stories feature larger-than-life ("heavy" or "flat") characters based on specific cultural values or traits (Ong 2002: 149), rather than the more realistic characters of Western novels. Oral societies think in terms closer to the world of personal experience, rather than in "neutral" or the abstracted, detached language of Western society (Ong 2002: 42).

In contrast to oral societies, Ong depicts literate societies as efficiency-driven, highly abstract, innovative, neutral and unemotional in their delivery. The Western focus on writing, manuscript, and eventually print influenced much of the way its people think. Printed books – created on an assembly rather than individually – birthed the idea of exact replication of materials; by extension, this practice created replication in results and actions, which is the origin of the scientific method (Ong 2002: 126). The existence of print itself helped in developing the idea that the book-object is in a finished state, once printed. While manuscripts were still available to be edited ("in dialogue with the world outside their own borders"), books were not edited easily after being printed (Ong 2002: 13). This difference affected the types of stories told in books: they often stood on their own and were longer than oral stories (e.g., the novel), and these features created the focus on original ideas – intellectual property (Ong 2002, 129). The formulas of oral societies may be seen as clichés or redundant in a literate society, focused on innovation as it is.

A brief disclaimer: as he is not a fieldworker, Ong relies on interpreting the work of others. As such, some of his work takes on a caricatured quality of both oral and print societies, and he trends toward an evolutionary understanding of societies (depicting them as "evolving" from oral to print). As such, Ong should not be taken as a literal understanding of oral societies. He falls under the "iconicity" trap of ethnographic writing: assuming that oral practice is the *essence* of thought in oral societies, and using erasure to ignore elements of oral tradition still in our own society. Nevertheless, for our purposes, Ong can be useful: because he is a Westerner writing from a Western perspective, he brings forth the values and assumptions that Westerners may have about oral vs. print as cultural opposites.

For our purposes, Ong creates an interesting binary which can also be seen in the Federation and Tamarians. While the Tamarians do seem to have writing – Captain Picard finds Dathon's logbook containing a circuit-diagram-like script (TNG 5.2 "Darmok," 20:58) – their behaviour may suggest an oral society in a way that Ong outlines, albeit with the improvisational fluidity of the folk singers described in Lord.[9] Tamarians do seem to speak within a rigid set of formulas, in this case based solely on their history and mythology. Although this feature is not outright stated in the episode, it suggests that this society *does* rely on preserving tradition and evoking the past. The Tamarians associate themselves with the "heavy" characters of Darmok and Jalad; while we know very little about either of them, we know that Darmok was a great hunter (TNG 5.2, 20:53); and their existence within the formulas themselves suggests their "heavy" status. Here, these supposedly "flat" characters do not remain stylized and abstracted; their names are evoked to relate to Dathon and Picard's situation, suggesting that they are being molded to create personal connection to the stories, rather than staying elevated and distant.

We can further compare the folk singers to the Tamarians. Both the Tamarians and the Yugoslavs have some writing, but use an oral style to tell their stories. While the Tamarians do not sing, they speak in a way that evokes a performative style, using an agonistic tone that even Picard imitates while telling the story of Gilgamesh (TNG 5.2, 35:38). Like the folk singers, the Tamarians clearly have all been raised with the same mythology, and are thus able to merely reference a story for its meaning to come across. This ability implies that this is a fairly homogenized society, which is in contrast to the adaptable and multi-cultural Federation of Planets – a society which cannot rely on a common knowledge of stories, and must prioritize

[9] An interesting side topic would be to consider how the Tamarians could have become a space-faring society with very little writing. How does one develop engineering and mathematics with a highly story-based way of thinking? There are no details given at the time of writing, unfortunately; we will have to rely on speculation.

more literal communication. The Tamarian storytelling style is also similar to the Apache elders in Basso (1996), who have an exchange through referencing place names to remind each other of stories (Basso 1996: 89).

While Tamarian formulas are relatively fixed, they can be rearranged in sequence to illustrate something. For example, Dathon strings together the phrases "Uzani, his army with fist open" and "his army with fists closed" to suggest a method of luring in the beast for a surprise attack (TNG 5.2, 25:02). These formulas can also be strung together for effect to tell a narrative, such as when Dathon tells Picard of the myth of Darmok (TNG 5.2, 31:40). Like Lord's depiction of the traditional folk-singers, the Tamarians are shown to innovate and alter their words to prove a point. For example, after Picard returns to his ship and establishes a positive dialogue with Dathon's crew, the first officer not only offers an alternate phrasing of a previously-used formula (substituting "Temba, his arms open" with "Temba, at rest" to refuse the return of Dathon's logbook), but he also spontaneously invents a new phrase: "Picard and Dathon at El-Adrel" (TNG 5.2, 41:47) to imply that their story is now part of this people's history.

Here, we see two societies learning to understand one another through the use of oral storytelling: the Tamarians, who structure their lives around it; and the humans, who seem to have left their stories in the past (but have the capacity to remember them). We have shown that the Tamarians, although seeming alien, clearly borrow elements of oral storytelling found in the real world. Where does this ability leave the Federation's humans? The Federation – here and in the Klingon-focused episodes discussed previously – seems to be the cultural opposite of these storytelling societies, filling the extreme role of Ong's print-society.

The Federation members try to understand the Tamarians from the perspective of an "efficient and abstract" literate society, just as they seek physical proof for Kahless' existence, and prioritize written history. Yet in *Star Trek*, they often have to realize that there are other ways to think than their own (Western) perspective, that communication can only happen once they see beyond their own biases, and that often materialist proof is not the point. The Kahless who appears to Worf is eventually proven to be a cloned version of the original Kahless, but Worf argues that this proof is not going to change anything for his people: the true power to change society will come from the belief of the people in Kahless, and this belief will help the Klingons rise above their corrupt society to reclaim their glory days (TNG 6.23 "Rightful Heir," 38:30). Jadzia realizes that her flippant attitude is distancing her husband-to-be, the two of them establish a balance between Klingon and Federation values, and they hold the Klingon marriage ceremony on their space station. Finally, Picard learns to speak like the Tamarians in order to establish a connection with the people who were so alien to him before – although the fact that he is a philosophical individual (and an archaeologist by training, fascinated by ancient history) certainly helps his task. All these instances of humans accommodating to aliens seems to suggest that, again, the humans (and the Federation) function in a mediating role, able to learn to behave like the other species in order to get along. What else can we learn from these humans? The next section will look directly at alien opinions of the Federation.

Human Exceptionalism

I have discussed what the human/alien interactions throughout *Star Trek* tell us about the aliens through various kinds of metaphor, as well as about the humans indirectly, through the process of inversion. In focusing on the humans now, we can look the opposite way: what the

aliens' comments say about humans directly. This will be the topic for the second half of this chapter.

Although many of the *Star Trek* aliens have neutral to negative opinions of the humans, there is evidence throughout the show that the humans are actually a rather exceptional species. Time and again, we see the humans triumph in dangerous situations which have killed other species: fighting the extremely powerful Borg where many others have become assimilated, outwitting alien traps in deep space, negotiating terms between sworn enemies. This success is usually accomplished through resolve, ingenuity, and creative problem-solving rather than through a show of extreme ability. There is, of course, a practical reason that the humans overcome so many challenges: this is a serialized television show. Without adversity, there would be no story. Practicality (including the time it takes to apply makeup to actors) also limits the aliens to key individuals, so most of the serial's characters must be human. Finally, the need to maintain the same cast – as is required in a television serial – means that the recurring characters must survive against their challenges more often than not.

At the same time, the fact that this exceptionalism is acknowledged within the serial implies that it is not *only* for practical reasons. Many of the more powerful foes which the Federation faces seem fascinated by the human ability to overcome challenges. The Romulans are stated in TNG to have "a fascination with humans" (TNG 1.25 "The Neutral Zone," 17:20). In the very first pilot of TOS (0.1 "The Cage"), the big-headed Talosians capture Captain Pike in order to study his species. Their conclusions are that the humans "show a unique hatred of captivity" (TOS 0.1 "The Cage," 56:29), and – although they are "violent and dangerous" (TOS 0.1, 56:48) – they are the most adaptable race they have seen: "No other specimen has shown your adaptability" (TOS 0.1, 57:21). This adaptability puts the humans in a unique position to

help the Talosians save their species: “you were our last hope,” they tell Captain Pike (TOS 0.1, 57:30).

This attitude is echoed throughout many episodes in *Star Trek*: in TNG’s pilot (TNG 1.1-2 “Encounter at Farpoint”), Picard is put on trial as a representative of humanity by the powerful and god-like alien Q, who runs him through a gauntlet of negative human history in order to prove why humans are worthy – which they do by saving an alien lifeform. In a later episode, after Q once again tests them, he finally admits that he is interested in humans because of their ability to adapt – that they may even surpass his own god-like species someday (TNG 1.10 “Hide and Q,” 26:00). In DS9, human captain Sisko is given the role of spiritual Emissary by another god-like species of aliens, the Prophets, who went so far as to arrange his birth so that he could fulfill this role of religious leader (DS9 6.26 “Tears of the Prophets”).

The humans are also unique for their speed of technological innovation: although they entered the galactic stage later than most of the other alien species, they canonically reached space quickly, compared to the other species. Ferengi Nog comments on this fact after reading a history book about Earth: “It took us twice as long to establish the Ferengi Alliance, and we had to buy warp technology…” (DS9 4.8 “Little Green Men,” 10:20). Similarly, the Vulcans’ general demeanour throughout ENT suggests that they consider the humans as moving too quickly. This attitude extends to other series as well: in “Flashback,” Tuvok states that “The human fascination with ‘fun’ has led to many tragedies in your short but violent history” (VOY 3.2 “Flashback,” 31:02). If we are to follow *Star Trek’s* timeline, we would have created genetic superhumans in the 1990s and developed faster-than-light (warp) travel by 2036 (Memory Alpha 2019) – indeed, quite a lot faster than our current rate.

It seems clear, then, that the humans are exceptional in the canon. Yet while their adaptability seems to have unlimited potential, they are still the subject of criticism by all of the aliens in the serial. The next section will detail some of the commentary directed at the humans by their fellow galaxy-faring species.

Alien Commentary

In looking at our analysis of the alien commentary of humans, two trends become evident: negative opinions, and the fact that many aliens seem to come to understand/agree with the humans after spending enough time with them. Let us look one at a time at these societies.

As mentioned previously, the severe and tactically-minded Romulans have a fascination with humans. At the same time, they posses a hatred of the political body the humans represent – the Federation. Vulcans and Romulans "share a common physiology" but also "a mutual distrust of one another" (Kira and Odo in DS9 7.1 "Image in the Sand," 34:26). They consider the Klingons – Federation allies – as no better than animals. In "Tears of the Prophets" (DS9 6.26), one Romulan senator tries to provoke a Klingon politician by dryly commenting to the others in the room: "Notice the primitive rage in his eye. The uncontrolled brutality. Klingons can be quite entertaining, can't they? Every Romulan zoo should have a pair" (DS9 6.26 "Tears of the Prophets," 11:05). This hatred contributes to an overall negative opinion regarding humans as well. Like the Klingons from TOS, their empire spreads propaganda about Starfleet's weakness: "Contrary to the propaganda that your superiors would have us believe, Starfleet is neither weak nor foolish," (Romulan to the *Tal Shiar* in TNG 6.14 "Face of the Enemy," 25:52). Whether from this propaganda or personal experience, they consider the Federation an organization with a limited perspective on the future, perhaps because of its materialist approach: "The Federation credo – Exploitation!…Strip it down. 'What secrets might it reveal that we can use?' You're a

short-sighted people" (TNG 3.10 "The Defector," 12:06). Yet this statement seems to mirror some of their own behaviour, as in the same episode we get the following threat from Romulan captain Tomalak: "After we dissect your Enterprise for every precious bit of information, I intend to display its broken hull in the centre of the Romulan capital as a symbol of our victory. It will inspire our armies for generations to come, and serve as a warning to any other traitor who would create ripples of disloyalty" (TNG 3.10 "The Defector," 40:33).

Some Romulans respect the individual actions of humans, perhaps seeing them as rising above the morals of Starfleet or the Federation as a whole. In the series finale of TNG, Tomalak appears again to face off with Picard. When Picard suggests that their ships meet across the Neutral Zone , he responds by asking, "Has Starfleet Command approved this arrangement?" When Picard says it was not, he responds enthusiastically with: "I like it already!" (TNG 7.25-6 "All Good Things…" 52:38).

Yet despite the arrogant and cold attitude that they possess toward the humans and allies, the serial hints at eventual peace between the Federation and the Romulan Empire. As mentioned in chapter one, in "The Chase," (TNG 6.20) the humans and Romulans (alongside the Klingons and Cardassians) discover that their individual species all came from an ancient, star-faring progenitor species – a common ancestor. While the Klingon and Cardassian captains leave in frustration, the Romulan captain speaks to Picard with a note of hope: "It would seem that we are not completely dissimilar after all. In our hopes, and in our fears…Well, then. Perhaps, one day" (TNG 6.20 "The Chase," 43:16). Even while the Romulans insult the Klingons in DS9, and go as far as coming to blows (DS9 3.17 "Visionary," 17:32), the humans play a mediating role again, and ensure that even these blood enemies put aside their differences for the time being. The new *Star Trek* mini-series – *Star Trek: Picard* – is currently in development at the time of writing, but

so far its creators have revealed that the Romulan Empire is dissolved (Memory Alpha 2019), and the trailer seems to feature Romulans working with Picard – suggesting that the Romulans do, indeed, ally with the Federation (or at least are not actively at war) by this latest series. The lack of severe V-shaped brow in the Romulan who appears in the trailer – once again, these people could be mistaken for the Vulcans – could be a visual metaphor that suggests that the Romulans are not going to be portrayed as harshly in this new series.

The Vulcans, who are the enlightened and inscrutable version of the passionate Romulans, see a different side of the humans than the Romulans; and their opinion is markedly different. To the Vulcans, the humans are the passionate, independent, and animated people. They seem to relate to the humans' turbulent history, having also had a violent past to overcome. The humans' commitment to individuality (a well-known American value) is emphasized in ENT as different from the Vulcans. In "Breaking the Ice" (ENT 1.8), Tucker tries to convince T'Pol that she does not have to follow through with her arranged marriage by appealing to her experiences on the ship: "You've got an obligation to yourself. You've spent the last year around humans. If there's one thing you should've learned, is that we're free to make our own decisions. There's a lot to be said for personal choice" (33:25). While T'Pol argues that tradition matters more to her people, she eventually does not get married. Later in the same episode, she tries to convince Captain Archer that he should put aside his stubbornness and accept a Vulcan's help, by appealing to human adaptability.

> "Vanik expects you to refuse, Captain. He sees humans as arrogant, prideful. Why not prove him wrong? You can save them, or you can let your pride stand in the way. You're human. You're free to choose." (ENT 1.8 "Breaking the Ice," 40:48)

The Vulcans think that the humans' rapid progress requires supervision; and attempt to control their emotions by providing guidance, to the point where the humans become frustrated: "Your superiors don't think we can flush a toilet without one of you to assist us" (Archer in ENT 1.1-2 "Broken Bow," 16:39). In addition to apparently thinking them arrogant and prideful, the Vulcans consider the humans unpredictable and confusing. In "Shadows of P'Jem" (ENT 1.15), T'Pol is told she is an exception for staying aboard a human ship for as long as she did – others of her species on other ships lasted only a few weeks. "They found their crewmates too chaotic and unpredictable" (ENT 1.15 "Shadows of P'Jem," 10:16). Like the binary of Tamarians/Federation, the Vulcans are portrayed as rigid and traditionalist, while the humans are flexible and chaotic.

Yet once the Vulcans learn the ways of the humans, they begin to understand their emotional crewmates, and are able to form connections (Spock and Captain Kirk, Tuvok and Janeway, and T'Pol and Archer all form close bonds with one another). T'Pol laments this situation, claiming that "It's clear that living among humans has caused my reasoning to become compromised," but Archer suggests that the humans are having an affect on her: "You're running away [to another ship] because you're afraid to become one of us" ("Shadows of P'Jem," 20:24). T'Pol's eventual romantic partnership with a human indicates that she adjusts to this process.

Despite sharing a similar oral storytelling tradition, the Klingons tend to regard the humans (and more broadly, the Federation) as quite different from them. They complain about the Federation being too passive, and focused on pleasant words rather than actions. In "Broken Link," (DS9 4.26) Gowron chooses to declare war on the Federation in the midst of impending war against another foe. In a speech, he criticizes the stalling tactics of the Federation's words:

"The Klingon Empire is tired of words, of negotiation, of the endless delaying tactics of the Federation" (DS9 4.26 "Broken Link," 42:58). The Klingons see human residences as "luxury-minded" (TOS 2.13 "The Trouble with Tribbles" 14:03) and too "Soft. Comfortable…No one would suspect a warrior lives here" ("Sons of Mogh" TNG 4.15, 5:20). While Klingons who interact with humans do stoop to some level of politeness, among each other they are still warriors: "He is a Klingon warrior. He doesn't have the same moral code as a Starfleet officer. He is one of us: a killer, a predator among sheep" (DS9 4.18 "Rules of Engagement," 13:14). They find human politeness aggravating and fake – something that casts an interesting light on the TOS behaviour of Klingons in comparison with that of the later series.

Yet, like the Vulcans, those Klingons that spend enough time among the humans begin to adjust to their ways. Worf, a Klingon among humans, has difficulty reconciling his experiences with the humans alongside his Klingon nature. Although, in TNG, he resolutely states that he is a warrior and that he follows the Klingon code, by DS9 he seems to be struggling more among his people. The Klingons with whom he interacts are disillusioned, focused more on alcohol, fighting, and partying than the rigid code of conduct he chooses to follow. In "Sons of Mogh" (DS9 4.15), Worf has to confront the reality that he may not fully fit in as a Klingon either. When his (Klingon-raised) brother appears and asks him to assist in committing ritual suicide in response to being dishonoured, Worf is suddenly conflicted. Although Klingons see death by choice as honourable, Worf realizes he is hesitant to kill his brother. Later, he realizes that he does not possess the warrior's instinct. When another Klingon attacks him and Kurn, Worf is taken off guard and cannot react as quickly as he wanted. Later, he expresses frustration at not seeing the killing instinct in the other's eyes, while his brother did from three metres away. To Jadzia's skepticism that "…I don't think you can tell someone's going to kill you by looking at

them," Worf replies simply that "A Klingon can. It is an instinct. The ability to look someone in the eyes and see the decision to kill. An instinct I no longer have." He further admits to having Federation opinions on some Klingon rituals – assisting his brother in ritual suicide feels like murder to him (DS9 4.15 "Sons of Mogh," 35:19). Kurn also calls him out for acting too human while they are in conflict: "You 'regret'? What's next, Worf? Do you want to apologize to me? Express your sympathy? How many human weaknesses will you display?" (DS9 4.15, 5:20). Kurn realizes that Worf is not the only one affected by the Federation's values: "For a moment, in your quarters, during the ritual, you were Klingon. But your Federation life has claimed you again, and now it is claiming me as well" (DS9 4.15, 19:27). In the end, Worf works with the Federation to erase his brother's memory – essentially ending his life as Kurn while not killing him. Although he understands his brother's need to end his own dishonour, Worf ultimately chooses Federation values in choosing to save Kurn's life over his honour.

Finally: the Ferengi, who share a connection with Western stereotypes, have unique opinions on humans. These aliens are not part of the Federation, instead playing a neutral role with most of the societies mentioned before. In their first appearance as rivals in "The Last Outpost," (TNG 1.5) the Ferengi seem bewildered by the humans, calling them ugly (TNG 1.5 "The Last Outpost," 22:30); and acting unsettled by their egalitarian cultural practices: "You work with your females. You arm them and force them to wear clothing. Sickening" (TNG 1.5, 32:00). To another alien, they make the case that the humans "…are demented. Their values are insane. You would not believe the business opportunities they have destroyed" (TNG 1.5, 38:04).

Even after relations have warmed between the two species, the Ferengi are generally wary of the highly moral Federation. Quark, in particular, frequently criticizes the Federation's

attitude. In "The Way of the Warrior," (DS9 4.1), he and Cardassian Garak are both disgusted by root beer: "…It's so bubbly and cloying and happy." "Just like the Federation." Quark then adds bitterly, "But you know what the worst part is? If you drink enough of it, you begin to like it…Just like the Federation" (DS9 4.1 "The Way of the Warrior," 1:11:52). Quark also considers the Federation and Starfleet in particular as a primarily human enterprise. When his nephew Nog leaves the station to become a Starfleet officer, he complains about the decision to his brother: "[Nog] is a disgrace to this family and to Ferengi everywhere. He should be here, helping us earn profit, not in his room learning how to be more like a human" (DS9 3.23 "Family Business," 1:38). When his brother protests that "He doesn't want to be human, brother; he wants to join Starfleet" Quark quickly dismisses it as "the same thing." Part of his frustration may be the fact that the Federation often stands in the way of his various business ventures; but Quark is also well aware that his people are looked down upon in the Federation, and he uses it as a sticking point in multiple arguments. In "The Jem'Hadar" (DS9 2.26), he uses this knowledge to guilt Commander Sisko into taking him along on an away-mission (DS9 2.26 "The Jem'Hadar," 7:26). Later in the episode, he accuses the Federation of being hypocritical: "You talk about tolerance and understanding, but you only practice it towards people who remind you of yourselves. Because you disapprove of Ferengi values, you scorn us, distrust us, insult us every chance you get" (DS9 2.26, 13:56).

Yet Quark's complaints bring us back to the earlier idea that the Federation is more distant from modern Westerners than some of the aliens. In and out of canon, the Ferengi are compared to people of our time. Producer Ira Behr states this view clearly in an interview with *Titan Magazines* that he sees the Ferengi as human: "To me, the Ferengi are 20th Century Human beings. That's what they are. And to me that means they are deeply flawed, but deeply

energised and energising characters" (Memory Alpha 2019). Actor Armin Shimerman, who played a Ferengi from "The Last Outpost" (TNG 1.5) as well as Quark, also holds this view. He sees the Ferengi as a direct critique of the Western capitalist lifestyle: "By pointing out humanity's shortcomings, its nastier sides, and greedier sides, we will learn to see how ugly that is and perhaps how to eschew it in our lives" (Memory Alpha 2019). He sees the dysfunctional relationship between Quark and his brother Rom as an analogy for human family dynamics: "Yes they're Ferengi, but they're also a model for Human brothers" (Memory Alpha 2019).

These attitudes are reflected in the show itself. Quark states that "The way I see it, humans used to be a lot like the Ferengi: greedy, acquisitive, interested only in profit. We're a constant reminder of a part of your past you'd like to forget" (DS9 2.26 "The Jem'Hadar," 30:25). He goes on to add that humans had a far darker past than the Ferengi: citing slavery, concentration camps, and wars as something that his own people never did (DS9 2.26, 30:30). In "Little Green Men" (DS9 4.8) – a tribute to classic SF films – Quark, Rom, and Nog travel back in time to 1940s Earth and are interrogated at Roswell. The army personnel comment on the Ferengis' familiar manner, saying that "…the more we talk, the more you remind me of my brother-in-law" (DS9 4.8 "Little Green Men," 27:59). Quark notices the similarities as well, claiming he can understand the 20th century humans far better than those of his time. "…These humans, they're nothing like the ones from the Federation. They're crude, gullible, and greedy… [like me]…These are humans I can understand and *manipulate*" (DS9 4.8, 32:28). After they escape back to their own time, Quark instructs his nephew to be careful when he goes to Starfleet: "Just remember, under that placid Federation veneer, humans are still a bunch of violent savages" (DS9 4.8, 43:12).

All four of these alien attitudes can help us develop a picture of the humans as a species in *Star Trek.* These humans have "advanced beyond" their past, leaving behind (intra-species) war, material desires, and inequality by the 24th century (Memory Alpha 2019). Even Starfleet, although its personnel are trained like the military, is described as a program for explorers, emphasizing their focus on peace and negotiation. Comparison to the Vulcans, Romulans, and Klingons seems to suggest that the humans follow their emotions and gut instincts, but that they are gentler than the latter two species. While they are cooperative, they are focused on independence and personal choice. Yet compared to the Ferengi, their values trend more toward universal ethics rather than material gain. Although many Federation values are questioned as the serial grows darker (in DS9 especially), there is still an overall optimism about us as a species.

From this analysis, one can get an image of the humans as its own alien species within the world of *Star Trek*, with a complex role to the play in the politics of the galaxy. Yet it matters that these people are meant to be us – our species, our societies. The next section will look at why the humans in *Star Trek* matter as metaphors for the viewers.

The Federation and Western Hopes

From these examples, I suggest that the humans of *Star Trek* are, in some ways, more distant from its audience than some of the aliens. The Federation humans have, for the most part, distanced themselves from an oral tradition; and storytelling instead appears in an alien form with species like the Klingons and Tamarians. The humans have also distanced themselves from their capitalist past, and look down upon the Ferengi as a reminder of what they have left behind. The purpose of this next section will be to apply some of the anthropological ideas we have already discussed, and make a few arguments about what the Federation humans represent to their real-world audience.

We have already seen how *Star Trek* uses iconicity and inversion to show its audience cultural opposites, in order to isolate traits that it considers human nature. Through inversion with the other alien species, we can reasonably say that the humans in the 24th century are a gentle and emotional people who use their powers of mediation and negotiation to avoid conflict, and who are motivated by curiosity for its own sake. They are resilient and fluid thinkers, having "moved past" their violent history; and are skilled at adapting to new challenges. They use gut instinct as well as a moral compass to make decisions. Many humans hold their morals above most else, although they are often protective of a few individuals like their family or friends. They are also highly individualistic, and less motivated by family/ancestral line; but they are more concerned with a general sense of achievement than material wealth. To focus specifically on the organizations of the Federation and Starfleet: both are presented as highly moral (although there are parts of it that do not follow this as closely, like the spy network Section 31 which features in DS9 and DIS), who prefer talking before action. Being in a mediating position means they are more likely to have moderate and less extreme views than those of their alien allies – because of this attitude, they are more likely to find common ground among one another. Other aliens may be annoyed with the society, but they tend to take on traits of the Federation if they spend enough time with the humans.

In chapter one, we discussed how fictional beings are conglomerates of various social traits. These humans, then, are a conglomerate of traits, just like the aliens. This conglomerate is one of Western ideals: individualism, achievement (both personal and in the workplace), mediating for other societies. Some of the Western follies (greed, corruption, extreme patriotism, inflated organizations, propaganda) have been placed instead on the various alien species around the Federation, showing that these problems are not only that of the humans, but also that our

species can overcome these issues. As such, these humans are both like and unlike us (Westerners), functioning as something to look up to and be hopeful about.

The frequent mediating role of the Federation puts them in a similar position to the Western anthropologists whom Strathern (1988) discusses. Having this internal topography of ideas from other societies in one's head, the researcher seems to be able to comprehend and internalize the whole of another society – these people are complex-enough to have an "encompassing vision" of the world's societies (Strathern 1988: 91). This feature must mean that the anthropologist comes from a society that is also able to hold concepts from these other societies, "which must thus out-complex any one of them" (Strathern 1988: 91), a view which places the Western world comfortably in a superior position. Similarly, the humans of the Federation are able to comprehend the values of their cultural opposites – the Vulcans are logical, the Klingons are honourable, the Ferengi are greedy, the Romulans are proud – while also maintaining their own complexity: highly varied, moral and corrupt, with a dark past but with almost unlimited potential. In the more modern *Star Trek* episodes, there have been attempts made to show these other societies as complex and less easy to comprehend, closer to what Strathern urges anthropologists to do in the future: mediate between two different societies, not to hold them as opposites of each other, but to demonstrate the non-comparability of these two (Strathern 1988: 95). The Federation is still in the role of researcher, however, studying and mediating between other societies.

The differences between the Federation and the real-world audience, then, seems to be that the Federation has continued the trajectory of "improvement," which is an ideal within the Western world – it has left behind its violent past and is self-improving toward an ideal, even more perfect future; perhaps to where humans themselves become gods like the powerful aliens

they encounter. While humans are still not perfect, this future is held up as a point of hope for the audience, based in the idea of a human essence drawn from Western ideals. At the same time, the aliens show aspects of present-day humanity – drawing on foreign, non-Western societies (as understood by its writers).

Thus, we have seen how the humans are purportedly the most "complex" society within the *Star Trek* universe. In the comments of the other societies, as well as the Federation's role as galactic mediator, we can say that the major "essence" of the humans is adaptability and flexibility, which is shown to have led to accelerated "development" in the human species. *Star Trek* uses several binaries through cultural opposition to showcase these positive traits: soft vs. hard, print vs. oral, flexible vs. rigid. Many of these traits can be subsumed under the concept of adaptability vs. tradition. Although the humans have apparently lost their storytelling traditions, this binary opposition suggests that the loss of oral tradition comes with new strengths, which echo Ong's portrayal of print societies: focus on innovation, adaptation to change, scientific method, globalization. Perhaps the Federation's humans no longer tell stories of heroes fighting beasts or men perishing to heavy winds, but the implication is that *they no longer need to* – they have gained adaptability, and are thus becoming a race with limitless potential; moreover, they are able to mediate to the point where *aliens* begin to think like *humans*. The Federation, functioning as a model for positive Western ideals, is the fictional all-encompassing anthropologist which Strathern criticizes.

With this chapter, I have discussed both sides of the binary: the other (alien) side and the familiar (human) side. As we have seen, human and alien alike are conglomerates of various "real world" societies – both familiar and distant to Westerners, often held up as cultural opposites to the West. The humans in *Star Trek* occupy a unique role in that they have a less

prominent “essence,” instead allowed more complexity in order to mediate between other species. In discussing these ideas, I hope to have shown a small part of the internal topography used in *Star Trek* to portray these societal conglomerates.

Conclusion

As I leave the wilderness of deep space and return to my home planet, I reflect on the past year. The aliens that I found out here in the depths of space are, in the end, far closer to home than I thought when I first set out. Many of the same concerns that plagues us also affects their lives, and the array of cultural diversity that colours our own planet seems to be a staple in theirs as well. Perhaps we are all the same cosmic specks in the landscape of the universe.

- From the ethnography *The Final Frontier: A Year Aboard a Starfleet Vessel*. Ellen Burnham, 2431. San Francisco: Starfleet Academy Press.

In discussing *Star Trek* as an exemplar for other SF, I set out to understand the process of creating fictional societies; and what these fictional societies say about the so-called real world. I wanted to know how the portrayal of specific aliens in *Star Trek* (as an influential example of SF) inform and reflect a society's (in this case, American) understanding of real-world societies. The answer which I have found is that *Star Trek* forms its own internal topography which uses visual and textual metaphor, metonymy, and other kinds of tropes (in the form of costumes, script, food, body language, etc.) to show a galactic and ever-changing society which tolerates a wide array of different societies, but which is still influenced heavily by Western ideals and stereotypes of "the other," whatever these stereotypes may be at the time. I have now assembled the conceptual pieces, and I will suggest a framework which I can use to examine these ideas further in the future.

In the first chapter, I established how *Star Trek* uses metaphor to express ideas about the alien societies. Sapir (1977), Black (1962), and Booth (1979) define analogy, metaphor, and related concepts as a trope which draws a symbolic relationship between two terms in a way that brings out nuance that may be missed in a more literal presentation. Using metaphor calls on the reader/listener to use empathy; to draw on common (cultural) knowledge to understand the author/speaker. These terms can be stacked to create a more complicated extended metaphor,

which is commonly used in fiction. Booth and Sapir say that the shared communities based around common understandings can create community, united under an ethos. As such, there are no "neutral" or objective pieces of fiction – each carries a message and reflects the mind of the creator(s). These metaphors can be conceptualized as arranged and rearranged in what Fernandez (1986) calls Quality Space – a conceptual landscape which we all drawn on to make strategic comparisons along symbolic axes. Fictional characters are new entities, created out of conglomerates of the concepts they represent: social categories, commonplaces, correct/incorrect moral behaviour, animal traits, or anything in between. *Star Trek* aliens, in particular, are conglomerates of various societies and philosophical concepts as they relate to "human nature" as a broad concept.

We (as members of a society) create cultural opposites to contrast with our own society. These exemplars are often more extreme than reality, because the purpose of these oppositions is to bring our own values and customs to the forefront. To create these binaries, we pick essential features of a society and contrast it with our own. The cultural opposite to one's own society must remain foreign in order to be effective in this way – otherwise, we begin to see nuance and similarity that muddies the conceptual waters and makes exemplars less pointed. Fictional alien cultures are potent because they are always foreign, and their "essences" can be as literal or obvious as we like. These fictional societies show us who "we" are via contrast. Thus, the human interactions with these aliens carry underlying messages of how to relate to people with different perspectives, and on what it "means to be human," although in the case of *Star Trek*, these come through the lens of the Western (American) world. These messages form an internal, fictional topography, to borrow Strathern's (1988) term.

Star Trek shows us a galactic landscape which a host of different races share. The serial uses visual and textual metaphor to convey each aliens' characteristic behaviour, as well as to show how they are seen by the humans. All of the aliens we discussed are negative at some point, if not actively antagonistic, toward the humans. This feature suggests that the sympathetic humans and their values are more "correct" to the viewers. The negative aspects of the aliens show the humans (through implied inversion) in a good light. At the same time, all of the aliens side with the humans at one point or another. This fact suggests that the humans are the negotiators of the galaxy. The other aliens, then, represent different kinds of extremes, with humans mediating between them – they are the ultimate in adaptability, playing the role of the ideal anthropologist who can comprehend all other societies.

The tropes that *Star Trek* uses are numerous; yet there are some trends in the exemplar societies that suggest general trends, and how humans and aliens fit together within the galactic schema. These are arranged on conceptual continua within Quality Space. Throughout this thesis, I have identified several recurring continua, which can be put onto the following table.

Table 1. Conceptual Domains in *Star Trek.*

Animation/Body Language	CHAOTIC Ferengi, Klingons	 Humans	STILL Vulcans, Romulans, Borg
Cooperation (on a societal scale)	AGGRESSIVE Klingons, Romulans, Borg	 Humans	PEACEFUL Vulcans, Ferengi
Traditionalism	RIGID Vulcans, Klingons, Romulans, Borg, Tamarians	 Ferengi	FLEXIBLE Humans
Cooperative (within the society)	SOCIETAL Vulcans, Klingons, Borg	 Humans	INDEPENDENT Romulans, Ferengi, humans (ENT)
Interest in the world of the senses	SPIRITUAL Vulcans, Tamarians, Klingons	 Ferengi (spiritually motivated by material)	MATERIAL Romulans, Humans, Borg

As Fernandez (1986) has discussed, these ideas fall on continua rather than strict binaries; and here we can see mediating individuals taking the in-between spaces. The humans generally fall in the middle between these binaries, with the exception of the Rigid/Flexible poles. The Ferengi, because they mediate like the humans, are also in the middle of some of the binaries. Many of the other aliens are on one extreme or the other, since they function as cultural opposites to the humans. Many of the structuring metaphors that the aliens use, such as comparisons with animals, can be put into this table as ultimately being about these various points – the Klingon's obsession with predator/prey relations as falling on a continuum of cooperation, for example. In my future research, I would further investigate the serial for more examples in which metaphors and tropes express these (and other) continua.

In chapter two, I discussed where these ideas of these continua come from. I argued that *Star Trek* draws on a Western tradition of exploration and academic categorization in part. Orientalism is part of the academic internal topography, and creates the binary of West/East (as defining each other via inversion). Historically, in the West's eyes, the Orient became a passive object to be explored by Europeans. The Orient was seen as feminine, alluring, traditional, irrational, and naïve, and exploring the East was a heroic act which built a white man's character; elements of these stereotypes still exist in media and academia today.

Just as Western (European) society drew on its religious background to understand other societies and its place among them, *Star Trek* draws on this exploration/colonialization history to romanticize the "exotic other," and show the Federation as moral explorers and mediators travelling the unknown wilderness of the galaxy. *Star Trek* romanticizes exploration through its triumphant intros, the Western depiction of its humans, the connection of Starfleet to the American navy, and the American-centric ENT intro. The aliens are, in turn, exotic others (e.g., the Middle-East and Asia) to be explored. The hybrid characters function as mediators between the human/alien experience, just like our academics are meant to explain the "essence" of other societies.

In chapter three, I discussed *Star Trek's* depiction of human society, and what this human essence is meant to be. The Klingons and Tamarians use oral storytelling in a human way, but their alien origins suggest this practice is meant to be taken as distant when compared to the Federation. The humans prefer to look for materialist evidence, although they are adaptable enough to look back to their own oral tradition. Westerners tend to see oral culture as rigid compared to print culture, and this ideal further emphasizes the materialistic but mediating role that the Federation serves. The Federation's ability to comprehend other societies is comparable

to Strathern's depiction of the "society-encompassing" anthropologist, who comes from a complex-enough society to comprehend all others (Strathern 1988). The Federation has continued the trajectory of "improvement," which is an ideal within the Western world. At the same time, the aliens have elements of present-day humanity. These humans, then, are conglomerates of Western ideals, but depicted as having moved past many Western follies. This position gives *Star Trek*'s audience something to relate to, but also to look up to and be hopeful about. It encourages its viewers to be mediators in their own right – perhaps, tolerant and understanding of difference – and to aspire to a positive future.

What are potential next steps for my research? I have found that the aliens of *Star Trek* can be seen as conglomerates, like other fictional characters, of various tropes of other cultures that exist in Western society. Like in any society, the metaphors of this fictional internal topography are shifted and melded to serve different purposes – usually, to convey a message about the future or the way human beings in the real (Western) world should relate to one another and to other societies. These conglomerates are not one-to-one analogies of any one of Earth's societies, but they have elements of several dominant concepts working together to create a believable society; and a message on how the humans should relate to them. While I do not purport to have found every one of the influences, I have discussed many that are frequently mentioned in the serial. The Vulcans are a race of nobility, influenced by Ancient Greek logic and Golden Age Japanese mysticism to create a tightly-controlled but emotionally repressed society. The Romulans are a more aggressive complementary race to the Vulcans – while they are noble as well, their status as "barbarians" makes them conceptually close to humans but morally inferior in choosing their own values. The Klingons are a mix of Near-Eastern Orientalist imagery – once influenced by the USSR, currently most closely associated with the

Middle-East – who draw on wild animal metaphors to show their aggression and distance from the more moderate humanity. The Ferengi are closely linked with 20th century critiques of Western society, alongside with antisemitic and European folklore imagery. The less-featured aliens, the Borg and the Tamarians, nevertheless convey important ideas: the fear of the future, and the Western understanding of having "moved on" from a rigid but spiritual oral past, respectively. Finally, the humans of the Federation are mediators by virtue of being less extreme or rigid than the other societies in their values, and are overall a hopeful vision of the future of Western society – their fluid way of thinking and individualistic morals influence all others that spend time among them.

I have identified the important elements that form the conglomerates that are *Star Trek's* aliens. The next steps would be to further investigate these influences, in order to see how the continua relate to one another. I also would be interested in looking more closely at how historical context influenced *Star Trek,* and how much the internal topography has changed in the 21st century. *Star Trek* has experienced a revitalization of new material with DIS, with several mini-series changing the way modern viewers look at the serial. With the redesigning of the Klingons into demon-like predators, it is possible that all of the aliens will be altered to fit new cultural opposites and underlying ideals. With greater focus on cultural relativism and acceptance of diversity, it is likely that the Federation's values will also shift to better echo 21st century Western ideals. Future research would be needed to see what form all these new ideas take.

Finally, I would wish to remind the reader that this analysis is not meant as a criticism of *Star Trek* (or Western society, for that matter). *Star Trek* is a constantly-evolving serial, and its values are constantly shifting as well. The fact that species like the Klingons change shows us

that the creators are constantly changing what it means to aspire to a better future. With the greater diversity in these shows, I think that *Star Trek* can continue telling the stories of increasingly-diverse groups of people. I also think that this changing internal topography is key to why SF can be a powerful tool for anthropologists. Academics and writers both draw on their own experiences (commonplaces, internal topography, Quality Space) to describe their experiences. In this way, SF and ethnography are a kind of fiction, in the sense that they draw on the same devices to distill experiences into a compact work; but this feature does not mean that their goals are any less important to the world. Anthropologists are trained in self-reflexivity, and strive to be aware of their biases in coming from a particular culture and a particular position; thus, being aware of the fictionality of our accounts is something we already do and is not meant to discredit us. Yet it can help to be aware of this fictionality, as self-awareness makes it harder to lean too heavily on iconicity, metonymic misrepresentation, and erasure in ethnographic accounts.

From the other perspective – from that of a fiction writer – I think that being aware of the overlap between research and fiction acknowledges the legitimacy and power of the latter: we are all living in the same world and drawing on the same ideas, so fiction brings up the same truths as fieldwork, albeit in a different way. Finally, we (people living in the "real world") use metaphor to understand ourselves and our world, framing stories about ourselves and applying metaphor to understand who we are. In his book, Mark Johnson (1993) proposes that we (humans in general), as selves actively developing and adapting to our situation in a society, seek to increase unity and decrease fragmentation in our lives (Johnson 1993: 160), by telling stories about ourselves, and drawing on the roles, tropes, and metaphors that are available to us in our

environment (Johnson 1993: 165). It helps us make decisions, structure our lives, and find meaning.

In our (Western) society, the underlying prototypical story is that of a journey – or what he calls source-path-goal (there are other prototypical narratives, but Johnson prioritizes this one – perhaps as a structuring narrative for Western society as a whole). These metaphors carry an implicit story with them: if there is a journey, it implies a destination (a goal), conflict or struggle that must be overcome, and travel (Johnson 1993: 167). Metaphor and narrative are thus part of the same process, drawing on each other to create meaningful stories for our lives. If this is the case, then fiction and reality are not a binary, but are more like a continuum themselves. Far from being a trap toward which anthropologists are drawn, fiction is a powerful tool for understanding how we see ourselves and others. If we are constantly telling ourselves stories in this way, then LeGuin's idea (1989) that we are simply taking old worlds to create new ones is certainly close to the truth.

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Star Trek: The Next Generation. "Ménage à Troi." Season 3, Episode 24. Directed by Robert Legato. Written by Fred Bronson and Susan Sackett. Syndicated, May 28, 1990.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "Q Who." Season 2, Episode 16. Directed by Rob Bowman. Written by Maurice Hurley. Syndicated, May 8, 1989.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "Redemption II." Season 5, Episode 1. Directed by David Carson. Written by Ronald D. Moore. Syndicated, September 23, 1991.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "Rightful Heir." Season 6, Episode 23. Directed by Winrich Kolbe. Written by Ronald D. Moore. Syndicated, May 17, 1993.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "Sarek." Season 3, Episode 23. Directed by Les Landau. Written by Peter S. Beagle. Syndicated, May 14, 1990.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "The Chase." Season 6, Episode 20. Directed by Jonathan Frakes. Written by Joe Menosky. Syndicated, April 26, 1993.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "The Dauphin." Season 2, Episode 10. Directed by Rob Bowman. Written by Scott Rubenstein & Leonard Mlodinow. Syndicated, February 20, 1989.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "The Defector." Season 3, Episode 10. Directed by Robert Scheerer. Written by Ronald D. Moore. Syndicated, January 1, 1990.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "The Emissary." Season 2, Episode 20. Directed by Cliff Bole. Written by Richard Manning and Hans Beimler. Syndicated, June 26 1989.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "The Last Outpost." Season 1, Episode 5. Directed by Richard Colla. Written by Herbert Wright. Syndicated, October 19, 1987.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "The Neutral Zone." Season 1, Episode 26. Directed by James L. Conway. Written by Maurice Hurley. Syndicated, May 16, 1988.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "The Price." Season 3, Episode 8. Directed by Robert Scheerer. Written by Hannah Louise Shearer. Syndicated, November 13, 1989.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. "Unification I." Season 5, Episode 7. Directed by Les Landau. Written by Jeri Taylor. Syndicated, November 4, 1991.

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Star Trek: The Original Series. "Amok Time." Season 2, Episode 5. Directed by Joseph Pevney. Written by Theodore Sturgeon. NBC, September 15, 1967.

Star Trek: The Original Series. "Balance of Terror." Season 1, Episode 8. Directed by Vincent McEveety. Written by Paul Schneider. NBC, December 15, 1966.

Star Trek: The Original Series. "Day of the Dove." Season 3, Episode 11. Directed by Marvin Chomsky. Written by Jerome Bixby. NBC, November 1, 1968.

Star Trek: The Original Series. "Errand of Mercy." Season 1, Episode 27. Directed by John Newland. Written by Gene L. Coon. NBC, March 23, 1967.

Star Trek: The Original Series. "Journey to Babel." Season 2, Episode 15. Directed by Joseph Pevney. Written by D.C. Fontana. NBC, November 17, 1967.

Star Trek: The Original Series. "The Cage." Original Pilot. Directed by Robert Butler. Written by Gene Roddenberry. NBC, October 4, 1988.

Star Trek: The Original Series. "The Enterprise Incident." Season 3, Episode 4. Directed by John Meredyth Lucas. Written by D.C. Fontana. NBC, September 27, 1968.

Star Trek: The Original Series. "The Galileo Seven." Season 1, Episode 13. Directed by Robert Gist. Written by Oliver Crawford and S. Bar-David. NBC, January 5, 1967.

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Star Trek: Voyager. "False Profits." Season 3, Episode 5. Directed by Cliff Bole. Written by Joe Menosky. UPN, October 2, 1996.

Star Trek: Voyager. "Flashback." Season 3, Episode 2. Directed by David Livingston. Written by Brannon Braga. UPN, September 11, 1996.

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