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Star Trek – The American Dream Continued?

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STAR TREK

The American Dream Continued?

The Crisis of the American Dream in the 1960s
and its Reflection in a Contemporary TV Series

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Introduction

This thesis is written in the field of American Cultural Studies. Academic research of the American experience was sparked off in 1927 with Vernon L. Parrington's book about Main Currents in American Thought, which initiated a whole series of investigations resulting in the American Studies movement.

In the beginning this movement had "*a substantive consensus on the nature of American experience, and a methodological consensus on ways to study that experience*". Its basic aim was "to probe for the fundamental meaning of America".¹

The "intellectual history synthesis", as Wise called this approach, dominated Americanist scholarship from its beginnings up to the middle of the 1960s. Scholars of that school certainly were critical of American institutions, but not of the American experience itself.

During the 1960s, the American Studies movement, like society as a whole, lost its consensus. The pursuit of happiness had turned into "*The Pursuit of Loneliness*"² and the American Studies movement had no valid explanation.

The movement's claim to explain America was lost and at least partly transferred to journalists, non academic culture critics and - television. Within and without the movement consensus was replaced by conflict and diversity:

"We are less inclined now to take readings from a single vantage point on The American Experience; instead we look upon America from a variety of different, often competing, perspectives ..."³

¹ cf. Wise, Gene, "'Paradigm Dramas' in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement", in: *American Quarterly*, 31 (Bibliography 1979), 306 and 307

² Slater, Philip, *The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970)

³ Wise, *Paradigm Dramas*, 319

One of these new perspectives was that of popular culture. According to M. Thomas Inge "*Popular culture is what we do by choice to engage our minds and our bodies when we are not working or sleeping*" and its function is to "validate the common experience of the larger part of the population".⁴

The American Dream, in essence, is an expression of this "common experience of a larger part of the population".

Therefore I believe it to be a rewarding enterprise in American Studies to examine samples of American popular culture and see how elements of the American Dream are reflected in them: the very nature of popular culture implies that it epitomizes the value system of the society producing it; on the other hand popular culture also shapes society and thus possible changes in societal ideals may well be foreshadowed in it.

⁴ Inge, M. Thomas, *Handbook of American Popular Culture* (Westport, Ct.:Greenwood Press, 1988), xxvi and xxviii

This thesis tries to heed the above considerations. Its aim is to analyze how the crisis of the American Dream in the Sixties is reflected in contemporary popular culture, with the original Star Trek series serving as a case study.

Part one begins with an examination of the American Dream's historical roots. "The American Dream" is more than just the immigrant's dream of success: it denotes a unique set of specifically American social and moral ideals.

These values were extremely powerful and persuasive for centuries. It was only in the maelstrom of the Sixties that for the first time they were fundamentally questioned by a significant part of the American population.

Part two begins with a short discussion of methodology and continues with "An Introduction to Star Trek" based on that discussion. It examines the making of the show, its basic format, television production conditions, principal characters, setting, and its impact on the audience and vice versa.

Part three traces the main elements of "The American Dream in Star Trek". It is dedicated to an analysis of how the Dream and its crisis in the Sixties are reflected in the original Star Trek series.

Summing up it can be said that this thesis

- examines the historical roots of the American Dream and its crisis in the Sixties, and
- investigates how this crisis is reflected in the original Star Trek television series.

1 The American Dream

The term "American Dream" was coined by historian James Truslow Adams in 1931. At the height of the Great Depression he described "*that American dream of a better, richer, and happier life for all our citizens of every rank which is the greatest contribution we have as yet made to the thought and welfare of the world*" in the preface to his book *The Epic of America*.

Since Adams introduced the term it has been used by a vast variety of writers, scholars, politicians, advertising agents, journalists and others in almost every conceivable context.⁵

At the very beginning of the introduction to his influential work "American Literature and the Dream" Carpenter tried to define the subject of his study. Like many others he came to the conclusion that "*the American Dream has never been defined exactly, and probably it never will*

⁵ Adams, James Truslow, *The Epic of America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1931), vii/viii;

be." Vague as it may be he nevertheless called it "*one of the motivating forces of American civilization*", and certainly there is a set of values specifically and uniquely American.

These values define what is American and they are so strongly felt and widely accepted that after World War II a House Committee was able to identify un-American activities without ever defining what un-American was.

Hence the American Dream determined patterns of thought and the fate of a nation for centuries and yet at the same time remained vague and resisted definition. Carpenter offered a solution to this quandary by saying that

"I shall partially define the American dream by recalling some of its most famous and explicit expressions in history, and examining the ideas which these have held in common."⁶

⁶ Carpenter, Frederic I., *American Literature and the Dream* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 3

Accordingly I will begin this paper with an attempt to outline the "American Dream" by referring to its historical roots and some of its most important elements. Simplifying a complex matter it can be said that it was a combination of three main aspects that laid the ground for the American Dream:

- a mythical aspect referring to the vision of "America" that existed before Europeans actually settled in America,
- a religious aspect referring to the Puritan effort to build a "Citty Upon a Hill" and the subsequent secularization of Puritan work ethics, and
- a political aspect referring to the promises Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and to the influence of Frontier and Manifest Destiny.⁷

The focus in this examination will be on the religious aspects and the role of Puritanism because many of the

⁷ cf. Freese, Peter, "The American Dream and the American Nightmare: General Aspects and Literary Examples", *Anglistik und Englischunterricht*, 25 (Heidelberg, 1985), 12 f.

main elements of the American Dream can be traced back to Puritan origins.

After the exploration of its historical roots and a brief summary of the American Dream's main components, I will conclude this chapter with an analysis of "American Dreams, American Nightmares" in the Sixties.

Since historical developments can seldom be forced into a decimal system the term "Sixties" will be used according to Edward Purcell's suggestion that

"the cultural decade of the Sixties began sometime between 1957 and 1962, became self-conscious about 1965, peaked between 1968 and 1972, and expired rapidly after 1974."⁸

⁸ Purcell, Edward, "Social Thought", *American Quarterly*, 35, 1/2 (Spring/Summer 1983), quoted in Ribuffo, Leo P., "The Burdens of Contemporary History", *ibid.*, 5

1.1 Mythical Aspects: The Vision of "America"

The roots of the American Dream reach back into ancient times:

"Long before 'America' became a country, it was a continent, and long before it was known to exist as a continent, it was a vision and a dream."⁹

The vision of an ideal community probably is as old as humanity itself. The Greeks already knew tales of a lost *Golden Age* and situated the earthly paradise beyond the Atlantic ocean in the far west, out of reach for mortal men.

Building on the ancient myth of *Atlantis*, Plato in his *Politeía* constructed a hypothetical eternal city in which justice and wisdom ruled the day.

A few centuries later, Vergil reacted to the chaos around him by imagining a harmonious dreamscape called *Arcadia*.

These utopias had one thing in common: they were situated in mythic, unreal places that could not be found on any map.

The dream of utopia never vanished and reached a turning point in the *renaissance*, an age marking the transition from medieval to modern world. The French word *renaissance* means "rebirth" and refers to the revival of antiquity in many areas of life, including the myths of a Golden Age and the existence of an earthly paradise beyond the Atlantic.

Up to the middle ages, the Atlantic ocean was thought to be the end of the world and the crossing of this boundary physically and mentally disclosed new horizons. Suddenly it was possible to go beyond the Atlantic and that was where paradise was supposed to be. The world was in motion.

The political, economical, and social restrictions of feudalistic society softened and opened new possibilities for

⁹ Freese, 8

the non-aristocratic population, but the possibility of fulfilling the economic and political potential set free by the fundamental changes of the 15th and 16th century also contained the possibility of failure, of feeling lost and confused.

Thus Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) can be interpreted as a reaction to the turmoil of his time similar to Vergil's *Arcadia*, but More's contemporaries situated his utopia in the real realm of America discovered twenty-four years earlier.

An ancient European tradition saw the rise of civilization following the course of the sun from East to West. This concept held that civilized progress had developed in a westward pattern through the successive empires of the Far East, the Near East, Egypt and Persia, Greece, Rome, the Italian city states, Spain, France, and England.

Each of these civilizations was seen as having added some important element to mankind's progress before giving way to its successor. America was the western-

most country, and thus appeared to be destined for completion of the great circle that had begun thousands of years earlier.¹⁰

For Europeans it became a place to realize both their idealistic and materialistic dreams. At the time a deep belief in the reality of Eden existed. After their expulsion, humans were not allowed to dwell in paradise, but it nevertheless existed and it was not forbidden to search for it.

However, it was not only a "paradise lost" that occupied the minds of contemporary Christians, they also believed in "paradise to be": chiliasm, the doctrine of Christ's expected return to reign on earth for a thousand years, was revived and modified in the renaissance.

Whereas medieval Catholicism had located the Millennium in the past, sixteenth century Protestantism

¹⁰ Hellman, John, *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 5

placed it in the future. The second paradise was believed to be an earthly one and would be realized at the end of history.

During the sixteenth century America was portrayed as an innocent and pastoral country contrasting an old, sinful and urbanized Europe. America was paradise and Europe was hell.

European thinkers and tinkers alike projected their desires onto the New World and this process decisively shaped the development of American society from the very beginning.

A feeling grew that now was the time and America was the place to consciously create a new order based on ideal philosophical, religious, political and economical principles, unspoiled by history.

Therefore the American Dream in essence is of European origin:

"The colonization and development of the North American continent was inspired and conducted within the framework of the cen-

tral European myth of the creation of a New World and the emergence of a New Man who would bring forth a new Golden Age." ¹¹

The first ingredient in the making of the American Dream was the image of an Edenic America many Europeans had in their minds. In other words, Europeans believed in a

"mythic projection of America as a land of milk and honey and an El Dorado in which the Fountain of Youth bubbled forth in a pastoral landscape." ¹²

¹¹ Davis, Joseph K., "The American South As Mediating Image in the Plays of Tennessee Williams", in: Weber, Alfred und Siegfried Neuweiler, eds., *Amerikanisches Drama und Theater im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975), 171-189

¹² Freese, 12

1.2 Religious Aspects: "A Citty Upon A Hill"

1.2.1 The Role of Puritanism

At the end of the 16th century it looked as if North America - like Middle and South America - would become part of the Spanish empire, but it turned out to be different. The Spanish seizure was limited to the southern areas whereas France claimed the northern part.

Great Britain secured access to the middle region of the North American eastern coast. Of all these only the British plantations had the character of permanent settlements.

The settlers coming to America on the same ship hardly knew each other before their journey. About the only thing they had in common was that they started a new life in a new continent. The reasons for their decision to emigrate varied, and for some it was voluntary while for others it was out of necessity.

During the first few years the Puritan settlement set up at Plymouth in 1620 had experimented with a commu-

nity of goods, but in 1623, after having had several bad crops, William Bradford, governor of Plymouth Plantation, came to the conclusion that

"The experience that was had in this common course and condition ... may well evince the vanity of that conceit of Plato's and other ancients ... that the taking away of property, and bringing in communitie into a common wealth, would make them happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser then God."¹³

Instead, Bradford continued, "God in his wisdom saw another course fiter for them." This course, which according to Bradford was more apt to the ways of man, was based on the economic principle of private property.

In the beginning the often harsh reality in America forced the settlers to share their scarce resources and organize them collectively, but in the long run this

¹³ Bradford, William, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647* (New York: Random House 1981), p. 133

would not have sufficed as a foundation for a lasting social structure. The settlers needed a common identity, something that gave their life a meaning beyond their limited earthly existence.

In other words, they needed a consensual ideology, which would justify the use of force as an instrument of political and social integration. Otherwise the centrifugal dynamic inherent to private property as the basic economical principle would have endangered a successful settlement by consistently threatening to break the existing social order from inside. This danger was increased by the abundance of free land in the new continent. In America, Puritanism ideally played the role of the required consensual ideology which created the needed common identity.¹⁴

¹⁴ for a detailed analysis of the need of a "consensual ideology" in America: Krugmann, Malte C., "Zur Genese und Struktur des Amerikanismus (I)", *Englisch Amerikanische Studien*, 1/3 (1979), 309-341, esp. 316-323

The importance of Puritanism for the development of America has long been established. Vernon Parrington took it for granted when he said:

"Common report has long made out Puritan New England to have been the native seat and germinal source of such ideals and institutions as have come to be regarded as traditionally American."¹⁵

Ralph Barton Perry in his examination of Puritanism and Democracy tried to be a little more exact and presented astonishing figures: in 1776 nearly half of the 2,5 million people living in the Colonies were Puritans.

His conclusion was that the influence of Puritanism has been the single most important contribution to the making of the American mind, and the American Dream is an expression of that mind.¹⁶

¹⁵ Parrington, Vernon L., *Main Currents in American Thought*, Vol. I. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1927), 3

¹⁶ Perry, Ralph Barton, *Amerikanische Ideale (Puritanismus und Demokratie)*, Vol. I (Nürnberg: Verlag Hans Carl, 1947), 95f.; originally published as *Puritanism and Democracy*

The influence of Puritanism was so strong that even today the picture of the "true" American is dominated by the metaphor of the WASP: White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant; and of course male.

1.2.2 The Reformation

Since the late middle ages there had been a widespread demand for an inner renewal of the Roman Catholic church.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century German theologian Luther proposed several internal reform measures and their blunt refusal by church authorities finally led to a reformation movement resulting in the establishment of separate Protestant churches.

The spreading of the Reformation was enhanced by the underlying conflict between a rigid political order and a changing economy. The Reformation found its allies in the non aristocratic classes, whose growing trade interests required a greater degree of freedom than the traditional monarchy was willing to grant.

The response of Protestantism to the social decay of the old order was to transfer authority and responsibility into the conscience of the individual. In the last analysis this meant to free the individual from social stagnation and to endanger the existing order. The individual was directly responsible to God and the only mediating instance was his own conscience.

However, awareness of individual independence also contained a potential hazard: if an individual set his own particular interest above that of society and gave in to his innate sybaritic impulses, the existing social order would be endangered.

While supporting the drive toward freedom from feudalistic dependencies, Protestantism had to invent a new dependence. The solution to this dilemma was Protestantism's negative anthropology: on its own the individual was bad, sinful and prone to damnation; only subordination to God's will offered redemption.

This not only demanded a literally "puritanical" way of life, but also a consistent examination of one's soul,

which could ultimately only be achieved by a rigid social discipline. Protestantism on the one hand granted a greater degree of personal freedom and on the other required discipline and asceticism, a combination most welcome by the rising capitalistic economy with its emphasis on production for profit instead of consumption.

The importance of the Reformation for intellectual history is that for the first time the unity of medieval belief and thought was split up into a hesitant plurality.

Hence the Reformation was an indispensable prelude for modern secularized thought. It quickly spread across Germany and many parts of Europe. Of special importance was the Swiss branch represented by Calvin. Calvinism was of a more militant kind and soon outweighed Lutheranism in some parts of Europe.

The Reformed Church, as the Calvin-oriented churches became known, emphasized the doctrine of predestination and was Presbyterian in character.

Both Luther and Calvin accepted the adequacy of the Scriptures for all worldly needs, but other than that their systems were quite different.

Luther derived his inspiration mainly from the New Testament and tended towards tolerance of different opinions between believers. He held that

"Neither pope nor bishop nor any other man has the right to impose a single syllable of law upon a Christian man without his consent; and if he does, it is done in the spirit of tyranny."¹⁷

Thus, according to Luther, Calvinism might be considered to dwell "in the spirit of tyranny" as Calvin abandoned the absolute authority of pope or bishop only to replace it with that of the eldership.

Calvin put righteousness above love and received his inspiration mainly from the Old Testament and its emphasis on monarchy and law: where Lutheranism is indi-

¹⁷ Luther, Martin, "The Babylonian Captivity", in *Works*, Vol II (Philadelphia 1915), 233; quoted in: Parrington, 12

vidualistic, Calvinism is hierarchical; and where Luther believed in implicitly equalitarian ideas, Calvin remained explicitly aristocratic.

This difference caused Vernon Parrington to remark:

"That the immigrant Puritans brought in their intellectual luggage the system of Calvin rather than that of Luther must be reckoned a misfortune, out of which flowed ... much of the intolerance that left a stain on the pages of early New England history."¹⁸

1.2.3 Puritanism in England

Before taking a closer look at the Puritan beginnings in America I will briefly summarize the struggles in Europe prior to the emigration of the Puritans.

In 1521, King Henry VIII published a paper against Luther's Reformation and the Pope awarded him the title "Defender of the Faith". Ten years later, King Henry was the dissident and he declared himself head of church

¹⁸ Parrington, 11

and state. The founding of the Anglican church was a reaction to the Pope's refusal to divorce him from Catherine of Aragonia.

The Church of England, as the Anglican church became known, strictly upheld the absolutist principle in church and state, remaining catholic in character and more or less unspoiled by the ideas of the Reformation. Dominated by the feudal spirit of corporate unity it did not allow for vertical social mobility. Every citizen was born into his place and owed allegiance to spiritual and temporal authorities. Firmly believing in unity of church and state, authority was believed to be of divine origin. Politically, the Anglicans led up to Toryism.

Puritanism is a result of the historical peculiarities of the Reformation in England. The first occurrence of the word "Puritan" was documented in 1564, when it was used mockingly to describe a group of Protestants demanding reforms in doctrine and worship and greater strictness in religious discipline.

Puritanism was a Protestant reform movement within the Anglican church, which wanted to purify it from Catholic remnants, and was based on the doctrines of Calvinism. Not a small percentage of Puritans also had a political motivation. As Parrington put it:

"But though English Puritanism was wholly theological in its immediate origins, it gathered about ... all the forces of unrest fermenting in England."¹⁹

Puritanism was divided into two main fractions: Presbyterianism and Separatism.

In modern terms, *Presbyterianism* represented a compromise between aristocracy and democracy. In contrast to the traditional Episcopal church it consisted of congregations. Two or more of these congregations made up a presbytery. Two presbyteries again were combined to a synod. The divine right was substituted

¹⁹ Parrington, 5

by an elective stewardship, but nevertheless Presbyterianism was prone to becoming an oligarchy.

Rejecting absolutist hierarchies it relied on Calvinism, which upheld the principle of a state-church, but saw the church controlled by an eldership elected by the members of the congregation. The eldership had final authority in doctrine and discipline.

Presbyterianism drew its main support from the middle classes. In comparison to the Church of England it had been influenced by what finally would become known as the doctrine of natural rights, but on the whole it restricted natural rights to property rights. Its parliamentary equivalent was to be found in the Whigs, its political in capitalistic imperialism.

Separatism is a collective term for Puritans that were more or less consciously democratic in spirit. They wanted to separate from the Church of England and set up independent congregations on a local and self-governing basis.

In contrast to Presbyterianism every congregation was to be regarded as a self-sufficient, independent unit. They were not combined to form a presbytery and consequently there was no ecclesiastical hierarchy at all. Separatist ideas sparked off fierce antagonism from Presbyterians and Anglicans alike.

If Presbyterians found their basic ideas in Calvin's strict doctrines, Separatists tended towards the more tolerant system of Luther. His idea of the "priesthood of all believers" implicitly contained an individualism that proved to be a great disrupting force to the idea of rigid corporate unity. Separatism represented the left wing of the Puritan movement and politically led up to the Democrats.

In 1603, King James I. succeeded Queen Elizabeth and proclaimed himself the first King of Great Britain. Only one year later a conference of Anglican bishops at Hampton Court condemned Catholics and Puritans alike. This was an attempt to control the growing opposition

against absolutism and marked the beginning of religious persecution.

The Puritan dream of a reformed Anglican fighting Rome and its Spanish allies had to be abandoned in the presence of James' harsh regime. The reality was "*that bitter war ... about ceremonies and service book, and other popish and antichristian stuff, the plague of England to this day.*"²⁰

The Separatists of the Scrooby congregation decided to emigrate and found refuge in the city of Leyden in the Netherlands. In 1610, John Robinson, their theological leader, published his influential "Justification of Separation from the Church of England",²¹ in which he developed his idea of Congregationalism that ten years later would serve as a base for the democratic church model adopted by the Pilgrim Fathers.

²⁰ Bradford, William, 4

²¹ quoted in Perry, 128; cf. Ashton, Robert, *The Works of John Robinson*, 3 Vols. (Boston 1851)

Approximately twelve years after their arrival in the Netherlands, rising unemployment, fear of secularization and the threat of Arminianism caused part of the Leyden Puritans to join a group of London merchants in order to emigrate to America.²²

In the beginning mainly Separatists emigrated, but this changed after King Charles' accession to the throne in 1625. The pressure on dissenters and particularly on the Puritans increased and after the dissolution of parliament in 1629 many moderate Puritans decided to emigrate.

Having said this it must be added that religious persecution was not the only reason for emigration.

Numerous grievances caused by the revolutionary economic changes of the time contributed to the stream of emigrants.:

²² *Arminianism*: named after Leyden theologian Jacobus Arminius, who replaced the Calvinist emphasis on predestination with the belief that redemption can be influenced by human behavior in this world.

- The increased demand for wool in the mid-sixteenth century had made sheep-breeding very profitable. The necessary expansion of pastures left many small farmers and farmworkers without means of subsistence.
- Poverty had been declared to be internal enemy number one by Queen Elisabeth. Nevertheless unemployment reached the cities and combined with a general inflation this caused many members of the lower classes and the gentry to leave the country and project their hopes to the New World.

In the third and fourth decade of the seventeenth century the stream of emigrants reached a preliminary climax. Until 1640, approximately 70 000 people had left Britain for the New World, 18 000 of which went to New England. The others headed towards Virginia, the Bermudas and the West Indies.²³

²³ Guggisberg, 14

1.2.4 Puritanism in America

The colonial ventures were usually organized as joint-stock companies with all stockholders sharing profit and loss. Royal charters described their rights and authorized them to establish an administration and to enact laws in their new surroundings.

In spring 1606 the London Company of Virginia received a charter from King James to set up a settlement in Virginia and one year later Jamestown was founded. The main motivation of these adventurers was to find gold or other riches. The royal charter was renewed and extended several times, but in 1624 the company was dissolved and Virginia became Crown Colony.

About the same time the Protestant Reformation gave a different twist to the development in America. The above mentioned Scrooby Separatists had obtained a patent from the London Company of Virginia granting them the right to settle near the northern boundary of the Company's territory and entitling them to self-government.

Unlike the Virginians they were not hopeful adventurers trying to gain worldly riches but Separatists who ultimately fled from persecution looking for a place to live according to their religious convictions.

The "Mayflower" landed north of Virginia in Cape Cod and because their charter was not valid in that area they decided to supplement their democratic church government with an informal democratic civil government. The result was the "Mayflower Compact", which has often been called the substratum of democracy in America.²⁴

1.2.4.1 The Massachusetts Bay Colony

Plymouth always remained a small settlement and the "Great Migration" of Puritans from England started a few years later. In 1629 a group of Puritan merchants had founded the Massachusetts Bay Company and received a charter from King Charles.

John Winthrop, a country gentleman from Suffolk, was unanimously voted governor of the company. In 1630, he brought hundreds of colonists to America. His passengers came from all walks of life and their geographical origin was just as varied as their social roots.

Hence Winthrop knew that it would not be an easy task to model them into a community. What they needed was a common cause that would forge them together and to further that process Winthrop contrived a sermon entitled "Christian Charitie",²⁵ which according to a historian writing in 1966 "is almost as relevant to an understanding of America today as it is to an understanding of the Puritans of 1630."²⁶

Winthrop began his sermon with the words

"God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the Condi-

²⁴ cf. Morison, Samuel Eliot, *The Mayflower Compact 1620*, in: Boorstin, Daniel J., ed., *An American Primer* (Chicago: UP, 1966), p. 19-25

²⁵ Pearce, Roy Harvey, ed., *Colonial American Writing* (New York, 1969), 116-131

²⁶ Towner, Lawrence W., *John Winthrop - A Model of Christian Charity*, in: Boorstin, 42

cion of mankinde, as in all times some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjeccion"

and continued a few paragraphs further that

"All men being thus (by divine providence) rancked into two sortes, riche and poore."²⁷

The sermon was an appeal to every single person among the emigrants not to forget that despite all differences "*wee must be knitt together in this worke as one man.*"²⁸ In contrast to the Separatists of the Mayflower, Winthrop and his men were Presbyterians. They did not want to separate from the Anglican Church. They wanted to prove to the people of England and the rest of the world what the Reformation could be if completed:

"... men shall say of succeeding plantacions: the lord make it like that of New England: for

²⁷ Winthrop, 116/7 (reprinted in Pearce)

²⁸ Winthrop, 130

wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us;"²⁹

The building of a "Citty upon a Hill" was the magic metaphor and everything had to be subordinated to that goal. The metaphor is taken from Matthew 5:14, a verse beginning with the words "*Thou art the light of the world.*"

To fully understand the importance of these words we have to appreciate the Puritans' typological perception of reality. "Typology" is "*the doctrine or study of types or prefigurative symbols especially in scriptural literature*" and is not easy to comprehend in terms of secularized modern thought. Occurrences of the Old Testament were thought to be a prefiguration of later and present events.

Between the various stages of this development a progression toward fulfillment was assumed, which meant

²⁹ Winthrop, 131

that later events were more perfect versions of earlier ones. Adam, for instance, was considered to be an imperfect prefiguration of Jesus: He did not resist temptation and was responsible for men's fall; Jesus on the other hand did resist temptation and became the anti-type of prophecy, a culmination in a historical as well as in a spiritual sense.

The resulting belief in steady progress toward perfection became an important part of the American Dream.³⁰

When Winthrop closed his sermon with a reference to Moses as leader of the chosen people, he typologically implied that Moses was but an incomplete version of himself, and to his audience this did not sound impudent.

In Winthrop's biography Cotton Mather later said that "*... This Eminent Person was by the Covenant of all,*

³⁰ cf. Krugmann, 333

Chosen for the Moses ..."³¹ Winthrop was Moses just as New England was Israel. The prophecy that the Lord would lead the people of Israel to the Promised Land was a prefiguration of their own enterprise.

Medieval history was but a prelude to the New England settlements. America was the Promised Land and God guided their way to build "*a citty upon a hill*."

Winthrop and his men had a sense of mission. They were "the light of the world" and the world was not only watching their plantation, the world was going to be re-fashioned according to their "Model of Christian Charity". To the Puritans their emigration was part of God's Wonder-Working Providence:

"Know this is the place where the Lord will create a new heaven and a new earth"³²

³¹ Mather, Cotton, *Magnalia Christi Americana: Or, the Ecclesiastical History of New England* (1702), in: Murdock, Kenneth B., *Selections From Cotton Mather* (1926; New York, ³1965), 61

³² Johnson, Edward, *Wonder-Working Providence of Sions Saviour in New England*, with an introduction by Gallagher, Edward J., ed., (Delmar, N.Y.: Scholar's Facs. and Repr., 1974), 3

If the first ingredient to the American Dream was a mythic vision of America as paradise on earth, the second was the religious concept of America as a "*Citty upon a Hill*".

1.2.4.2 Predestination and Theocracy

Another key to the understanding of Puritan thinking is the doctrine of predestination. To Puritans the world was made according to God's will and everything happened because God wanted it to happen.

This concept permeated their whole culture and thus, for instance, a historian's task was not to faithfully record reality but to discover God's plan in every detail of the world. History was the manifestation of God's will and historiography its revelation.

This view of reality makes it seem logical that, as Perry remarked, "Puritanism tended towards Theocracy."³³ If the world is a manifestation of God's will, no one would

³³ Parrington, 23/24 and Perry, 135

be better suited to govern it. In the words of John Cotton, the colony's most influential thinker in theological matters:

"Theocracy, or to make the Lord God our Governour is the best Form of Government in a Christian Commonwealth, and which men that are free to choose (as in new Plantations they are) ought to establish."³⁴

The Lord God is the supreme civil ruler and his laws are being interpreted by the ecclesiastical authorities, namely John Cotton.

The Massachusetts Bay theocracy peaked between 1648 and 1690. Combined with Puritan zeal and righteousness this form of government led to a rigorous approach toward dissenters like Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams.

³⁴ Cotton, John, A Discourse about Civil Government in a New Plantation Whose Design Is Religion (Cambridge, 1663), in: Grob, Gerald N. and Robert N. Beck, ed., American Ideas: Source Readings in Intellectual History of the United States, 2 vols. (New York, 1963), I, 40/41; found in Krugmann, 325

The latter founded Rhode Island, which according to Parrington produced "a theory of commonwealth that must be reckoned the richest contribution of Puritanism to American political thought."³⁵ Among the greatest achievements of the Rhode Island settlement was the separation of church and state.

Thus the Puritan beginnings were twofold: in the Plymouth Plantation and for example in Rhode Island a democratic seed was planted, which would later begin to grow and blossom, but around Massachusetts Bay theocracy was the political system of choice.

And theocracy did not support any tendency toward democracy:

"... a Democratie is, among most Civill nations, accounted the meanest and worst of all formes of Government, ... it hath been

³⁵ Parrington, 66

allways of least continuance and fullest of troubles."³⁶

The doctrine of predestination had another important consequence. Individuals were either chosen for salvation or doomed to eternal condemnation. The decision had been made by God long before the beginning of time and could not be understood or changed by man.

Also, individuals had no possibility of finding out whether they were saved or doomed. This led to an existential insecurity and Puritans took refuge in the reassuring assumption that God's permission to become successful was a sign for being chosen.

Hence they devoted all their energy to success. Success was not the reason for salvation but became proof thereof. To be successful was to be close to God.

The inversion of this formula also worked well: Those who were not successful were not meant to be. If, for

³⁶ John Winthrop, quoted in Krugmann, 328

instance, the Indians were eradicated by war or disease they were dispensable in God's universal plan.

To prevent indifference and fatalism as a consequence of the doctrine of predestination, Calvin established so-called secondary reasons.

These *causae secundae* made the individual responsible for voluntary actions. It was, for example, Adam's free decision to sin and give in to temptation. Nevertheless it remained a somewhat paradoxical endeavor to combine free will with predestination.³⁷

The will to work hard, combined with dedication to success and the simultaneous call to asceticism, seemed ideally suited for the rising capitalistic economy. However, there is nothing in John Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charitie" that would support such view.

Winthrop was aware of the huge social differences between the emigrants and had no intentions to change

³⁷ cf. Raeithel, Gert, *Geschichte der nordamerikanischen Kultur*, Bd. I (Weinheim und Berlin: Quadriga, 1987), 40

them, but nevertheless the sermon is saturated by the spirit of charity and the emphasis is on "love" as "*the bond of perfection*" rather than on material wealth.

He stated that the rich must share their riches with the poor and to emphasize the validity of his statement he quoted Matthew 5:42: "*From him that would borrow of thee turne not away.*"³⁸

Another example for the colony's uneconomic spirit is the case of the merchant Robert Keaynes, who in 1639 was accused of having made a profit of six or eight pence out of a shilling. He was sentenced to pay a penalty of £200.³⁹

Summing up, it can be said that about this time the Puritan work ethic was motivated by idealism and not materialism. At the middle of the seventeenth century it still seemed possible to the Massachusetts Bay Puritans to build their "Citty upon a hill".

³⁸ Winthrop, 121

³⁹ cf. Kilian, 36-38

The capitalistic spirit of "getting the most out of it" had not yet infected the colonial community, but its seeds were already sown.

1.2.4.3 Secularization

From the very beginning secularization was one of the main perils to the Puritan system. Only church members were allowed to acquire the status of "freeman", and only freemen were entitled to franchise. This was the political foundation for theocracy.

Around 1640 the political scene in England began to change rapidly. Parliament was summoned again by King Charles and dominated by moderate Puritans like John Pym.

In 1642, the English Civil War began and ended six years later with the Puritan Revolution, when Oliver Cromwell, an Independent Puritan, seized power. In 1649 Charles was executed and monarchy abolished.

What at first must have seemed like a dream come true to most Puritans had a most unwelcome effect on the

New England settlements. The stream of immigrants had kept the colony's fragile economic balance.

One consequence of the drying up of this stream was a near collapse of the domestic market, which forced the settlers to intensify export trading. Trade with the West-Indies became the foundation of a flourishing economy. New England grew to be the trade center of the New World, but its rigid social order did not change accordingly.

The overwhelming economic influence of the merchants was contrasted by their absolute political impotence. In 1646, Dr. Robert Child had tried to loosen the tight regulations for church membership and franchise, but his proposals were sharply rejected by the General Court.⁴⁰

Nevertheless Puritan leaders were in an increasingly intricate position: To voluntarily abandon the original religious objectives was out of question, but to keep ignor-

⁴⁰ cf. Kilian, 40

ing fundamental economic developments and necessities was just as impossible. The synod of 1679 was almost exclusively dedicated to the moral degeneration of the settlement.

Its results were summarized in Increase Mather's *The Necessity of Reformation* (Boston, 1679), which listed and denounced all kinds of sinful behavior like preference of worldly goods to the welfare of the soul, excessive drinking, sexual permissiveness, usury and many more, but the community had become what Parrington called "sermon-proof".⁴¹

Soon Increase Mather's laments were to be overshadowed by other events. In 1684, King Charles II. withdrew the colony's charter. Two years later the New England colonies were combined to form the "Dominion of New England" and all institutions for self-government were abolished.

⁴¹ Parrington, 86

Although this remained a short intermezzo ended by the Glorious Revolution and the enthronement of William of Orange in 1688, the old charter was not restored. The governor was to be appointed by the king and not voted by the community any more and the right to vote - hitherto limited to church members - was now granted to every male adult possessing at least 40 shillings.

With these measures the political foundation of theocracy had been removed. In essence they were but an overdue adjustment of the political system to the economic and social reality.

Theocracy had ceased to be the predominant force in the colony. Merchants and traders could now begin to translate their economic position into political power.

1.2.4.4 The Way to Wealth

Cotton Mather characterized traditional Puritan virtues when he said that "There never was an eminent man that was not an industrious man."⁴²

Mather explicitly said "eminent" and not "wealthy". Discipline, industriousness and frugality were Puritan virtues indeed and derived of their theological content they proved helpful in the propagation of a new way of production that thrived on strict self-control.

To the early Puritans these virtues had been an end in itself whereas to the new generation they were only means to an end, and that end was not idealistic in nature but materialistic.

The Puritan theocracy tried to stem the tide of profanation until the very last and it was only through the process of secularization that these virtues became the means to achieve "worldly success".

⁴² Mather, Cotton, *Manudictio ad Ministerium* (Boston, 1726); quoted in Kilian, 54 (my italics)

The prototype of this new generation of rationalists was Benjamin Franklin: "*While paying lip service to God and virtue, Franklin clearly had his eye on material success: nothing is so likely to make a man's fortune as virtue. Virtue is a means, worldly fortune the end.*"⁴³

One of Franklin's greatest successes as a printer was the annual publication of an almanac called *Poor Richard*. Published between 1733 and 1758 it contained a series of proverbs, maxims and popular aphorisms dealing with all kinds of matters from personal conduct to the relations between man and society.

The last edition of the almanac in 1758 included a preface called "Father Abraham's Speech". This was reprinted several times and as "The Way to Wealth" it became a key document to the understanding of the new American ideal.

⁴³ Fossum, 10

Aphorisms like "*Early to Bed, and early to rise, makes a Man healthy, wealthy and wise*" epitomize Franklin's secularized approach towards Puritan virtues:

"In short, the Way to Wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the Way to Market. It depends chiefly on two words, industry and frugality."⁴⁴

Franklin surely did not mind being an eminent man and the popularity that came with it, but he emphasized the virtue of being industrious for a different reason: it smoothened "The Way to Wealth".

An important consequence of this shift in emphasis is that success or failure was not exclusively determined by predestination anymore. The responsibility for success or failure now firmly rested within the individual: "God helps them that help themselves."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ for a commented reprint of "The Way to Wealth": Boorstin, 66-77. Quotes on pp. 68, 69 and 75

⁴⁵ Franklin, Benjamin, *Father Abraham's Speech, or, The Way to Wealth*, in Boorstin, 68; interestingly enough this is a quote from the very first edition of 1733, thus in a way this proverb "framed" the publication of the almanac having appeared in its first *and* last edition.

America had abandoned the old Puritan goal of an idealistic paradise and began to turn into a materialistic *"land of unlimited opportunities."*

The Puritan religious idealism had been transformed to sustain a profane materialism. Therefore the attainability of personal success as a result of the secularization of the Puritan work ethic is the next ingredient to the American Dream.

1.3 Political Aspects: "A Democratic Utopia"

In the first half of the eighteenth century the English colonies were surrounded by Spanish Florida in the South and French Canada in the North.

The French also claimed the territory west of the Appalachian mountains. This would have restricted the English colonies to a comparatively small area between the Atlantic coast and the Appalachian Mountains.

If England would have accepted the French claim, the colonies could not have expanded any further. A result of this latent conflict was the "French and Indian War" (1754-1763), which was caused by English settlers advancing into the Ohio valley.

Britain won the war and in 1763 the Paris Peace Treaty was negotiated by Benjamin Franklin. England gained access to the territory west of the Mississippi and thus dominated the continent from the Mississippi to the Atlantic and from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico.

The door to westward expansion was flung wide open and this gave a new emphasis to the frontier as part of the American experience.⁴⁶

The conflict between the colonies and their mother country leading up to the foundation of the United States of America was sparked off by two major problems.

- The first one was westward expansion. The English government did not allow private land purchases in the former French territories west of the Appalachian Mountains. To the settlers it seemed that the government wanted to prevent them from taking their spoils of the war. However, westward expansion was not seriously inhibited by English legislation.
- The second problem proved to be more disruptive. In England many people believed that the colonies should pay a contribution to the just finished war

⁴⁶ for the following argumentation cf. Guggisberg, 33 ff.

and therefore taxes were both introduced and increased.

The colonies reaction to this measure was stronger than expected and can be summarized in the slogan "*No taxation without representation.*"

The "Stamp Act Crisis" of 1765 had suddenly brought the colonies to the brink of rebellion. Remarkable about this process were two things: first the determined will of resistance by the colonies, which was grossly underestimated by the English government, and secondly the unity with which this resistance was demonstrated by the American people.

1.3.1 Democracy and Melting Pot

Independence was not the prime reason for the outbreak of the "War of Independence". In the beginning all the colonies wanted was justice. The fight for their right only slowly turned into a fight for independence.

It was not until June 1776 - aggravated by the hardships of war, King George's stubbornness and political

pamphlets like Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* - that the Continental Congress appointed a committee to prepare a declaration of independence. The committee asked Thomas Jefferson to draw up a draft of the declaration.

Today it is not the long list of grievances in this declaration that attracts attention, but the preamble with its statement of political philosophy:

"We hold these truth to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."⁴⁷

The makers of the Declaration of Independence stated many of the Dream's political assumptions. The main principles are as follows:

⁴⁷ all quotes are from the reprint in Boorstin, 83-93, commented by Henry Steele Commager

- (1) That all men are equal and that they are endowed with unalienable rights, including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
- (2) That governments are instituted to secure these rights and that they derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.
- (3) That it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government should it become destructive of these ends.

These principles were of course neither new nor of American origin, but it was the very first time in history that Locke's doctrine of natural rights had been translated into political terms as a foundation for government. This added *a political dimension* to the American Dream.

The next step was the approval of the Constitution in 1787. One of the most often quoted parts of the Constitution is its preamble:

We the People of the United States, in Order
to form a more perfect Union, establish Jus-

tice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.⁴⁸

This sentence defines the source of authority for the following constitutional articles. "People" at the time meant the responsible electorate, and thus in a literal sense the source of authority for the constitution was a selective group rather than "all the people".

The definition of "people" has since been broadened by measures like the abandonment of property requirements for voting, the Fourteenth Amendment, enfranchisement of women, and last not least the Civil Rights legislation of 1964-65.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Boorstin, 101-105

⁴⁹ on the use of "We the people" cf. Beard, Charles, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (1913)

In 1791, the Bill of Rights provided for basic individual liberties, such as freedom of religion, press, speech, and assembly. Even if the reality in America was, and is, quite different to the promises of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, they represent a breakthrough in the development of democratic ideas. To many Europeans suffering under the rule of absolutist monarchists such words must have seemed like a dream come true, like "heaven on earth".

America's goal was "*nothing less than to establish a democratic utopia of liberty, prosperity, and public virtue,*" and this utopia would be open to all mankind.⁵⁰

The idea of America as a melting pot is as old as the United States itself. It was first formulated in 1782 by a Frenchman living in New York, de Crèvecoeur, in his Letters from an American Farmer, published in London: "*Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new*

⁵⁰ Hugh Swinton Legaré in 1823, quoted in Fossum, 5

race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world."⁵¹

This concept received a popular label when Israel Zangwill's play *The Melting Pot*, first performed on October 5, 1908, became an instant nationwide success. The play struck a responsive chord and soon the melting pot metaphor became an important aspect of the American Dream.

1.3.2 Manifest Destiny and Frontier

The secularization of the "citty upon a hill" had changed its political foundation from theocracy to democracy, but Winthrop's vision that "men shall say of succeeding plantations: the lord make it like that of New England" was shared by Americans of generations to come.

The idea to serve as a model for the world survived secularization, and democracy was now part of it. The Puritan awareness of being a chosen people was firmly

⁵¹ quoted in Freese, 26

implanted into the political dimension of the American Dream.

In 1802 Thomas Jefferson wrote in a letter to J. Priestley: "*It is impossible not to be sensible that we are acting for all mankind.*"⁵²

One year later, he agreed to the Louisiana Purchase, which included the larger part of the lands between Mississippi, Missouri and the Rocky Mountains and laid the foundation for the conquest of the west.

The Louisiana Purchase was to the Mississippi boundary what the Paris Peace Treaty of 1763 had been to the Appalachian Mountains.

In 1837 President Andrew Jackson claimed in his "Farewell Address to the People of the United States" that "*Providence has showered on this favored land blessings without number and has chosen you as the guardians of*

⁵² Letter from Jefferson to J. Priestley from June 19th, 1802; quoted in Krugmann, 313

freedom to preserve it for the benefit of the human race."⁵³

In 1845 westward expansion received an attractive and powerful label. Defending the annexation of Texas the journalist John O'Sullivan wrote an article in which he argued that the exploitation and the occupation of the North American continent were *the Manifest Destiny* of the United States.⁵⁴

In 1890 the Superintendent of the Census declared that "*the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line.*"

Three years later, in a speech to the American Historical Association, the young historian Frederick Jackson Turner came to the conclusion that

⁵³ Jackson, Andrew, "Farewell Address to the People of the United States", in Joseph L. Blau, ed., *Jacksonian Democracy*, 20; quoted in Krugmann, 313

⁵⁴ Pratt, Julius W., "The origins of 'Manifest Destiny'", *American Historical Review*, 32 (1927), 595-598; for excerpts of O'Sullivan's article see: Bischoff Peter, "'Westward the Star of Empire takes its way': Manifest Destiny and American Expansion", *Englisch Amerikanische Studien*, 3/1 (1979), 369 u. 372

"The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain the American development."⁵⁵

This statement became known as the frontier thesis and influenced generations of scholars in their attempt to explain the American experience.

Turner underlined the uniqueness of American development and concluded that "*these free lands promoted individualism, economic equality, freedom to rise, and democracy.*"

An important aspect of the frontier was its function as a safety valve. Due to the existence of free land beyond the frontier, Americans never had to solve their conflicts "in loco" and instead could simply move on for a new beginning.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Census quote and *frontier thesis* from Turner, Frederick J., *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893), in: Turner, Frederick J., *The Frontier in American History* (1920), 2

⁵⁶ cf. for instance Hirschmann, Albert O., *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Declines in Firms, Organizations and States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970): "This

After the continent was conquered America extended its Manifest Destiny to areas beyond the West:

"For nearly three hundred years the dominant fact in American life has been expansion. [...] That these energies of expansion will no longer operate would be a rash prediction."⁵⁷

And this observation was correct: around the turn of the century the USA intervened on numerous occasions in Middle and South America, declared war on Spain, occupied the Philippines, annexed Hawaii and demanded an Open Door into Asia.

At the beginning of the twentieth century more interventions followed: in the Dominican Republic (1905, 1916), Cuba (1906, 1912), Nicaragua (1912), Mexico (1914) and Haiti (1915).

preference for the neatness of exit over the messiness and heartbreak of voice has then 'persisted throughout our national history.'" (107f.)

⁵⁷ Turner, Frederick J., "The Problem of the West", in: *The Frontier in American History*, 219

These interferences were manifestations of the missionary spirit President Wilson described in his official declaration of war in 1917: "*The world must be made safe for democracy.*"

Despite strong currents of isolationism this attitude remained a dominant quality in American foreign politics and can be observed until today.

Even after closure of the frontier, movement towards the west continued. Paradise was still believed to be somewhere in the west.

California as the westernmost state was the new elysium and refugees from the Dust Bowl did not want to stay "East of Eden."

Between 1940 and 1960, California more than doubled its population and in 1963 surpassed New York as most populous state. The admission of Alaska and Hawaii into

the Union in 1959 symbolizes the persisting westward movement of the population.⁵⁸

I would like to close this chapter with a quote from Ronald Reagan, who in 1980 had "*proclaimed a dream of an America that would be 'a shining city on a hill'*."⁵⁹

More than three and a half centuries after Winthrop's memorable sermon America still believes in the dream of a "citty upon a hill".

⁵⁸ Noble, David, et al, *Twentieth Century Limited* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 319 f.

⁵⁹ Speech to the National Republican Convention in Dallas on August 23, 1984; quoted in Freese, 7

1.4 The Main Elements of the American Dream

Having discussed the mythical, religious and political roots of the American Dream I would now like to briefly summarize its main elements. Strictly speaking it is an impossible task to reduce such complex phenomenon to its main components and yet keep its puzzling complexity.

An abstraction of main elements will inevitably omit important aspects and distort the picture of the whole. Therefore I do not claim to give a universally valid classification of the American Dream. Such venture would like any effort to achieve something even remotely resembling a definition necessarily be bound to fail.

In their booklet on "The American Dream" Fossum and Roth stated that

"... we could not begin to mention, let alone analyze, every feature of the Dream. Nor could we expect to point out all the ways in which they are interwoven; the warp and woof of the Dream are much too intricate for

that. We can only hold the fabric up to the light, identify its major strands [...]."⁶⁰

The most important "major strands" in the fabric of the American Dream are

- a belief in steady **progress** towards a perfect society and personal success
- a belief in **democracy** as government of the people, by the people and for the people as the exclusive sponsor of liberty and equality,
- the idea of the **melting pot** that in America people of various nationalities, religious beliefs and ethnic origins are forged into something new and specifically American,
- the notion of the continuous challenge of the **frontier**, both as geographical reality and as symbol,

⁶⁰ Fossum, 6

- the belief in the **manifest destiny** that America has been chosen by God to free the rest of the world from despotism and darkness.⁶¹

⁶¹ cf. Freese, 14 and 27

1.5 American Dreams, American Nightmares

"American Dreams, American Nightmares" is the title of a collection of essays edited by David Madden and published by the University of Southern Illinois in 1970.⁶²

In the following chapter I will very briefly outline how the American Dream turned into a Nightmare.

1.5.1 The Quest for National Purpose

The post-war period in America generally is portrayed as an idyll, a time of consensus. Historians like Hofstadter, Hartz and Boorstin described the American past "as a homogenized culture without significant class, ethnic, or racial conflict" and among social scientists such terms as "disharmony, disequilibrium, maladjustment, disorganization" were considered "bad things".⁶³

⁶² Madden, David, ed., *American Dreams, American Nightmares* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois U.P., 1970)

⁶³ Noble, 402 f.

However, the seeds for disharmony were already sown. As the 1950s drew toward their close, a mood of dissatisfaction began to spread and during the 1960s took hold of almost every aspect of the American Dream.

The Dream had suffered a major setback during the Great Depression. Since then the economy appeared to have recovered, but despite the prosperous fifties poverty had persisted throughout the United States.⁶⁴

Also, technological progress began to show side effects and first voices of caution against unhampered technological progress could be heard.

The 1954 Supreme Court decision against segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education* was a step towards the realization of constitutional promises and in support of that decision President Eisenhower in 1957 sent paratroopers to Little Rock to protect black students enrolling at Central High School.

⁶⁴ cf. Galbraith, John Kenneth, *The Affluent Society* (1958), or Harrington, Michael, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1962)

Nevertheless reality was dominated by the doctrine of "separate-but-equal", and the Civil Rights movement had begun to draw attention to the persisting injustices.⁶⁵

The USA had emerged from World War II as the leading world power, and this seemed to underline America's manifest destiny.

However, in 1957 the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik*, the first earth orbiting artificial satellite. This technological feat on part of the supposedly backward Russians took the American public by surprise and shook the foundations of America's postwar self-confidence.

The Sputnik shock led to a revision of the educational system and to the foundation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958. It also sparked off the national space program, which would become part of Kennedy's "New Frontier."

⁶⁵ "Separate-but-equal" was the result of a Supreme Court decision in 1896 (*Plessy v. Ferguson*), which was used to justify the "Jim Crow laws" of racial segregation in the South.

In May 1960, Russia announced that it had shot down an American spy plane, the U2. The United States immediately denied the charge, claiming that it was a "weather plane" strayed from its course. In return, Khrushchev produced Francis Gary Powers, the CIA pilot, revealing the American lie.

The U2 incident harmed America's reputation throughout the world and back home its effect was even more fundamental: Eisenhower had not only lied to Khrushchev but also to his own people.

This incident marked the beginning of an increasing credibility gap between the American public and its government which would culminate with Watergate in 1974.

The mood of increasing discontent resulted in a quest for national purpose. In February 1960, Eisenhower created a President's Commission on National Goals and in the summer Life and New York Times jointly published a series of essays on "The National Purpose".

Among the authors of this series it was consensus that "the American purpose was not so much national as international" and that America's mission was "the liberation of humanity". Domestic problems were thought to be of secondary importance and thus they

"... routinely scored excessive materialism, complacency, flabbiness, selfishness, apathetic and aimless affluence, and moral confusion; but those and other ills needed remedying especially because they impaired America's global performance and reputation."⁶⁶

In November, the President's Commission issued its report on Goals for Americans and it echoed a similar tune: "The 'ultimate goal' was 'to extend the opportunities for free choice and self-determination throughout the world'."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Jeffries, John W., "The 'Quest for National Purpose' of 1960", *American Quarterly*, XXX, (Fall, 1978), 457; the essay (451-470) represents an excellent summary of the discussion.

⁶⁷ Jeffries, 459

Kennedy's "New Frontier" proved to be strikingly similar to the Commission's recommendations. New Frontier Democrats and moderate Republicans both agreed on the grandiose conception of the American mission and the difference between them was limited to domestic goals and the proper role of the federal government. Jeffries concludes that:

"Despite the anxieties of the late 1950s, the belief in America's rectitude, power, and global mission ... persisted into the 1960s. [...]"

Only later, with the collapse of the New Frontier and much of its reputation in the turmoil of the late 1960s, did the messianic global conception of the national purpose ... undergo rethinking."⁶⁸

1.5.2 The Crisis of the American Dream

Historical accounts of the Sixties describe the period as "Years of Discord", "The Lost Consensus", "Into the

⁶⁸ Jeffries, 470

Maelstrom", or simply as "Coming Apart".⁶⁹ A quick glance at the already mentioned discrepancies between the grand promises of the Dream and the unpleasantly conspicuous shortcomings of its reality reveals why Madden in 1970 talked about the "Dream defunct".⁷⁰

The ideal of steady progress towards a perfect society was contradicted by almost everything that happened in the Sixties. Instead of progressing towards perfection society seemed to be heading towards disaster.

Furthermore, the belief in technical progress had resulted in the rape of natural resources and had turned into a serious menace threatening not only the Dream but also the dreamers.

Ever since their first contact with white immigrants American Indians had commented upon the incompre-

⁶⁹ Blum, John Morton, *Years of Discord: American Politics and Society, 1961-1974* (New York: Norton, 1991); "The Lost Consensus", Noble, 455-482; Tindall, George B., "Into the Maelstrom: The Sixties", in: *America - A Narrative History*, Vol. 2 (New York, 1984), 1260-1300; O'Neill, William, *Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960's* (New York: Quadrangle, 1971)

⁷⁰ Madden, xvi

hensible way the White Man treated nature. The nemesis of the Dust Bowl, the poisoning of the waters, and the pollution of the air - to name but a few catchwords - had finally brought the message home that progress was about to turn paradise into a waste land.

In February 1965 none other than President Johnson wrote in a special message to Congress that

"the water we drink, the food we eat, the very air we breathe, are threatened with pollution."⁷¹

Similarly, the value of success as the only goal in life was being questioned. The emerging counter culture of young Americans did not believe that success and wealth result in happiness. They rejected their parent's way of life and voluntarily dropped out of the "rat race".

David Madden's fictitious "atheist of the American Dream" remarked: "*Even those who make the Horatio*

⁷¹ Blum, 180

*Alger dream come true become restless, heartsick, ulcer- and anxiety ridden."*⁷²

As for liberty and equality: In August 1963, Martin Luther King had articulated his version of the American Dream, when he said that

"I have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American Dream. I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia some sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood."⁷³

The Civil Rights movement gained momentum and pressured the Johnson government into the passing of Civil Rights laws, but to some black leaders the results amounted to little more than cosmetic surgery to a decayed system.

⁷² Madden, xxvii

⁷³ Freese, 29

In 1968, a few months after King's assassination, a black student leader told Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey that

"I don't believe in the American Dream, because the American Dream doesn't believe in me. The American Dream for the black man is nothing more than a nightmare."⁷⁴

And it was not just blacks that were excluded from the American Dream. Red Indians lived in reservations, deprived of their land; Chicano farm workers were fighting for their rights; and Chinese and Japanese well remembered the Chinese Exclusion Act or the relocation camps after Pearl Harbor.

The ideal of America as a melting pot for all races, as the forge for a new and more perfect kind of human being was for the first time consciously repudiated by a significant part of the population.

⁷⁴ Madden, xv

At the end of the Sixties America resembled not a melting pot but a salad bowl, in which all races are tossed together but do not mix at all. And it was a bitter salad, too.

If American self-confidence was shaken by Sputnik, it was destroyed by Vietnam. Eisenhower had committed the United States to the preservation of South Vietnam's independence, Kennedy had increased that commitment and Johnson escalated it.

What had started with a few military advisors had turned into an undeclared war, and what had in the beginning been an attempt to preserve South Vietnamese independence had become "largely an exercise in protecting American credibility."⁷⁵

From the American point of view, the Vietnam war went through three major phases:

⁷⁵ Blum, 239

- 1960 to 1965: *Entanglement*. There were American military advisors, equipment, and money, but the Vietnamese soldiers did most of the fighting.
- 1965 to 1970: *Escalation*. Fighting was taken over by regular American ground troops and Johnson commenced bombing of North Vietnam. The Tet Offensive was in a sense the center of the war.
- 1970 to 1975: *Vietnamization*. American troops were withdrawn and on April 30, 1975 the Saigon government and army collapsed.

By October 1967 only 44 percent of the American public still supported the American involvement in the war, and opposition was growing.

The war in Vietnam also served as a catalyst to domestic conflicts and offered "the key to a systematic criticism of America."⁷⁶ In the words of a Johnson aide:

⁷⁶ Susan Sontag quoted in "Vietnam as the Past", *The Wilson Quarterly* 7/3 (Summer 1983), 107

"Vietnam was a fungus slowly spreading its suffocating crust. ...No matter what we turned our hands and minds to, there was Vietnam, its contagion infecting everything that it touched, and it seemed to touch everything."⁷⁷

Within a few weeks of the Viet Cong's Tet Offensive in early 1968 public support fell to 26 percent. For North Vietnam, Tet was a military defeat but a political and moral victory.

The main significance of the Vietnam war to the American Dream was that *"by its end, defeat and disillusion would for the first time be a significant part of the national experience."*⁷⁸

Polarization of American society was in full swing and the nation was in desperate need of an integrating personality.

⁷⁷ quoted in Blum, 281

⁷⁸ Hellman, 4

In November 1967 Robert Kennedy had delivered a spontaneous speech on national television against the American slaughter of the Vietnamese. Kennedy's opinion was of special importance as in the early Sixties he had helped fashion the strategy of counterinsurgency in Vietnam.

Finally convinced that President Johnson was not going to do anything about the war or about the problems in American cities, he decided to run for presidency and declared his candidacy on March 16, 1968.

Robert Kennedy was *"the last liberal who could reach both races as well as both generations"* and his *"eighty-five-day campaign stirred an emotional groundswell never before seen in American politics."*⁷⁹

To many people of all races and from all walks of life, Kennedy

"symbolized the lost idealism of the New Frontier, the flickering hope that all classes

⁷⁹ Blum, 304 and Noble, 475

and races really could share in the American Dream."⁸⁰

However, this hope should remain a flicker suffocated by the chaos of 1968.

On April 4, Martin Luther King was assassinated. Riots broke out in more than a hundred cities. On June 6, Robert Kennedy was shot.

Within only two months two of the most needed men had been killed, two important symbols of hope and unity in America had been destroyed by violence.

The Democratic convention in Chicago in August 1968 symbolized the state of the nation: the violent oppression of demonstrations by Mayor Daley's police force made the city look a battlefield. The war in Vietnam had turned into a war at home, and life in America would never be the same.

A few months later, Richard Nixon was elected President. Writing about Nixon's presidency Blum concluded

⁸⁰ Noble, 475

that "he was sane, and he was responsible; but his were the characteristics of a disturbed personality."

The 1964 Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater later described Nixon as "*the most dishonest individual I have ever met in my life ... Nixon lied to his wife, his family, his friends ... his own political party, the American people, and the world.*"⁸¹

One of Nixon's first major acts as president was "Operation Breakfast": the bombing of Cambodia, which at the time was a neutral country.

The polarization of American society continued and domestic protest against the war increased. On May 4, 1970, the Republican governor of Ohio ordered the national guardsmen to the campus of Kent State University to dissolve a protest rally. They fired a volley into a crowd of students, hit fifteen and killed four, of whom two were just observers. America was shocked.

⁸¹ Blum, 319

After the congressional elections in 1970 the "Committee to Re-elect the President" (Creep) was founded. Creep's main task was to raise money for Nixon's campaign and to undermine the unity of the Democratic Party.

The organization was quite efficient at both tasks, until in the early hours of June 17, 1972 burglars hired by Creep agents were caught breaking into the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee at Watergate, a complex of apartments and offices in Washington, D.C.

At first Nixon denied knowledge of the break-in, but two journalists of the Washington Post published documents proving that he was involved. The series of scandals that followed became known as "Watergate". Basically it was the cover-up and not the break-in that brought down the Nixon administration.

Being threatened by impeachment, Nixon resigned on August 8, 1974. The president of the United States had continuously and consciously lied to his own people.

The America of the late Sixties and early seventies did not resemble the Puritan vision of a "citty upon on a hill".

The American Dream had in almost all respects turned into an American Nightmare.

1.5.3 The Nature of the Crisis

Madden's book tried to take stock of the Dream at a time when in the "collective field of vision, in which we perceive mainly the nightmare, 'the American Dream' is a cliché, symbolic of the Dream defunct."

This observation led Madden to the central question of his study: "*What was the American Dream and how did it evolve into a nightmare?*"⁸²

A hint to Madden's answer - and that of his contributors - is given even before his study actually begins. The book is dedicated to "Three American Dreamers", one of

⁸² Madden, xvi and xvii

them being Granville Hicks who in "I Like America" is quoted to have said

"Some time there will be a generation with both the opportunity and the will, and the better world we hope for will be created. ... You may see the American Dream come true."⁸³

Madden's approach suggests that the crisis of the American Dream is of historical rather than structural nature.

The solution suggested by this point of view necessarily has a conservative tendency. It tries to preserve the values and ideals underlying the Dream in their true form and does not question their integrity. The nightmare is believed to be merely a dream gone wrong.

The Declaration of Independence held it to be "self-evident, that all men are created equal"; yet the institu-

⁸³ Madden, v

tion of slavery excluded a large part of the population from this equality.

On an ideological level the realization of the American Dream was demanded for "all men", but on a personal many accepted the deprivation of rights for Blacks and Indians.

Even at this early stage the Dream reveals an inconsistency that persists until today. The race riots in the Sixties were not isolated events sparked by fleeting injustice but the result of structural inconsistencies in the Dream.⁸⁴

The American Dream's character has been antinomic from the very beginning. The individual's right to progress and success, for instance, necessarily creates social inequalities and injustices.

The realization of some aspects of the Dream inhibit the realization of others: among the first consequences of

⁸⁴ cf. Köhring, Klaus, "American Dream of Success in der neueren amerikakundlichen Literatur der Bundesrepublik", *Englisch Amerikanische Studien*, 3/1 (1979), 351-360; esp. 353 f.

the settler's attempt to make it come true was the extermination of the native population. The possibility of failure is implicitly inherent in the dream metaphor: a dream is not reality, and it might never be.

I would like to close this chapter and lead over to the analysis of Star Trek with a quote from Madden's introduction, which is typical for the belief in a new beginning.

All it takes to revive the Dream and make the nightmares go away is a new impulse, if necessary from outer space:

"With the dawn of the Moon Age, one wonders what prospects exist in outer space for a renaissance, a transformation of the Dream-as-nightmare into a new Dream."⁸⁵

As we shall see, Star Trek is concerned with exactly these prospects.

⁸⁵ Madden, xxiv

2 An Introduction to Star Trek

Star Trek was conceived, realized and aired during the Sixties in the USA. Its success is without parallel in the history of television and today, almost thirty years after the U.S.S. Enterprise started its first mission, Star Trek has become a legend in its own time.

Before I will begin the actual analysis of the original Star Trek series, I will briefly state some general considerations about the use of methodology in the analysis of popular culture.

2.1 Reflections on Methodology

In my introduction I have mentioned that the American Studies movement up to the middle of the Sixties agreed upon a methodological consensus.

Scholars argued for the unique role of literature as a key to culture: exact scientific methods as used in the social sciences would merely scratch the surface; only humanistic insights could penetrate to the deeper re-

gions of human experience. In the humanities this approach is known as literary criticism, in the social sciences as content analysis.⁸⁶

Being a creation of the American Studies, the *Popular Culture Studies* inherited this approach when - in the second half of the Sixties under the leadership of Ray B. Browne of Bowling Green State University - it institutionally broke away from the American Studies movement.

In its beginning it was extremely theory reluctant and often resembled "a facile populism that uncritically equates popular cultural forms with the voice of the 'people' and disregards questions of ideology and social control altogether."⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Marx, Leo, "American Studies - A Defense of an Unscientific Method" (1969), quoted in Wise, 321

⁸⁷ Fluck, Winfried, "Popular Culture as a Mode of Socialization: A Theory about the Social Functions of Popular Cultural Forms", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 21 (3/1987), 31 ; for a critique of the current situation in Germany: Kreuzner, Gabriele, "On Doing Cultural Studies in West Germany", *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 3/2 (May 1989), 240-249, who argues that the traditional dominance of the Frankfurt School Critical Theory inhibits the development of "the theoretical possibility of contradiction and conflict between processes of cultural production and consumption." (245)

If an apparent method was used at all it was content analysis. However, the shortcomings of this technique soon became apparent as "*popular culture is by its very definition determined by the consuming public*", i.e. the audience, and in traditional content analysis there was no room for aspects like the role of the audience.⁸⁸

The study of popular culture has the potential of being "*the cutting edge of American Studies*", but a potential has to be fulfilled and the academic and cultural impact of Popular Culture Studies remained negligible for a long time.

The main point of criticism was, and still is, the lack of method, which at its worst tends to reduce research to a mere positivistic description. As Fluck remarked, there are few exceptions, "notably the work of John Cawelti."⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Denisoff, R. Serge, "Content Analysis: The Achilles Heel of Popular Culture?", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 9 (2/1975), 456/104 - 460/108

⁸⁹ Fishwick, Marshall, "Do We Need Method?", *Journal of Popular Culture* 9 (2/1975), 495/143; Fluck, *Popular Culture as a Mode of Socialization*, 45, Footnote 4

2.1.1 The Formula

In his classic study of the Western, "The Six Gun Mystique", Cawelti suggested a few "*basic principles of interpretation and explanation*" of popular culture "*by taking some tentative steps toward an interdisciplinary method.*"

Though focusing on the Western his general considerations are equally applicable to other forms of popular culture following "a highly conventionalized pattern".⁹⁰

According to Cawelti the culturally significant phenomenon of popular art is not the individual work, but the formula by which the individual work of art is made.

Formula is defined as "*a conventional system for structuring cultural products. It can be distinguished from invented structures which are new ways of organizing works of art.*"⁹¹

⁹⁰ Cawelti, John G., *The Six-Gun Mystique* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1971), ix

⁹¹ Cawelti, 29 (my italics)

All cultural products contain a mixture of conventions and inventions. Conventions are those "*elements which are known to both the creator and his audience beforehand*", for instance favorite plots, stereotyped characters, ideas or specific linguistic expressions.

Inventions are those elements of the artifact uniquely imagined by the artist.

In popular culture conventions usually are more dominant than inventions, but nevertheless the latter are important and the "formula approach" sometimes does not pay due respect to this fact.

Cawelti points out that conventions and inventions have quite different cultural functions:

"Conventions represent familiar shared images and meanings and they assert an ongoing continuity of values; inventions confront us with a new perception or meaning which we have not realized before.

Both these functions are important to culture. Conventions help maintain a culture's stability while inventions help it respond to

changing circumstances and provide new information about the world."⁹²

This means that popular culture both reflects and shapes the attitude of its audience.

Cawelti suggests that a formula has three main dimensions:

- a built-in artistic unity of setting, action and character;
- a universal dimension referring to archetypal patterns; and
- a cultural dimension of game, social ritual and dream.

The artistic unity is a major source for the formula's lasting appeal to mass audiences.

- The Western formula implies a particular setting: "*The Western is a story which takes place on or near a frontier.*"

⁹² Cawelti, 28

- Its action "*develops out of [...] the epic moment when the values and disciplines of American society stand balanced against the savage wilderness.*"
- And it features a typical cast of characters: "*the townspeople or agents of civilization, the savages or outlaws who threaten the first group, and the heroes who ... possess many qualities and skills of the savages, but are fundamentally committed to the townspeople.*"

Western plots are concocted out of the varying relationships between these three groups.⁹³

Frye's definition of four central myths in literature is helpful in the discussion of the formula's universal dimension. He distinguishes comedy, tragedy, satire and romance.

The Western is a perfect example for romance. The essential element of a romantic plot is adventure, namely

⁹³ Cawelti, 35, 66 and 46

the successful quest, which begins with a perilous journey and some preliminary adventures, builds up towards the climax of the crucial struggle in which hero, foe or both must die and finally ends with the exaltation of the hero.⁹⁴

The cultural dimension of formula includes the aspects of game and ritual. All cultures have a number of games which their members know and can participate in. These games supply a sense of group solidarity and provide individual enjoyment at the same time.

The Western's formulaic structure is identical to that of a game: both have clearly opposing players, a set of rules, and a typical setting.

As for ritual: "*A ritual is a means of reaffirming certain basic cultural values, resolving tensions and establishing a sense of continuity between present and past.*"

⁹⁴ Frye, Northrop, *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), especially the third essay "Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths" (131-242) and its discussion of myth (158 ff.)

In more homogeneous cultures this was achieved by religious ceremonies, in industrialized Western society popular arts and mass media, especially television, have taken over this task.

The Western, for instance, is effective as social ritual because

"it indirectly confronts those uncertainties and conflicts of values which have always existed in American culture, but which have become increasingly strong in the twentieth century."⁹⁵

In other words: *the increasingly apparent structural crisis of the American Dream is indirectly reflected in corresponding changes in the Western formula.*

Summing up, Cawelti attacks the idea that popular fiction is a degraded literary product and assigns it to the realm of escape and distraction.

⁹⁵ Cawelti, 73

He believes that formulaic literature has a different function than its elite counterpart. The Western formula, for instance, fulfills the latent cultural need for a fictional pattern disguising and legitimizing aggression.

The emphasis on the importance of the formula results in a somewhat rigid approach to popular culture. Cawelti's equation of "popular = formulaic" is too simple and the related emphasis on the consensual role of popular culture tends to ignore its potential for change.⁹⁶

2.1.2 Artist, Artifact and Audience

Another shortcoming in Cawelti's model is the negligence of the medium. He makes no distinction between the Western as literature, movie or television series. Building on Cawelti's classical study Donald Dunlop offered a solution to this omission.

⁹⁶ Pawling, Christopher, ed., *Popular Fiction and Social Change* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 10-12

He suggested that the analysis of popular culture must involve at least three factors and their interrelationship: the artist, the artifact, and the audience.⁹⁷

The following diagram illustrates the relationship of artist, artifact and audience.



Relationship between Artist, Artifact and Audience

The relationship between popular artist and audience works in both directions:

- The artist creates the artifact within the conventional framework of the formula, which serves as a corset and restricts the artist's creativity in many ways.
- The audience determines the success of an artifact. In popular culture success is commercial success.

⁹⁷ Dunlop, Donald, "Popular Culture and Methodology", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 9 (2/1975),

"No audience, no artifact" is a simple but valid equation, and therefore the audience is constantly under close scrutiny.

Success is determined with the help of quantitative analysis tools such as the Nielsen Ratings. Despite this prominence of commerce I believe that a method of simple economic determinism is not sufficient for the analysis of popular culture as "it does not leave any space for considerations of legitimate needs on the side of the recipients."⁹⁸

Interposed between artist and audience is an extremely composite group of persons which I would like to call *mediators*: A mediator is a third between two opposites that shares something of the nature of each.

The term "mediator" describes not only this group's position between artist, artifact and audience, but also

375/23-383/31

⁹⁸ Fluck, *Popular Culture as a Mode of Socialization*, 31

their function: to mediate between the artist as creator, the artifact as product and the audience as recipient.

The word "mediators" also indicates that this group usually is in some way connected to the medium conveying the artifact to the audience.

In television mediators include network executives, program directors, producers, distributors, technicians, actors and many more.

Mediators perform very different functions and there are two distinct subgroups:

- The first group, which I shall call "Mediator I", is directly involved with the production of the artifact itself and is therefore situated between artist and artifact. An example would be the production crew in a television studio.
- A second group, "Mediator II", is concerned with the marketing of the artifact after its production, and is situated mainly between artifact and audience. Their tasks range from determining an arti-

fact's suitability for a certain market to creating a market for that artifact. An example are network executives.

Nevertheless all mediators have some things in common. With the notable exception of actors, mediators work behind the scenes and remain relatively anonymous to the audience most of the time; yet they exert a varying amount of control over both artist and artifact.

Also, it is extremely difficult for an outsider not participating in the production to analyze the exact influence of their activities. To some extent this lack of information can be made up with the help of trade and other inside publications.

I would like to illustrate the importance of the medium with an example based Edmund Carpenter's in "The New Languages":

An immigrant living in America had retained many of his native customs and refused to wear a suit in style. A few months after his son had bought him a TV set a change took place and

the father suddenly appeared in 'the kind of suit executives wear on TV'.

He had passed the same suit in store windows many times before and had seen it both in advertisements and on other living men, but not until he saw it on TV did it become meaningful.

After experiments with various media Carpenter concluded that

"each communication channel codifies reality differently and thus influences, to a surprising degree, the content of the message communicated. A medium is not simply an envelope that carries any letter; it is itself a major part of that message."⁹⁹

A few years later Carpenter's colleague and co-author Marshall McLuhan presented this observation a little less differentiated but all the more memorable when he stated that "the medium is the message."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Carpenter, Edmund, 'The New Languages', Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan, *Explorations in Communications* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), quoted in Dunlop, *Methodology*, 380/28

¹⁰⁰ McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet Books, 1966), 24

In essence this means that we "*cannot concentrate on the content of an artifact to the exclusion of the medium through which it is conveyed.*"¹⁰¹

Transferring the above considerations to the analysis of Star Trek we can safely say that the audience consists of Americans who have access to and watch television. The artifact is the original television series with its seventy-nine episodes. But who is the artist?

In a literary formula the artist would be the writer, but with Star Trek - or any other television series - this concept does not work.

The writer is important, but transferring the written story to the medium of television is a complex process and to the final artifact the director and many others are just as important as the writer.

¹⁰¹ Dunlop, *Methodology*, 380/28

Also the subject of our examination is a series and using the above concept there would be many different artists as various episodes are written by various persons.

Thus the producer of a series comes closest to being the artist. He is the one person in control of the artifact as an entity. All other hands involved are concerned with single aspects: the writer creates the story, the director transfers it to the medium of television and so on.

The producer determines the mixture of conventions and inventions that in the end make up the artifact.

Summarizing the above reflections my analysis will include

- the artist and the creation of the artifact;
- the mediators and their role in the production of the artifact; and
- the impact of the artifact on the audience and vice versa.

Popular culture is a symbolic reconstruction of reality. Symbols have meaning only because they are objects

representing a reality shared by a certain group of people.

Outside this group the symbol loses its meaning. The group's shared reality is determined by underlying cultural myths known to the individual members of the group. The final chapter about "The American Dream in Star Trek" focuses on the reflections of American myths in Star Trek.

Dunlop concluded his essay by saying about Cawelti that

"his discussion of social and psychological dimensions provides us with a rough map into territories beyond the West."¹⁰²

As we shall see, in a literal as well as in a metaphorical sense "*beyond the West*" is where the following analysis of Star Trek is going to take us.

¹⁰²Dunlop, 382/30

2.2 The Making of Star Trek

2.2.1 The Producer

I have argued that the producer of a television series comes closest to being the artist and with Star Trek this certainly is the case. More than anyone else the late *Gene Roddenberry* is considered to be creator of Star Trek.

For a long time Roddenberry's comments about subjects related to Star Trek were considered as the final word on the subject. Biographies and interviews generally tend to portray him as a man of genius, charming, knowledgeable, concerned about the future of humanity, and dominant.¹⁰³

Born in 1921 in Texas, Roddenberry grew up in Los Angeles. He was fascinated with flying, became a cadet in

¹⁰³ Roddenberry died on October, 24, 1991. A critical and well researched biography has just been published: Engel, Joel, *Gene Roddenberry - The Man and the Myth behind Star Trek* (New York: Hyperion, 1994)

the U.S. Army Air Corps, and flew combat and reconnaissance missions during World War II.

In 1949 he returned to Los Angeles with the intention of creating drama for the new medium of television. Having a family to support, he at the beginning had to take up a job at the Los Angeles Police Department.

Two years later he sold his first script and in 1954 quit his police job in order to write full time. He had several assignments for all kinds of television shows and became head writer for "Have Gun, Will Travel."

The episode "Helen of Abajinian" won him a Writer's Guild Award for Best Western. Roddenberry had acquired a reputation as an outstanding writer, but was not satisfied with it:

"The story is not 'told' until it's on celluloid. [...] Therefore it became apparent to me that if you want the film to reflect accurately what you felt when you wrote the script,

then you have to produce it, too. [...] Producing in television is like story-telling."¹⁰⁴

Consequently, by 1963 he had moved on to produce his first television series, "The Lieutenant", and many actors, writers and directors working on "The Lieutenant" would later be involved in Star Trek.

Roddenberry's interest in science fiction had been awakened back in his junior high school days when a classmate gave him a copy of *Astounding Stories*.¹⁰⁵

In 1960 he began to toy with an idea for a science fiction show which he called Star Trek. At the time televised science fiction had a fairly bad reputation.

Shows like "Captain Video" were made on a low budget, looked cheap and inevitably had an extremely-good-versus-utterly-evil plot with lots of action and a bug-eyed monster that in the end was killed by the hero.

¹⁰⁴Whitfield, Stephen E. and Gene Roddenberry, *The Making of Star Trek* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), 33

¹⁰⁵For information on *Astounding Stories of Super-Science*, cf. Schäfer, Martin, *Science Fiction als Ideologiekritik? Utopische Spuren in der amerikanischen Science Fiction-Literatur 1940-1955* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977)

Especially the monster was considered obligatory for science fiction.

At the end of the 1950s *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits* were the first quality TV shows featuring science fiction elements, but they were anthologies. A few widely acclaimed science fiction films like *The Day The Earth Stood Still* or *Things To Come* could be seen on the big screen, but "*compared to television, features seemed to have unlimited time and unlimited money.*"¹⁰⁶

After 29 episodes the contract for "The Lieutenant" expired and Roddenberry was asked for another series idea. He developed his science fiction concept into a "series format", which is an outline describing the main elements of the new show.

2.2.2 The Format

Star Trek was the first attempt at a one-hour quality science fiction TV series with continuing characters.

¹⁰⁶Whitfield, 100

Roddenberry knew that an idea like his would be considered too risky, too expensive and impossible to produce.

Television is financed by advertising products to a mass audience and advertising rates depend on the size of the audience. Thus there was - and is - a tendency not to risk anything too different.

Knowing this, Roddenberry tried to make his concept appear as conventional as possible, but *"like a Trojan horse, the series idea would conceal a few surprises. He was determined to break through television's censorship barrier and do tales about important and meaningful things."*¹⁰⁷

Roddenberry developed his idea into a format, which was submitted to network executives. In this format, he called Star Trek a "Wagon Train to the Stars", referring to one of the most successful contemporary Western shows on television.

Actually, Star Trek was more similar to "Gunsmoke" than to "Wagon Train": a tall, calm hero with an air of self-assurance; a half-breed preferring his own company, but being a willing assistant to the hero; a country doctor of the old school, skeptical towards new technologies.

These descriptions roughly fit Kirk, Spock and Dr. McCoy just as well as Matt Dillon, Quint Asper and Doc Adams. As Peel concludes "it was from the Westerns that Star Trek emerged, not the more obvious science fiction of the past."¹⁰⁸

Roddenberry emphasized that the Enterprise would provide a familiar locale *"as with Gunsmoke's Dodge City"* and that the format "keeps all of Science Fiction's variety and excitement, but still stays within a mass audience frame of reference."

¹⁰⁷ Whitfield, 21

¹⁰⁸ Peel, John, *Star Trek - Reflections of the '60s* (Los Angeles: Schuster & Schuster, 1988), 19; Peel also shows that "almost all of the *Star Trek* production team either learned their craft with Western series or else worked extensively for them", 21

The basic elements of the Star Trek were to be "*science fiction which adhered to the proven rules of drama, a cast of continuing characters, and a familiar home base from which to operate.*"¹⁰⁹

Roddenberry's "similar worlds concept" made it probable that worlds on other planets are similar to our own, ranging from a parallel to our yesterday to our breathtaking distant future.

The mission of the Enterprise is best described by an excerpt from the orders to the Captain of the starship:

III. You are therefore posted, effective immediately, to command the following: The U.S.S. ENTERPRISE [...]

IV. Nature and duration mission:
Galaxy exploration and investigation; 5 years

V. Where possible, you will confine your landings and contacts to Class "M" planets, approximating Earth-Mars conditions.

VI. You will conduct this patrol to accomplish primarily:

- (a) Earth security, via explorations of intelligence and social systems capable of a galaxial threat, and
- (b) Scientific investigation to add to the Earth's body of knowledge of alien life forms and social systems, and
- (c) Any required assistance to the several Earth colonies in your quadrant, and the enforcement of appropriate statutes affecting such Federated commerce vessels and traders as you may contact in the course of your mission.¹¹⁰

In short: "Hornblower in space."

Just as Captain Horatio Hornblower was the highest representative of English law in the far waters in which he sailed, so would the Captain of the Enterprise be the highest representative of Starfleet Command in outer space.

The mission was "*to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilization, to boldly go where no man has gone before.*"

¹⁰⁹The complete original format is printed in Whitfield, 24-30. Quotes from 22-26 and 37

Like in the 18th century Captain Horatio Hornblower's ship was the fastest way to get around there is in the 23rd century no way of communication faster than the Enterprise.

This renders *"the situation of this interstellar society ... almost exactly analogous to the Earth of the eighteenth century. Then too, communications over vast distances were slow and uncertain. The arrival of a courier was always an event."*¹¹¹

The setting promised an interesting story potential. The principal characters acting in those stories were to be:

- Captain: Robert T. April, aged 34, strong personality, leading man and central character of the show, prefers action to administration.

¹¹⁰ This slightly modified format was later distributed as *The Star Trek Guide* to all writers for the series

¹¹¹ Gerrold, David, *The World of Star Trek* (New York: Bluejay Books, 1984), 7

- Executive Officer: a woman always referred to as "Number One", second-in-command, cool and logical, almost "computer-like"
- The Navigator: José (Joe) Tyler, American father, Brazilian mother, brilliant mathematician, but very temperamental.
- Medical Officer: Philip "Bones" Boyce, aged 51, humorously cynical, considers himself the only realist on board.
- First Lieutenant: Mr. Spock, captain's right hand, an alien with almost satanic appearance, probably half Martian.
- Captain's Yeoman: J. M. Colt, captain's secretary, reporter and bookkeeper, very female.

And of course there would be Earth colonies, outposts, and plenty of alien life forms to be encountered.

Star Trek fulfilled all the requirements for an interesting TV series: its format was ideal for a wide variety of stories, it had an interesting cast of characters and an un-

usual but familiar setting, which invited drama-action-adventure similar to that of a Western.

In April 1964, Roddenberry had signed a three-year-contract to make pilots¹¹² for Desilu Studios, a small production company best known for their long running show "I Love Lucy."

The production company's task is to sell the series to a network which will pay for its production. Desilu contacted CBS, and Roddenberry presented the format to CBS network executives, who rejected it.

A few weeks later, the format was presented to the second network, NBC.

They liked the idea and in May 1964 asked Roddenberry for three story outlines. Out of these NBC would choose one to be developed into a pilot film. This was quite a risk for NBC as conservative estimates placed production costs for a Star Trek pilot in excess of \$500,000.

¹¹² "pilots" demonstrate to network executives what a new series would look like each week

2.2.3 Television Production Conditions

An eye-witness of the first airing of Star Trek remembered that compared to other television series ...

"... Star Trek was different. It had all these little gadgets, it looked good, they had phasers, super effects, nice uniforms, and it wasn't cowboy, your ordinary sitcom or the news."¹¹³

The existence of the "little gadgets", which apparently were very memorable to the audience, was due to the fact that Star Trek was created for a visual medium.

Had it been literature these and other details could have been left to the reader's imagination, but on film or television every detail had to be visually present on screen.

¹¹³Mr. David Thornton in an interview on August 1, 1993

The following part briefly examines some of the conditions and peculiarities specific to the production of a TV series.¹¹⁴

After World War II, television emerged as a new medium in the market of mass entertainment and began to replace radio. The uprising industry was controlled by the same corporations that had controlled the radio market before.

After development of the market had been inhibited by World War II, it literally exploded in the decade following the war: in 1947 Americans owned about 20,000 TV sets, ten years later this number had skyrocketed to forty million, and set ownership had become a status symbol.¹¹⁵

In 1954, color TV broadcasting on a regular basis was begun by the major networks. The addition of color did

¹¹⁴Whitfield's book contains valuable inside information on how a TV series is made and was advertised as "The book on how to write for TV!"

¹¹⁵Noble, 339 f.

not change the attributes of television as a medium, but it did give it a more realistic and natural character.

Color was seen as more "intimate", "exciting", adventuresome", "real", and "sophisticated", in short more "believable". The first show aired in color was "Bonanza" and by 1965 all series were filmed in color.¹¹⁶

Symbolically, one of the first TV test broadcastings had been the transmission of a dollar sign. American television is financed by advertising products to a mass audience and advertising rates depend on the size of the audience: The bigger the audience, the better the income.

Consequently everything in the business of television is subordinated to the pursuit of high ratings. Programming was - and is - determined not by content but by a broadcast's ability to attract commercial sponsors.

¹¹⁶ Bogart, 291 and 471

In this context the fact that no one on the Enterprise smoked was quite remarkable at a time when advertising was a key to network profits.¹¹⁷

The American television market of the 50s and 60s was dominated by three networks: ABC, CBS and NBC. Independent local stations did not have the significance they have today.

From the beginning television primarily was entertainment. This resulted in the fact that American movies and television series were functionally optimized towards pure entertainment, made for universal acceptance under almost industrial conditions of production.

¹¹⁸

The production of a television series is divided into three distinct phases:

¹¹⁷ cf. Bogart, Leo, *The Age of Television*, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1958, rpt. 1972), 195; about 8-10% of network revenues were derived from advertising smoking material

¹¹⁸ cf. Hallenberger, Gerd, "Anmerkungen zur Amerikanisierung der Fernsehunterhaltung in der BRD", 45 f.; in: Maase, Hallenberger und van Elteren, *Amerikanisierung der Alltagskultur?*

- preproduction,
- production, and
- post-production.

Preproduction is the planning phase and involves a myriad of details from script writing to designing studio sets and casting.

In overall command is the executive producer. Second-in-command is the line producer, who takes care of all the daily problems arising in the various departments. During the preproduction phase the script is broken down scene by scene and rearranged in an order to allow shooting to progress in an efficient and economical way.

Scripts not only had to have an interesting action-adventure plot, with stimulating characters and an exciting setting, they also had to meet several other requirements. First, they had to be realized within budget.

Zur Rezeption US-amerikanischer Populärkultur in der BRD und in den NL, Diskussionspapier 9-90 (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, 1990)

The number of required sets, extras like alien creatures and fancy costumes or make ups, the number of opticals and many other things had to be controlled.

Second, there were restrictions by the network's Broadcast Standards Department, which revised scripts and made comments such as "*Page 4: Please delete McCoy's expletive, 'Good Lord ...'*" or "*Page 43: Caution on the embrace; avoid open-mouthed kiss.*"¹¹⁹

Third, scripts had to maintain week-to-week unity concerning technical details and character development. Therefore they underwent several "production revisions", even after a writer had submitted his final draft.

More often than not the final script was a compromise between artistic optimum and various non-artistic necessities, with the scales strongly tilted towards the latter.

¹¹⁹Whitfield, 315 and 310

When a script finally met all of the above requirements the production phase began. This is the actual filming of the episode.

In the 1960s the shooting of an average science fiction movie took about ten to twelve weeks whereas a Star Trek episode, which in a way was a 48 minute science fiction movie, had to be filmed in only six days.

During this phase the director reigns supreme over a crew of about thirty to forty men and women consisting of cinematographer, assistant directors, property master, script supervisor, gaffers and many others.

In the post-production phase the filmed material is edited, a musical score is recorded, and opticals and sound effects are created and added.

An ordinary one hour show at the time took between six and eight weeks of post-production time to be completed. A Star Trek episode required between fourteen and sixteen weeks, more than double.

The specialized and extremely expensive opticals needed for the show constantly threatened budget limits. A well-known example for an efficient combination of optical and sound effect is the dematerialization and rematerialization of crewmen, which became known as "beaming".

In a science fiction series the post-production phase is of special importance, and at least two of the people involved in Star Trek post-production received Emmy awards for their work.¹²⁰

In 1966, the average episode of Star Trek cost about two hundred thousand dollars. Approximately five million dollars were at stake for the episodes of the first season alone. This meant that Star Trek would have to reach a mass audience and be profitable for the network or go off the air.

Any analysis of Star Trek must bear in mind that the pressures of television production have a direct effect

¹²⁰Whitfield, 373 f.

on the artifact, which is the episode aired by the network.¹²¹

2.2.4 The Pilots

From three story outlines presented to them NBC chose one called "The Cage" and in October 1964 preparations for the shooting of the pilot began. The history of this pilot illustrates the importance of conventions as opposed to inventions in the production of a television series.

To Roddenberry good science fiction did not necessarily involve an evil monster. He thought science fiction ought to be an extension of current knowledge worked out in enough detail to be possible or at least believable to the audience.

Thus the pilot was a challenge to all those involved. They had to create a believable 23rd century environment and everything used in the show had to be de-

¹²¹Gerold, 133 and Whitfield, 73

signed from scratch. As Gene Coon, script writer and Star Trek co-producer, commented:

"[Roddenberry] didn't create a show. He created a universe, and it works [...] You can submit our ship or our technology or anything you want to NASA and they will say, 'Well, it's pretty far out, but I don't see why it shouldn't work.'"¹²²

This emphasis on believability was very important to Roddenberry. For instance, the design of Star Trek's "Dodge City" (i.e. the Enterprise) was revised over and over again. The bridge alone took six weeks to be built at a cost of about \$60,000.

The decision to have a mixture of races in the cast caused a lot of raised eyebrows. A number of people were concerned that the audience might not accept the idea of different races working together. However, Roddenberry stuck to his basic concept:

¹²²quoted in Whitfield, 74

"Intolerance in the 23rd century? Improbable! If man survives that long, he will have learned to take a delight in the essential differences between men and between cultures. [...] This is part of the optimism we built into Star Trek."¹²³

In February 1965 the pilot was completed, submitted to NBC for evaluation, and rejected. The network thought it was "too cerebral".

Apart from the missing action-adventure NBC did not like the cast. "The Cage" was too unconventional. The network in particular did not like the invention of

- a woman as second-in-command,
- an alien who "looked like Satan",
- an integrated cast.

¹²³Gene Roddenberry, quoted in Whitfield, 40

Twenty two years later, Roddenberry reflected the rejection of "The Cage" as follows:

"... in those days [TV] was at the peak of its love affair with the Western Story. I wanted to sell my series so I had promised the network that my Star Trek idea would be little more than a space western. A Wagon Train to the Stars, zap guns instead of six-shooters, space ships instead of horses. ...

Perhaps I could use this as an excuse to go to those far off planets, with little polka-dotted people, if necessary, and be able to talk about love, war, nature, God, sex, all those things to go to make up the excitement of the human condition, And maybe the TV censors would let it pass because it all seemed so make-believe.

So, instead of a space western, I delivered a very different kind of story ..."¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Roddenberry in his introduction to the 1987 home video version of "The Cage"

However, Roddenberry had proved that it was possible to produce a series like Star Trek under the given conditions. All in all the pilot had cost \$630,000 and NBC was not prepared to write that sum off.

The network felt that perhaps they had just chosen the wrong story and therefore shattered all television precedent and asked for a second pilot; and this one had better be familiar action-adventure.

Before filming of the second pilot could begin, some fundamental changes had to be made. The network specifically asked for Number One and Mr. Spock to be dropped.

They could not imagine a woman in an important commanding position and Spock was just too strange: "Remember, we have a big religious group in this country, and those pointed ears look too much like the devil."¹²⁵

¹²⁵Whitfield, 125

Roddenberry decided to eliminate the part of Number One, but was vehement on keeping Mr. Spock. The network finally agreed and told him to "*kind of keep him in the back.*"

However, as the ship still needed a second-in-command Mr. Spock's responsibilities were increased and he inherited the cold and logic personality of Number One.

Also, due to unavailability of the actor who had played Captain Christopher Pike, the role of the Captain had to be recast and his name was changed to Kirk.

In June 1965, "Where No Man Has Gone Before" was chosen as the story for the second pilot, and in addition to the above changes two new characters were introduced:

- Engineering Officer Montgomery Scott, third-in-command and generally referred to as "Scotty", a likable man of Scottish descent and with heavy Scottish accent, played by James Doohan; and

- physicist Hikaru Sulu, who was of a mixed Oriental and Filipino background and had a mainly Japanese cultural heritage, played by George Takei.

Seven months later, in January 1966, the episode was submitted to NBC. In the middle of February the network announced its decision: the following September Star Trek would make its debut on national television. At this time, the network's commitment was for sixteen episodes.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ this is common practice by networks as it leaves them the possibility to cancel the show if the Nielsen ratings are not high enough for the first sixteen episodes; cf. Whitfield, 261

2.3 The Series

On September 8, 1966, the first Star Trek episode was aired on national television and in the following chapter

I will examine the regular cast of characters, the ship and the alien cultures that the Enterprise encountered on her journeys.

2.3.1 The Crew

Principal character of the show is **Captain James T. Kirk**, aged 34 and born in Riverside, Iowa. He was conceived to be a strong personality and in many ways resembles 18th century Captain Horatio Hornblower.

Kirk prefers action to administration and is a man of decision. From the beginning he has ruled out any romantic involvement aboard the ship, which does of course not necessarily preclude enjoyments ashore, and indeed he turned out to be something of a universal gigolo.

Kirk was portrayed by William Shatner, and there is a marked difference between Captain Pike in the first pilot and Captain Kirk in the series, as Shatner added a touch

of humor to the character. Kirk projects emotion, strength and a strong belief in the positive potential of the human race.

Second in command is **Science Officer Spock**. An alien with a somewhat satanic appearance he is the product of an interplanetary marriage between his mother Amanda, a native of Earth, and his father Sarek, a native of the planet Vulcan.

He has inherited characteristics from both parents, but he thinks of himself as Vulcan and tries to keep his emotions strictly under control, therefore appearing cool, logical and almost "computer-like".

Actor Leonard Nimoy portrayed Spock with such efficiency that the Vulcan turned out to be the most popular character on the show.

Many people have wondered about the origin of the Spock's name. The author of "the most popular book of the postwar era, with more than 20 million copies sold", The Pocket Book of Baby and Child Care, was a Dr. Benjamin Spock, but Roddenberry denied any connection to

the famous pediatrician: "it was not until later that someone told him about Dr. Spock."¹²⁷

Dr. Spock's book, first published in 1946, was the book about child education and promoted the importance of fun, play, love and understanding, providing a model which was to become known as "permissive education".

Considering the impact of Dr. Spock's book it seems surprising that a man with similar values had never heard of him, but even if Roddenberry did not choose it consciously "Spock" was a familiar name for an unfamiliar character.¹²⁸

After the network had accepted the second pilot and before production of the first episode began some interesting changes concerning the regular crew were made.

First of all the role of the ship's medical officer was recast and his name changed to **Dr. Leonard McCoy**.

¹²⁷ Siegel, 109; Roddenberry's comment in Whitfield, 236

Born in Georgia, "Bones" McCoy is 45 years of age and the prototype of a humorously cynical, humane, emotional Southern country doctor. He has been described as "a future-day H. L. Mencken" and considers himself the only realist on board.

Before Star Trek DeForest Kelley had mostly played the part of the villain in many Westerns, including Gunfight at the O.K. Corral.¹²⁹

The characters of captain and doctor had not changed much from their original outline as presented in the series format, but the melting of Number One and Mr. Spock resulted in the triad of Kirk, Spock and McCoy, which was to become the core of Star Trek.

All three had very different personalities but were united by deep mutual respect and their common mission. Kirk was leader and decider, McCoy and Spock were his ad-

¹²⁸ about Dr. Spock's influence: Noble, 335 and 527; Raeithel, Vol. 3, 236 ff.; in 1968, Dr. Spock was arrested for "aiding draft evasion". Dr. Spock's case is considered in its social and political context in a chapter entitled "The Spockian Challenge" in Slater, 62-77.

¹²⁹ Whitfield, 239

visors. Spock personified the concept of Rationality, McCoy that of Compassion.

Both represented various aspects of decisions that ultimately Kirk had to make. Spock and McCoy were more than mere characters: they symbolized Kirk's inside dilemmas by verbalizing the arguments the Captain had to consider in reaching a decision.

From a dramatic point of view both were perfectly fitted to demonstrate Kirk's internal conflicts. In psychological terms all of them would portray different aspects of personality: Kirk as Ego, Spock as Super-Ego, and McCoy as Id.

Another interesting change after NBC had accepted the pilot concerned the oriental **Physicist Sulu**, who had been introduced in the second pilot together with Engineer Scott: Sulu was promoted to helmsman, which required his constant presence on the bridge.

Scotty symbolized the ability to take action once a decision had been made by the captain and Sulu as helmsman was to be the tool of that action.

Last not least, **Lieutenant Uhura** joined the crew. The actor portraying Communications Officer Aden in "Where No Man Has Gone Before" was unavailable.

In the two pilots, Communication Officers had been white and male. Despite repeated cautions from various sides regarding the plans for an integrated crew Roddenberry decided not to simply recast the role but to completely change the character by creating Lieutenant Uhura, a black female officer on the bridge of the Enterprise.

Lieutenant Uhura symbolizes the ship's ability to communicate. She is a citizen of the Bantu Nation of United Africa and proud of her African heritage. Her name is feminine for the Swahili word uhuru, meaning "freedom".

Casting is of central importance to the success of a TV series. The fictional characters in a series are conceived in such a way as to offer an opportunity for identification to as many viewers as possible.

The actors chosen to portray those characters are very important in this process since it is them that the audience is directly confronted with.

Here is a list of actors portraying the main characters in the original Star Trek series:

Character	Actor
Kirk	William Shatner
Spock	Leonard Nimoy
McCoy	DeForest Kelley
Scott	James Doohan
Uhura	Nichelle Nichols
Sulu	George Takei
Chekov	Walter Koenig

Summing up it can be said that after the second pilot some interesting changes took place in the crew of the Enterprise. In the second pilot itself the only unconventional character on the bridge was that of Spock. In the

episodes to follow regular members of the Enterprise crew on the bridge included

- Uhura as black woman Communications Officer,
- Sulu as Japanese Helmsman,
- Scotty as Scottish Engineer,
- McCoy as a Southern white Medical Officer,
- Spock as Vulcan Science Officer,
- and Kirk as white, all-American Captain.

Completing the "United Nations ensemble in space" was **Ensign Chekov**, who joined the regular crew in the series' second season. He was of Russian origin and a kind of Kirk-in-training representing the next generation of command.

Thus Roddenberry realized his idea of an integrated crew *after* the network had accepted the series.

2.3.2 The Ship

The Enterprise is the culmination of man's technology in the 23rd century and provides a familiar week-to-week

locale to the audience. Bearing the registry number NCC-1701, the U.S.S. Enterprise is 947 feet long, 417 feet wide and has a maximum gross weight of 190,000 tons. "U.S.S." is the abbreviation of "United Space Ship".

The ship is divided into three main sections: the saucer-shaped primary hull, the cigar-shaped secondary hull underneath it, and the two engine-pods attached to the back of the secondary hull. The Enterprise is not able to land on a planet's surface and always stays in orbit above it.

The primary hull in its center is eleven decks thick. The bulge atop the center is deck one containing the circular shaped bridge, the nerve center of the ship.

The Captain's chair is situated in the middle and swivels so that he can easily survey the whole bridge. Before him are a giant viewscreen (an extension of his eyes) and the pilot console (an extension of his hands). Communications and Engineering are at the right and left rear, convenient but out of the way.

All in all the design of the bridge was so efficient and believable that *"the United States Navy sent a delegation to the studio to examine the bridge set in detail. They were considering a similar layout for a new aircraft-carrier bridge."*¹³⁰

The secondary hull is also referred to as the engineering hull, as much of the facilities and activities concerned with engineering take place in this area.

The Enterprise is able to travel faster than the speed of light and there are two basic means of propulsion: impulse power and warp drive. Impulse power can drive the ship only at sub-light speed.

To make the difficult concept of light speed more transparent to the audience the "Warp Factor" was invented. "Warp Factor One", for instance, is equivalent to the speed of light and "Warp Six", the maximum safe cruising speed, would be 216 times the speed of light.

¹³⁰Gerold, 24

The ship's sick bay on deck seven is Dr. McCoy's realm and is surrounded by a protective shell of bulk storage. It has sensor-controlled beds with a diagnostic panel above, allowing the doctor to scan vital functions without attaching anything to the body of the patient.

There are some fictional devices aboard the ship that have become very popular and that shall not go unmentioned.

- The *phaser* is Star Trek's equivalent to a colt. It is a hand weapon that can be set to various levels of intensity from stun to dematerialize. Until right into the second day of filming the second pilot they were known as "laser", but it was decided that lasers might very well have become common-place by the time the show got on the air or at least shortly thereafter and rather than run the risk of being outdated the hand weapons were called "phaser" instead.
- The *tricorder* looks like a black tape recorder but contains a small viewing screen. It is used to

measure, analyze, and keep records on almost any required subject.

- One of Star Trek's most useful devices was the *communicator*. Roughly the size of a cigarette pack it established communication between a landing party and the ship. It also served as a transporter-locator device allowing the transporter to locate and "beam up" any crewman within range.
- The *transporter* is a device for temporarily converting matter into energy, "beaming" that energy to a predetermined point, and reconvertng it back to its original state.

2.3.3 The Aliens

The Western had savages to pose a threat to the townspeople and the hero, science fiction had aliens. Before Star Trek, aliens almost always were slimy, crawly, scaly, and hairy monsters, who were at least as evil as they looked and whose main function was to be killed. Star Trek was different.

One of Spock's favorite lines was "*It's life, Jim, but not as we know it.*" The mission of the Enterprise was to "*seek out new life forms*" and not to destroy them.

An example for Star Trek's attitude towards alien life forms is an episode entitled "The Devil in the Dark." It featured an underground being called the "Horta", which killed pergium miners on planet Janus VI. The Enterprise is summoned to assist in locating and killing the monster.

After Kirk wounds it, Spock performs a mind meld and finds out that the Horta killed only in self-defense: it was a mother and the miners were destroying its eggs.

Says Roddenberry:

"With this understood, the Horta suddenly became understandable, too. It wasn't just a monster - it was someone. And the audience could put themselves in the place of the Horta [...] If you can learn to feel for a Horta, you may also be learning to under-

stand and feel for other humans of different colors, ways, and beliefs."¹³¹

There were of course many different kinds of aliens introduced throughout the series, but only three of them were developed into a culture of some detail: Vulcan, Klingon and Romulan.¹³²

2.3.3.1 Vulcans

The environmental conditions on the planet of Vulcan have resulted in the physical characteristics of its inhabitants:

"Vulcan has a hot, dry climate, a comparatively small amount of surface water and an exceptionally thin atmosphere. The enlarged and pointed ears result from the need to

¹³¹Whitfield, 36

¹³²For a list of aliens in the original series (including a short description) see Leach, Winslow, "The Monsters of *Star Trek*"; in: Irwin, Walter and G.B. Love, ed., *The Best of Trek* (New York: Signet Books, 1978), 45-51

"cup" the tenuous waves more efficiently in the thin atmosphere."¹³³

A basic tenet of Vulcan philosophy is that of non-violence. Vulcans do not believe in killing in any form and consequently are strict vegetarians.

However, Vulcans are not incapable of killing and if given sufficient reason they do so quite efficiently. As their name suggests, Vulcans used to be a highly emotional and a rather violent race until many centuries ago a spiritual leader named Surak ushered them away from destruction by promoting complete adherence to logic and radical suppression of emotion.

From the time of birth Vulcans are taught that to show emotion is highly inappropriate. As a result of this emphasis on logic the last ten centuries have been much more peaceful on Vulcan than for example on Earth.

Another fundamental belief of Vulcan philosophy is that "the greatest joy in all creation is in the infinite ways

¹³³Whitfield, 224

that infinitely diverse things can join together to create meaning and beauty."¹³⁴ This concept is called "Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations" (I.D.I.C.), also known as "Philosophy of Nome", and is symbolized by a medallion Spock wears in the episode "Is There In Truth No Beauty?".

The traditional Vulcan greeting is "Live long and prosper", accompanied by a salute with the right hand: palm facing the person being greeted, fingers spread in the middle and thumb sticking out, not unlike Churchill's V-for-Victory sign.

Vulcans also have some other extraordinary abilities: the mind meld and the nerve pinch.

The *nerve pinch* is applied with the fingers of the right hand to the area on the top of the right shoulder, near the base of the neck. It immediately blocks off blood supply and nerve responses to the brain and results in instant unconsciousness.

The *mind meld* is much more intricate and enables Vulcans to merge their mind with that of another intelligence and read its thoughts. The mind meld is only used if circumstances absolutely require it as the emotional contact inevitably involved is a great strain to a Vulcan.

2.3.3.2 Klingons and Romulans

Every action-adventure needs conflict and most often this is achieved by placing good guys against bad guys. In Star Trek two different kinds of villains made recurring appearances: Klingons and Romulans.

The Klingon Empire is number one adversary of the Federation. Klingons are professional villains: nasty, brutal and merciless. Cruelty is considered admirable and honor is a despicable trait.

Klingons are ruled by an absolute dictatorship. Their whole life is totally devoted to achieve personal gain

¹³⁴Whitfield, 226

and the cleverest, strongest and most ruthless inevitably wins. Women are regarded as little more than useful animals.

In short, Klingons are proud of everything the Federation detests. Physically they look slightly oriental with a dark complexion and bushy eyebrows.

Klingons were introduced during the first season in "Errand of Mercy". In that episode the neutral planet Organia is threatened by a Klingon invasion and Kirk tries to persuade the Organians to accept help from the Federation, but they refuse the offer.

Seemingly unprotected and unarmed they are confirmed pacifists and Kirk does not understand their behavior. When the Klingons arrive, Kirk naturally ends up in a confrontation with the Klingon leader Kor.

At this point the Organians reveal themselves to be superior energy beings with the power to neutralize all weaponry of both Klingons and Federation. The Organians forbid either side to fight and their commandment of "Thou shalt not fight!" finds an angry Kirk shouting

out something like "How dare you forbid us to fight with each other! It's our right!" However, the Organians enforce a peace treaty between the two empires and grudgingly both Kirk and Kor agree.

The Organian Peace Treaty prevented conflicts between Klingons and Federation from turning into an all-out war. The Klingons, villains as they were, had to be controlled: *"That is, the situation should be equivalent to the American-Russian cold war."*¹³⁵

Romulans were introduced in the episode "Balance of Terror". The Romulan Star Empire is located on the outskirts of the galaxy. Little is known about them, but they share a common ancestry with the Vulcans.

The two races are physically almost identical and it is hard to distinguish them. It is believed that the Romulans left Vulcan shortly after Surak's pacifistic teachings became the dominant way of life.

¹³⁵Gerrold, 23

Romulans are highly militaristic, aggressive by nature, and do not take captives. Their name is derived from Earth's ancient Roman empire and they are a dictatorship similar to the warrior-stoic philosophy of that time.

They have an alliance with the Klingons and are equipped with Klingon weapons. An uneasy peace exists between them and the Federation. A neutral zone was established and entry into that zone was considered an act of war.

William Blake Tyrell compares Romulans and Klingons to the two basic types of Indians appearing in the Western:

"The heart of the Western myth is the encounter with the Indian. The myth-making imagination has contained the Indian's alienness in two types: Chingachgook, the noble warrior ever outside the White Man's World,

and Magua, sly, perfidious, fallen and by that fall, bound to the white world."¹³⁶

Romulans are equivalent to the noble warrior, which according to Tyrell are "hard to hate as they often display enormous courage."

Klingons on the other side are like Cooper's Magua, and "with them in time, one episode predicts, the White Man of the Enterprise is destined to unite."

The mentioned episode was "Errand of Mercy" and the prediction would indeed come true long after Tyrell wrote his essay. In the motion picture Star Trek VI - The Undiscovered Country an alliance between Klingons and the Federation was established and in the Star Trek spin-off series The Next Generation a Klingon raised by humans became security officer on the Enterprise.

¹³⁶Tyrell, Wm. Blake, "Star Trek as Myth and Television as Mythmaker", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 10 (Spring 1977), 711-719; quotes from pages 711 and 712

2.4 The Audience

It is fandom that made Star Trek unique, and this chapter examines the Star Trek "fanomenon", i.e. the impact the audience had on Star Trek and vice versa.

2.4.1 Audience Ratings

The episode "Bread and Circuses", written by producers Roddenberry and Coon, included a satire-like reference to the pressures of television production in the 1960s. Kirk, Spock and McCoy beam down to a planet whose civilization closely resembles that of ancient Rome but whose technology is on par with 20th-century Earth.

Gladiatorial games are broadcasted live via television and the arena looks much like a Sixties' television studio. In one scene an arena guard taunts a gladiator not fighting aggressively enough with the revealing threat: *"You bring this station's ratings down, and we'll do a special on you!"*

Towards the end of the episode Kirk is to be executed in the arena and the proconsul tells him that *"we pre-*

empted fifteen minutes on the early show for you, in full color."

Assuming that humans in the 23rd century are so technologically advanced that they have long forgotten about an entertainment medium *"as crude as television"* he explains to Kirk that this medium entails constant battles (literally) to remain in public favor. Kirk smiles knowingly and replies: *"I heard it was - similar."*

And it was. During its three-year run Star Trek was in constant danger of cancellation due to insufficient ratings.

Success or failure of a popular culture artifact is determined by its audience, or to be more exact by the size of its audience. The A. C. Nielsen Company was one of the first services to analyze viewing habits of the television audience.

The Nielsen services provide in fact many different types of measurement, but the best known and most important is the "Nielsen rating", measuring the percentage of sets tuned to specific programs. The accu-

racy of these ratings is a constant topic of discussion, but nevertheless networks use it to determine the success of a broadcast and low ratings almost certainly mean the end for a television show.¹³⁷

In "Star Trek Memories", a 1983 special to promote the third Star Trek movie, Leonard Nimoy explains that unfortunately the network chose "The Man Trap" for Star Trek's television debut.

Those involved in the production liked this episode the least, but network executives had picked it because they believed it to be good science fiction: "The Man Trap" featured a conventional monster threatening the crew.

It was aired on Thursday, September 8, 1966, at 8:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), and most reviews were not at all favorable. The September 14 issue of *Variety* stated that the series was "dreary and confusing" and

¹³⁷ cf. Bogart, 332-354 ("Appendix: The Status of TV Research"); on Nielsen ratings esp. 338-352

"won't work". The *New World Journal-Tribune* called the show "dubious science fiction" but at least saw a "weird comic strip appeal." And in its September 10-16 preview issue *TV Guide* concluded that "*the sky's not the limit on this 'Trek'*".¹³⁸

However, after the other episodes were broadcasted and what Nimoy called "the Star Trek style" had emerged, critics and audience changed their minds. On October 5th, Desilu received official notification from NBC that audience ratings had been satisfactory and thirteen additional episodes were being ordered.

But only a few weeks later Star Trek would find itself in danger of cancellation, because the Nielsen ratings apparently had not developed according to the network's expectations.

As a reaction to this a number of science fiction writers calling themselves "The Committee" sent a form letter

¹³⁸ quotes from Asherman, Allan, *The Star Trek Compendium* (New York: Pocket Books, 1989), 31

to everyone on the mailing list of the 1966 World Science Fiction Convention. The letter discussed the television ratings system, said that it did not reflect Star Trek's popularity properly and urged fans to "WRITE LETTERS" and "let the world know that Star Trek has an audience."

Star Trek fans may not have been sufficient in numbers for high ratings, but they were very active and the letter writing campaign secured a second season.¹³⁹

On March 14, 1967, NBC announced that Star Trek would be continued for a second season, but the network had moved the show to Friday evenings at 8:30.

Why NBC chose the Friday night slot will remain a mystery since the network knew from the fan mail that most viewers were teenagers or young adults and Friday was a traditional night out for this age group.

¹³⁹ quotes from Asherman, 32; members of "The Committee" included well known writers such as Frank Herbert, Robert Bloch, Theodore Sturgeon, Harlan Ellison and Philipp José Farmer

In August, 1967, NBC published the "Star Trek Mail Call", a promotion booklet for prospective sponsors. It emphasized the large amount of Star Trek fan mail the network had received and claimed that most of this mail had come from "people who were associated in some way with the space program" and "students, housewives, and many others with scientific or intellectual background." It also cited numerous incidents for Star Trek's immense popularity.¹⁴⁰

This attempt at attracting sponsors for the series apparently failed as in December 1967 Trek fans received a letter from John and Bjo (pronounced Bee-jo) Trimble saying that Star Trek was to be canceled after its second season.

The letter suggested that although Star Trek was popular with the public Nielsen ratings were quite low and the Trimbles asked fans to write letters to the network

¹⁴⁰ Asherman, *Compendium*, 67

in support of the series. Included was a brief memo on "How to Write Effective Letters to Save Star Trek."

The campaign was very well organized and had an enormous impact. NBC was swamped with hundreds of thousands of letters and on Friday, March 1, 1968, NBC made an "on-air" announcement that Star Trek would be renewed for a third season, and would fans please stop writing.¹⁴¹

The network had underestimated the enthusiasm and the determination of Trek fans. However, after initial promises of a Monday 7:30 p.m. time slot, Star Trek was moved for its third season to Friday, 10:00 p.m.

Apparently bad time slots were NBC's way of getting the show off the air:

"NBC ... would have canceled it in 1968, had it not been for the mail campaign. Thus embarrassed they had to keep it on the air - but they were not committed to keeping it alive.

¹⁴¹ for a reprint of the press release, Whitfield, 394 f.; for Bjo Trimble's campaign, Gerrold, 94 f.

Hence, the bad time slot. ... It was too expensive and it wasn't a big enough hit. Demographics have since proven the Nielsen ratings wrong on Star Trek."¹⁴²

At the time, the A. C. Nielsen Company only calculated a total share of the viewing audience. Very soon after Star Trek went off the air, a more differentiated demographic system was introduced where percentages of particular groups were calculated, e.g. people between 18 and 30, or earning over \$20,000, or married with children of school age.

Under that style of calculation, Star Trek scored high in the specific demographic group at which it was aimed - teenagers and young adults between 18 and 30 - and thus might have been renewed in a more appropriate time slot.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Gerrold, 111

¹⁴³ I owe this information to several Trek fans who answered my questions about "TOS and Nielsen" in the TREK echo on the FIDO net, especially to Owen E. Oulton of Ottawa, Ontario (Pandora's Box, 1:243/45).

Be it as it may, on June 3, 1969, the last episode was aired. Due to weak ratings the five-year mission of the U.S.S. Enterprise had been aborted two years before its completion.

Only a few weeks later, on July 20, ninety-four percent of all US television households and more than five hundred million people world-wide were mesmerized by Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon.

2.4.2 Syndication

The fans were shocked by the end of the series, but as Edward Gross remarked

"Network cancellation was the best thing that could have ever happened to Star Trek. Had NBC renewed for a fourth or fifth year, the series ... would have faded into the annals of television history."¹⁴⁴

Almost immediately after cancellation on national television, Star Trek went into syndication, and the legend

¹⁴⁴ Gross, Edward, *The Making of the Trek Films*, (New York: Image Publishing, 1992), 1

began. Originally it was marketed only to NBC's affiliate stations, at the hours that NBC specified. Syndication is the sale of a package of episodes to a single market, i.e. a local TV station. This station can then use those shows in whatever way they think it best.

Paramount Pictures, who after a summer 1967 merger with Desilu now owned Star Trek, thought they might recoup some of the money spent on production this way and prepared a "syndication kit", listing all episodes in original production order and providing print and other advertising material for the local stations.

A consequence of syndication was that local station managers scheduled Star Trek between 4 and 7 p.m.. For the first time the show was presented to teens and pre-teens and it found a whole new audience.

Almost everywhere it earned very good ratings and attracted commercial sponsors trying to reach teenagers. In the USA alone Star Trek was syndicated in over 150 markets.

Also, the moon landing had a significant impact on the general reception of science fiction. Concepts that until then had only intrigued a few hard core fans now were of interest to millions around the globe. Space travel did not seem all that far fetched anymore.

The first step was accomplished and given the rapid pace of technological progress in other areas it did not seem impossible anymore that one day a starship Enterprise might indeed "*boldly go where no man had gone before.*"

The original Star Trek series was sold to more than a hundred countries around the globe and even today, twenty-five years after syndication began, it is broadcasted all over the world to a weekly audience of 213,5 million viewers.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ July 1993, according to the *Guinness Book of Entertainment*; quoted in the "List of all Lists" for TOS; compiled by Michael Spohn (FIDO: 2:241/1077.19; TrekNet: 37:1/3).

2.4.3 Revival

Even before syndication the first fanzines had appeared. Fanzines are magazines published by and for fans, whose content and appearance vary considerably. Some are little more than a few type-written pages stapled together with a circulation as high as one or two copies.

Others have more commercial ambitions, are professionally produced and have a much higher circulation. Fanzines contain articles about actors, characters and gadgets, discussions of technological details, philosophical aspects of the show, and of course new stories.

In December 1971, a few fans organized a get-together for Trek fans in Brooklyn College's Gershwin Auditorium, which could hold approximately 200 people. The attendance was more than anyone had expected and the auditorium was overcrowded.

A few weeks later the first proper Star Trek convention was held in the Statler Hilton hotel in New York with more than two thousand fans attending. Joan Winston, one of the organizers, remembered:

"Up until that time, Star Trek fandom had been underground. [...] The publicity our convention received appeared in hundreds of papers all over the United States and around the world. Thousands and thousands of fans discovered a most marvelous fact: They were not alone."¹⁴⁶

The number of participants grew each year and more conventions were organized. Star Trek merchandise suddenly became available. Actors and other people involved in the production of the series were invited as guest speakers.

Today hundreds of annual Star Trek conventions are held all over the world. What is interesting about these events is that they were spontaneously created by fans and not the result of an organized campaign by any company involved in merchandising.

¹⁴⁶ Winston, Joan, *The Making of Trek Conventions or How to Throw a Party for 12,000 of Your Most Intimate Friends* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1977), 9

Filmation Associates, a West Coast animation company, approached Paramount and Roddenberry about doing an animated series. Many of the people involved in the original series participated in this venture and on September 15, 1973 the first animated episode was broadcasted.

The animated series received an Emmy Award for best children's series of the 1974-75 television season, but to fans could not substitute the real thing.¹⁴⁷

In 1976, Star Trek fans organized a letter campaign asking President Gerald Ford to rename the first space shuttle to Enterprise. And they succeeded.

On September 17, two thousand invited guests including Gene Roddenberry and the crew of the fictional Enterprise witnessed the roll-out of the real Enterprise while an orchestra played Alexander Courage's Star

¹⁴⁷ Asherman, 149; Asherman included a complete list of *The Animated Series* on page 176

Trek theme heard at the beginning of each episode. Fiction had become fact.¹⁴⁸

Discussions between Roddenberry and Paramount about Star Trek's return had already begun in 1974. First it was to be a motion picture, then a television series, then a motion picture again, but nothing substantial materialized.

In 1977, Paramount decided on a new series as part of their plans to found a fourth nationwide network and the Writers'/Directors' Guide for "Star Trek II" appeared on August 12.

Everything was prepared and production of the first episode was scheduled for November 30, but Paramount abandoned network plans, and Star Trek II finally became *Star Trek - The Motion Picture*, which opened in December 7, 1979.

¹⁴⁸ the event is described in Jesco von Puttkammer's introduction to Marshak, Sondra and Myrna Culbreath, ed., *Star Trek: The New Voyages 2*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1978), xxiii f.

Twelve years later, *Star Trek VI - The Undiscovered Country* was released to celebrate Star Trek's 25th anniversary. In the meantime a second Star Trek television series, *The Next Generation*, had been launched in 1987. It featured a completely new cast and from the beginning was sold in syndication.

Despite much skepticism from all sides it turned out to be a tremendous success and has just completed its seventh season. The last episode was aired on May 23, 1994 and *The Next Generation* will return as a motion picture at the end of the year.

Another Star Trek series called *Deep Space Nine* had its debut in January 1993 and ever since its release both Trek series have continuously been in the Top Ten of syndicated TV shows.

Also, Paramount has announced a new Star Trek series called *Voyager* due to start in early 1995.

And so on ...

2.4.4 The Fans

In an effort to determine characteristics and attitudes of Star Trek fans, Judith Gran has conducted an empirical study of Star Trek viewers. Gran stresses the diversity of Star Trek fans, but finds that they nevertheless share certain characteristics.

Most fans are either young men of high school or college age or women in their twenties and thirties, the latter group predominating.

Fans usually come from the middle class and socially are upwardly mobile. Many work in the professional or technical fields, those in the humanities and sciences far outnumbering those in business.

Star Trek fans show a "consistent lack of academic interest in business subjects"¹⁴⁹ and appear to be highly educated. Of male fans, 45.4 percent had achieved a bachelors degree or higher as compared to 14.1 percent

¹⁴⁹ summarized in Huff, Laurie, "Star Trek and Secularization: A Critical Analysis", in: Irwin, Walter and G.B. Love, ed., *The Best of Trek, Vol 14* (New York: Signet Books, 1988), 96-112

of the male population in the U.S.; for female fans these figures are 44.9 percent compared to 8.2 percent.

Politically, most fans described themselves as liberal and seventy-five percent believed the views presented in Star Trek to be compatible with their own. Gran holds that the political attitudes of Star Trek fans bear close resemblance to those of the Populist-Progressive movement based on Jeffersonian individualism.

Fans embraced a similar combination of liberal and conservative views, working for liberal reforms and at the same time yearning for a lost Golden Age,

Two distinctly different types of fans have evolved: Trekkies and Trekkers. The differentiation is made by the fans themselves:¹⁵⁰

A Trekkie is a groupie fan: Someone who wears Spock ears and thinks that makes them important. Asks questions like "what

¹⁵⁰ a FAQ is a list of answers to *Frequently Asked Questions*. These lists are posted and updated regularly on various networks; dated January 4, 1994 this one has been compiled by Otto Heuer (InterNet: ottoh3@cfsmo.honeywell.com)

did you have for breakfast on the Tuesday when you shot scene 46a of episode 5?" The most die-hard fan, who lives, eats, and breathes Star Trek. Term originated in the late 1960s when it meant "any fan of Star Trek".

This has actually made it into the dictionary according to Leonard Nimoy, who suggested that they change the entry to "Trekker", a more acceptable term these days.

A Trekker is a fan who is interested in the show and the idea of Star Trek, but doesn't let it interfere with his/her life.

This is apparently being added to an upcoming edition of Webster's Dictionary. The term came into popularity in the 1970s when the press gave "Trekkie" a bad name.

Most fans, however, simply go by "Star Trek fan", rather than get branded the label "Trekkie" or "Trekker".

After the show had been canceled in June 1969 it was the fans that kept Star Trek alive for several years.

Cawelti mentioned the formula's function as social ritual. Rituals are a gathering of people who share common cultural values and beliefs, who in other words have in common a shared reality. Rituals are an efficient way to celebrate valued ideals and myths and according to Geist and Nachbar there are three different kinds: rite of passage, rite of season, and rite of unity.

A rite of passage marks the transition in the social status of a person or group, e.g. a wedding. Christmas would be an example in case for a rite of season. Rites of unity are rituals that eliminate "the individual's feeling of alienation or loneliness by the togetherness of a social group."¹⁵¹

Rites of unity are often associated with parties and conventions, and the keyword here is "convention". Joan Winston's book about the making of Star Trek conventions is significantly subtitled "How to Throw a Party for 12,000 of Your Most Intimate Friends."

She said that the most remarkable experience to most participants of the first conventions was that "thousands and thousands of fans discovered a most marvelous fact: they were not alone." It is largely due to the rite of unity that Star Trek has developed into the "fanomenon" that it is today.

Cawelti described a ritual as a means of a) reaffirming certain basic cultural values, b) resolving tensions and c) establishing a sense of continuity between present and past. The third part of this thesis will examine how Star Trek reaffirmed basic cultural values and resolved tensions. As for "establishing a sense of continuity between present and past":

"... the future, even that imagined in books, is uncertain. Star Trek, by disguising our past as our future, puts us in it - not the historical past but the mythic past of our first beginnings. There ensues a feeling of per-

¹⁵¹ Geist, Christopher and Jack Nachbar, *The Popular Culture Reader* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983), 266

manence, stability and renewed confidence."¹⁵²

Tyrrell concludes his essay with the remark that to the believer "Star Trek offers the comfort of religion."

2.4.5 A Cultural Artifact

According to the Star Trek 25th Anniversary Special, over 50% of the American population consider themselves fans of Star Trek. For many of them Star Trek is a way of life rather than a TV show.

The Enterprise model used in the shows is on display in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. First it was stored with Matt Dillon's hat from "Gunsmoke", but later it was moved and now hangs in the Air and Space Museum alongside Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis.¹⁵³

Without doubt Star Trek has become an important cultural artifact and there are references to it everywhere.

¹⁵² Tyrrell, "Star Trek as Myth", 713

¹⁵³ Peel, 94

The series has been parodied in countless shows and movies. Here are just a few examples:

- in the mid-seventies a Saturday Night Live episode had a Star Trek skit featuring John Belushi as Captain Kirk.
- in the early eighties it is quoted in E.T.: "Can't he just beam up?" - "Hey, this is reality."
- in the nineties The Simpsons watch the adventures of an aged and senile Enterprise crew in the movie Star Trek XII - So Very Tired.

Fans can buy just about every merchandise one can think of: bumper stickers, T-shirts, original uniforms, Spock ears, Enterprise telephones and telephone cards, model kits, trading cards and many more.

In addition to its cultural aspects Star Trek has become an economic entity, too. The magazine Variety estimated that the Star Trek franchise has earned almost

two billion dollars since the original series started in 1966.¹⁵⁴

Novelizations of the TV episodes were published. Fans also wrote new stories and as we have seen fan fiction even reached the level of professional publication. Secondary literature is available for almost every aspect of the series, from a Technical Manual to blueprints of the ship and behavior codes for Starfleet officers.

Star Trek has left its mark on language, too. Catchphrases like "Beam me up, Scotty!" have passed into usage even in non English speaking cultures. The characters developed recognizable tags from very ordinary words:

- Spock's "Fascinating" or "Interesting",
- McCoy's "He's dead, Jim!" and "I'm a doctor, not a [... fill in blank]!",
- Scotty's "I cannae change the laws of physics", or

- Kirk's "Beam me up, Scottie!"¹⁵⁵

Many of these expressions, says Mark Edward of the Sunday Times, "are just made for quoting in a kind of we-all-remember-this-one-don't-we tone of voice."¹⁵⁶

In the mid-eighties, a complete new artificial language was sparked by Star Trek: Klingon. Linguist Marc Okrand was hired for the Klingon dialogue in "The Search for Spock", the third Star Trek movie.

Today, The Klingon Dictionary is a bestseller and Klingon language courses are available on audio tape and being broadcasted on radio. Linguistic departments in universities analyze Klingon as a unique example of an artificial language. In 1992, the Klingon Language Institute was founded and it publishes a quarterly journal

¹⁵⁴ Paikert, Charles, "After 25 Years Still ... Cruising at Warp Speed", *Variety* (December 2, 1991), 49

¹⁵⁵ which, in the original series, has actually never been said in exactly this wording

¹⁵⁶ Edward, Mark, "Life as we (almost) know it", in: *The Sunday Times* (7 November 1993), Section 9, page 9

called HolQed (Klingon for "Linguistics").¹⁵⁷ And the search engine Google.com is available in Klingon.

Star Trek is of course also present in the computer world. Ever since the late Sixties there have been countless Star Trek related computer games for just about every operating system. "Star Trek - The Screen Saver" is a bestseller. Files with pictures, famous words spoken by the actors and typical sound effects can be found in just about every mailbox.

Fans use existing world wide computer networks to communicate with each other. There are international Trek-related newsgroups on the InterNet, several Trek echoes on the FIDO Net, and even a complete electronic mail network called TrekNet exclusively dedicated to the discussion of Star Trek.

In fact, I have received innumerable helpful comments and hints from fans all over the world participating in

¹⁵⁷ Gorman, James, "Klingon: The Final Frontier", *Time* (April 5, 1993), 51; Okrand, Marc, *The Klingon Dictionary* (New York: Pocket Books, 1985)

these networks and much of the background information for this thesis has been compiled with their help.

Star Trek can even be found in the music industry. Sound tracks to the various series and movies are available on CD. In 1987, "The Firm" had a No. 1 hit single with their song Star Trekkin' (Across The Universe), in which typical lines from Uhura, Kirk, Scotty and Spock were recited to a simple synthesizer tune.

In 1989 the German band "Plan B" had a hit single with their song Beam me up, Scotty (This planet sucks!). In 1992, the Austrian studio project "Edelweiss" produced a million selling dance hit with its Star Trek parody "Raumschiff Edelweiss".¹⁵⁸

Last not least Star Trek has of course also been subject to scholarly analyses. It has been studied as "a religious phenomenon, a psychological phenomenon, an example of American cultural monomyth, and even as a sexual

¹⁵⁸ The song title mocks the German title of the series. *Star Trek* was first broadcasted in 1972 by ZDF network as "Raumschiff Enterprise" ("Spaceship Enterprise").

phenomenon." Writing in 1984, David Gerrold concluded:

"Truly, Star Trek has transcended its origins as a simple TV series to become a larger expression of American culture. Paramount is no longer the owner of a property, as much as they are the custodians of a national treasure."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ Gerrold, 118 and 119

3 The American Dream in Star Trek

Part one of this paper defined the main elements of the American Dream and described how they during the 1960s turned into a nightmare. Part two introduced the television series Star Trek, which was produced at that time.

In this third part I will examine how the American Dream and its crisis are reflected in Star Trek. I will begin by showing that the series does indeed echo the values of the 1960s (and not those of the 23rd century) and then continue to analyze how Star Trek portrayed the main elements of the American Dream.

3.1 Science Fiction or American Myth?

History is vital for our developments as human beings. It is more than a record of humanity's efforts and achievements; history provides the context against which and in which we relate to ourselves and to our society. Thus a historical consciousness is indispensable

in order to define one's identity. If functioning properly this consciousness grounds us in a definite time and place, if not it renders us unable to grasp reality, feeling lost and confused. Therefore a faulty and distorted view of history can lead to fatal and sometimes tragic personal and societal delusions.

History cannot possibly be an exact record of reality and to provide historical continuity, myths are created. A myth is more than a fanciful story without factual content. Myths deal with origins and history and establish these as meaningful.

A myth is the expression of a profound sense of togetherness, a togetherness not upon a level of intellect and reason, but of emotion: myth has "*not a substratum of thought but of feeling. [Its] coherence depends much more upon unity of feeling than upon logical rules.*"¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰Cassierer, Ernst, *Essay on Man* (Cambridge, 1944; rpt. New York, 1970), 89

3.1.1 "A Quintessential American Romance ..."

The Western is the only myth native to the white American. Roddenberry may not have been serious when he described Star Trek as "Wagon Train to the Stars", but nevertheless the similarities are obvious. Cawelti has defined setting, action and characters of a typical Western, and the description fits:

- The Western is a story set on or near a frontier: Star Trek is situated in space, the final frontier.
- The action in a Western develops out of the epic moment when the values of American society stand balanced against the savage wilderness: in Star Trek the values of the United Federation of Planets stand balanced against the savage wilderness of outer space.
- Western plots develop out of the various relationships between heroes, savages and townspeople: in Star Trek the townspeople are members of the Federation or Earth outposts, the savages are

aliens of some form, and the heroes are the crew of the Enterprise.

The crew of the Enterprise are American heroes indeed. The evolution of the typical American fictional hero begins with Cooper's Natty Bumppo. Lewis calls

"... such a figure the hero in space, in two senses of the word. First, the hero seems to take his start outside time, or on the very outer edges of it, so that his location is essentially in space alone; and second, his initial habitat is space as spaciousness, as the unbounded, the area of total possibility. The Adamic hero is discovered, as an old stage direction might have it, 'surrounded, detached in measureless oceans of space'."¹⁶¹

Kirk and his crew add a third meaning to Lewis' concept of "heroes in space".

¹⁶¹ Lewis, R. W. B., *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the 19th Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 91 (my italics)

Star Trek's roots reach deeply into American tradition straight down to the Western myth and much of its strength is derived from these roots.

In an excellent essay, April Selley compares the friendship between Kirk and Spock to that of two other American romantic heroes, Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook in *The Deerslayer*, and concludes that "*Star Trek is a quintessential American romance, and that may well be the principal reason for its enormous appeal.*"¹⁶²

3.1.2 "... in the Garb of Science Fiction"

Star Trek's appeal, however, cannot be explained that easily. The show was not content to clone Western scripts and transfer them into space. Star Trek was more than a mere reiteration of old symbols and myths. It displaced these myths.

¹⁶²Selley, April, "'I Have Been, and Ever Shall Be, Your Friend': Star Trek, *The Deerslayer* and the American Romance", *Journal of Popular Culture*, XX (1/1986), 102

During the Sixties traditional myths disintegrated and left a vacuum since they were not replaced. According to Frye a romance has the tendency "*to displace myth in a human direction.*"

Star Trek "displaces" traditional American myths into a pseudo-scientific future and thus¹⁶³

"creates a future world where the glories of the past are pristine and the failures and doubts of the present have been overcome.

It gives us our past as our future, while making our present the past which, like any historical event for the future-oriented American, is safely over and forgotten."

As myth Star Trek appeals to an emotional rather than a rational level. And it is precisely at this point that the medium enters the picture again:

"Television is the medium of immediate, personal communication [...] It works through the emotions on a non-reasoning level and is

¹⁶³for details about the concept of displacement: Frye, 137 (my italics)

thus the medium best suited to the emotional word, mythos."¹⁶⁴

Television is the ideal medium to create a myth, the ultimate myth-maker in a manner of speaking, and Star Trek makes very efficient use of that medium. Star Trek is not just a vision, it literally is a "tele-vision".

Roddenberry's emphasis on "believability" plays an important role in this process of myth-making. "Believability" meant different from today, but recognizable to the audience, and is not to be confused with scientific accuracy.

The first Star Trek episode aired, "The Man Trap", featured a monster living on salt and in one particular scene the script called for salt shakers on a food tray to demonstrate the creature's craving. The question what salt shakers would look like in the 23rd century arose.

The property master came up with some specimen so futuristic that the audience would not have recognized

¹⁶⁴quotes from Tyrrell, "Star Trek as Myth", 712 and 713

them. Therefore Roddenberry asked him to go down to the Studio Commissary and get some conventional salt shakers. As he turned to go, Roddenberry told him: "However, those eight devices you have there will become Dr. McCoy's operating instruments."

Thus the majority of McCoy's instruments in sick bay have been a selection of exotic salt shakers, and "we know they work, because we've seen them work."¹⁶⁵

Thus in Star Trek the story is more important than a theoretically exact scientific account of what a 23rd century environment might be like. In true science fiction the setting is not subordinate to the story.

This is the reason why many science fiction fans do not regard Star Trek as "real" science fiction. Star Trek was at its best (i.e. most popular) when it stressed not the science but the drama aspect of the story.

¹⁶⁵Whitfield, 187

Star Trek was never meant to be true science fiction. It was a series of seventy-nine stories about contemporary man set against a science fiction background. It was "*American myths clothed in the garb of science fiction*."¹⁶⁶

3.1.3 "The Omega Glory"

"The Omega Glory", written by Gene Roddenberry, was one of three stories proposed to the network for the second pilot.

NBC chose "Where No Man Has Gone Before" instead and "The Omega Glory" became a segment of the second season. The episode explicitly refers to American traditions and therefore I will describe some scenes in detail to illustrate the point that Star Trek in essence is "*a quintessential American romance in the garb of science fiction*".

¹⁶⁶ Tyrrell, 712

The Enterprise discovers the starship Exeter in orbit around planet Omega IV, its crew reduced to crystalized powder by a mysterious disease. Kirk, Spock and McCoy learn that they are contaminated, beam down to the planet in search of a cure and meet Exeter Captain Ronald Tracey.

On Omega, two tribes live at war with each other: the Asian rulers, the Kohms, and their opponents, the white Yangs. The Yangs live in the hills outside the village and are like wild animals: "*Impossible even to communicate with*", says Captain Tracey.

It soon becomes apparent that Tracey has violated Starfleet's Prime Directive of non-interference to assure a place for himself upon the planet by using phasers against the attacking Yangs.¹⁶⁷

Kirk resists Tracey and is arrested and put into a prison cell with a captured Yang couple. The male Yang immediately attacks him and Kirk's attempts to communicate

¹⁶⁷ for details on the Prime Directive, page 133

fail. The Yang only utters animal-like noises and the fight ends drawn. Shortly after, Kirk talks to Spock who is in a nearby cell and mumbles something about "re-gaining freedom". Suddenly the male Yang begins to speak in a somewhat clumsy manner:

"Freedom? Freedom? That is worship word.
Yang worship."

Kirk tells him that "*It is our worship word, too.*" After discovering their common love of freedom, both in a joint effort try to remove a bar from the prison window. The Yang takes the first bar loosened, hits Kirk over the head and escapes.

A little later, the Yangs conquer the Kohm village and all Federation members are gathered in one room. Kirk looks at the Yangs and begins to wonder that

Kirk: If my ancestors were forced out of the cities,
into the deserts, the hills ...

Spock: Yes. I see, Captain. They would have learned to
wear skins, adopted stoic mannerisms, learned
the bow and the lance ...

Kirk: ... living like Indians, finally even looking like
the American - (music) - America. Yangs.
Yanks. Spock? - Yankees.

Spock: Kohms. Communists. The parallel is almost too
close, Captain. It would mean they fought the
war your earth avoided, and in this case the
Asiatics won and took over this planet.

Kirk: But if it were true, all of these generations of
Yangs, fighting to regain their land.

McCoy: You're a romantic, Jim.

A single drum starts to beat, and a drummer walks into
the room. The drum stops.

Kirk's former cell-mate apparently is the leader of the
Yangs and proclaims their victory: "*That which is ours is
ours again. It will never be taken from us again!*"

The drum starts to beat again, and in walks a Yang pa-
rading an American flag. The Yang Chief begins to
speak: "*I am Cloud William. Chief.*"

Holding a bible, Cloud William walks up to the star-
spangled banner and with the right hand on his heart
speaks the following words:

"Ai plehglie aian neptuhn flaggen tupep laik
forstan ..." ¹⁶⁸

At this moment, Kirk interrupts him and continues in a loud voice:

"... and to the republic for which it stands,
one nation under God, indivisible, with lib-
erty and justice for all." ¹⁶⁹

The Yangs are surprised that Kirk knows their Holy Word, which is of course the American Pledge of Allegiance.

As proof for not being the devil, Kirk is supposed to speak the Greatest of Holies, because "*the evil one's tongue will surely turn to fire*" on speaking these words.

The Yang chief tells Kirk that "I will begin, you shall finish", and begins to recites:

¹⁶⁸ that's "Yang-speak"; in English: "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America ..."

¹⁶⁹ for the significance of the Pledge of Allegiance: Redling, Julius, *Kleines USA-Lexikon* (München: Beck, 1989), 133

"Ie pleb niesta norco forcom perfect unum
..."

They appear familiar, but Kirk does not immediately know how to continue. When Sulu and two security guards beam into the room, Kirk is believed to be a Great God's Son.

Then he looks at the Greatest of the Holies:

Kirk: Hear me, hear this! Among my people we carry many such words as this, for many lands, many worlds. Many are equally good and are as well respected, but where ever we have gone, no words have said this thing of importance in quite this way.

Look at these three words written larger than the rest, with a special pride never written before or since, tall words, proudly saying WE THE PEOPLE, that what you called "Ie pleb niesta" was not written for the chiefs or kings, for the rich or powerful, but for all the people.

Down the centuries you have slurred the meanings of the words "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union,

establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution."

This is the preamble of the American Constitution from 1787 (only the words "for the United States of America" at the end are omitted) and Kirk convinces the Yang Chief that these words must apply to everyone, including the Kohms.

Cloud William does not "fully understand" this, but nevertheless swears to Kirk that the Holy Words will be obeyed. With a last whimsical glance at the flag Kirk leaves. American myths in the garb of science fiction.

3.1.4 Reflections of the Sixties

Much care was put into technical details of the Enterprise and its equipment. In contrast to these technical details there is at no point during the show any explanation as to what the background culture to this ship would be like.

Throughout the series the Enterprise gives the impression of being an independent entity flying through space, but this independence is an illusion. After her five-year mission she would have to return to her home planet, and all we know about it is that Earth is a member of the United Federation of Planets, whose military arm is Starfleet.

In fact, it has been outlined in The Star Trek Guide for writers that humanity has found some unity on Earth but that details of Earth's politics in the 23rd century are best not mentioned.

Answering a question whether Man's needs such as food, physical love, sleep etc. will not have altered by the 23rd century, it said:

"Probably. But [...] remember, the only Westerns which failed miserably were those which authentically portrayed the men, values, and morals of 1870. The audience ap-

plauds John Wayne playing what is essentially a 1966 man."¹⁷⁰

In "The Corbomite Maneuver" the Enterprise encounters a luminescent, radioactive cube while on a star charting mission. When Kirk is forced to destroy it, an enormous ship of pulsating lights appears, traps the Enterprise, and announces that ship and crew will be destroyed within ten minutes since destruction of the warning buoy "*has demonstrated your intention is not peaceful.*"

Seeing no escape, Spock refers to the game of chess: "*When one is outmatched the game is over. Checkmate.*" Shortly after, Kirk replies: "*Not chess, Mr. Spock. Poker. Do you know the game?*"

Kirk stages a desperate bluff, telling the alien commander that Earth vessels are equipped with a self-destruct system called "corbomite" which also destroys the attacker.

¹⁷⁰Gerrold, 33

At the end of the ten-minute-countdown nothing happens. Kirk's bluff is successful. When it becomes apparent that annihilation is at least temporarily delayed Spock breaks the deadly silence aboard the ship by saying: "A very interesting game, this - poker." Kirk answers: "It does have advantages over chess."

Poker is "a pure expression of the American Dream." It is America's favorite card game. Seventy million Americans play cards and some 47 million prefer poker.¹⁷¹

It is as American as apple pie, baseball and hot dogs. And when the Enterprise and her crew are just two minutes away from destruction in the 23rd century her Captain rescues them with a strategy derived from a card game popular in the 1960s.

Considering David Gerrold's following statement this is not surprising:

¹⁷¹Jones, Rex L., "Poker and the American Dream", in: Montague, Susan P. und Arens, W., *The American Dimension. Cultural Myths and Social Realities* (Sherman Oaks/CA: Alfred Publishing Co., 1981), 27

"The crew of the Enterprise is in no way meant to be representative of future humanity – not at all. They are representative of the American Sphere of Influence today. Their attitudes, their manners of speaking, their ways of reacting ... are all contemporary. [...] The crew of the Enterprise is twentieth-century America in space."¹⁷²

Twentieth century America in space. This is the reason why there is so little information about Star Trek's background culture.

The background culture is that of twentieth-century America. Captain Kirk commands a spaceship in the 23rd century, but his adventures and decisions relate to the time of his creation, the 1960s.

Star Trek not only reflected the dreams and the nightmares of '60s, it was made by them.

¹⁷²both quotes from Gerrold, 33; italics there

3.2 A New Frontier

As we have seen, Star Trek is deeply rooted in American tradition and the Western myth. The connection between Star Trek and the ideal of the frontier as continuous challenge is apparent and has partly already been dealt with.

The magic of Star Trek is at least partly due to its frontier-like setting. The words spoken by William Shatner after each episode's teaser explain the mission of the Enterprise:¹⁷³

"Space - the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Her five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilization, to boldly go where no man has gone before."

The setting is space, but as we have seen the conditions are those of the early West: there is a frontier and the Enterprise's mission is to explore the uncharted territory

¹⁷³ a teaser is the short introductory scene before the opening credits

beyond it. The Enterprise is on a five year expedition, on an errand into the wilderness. The trek reached beyond the frontier into the wilderness. On Earth, treks had disappeared along with the closure of the frontier at the end of the nineteenth century.

But here now is "Space - the final frontier". The frontier has been transferred to another level, and so has the trek: prolonged beyond the west, upwards to the stars, the trek becomes a Star Trek.

Turner's frontier thesis emphasized the importance of the West for the development of an American national identity.

He may not have presented a one and only explanation, but he certainly struck a strong chord: the Frontier thesis is probably one of the most discussed topics in American historiography, along with the Revolution and the Civil War.

Without doubt the frontier experience decisively shaped America, first as historical fact and later as myth and symbol.¹⁷⁴

After the closure of the frontier as a line of settlement the longing to explore its challenges did not cease. John F. Kennedy composed a successful variation of this American leitmotif and captured the imagination of many Americans when, on July 15, 1960, in his nomination speech, he revived the myth of the frontier and exclaimed:

"We stand today on the edge of a New Frontier - the frontier of the 1960's, a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils, a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats."¹⁷⁵

An integral part of the New Frontier was the space program. Kennedy had attributed world-wide political and psychological importance to America's effort to overtake

¹⁷⁴ a useful introduction to the discussion of Turner's frontier thesis is Billington, Ray A., *The American Frontier Thesis: Attack and Defense* (Washington: American Historical Association, 1971)

¹⁷⁵ quoted in Freese, 23

the Russians in the space race. He set the nation to the task of facing the challenge by the Russian cosmonauts.

On May 25, 1961, Kennedy announced that the United States would land a man on the moon before the decade was out.

The moon race had begun. Instrumented flights were much cheaper and of greater scientific value than manned flights, but the latter definitely were more spectacular. Space flights were dramatic, immediate events and broadcasted live by television.

In 1962, Kennedy defended his ambitious program: "*But why, some say, the moon? ... Why climb the highest mountain? ... We choose to go to the moon in this decade ... because that goal will serve to organize the best of our energies and skills ... and 'Because it is there'.*"¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Blum, 48 f.; for the controversy of instrumented v. manned flights see O'Neill, William L., *Coming Apart* (New York: Quadrangle, 1971), Chapter 2 "Building Camelot [Profile: Space]", 51-60

In the same year, Jay Holmes published a book about the challenge of the space program which he called *America on the Moon: The Enterprise of the Sixties*.¹⁷⁷

The appeal of both this enterprise and the Enterprise to certain parts of the public had similar reasons:

"In the astronauts people gained a new set of folk heroes appropriate to the conditions of modern life, who yet manifested the simple, winning virtues of an earlier and less complicated time."¹⁷⁸

Like the astronauts, Star Trek's heroes were appropriate to the conditions of modern (and even of future) life and yet reflected the seemingly simple and winning virtues of an earlier and less complicated time, a mystical time which Tyrrell has called "*that of first beginnings*".¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Holmes, Jay, *America on the Moon: The Enterprise of the Sixties* (Philadelphia, 1962)

¹⁷⁸ O'Neill, 51; an interesting exploration of the theme is Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979)

¹⁷⁹ Tyrrell, "*Star Trek as Myth*", 717

Kennedy's assassination in November 22nd, 1963, had a profound impact on American society and culture and to many people it determined the beginning of the Sixties chaos, the dashing of dreams.

The New Frontier had vanished a few months before the Enterprise began to explore the final frontier, but nevertheless it had set the optimistic mood that Star Trek would pick up.

Two Star Trek episodes directly reflect the 1960s: "Tomorrow Is Yesterday" and "Assignment: Earth".

3.2.1 "Tomorrow Is Yesterday"

"Tomorrow is Yesterday", first aired on January 26, 1967, is one of the most popular episodes.

After an encounter with the gravitational forces of a "black star", the Enterprise is hurled backward in time to the twentieth century. Flying over Nebraska the ship is then sighted, classified as a UFO and threatened by an interceptor.

Airforce pilot Captain John Christopher's jet is accidentally destroyed by the ship's tractor beam and Kirk is forced to beam him aboard.

After first deciding not to return Captain Christopher to Earth since his knowledge of the future might in some way alter history, Spock discovers that their guest's yet unborn son will lead an important expedition into space.

Captain Christopher must be returned to Earth and after some dramatic complications, he is indeed safely beamed back to his jet just prior to its destruction. The Enterprise returns home.

In the beginning of the episode, when nobody aboard is aware of the time warp's effect yet, Uhura tries to reach Starfleet and instead picks up an Earth radio message on another channel: *"This is the 5.30 news survey. Cape Kennedy. The first manned moon shot is scheduled for Wednesday, 6 am, Eastern Standard Time."*

Kirk is baffled: *"Manned moon shot? That was in the late 1960s."*

At the time the episode was shown the space program had just suffered its first major setback. Three astronauts had been killed in an avoidable accident.¹⁸⁰

Nevertheless Kirk's estimation for the first "manned moon shot" of "the late 1960s" faithfully endorsed Kennedy's schedule of landing a man on the moon before 1970.

At the end of the episode, Kirk says to Christopher: *"Take a good look around, Captain. You made it here ahead of all of them."*

Implicit in the alliteration of Captain Christopher is its continuation Columbus: He is the first man in space, and with him being a 1960s Earthling, it is easy for the viewer to follow him aboard and discover what life on a starship is all about.

His amazement is that of the audience. He is astonished about seeing a woman serving as crew member and

¹⁸⁰ O'Neill, 51-60

hearing about a "United Earth Space authority", but all in all references to the Sixties in "Tomorrow Is Yesterday" are mainly used to create humorous situations of inappropriateness for both sides, contemporary and future men.

3.2.2 "Assignment: Earth"

"Assignment: Earth" is different: the Enterprise is on a historical research mission and intentionally travels backward in time to the Earth of 1968 in order to discover "how humans managed to avoid destroying itself."

Spock's historical account to Kirk mirrors the turmoil of the time:

"Current earth crises would fill a tape bank, Captain. There will be an important assassination today, an equally dangerous government coup in Asia, and, this could be highly critical, the launching of an orbital nuclear warhead platform by the United States, countering a similar launch by other powers."

The episode was aired on March 29, 1968: a few weeks after the Tet Offensive, two days before President Johnson's startling TV announcement that he would not run for re-election and six days prior to Martin Luther King's assassination.

But back to fiction: the Enterprise accidentally intercepts an incredibly strong transporter beam and a man called Gary Seven is beamed aboard.

Seven claims to be a human dispatched by an alien power concerned about humanity's fate "*to prevent earth civilization from destroying itself before it can mature into a peaceful society.*"

He states that "*this is the most critical period in Earth's history*" as "*Earth technology and science have progressed faster than political and social knowledge*" and that his mission is to prevent the launching of a warhead-bearing rocket. Launching base is - of course - Cape Kennedy.

Not knowing whether or not Seven is telling the truth Kirk interferes and the rocket is launched. With the un-

witting aid of his secretary Roberta Lincoln (note the surname), a twenty year old Earth woman, Seven eludes Kirk and diverts the rocket off-course.

The rocket is heading back towards Earth, where its atomic warhead will explode on impact. Despite Kirk's repeated intervention Seven finally manages to detonate the warhead just 104 miles above Earth.

Spock noted that the shock from this incident resulted in a new and stronger international agreement against the use of such weapons.

The first-draft script established the presence of the Enterprise in the Sixties by having the bridge crew watch an episode of NBC's "Bonanza" on the starship's main viewscreen.

Also, Mr. Seven's secretary was supposed to be called Roberta Hornblower. In the final draft her surname was

changed and as Ms. Lincoln she summarized the feelings of her generation:¹⁸¹

"I know this world needs help. That's why some of my generation are kind of crazy and rebels, you know. We wonder if we'll be alive when we're thirty."

In contrast to the gloomy perspective of the Sixties, Star Trek emphasized an optimistic and hopeful view of the future.

In his Inaugural Address, Kennedy had appealed to those nations "who make themselves our adversaries":

"Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths and encourage the arts and commerce."¹⁸²

Star Trek was the affirmation that Kennedy's vision would come true.

¹⁸¹ Asherman, *Star Trek Compendium*, 101

¹⁸² Boorstin, 939 and 940

In a manner of speaking "*Captain James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise took up Kennedy's fallen torch in the subconscious minds of countless viewers.*"¹⁸³

Star Trek delivers what Kennedy had promised: a new frontier.

¹⁸³ Klass, Judy, "Ask Not What Your Federation Can Do For You: Kirk as a Kennedy Figure", 174; in: Walter, Irwin and G. B. Love, ed., *The Best of Trek Vol. 16* (New York: Signet Books, 1991), 172-177

3.3 Progress

As we have seen in part one, the belief in progress is an essential part of the American Dream. In essence, it derives from the early Puritans' typological comprehension of history.

In the turmoil of the Sixties, the belief in societal progress turned out to be a somewhat questionable ideal since society appeared to be heading for disaster instead of progressing towards perfection.

Also the technological aspect of progress seemed to produce potentially catastrophic side-effects. The following chapter examines how these elements are portrayed in Star Trek.

3.3.1 Paradise

Paradise is a fundamental theme of the series and subject of almost one sixth of its seventy-nine episodes.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ These include (in production order): *The Menagerie (Part 1 and 2)*, *Shore Leave*, *The Return of the Archons*, *This Side of Paradise*, *Metamorphosis*, *Who Mourns for Adonais?*, *The*

In Western society, the most common cultural stereotype of paradise is the biblical Garden of Eden. This universal myth has special relevance to America because the image of Edenic America was the first ingredient in the making of the American Dream.

Confronted with a seemingly virgin continent, Europeans projected their dream of natural harmony and joy and America in essence was Eden.

3.3.1.1 "Who Mourns For Adonais?"

Traditionally paradise is imagined as a place of play, leisure and innocence. Man's only activity is ritual obedience to god in return for which all needs will be met. The episode "Who Mourns For Adonais?" deals with the relevance of this idea.

In the vicinity of planet Pollux IV the Enterprise is trapped by a giant "hand", which turns out to be a form of energy belonging to a humanoid figure claiming to be

Apple, *A Private Little War*, *The Paradise Syndrome*, *For the World is Hollow and I Have Touched the Sky*, *The Mark of Gideon*, and *The Way to Eden*.

the god Apollo, last survivor of a band of space travelers who once visited Earth and dwelt on Mount Olympus. He welcomes the crew of the Enterprise as his "beloved children" and orders them to stay with him: "I want from you that which is rightfully mine. Your loyalty, your tribute, and your worship."

When McCoy asks what Apollo offers in exchange for this worship, he answers: "*Life in paradise. As simple and as pleasurable as it was those thousands of years ago on that beautiful planet so far away.*"

Apollo offers paradise and all he asks in return is a little worshipping, but the "striving, bickering, foolishly brave humans" refuse.

Apollo's point of view is clear: "*Man thinks he's progressed. He's wrong. He's merely forgotten those things which gave life meaning. You'll all be provided for, cared for, happy. There is an order of things in this universe. Your species has denied it. I come to restore it.*"

However, in the end he learns from Kirk that "*We've outgrown you. You asked for something we can no*

longer give." Apollo's source of power, the temple, is destroyed and before he disappears he concludes that "*The time has passed. There is no room for gods.*"

The underlying theme of the episode is that of "progress". Man is always striving, progressing, developing, and has "outgrown" the need for gods.

When the first European settlers arrived in Edenic America they were not content with what they found. For the pioneers paradise was to be exploited:

"Open land beckons the plow, way to the new beginning that brings rebirth. It is the dream our ancestors followed westward; it launches our descendants into space."¹⁸⁵

Examining the pastoral ideal of America, Leo Marx found "The Machine in the Garden."¹⁸⁶

America became the locus of both the dream of a natural paradise and the reality of technology. However,

¹⁸⁵ Tyrrell, "Star Trek as Myth", 714

¹⁸⁶ Marx, Leo, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967, orig. pub. 1964)

both cannot exist side by side. As paradise is exploited, the machine progressively destroys the garden. Paradise and progress exclude one another.

Star Trek regards progress as elementary to the human condition and equates the paradisiacal tranquillity with stagnation.¹⁸⁷

3.3.1.2 "The Return of the Archons"

In "The Return of the Archons" the Enterprise visits planet Beta III to learn the fate of the U.S.S. Archon, a Federation ship that had visited the planet a century before.

After beaming down to explore the planet, Mr. Sulu is hit by a strange ray. Transported back aboard, he is found to be under the influence of a controlling force.

¹⁸⁷ The moon landing in 1969 was at the time the culmination of progress. Ironically, the message that "The Eagle has landed." came from Tranquility Base.

With a content, mindless smile on his face he talks about "Landru" and tells Kirk that "*It's paradise, my friend. Paradise. Paradise. Paradise.*"

A landing party beams down and finds a Western frontier-like town inhabited by blissful and mindless people.

They learn that the populace is controlled by "Landru", an ominously omniscient ruler. Outsiders - such as the crew of the Archon and Sulu - are absorbed and transformed into part of "the body", a fate that also awaits Kirk and his crew.

As Landru explains to them:

You have come to a world without hate, without fear, without conflict. No war, no disease, no crime. None of the ancient evils. Landru seeks tranquillity. Peace for all. The universal good [...]

You will be absorbed. Your individuality will merge into the unity of good. And in your submergence into the common being of the body you will find contentment, fulfillment. You will experience the absolute good.

Paradise requires submergence of individuality. McCoy is absorbed first and becomes part of the body. With the help of Reger and Marplon, two members of the anti-Landru underground, Kirk and Spock escape absorption.

Kirk learns that Landru is a computer, decides that *"the plug must be pulled"* and destroys Landru.

Back aboard the Enterprise, Spock remarks: *"How often mankind has wished for a world as peaceful and secure as the one Landru provided!"* To which Kirk replies: *"Yes. We never got it. Just lucky I guess."*

The traditional image of paradise is not portrayed as desirable. It denies the need for progress. In several episodes the inherent tension between paradise and progress is relieved by destroying paradise.

Such plots usually feature a highly advanced machine or computer possessing absolute power which in the end is destroyed or at least corrected by Kirk and his crew.

3.3.1.3 "This Side of Paradise"

In "This Side of Paradise"¹⁸⁸ tension is relieved in a more subtle way, but the above view of paradise as obstacle to progress remains.

The Enterprise arrives at Omicron III, depicted as rural America, and expects to find the members of an agricultural colony dead because of the fatal Berthold rays to which they have been exposed for years. But when a landing party beams down they are greeted by the colony's leader, Elias Sandoval.

The colonists have survived because of their symbiosis with spores that give perfect health and absorb the radiation.

These spores cause their hosts to lose any sense of self-advancement and consequently no progress has been made toward the original goal of the colony.

¹⁸⁸for an interesting analysis of the episode see Tyrrell, "Star Trek as Myth", 714-717; "This Side of Paradise" is also the title of an early novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1920)

However, the colonists refuse to be deported for a medical examination as they are quite content and happy in their paradise.

Spock and McCoy are among the first crew members to succumb to the spores. After his conversion, Spock is able to express emotions and for the first time gets to know happiness.

McCoy's contentment can be judged from his broad Southern accent - he feels at home. Other members of the landing party are exposed, plants are beamed aboard the ship, and soon the whole crew is affected, including Kirk who is hit by the spores while he is still on the bridge.

However, the captain becomes so angry about having to leave his beloved ship that he is released from the power of the spores and thus discovers that strong emotions are an effective antidote.

He tricks Spock into coming back aboard, provokes him to a fight and together they construct an apparatus that

will free crew and colonists from the influence of the spores. Sandoval's immediate reaction is one of regret:

"We've done nothing here. No accomplishments. No progress. Three years wasted. We wanted to make this planet a garden."

At the end of the episode McCoy remarks to Kirk: *"That's the second time that Man has been thrown out of Paradise."* Kirk replies:

"No. This time we walked out on our own. Maybe we don't belong in paradise, Bones. Maybe we're meant to fight our way through. Struggle. Claw our way up, fighting every inch of the way. Maybe we can't stroll to the music of the lute. Bones - we must march to the sound of the drums."

"Paradise" comes from the Persian word *pairidaeze*, meaning not garden but wall or enclosure.

Star Trek picks up the word's etymological roots. Paradise is not freedom but imprisonment. The expulsion from paradise, in the traditional myth a punishment, has its polarity reversed: the individual is freed from the

restrictions of the paradisiacal Golden Cage. The fall becomes a blessing.

The flight from paradise is a necessary prelude to the flight of the Enterprise. Work, culture, and technology are no longer associated with fall but with flight. Per aspera ad astra. Paradise does not exist in a state of natural unconsciousness or blissful innocence, but in the conscious constructions of the human mind.

Star Trek moves beyond the metaphor of "The Machine in the Garden" and begins to explore "*The Garden in the Machine*."¹⁸⁹

3.3.2 Technological Progress

Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring" (1962) about the dangerous effects of pesticides on the environment was among the first warning voices against uncontrolled technological progress.

¹⁸⁹ Blair, Karin, "The Garden in the Machine: The Why of *Star Trek*", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 310 - 320

In Star Trek, there are not many references to the emerging environmental issues, and if mentioned at all they are not explored in depth.

A scene from "Bread and Circuses" illustrates this point. At the beginning of the episode, Spock analyses some tricorder readings and concludes:

Spock: Fascinating. This atmosphere is remarkably similar to your 20th century. Moderately industrialized pollution, containing substantial amounts of carbon monoxide, and partially consumed hydrocarbons.

McCoy: The word was "smog".

Spock: I believe that was the term. I had no idea you're that much of a historian, Doctor.

McCoy: I'm not, Mr. Spock. I was simply trying to stop you from giving us a whole lecture on the subject.

McCoy succeeds. Pollution is not mentioned again.

If environmental issues are only touched upon, another aspect of technological progress fared much better: computers.

In the Sixties, computers presaged an Information Revolution. They solved complex mathematical computations in seconds and rapidly began to invade everyday life, and like all new technologies they were - and are - accompanied with a lot of apprehension.

First-season episode "Court-Martial" features Samuel T. Cogley, an eccentric but brilliant lawyer who distinctly dislikes computers. Kirk is accused of having taken an improper course of action in an emergency, resulting in the death of Records Officer Ben Finney.

Main evidence against him is a computer recording of the decisive minutes, and Kirk's testimony stands against the computer's.

Spock refuses to believe that his Captain is guilty and demonstrates by winning several games of chess against the computer that the machine has been manipulated.

The computer's seemingly infallible evidence is proven wrong and Kirk is cleared of all suspicion.

3.3.2.1 "The Ultimate Computer"

In "The Ultimate Computer", Dr. Richard Daystrom installs the computer system M-5 on the Enterprise.

Twenty-five years ago, Daystrom had developed the duotronic computer technology in use on the ship and claims that the multitronic M-5 can take over all functions of the crew. Although Kirk understandably expresses mixed feelings about this experiment, the computer does indeed appear to work very efficiently.

When the Enterprise approaches a planet for exploration and M-5 composes a landing team, Kirk and McCoy are omitted because they contribute no relevant function to the exploration of the planet. Kirk feels obsolete, helpless and without purpose.

However, M-5 begins to malfunction and for no apparent reason destroys an unmanned ore freighter. The computer takes over complete control of the ship and thwarts all efforts to be switched off.

When Commodore Wesley leads a squad of four starships in a simulated maneuver against the Enterprise, M-5 responds as though the attack is real. All "attacking" ships are severely damaged and the crew of the U.S.S. Excelsior is killed.

Daystrom had built his own thought patterns into the machine and thus M-5 reflects Daystrom's strengths and weaknesses. When he tries to persuade the system to stop killing, it becomes obvious that his obsession and paranoid fears of being a prodigy who has lost his touch also determine M-5's behavior.

Kirk finally rescues the ship by arguing the computer into self-destruction.

Despite its at first sight strong stance against men being ruled by technology, the episode actually sidestepped the issue and took an easy way out. Ultimately, the computer malfunctions only because of an insufficient underlying human thought pattern.

It would have been easy to build a new machine on the basis of a more appropriate and healthy model, e.g.

Kirk. According to the series format such machine should not have malfunctioned.

In several other episodes, Star Trek explored the idea of the ultimate computer not only running a starship but a whole planet or civilization. In every case, a computer-run society is either not functioning properly or retrogressing.

We have already seen Landru in "The Return of the Archons." Other episodes in case are "The Apple" and "For the World is Hollow and I Have Touched the Sky." In all of them the ruling computer prevents progress and must be corrected or destroyed.¹⁹⁰

Since the invention of the wheel, technology has repeatedly revolutionized society. The invention of the steam engine was a decisive factor in the abolishment of slavery.

¹⁹⁰ For details on "The Apple" see page 136

New technologies made life more convenient and production more efficient. The Sixties witnessed technological progress in many fields. Computers promised to alleviate men of terribly tedious tasks and to optimize production as they did not complain about working hours or go on strike.

However, the reverse side of that medal also became apparent in the Sixties: the jobs computers were thought to do better were already being done by humans. Automation increased unemployment and created the fear of being replaced by a machine.

The Enterprise is run with the help of computers. The ship is the culmination of man's technology in the 23rd century and as such a symbol for the belief in technology as savior.

Nevertheless the series emphasized that technology must be controlled by humans:

"Star Trek reflects and confronts these anxieties created by technology by telling a story of man's superiority. It explains why

machines can never replace men or research alter his condition."¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹Tyrrell, William Blake, "Star Trek's Myth of Science", *Journal of American Culture* (Spring 1979), 289

3.4 Liberty, Equality and the Melting Pot

The Declaration of Independence held that "all men are created equal." As we have seen, the 1960s record on liberty and equality left much too to be desired.

The following section analyses how contemporary values of sexual, social and racial equality are reflected in Star Trek.

3.4.1 Women's Liberation

During the Second World War many women had to do men's jobs since the men were off fighting and they not only discovered that they were able to do these jobs well but also that it was quite enjoyable.

However, it was not until the Sixties that "the common assumption of mid-century American culture that women, biologically and emotionally, were best fitted for and contented with domestic preoccupations" came under attack.

In "The Feminine Mystique" (1963) Betty Friedan exposed both the injustice of discrimination and the pretense of female contentment.

In 1966 women activists of all ages formed the National Organization for Women to secure their rights. By the late Sixties employment for women in both white and blue-collar jobs had become somewhat accepted.¹⁹²

On television this change was not reflected. In 1966, out of sixty-four shows only 60,9 percent had women in regular roles. These shows had sixty-nine regular female roles, out of which only twenty-four worked outside the home environment. Even shows centered about women with unusual abilities cast them in familiar roles.¹⁹³

Star Trek was no different. Roddenberry's original Writer's Guide from 1964 featured "Number One", a woman in a commanding position, but the character

¹⁹² Blum, 274-276

¹⁹³ Peel, 26

was rejected by the network. Audience tests of the character ranged from resentment to disbelief and Stephen Whitfield remarked that

"Although Star Trek was a show about the 23rd century, it was being viewed by a 20th century audience - who resented the idea of a tough, strong-willed woman ('too domineering') as second-in-command."

Roddenberry himself said that "I decided to wait for a 23rd century audience before I went that far again."¹⁹⁴

For the first season Star Trek cast three females:

- Janice Rand as Captain's yeoman had a traditional female role. She appeared in only seven episodes and was written out of the series after the first half of the first season.
- The second regular female was Christine Chapel, who occupied another traditional female occupation, a nurse. She participated in eighteen of the

¹⁹⁴ both quotes from Whitfield, 128

seventy-nine episodes, but hardly ever did more than pure nursing duties.

- Last not least there is of course Lieutenant Uhura, who appears in sixty-seven episodes.

In contemporary television landscape a black woman in a regular role was indeed a rarity, but as communications officer Uhura did virtually nothing but open hailing frequencies and look puzzled.

In most episodes Uhura is little more than an intergalactic switchboard operator. More important parts were regularly written out of the script, as the actress portraying Uhura, Nichelle Nichols, stated in an interview:

"Script after script were wonderful parts, and then you'd get the rewrites, page rewrite after rewrite, and I thought it was very cruel to give us the original scripts which had terrific parts in them, and then to see your part get cut, cut, cut. [...]"

But you also have to remember that the thing in 1966 was that everyone was scared

to death of having a black and a woman in an equal role."¹⁹⁵

After the second season she wanted to leave the show, but finally opted on and credited her decision to Dr. Martin Luther King, who told her that she was needed on the show as a positive sign to all African-Americans.¹⁹⁶

Female guest stars were not treated better than the regulars. In "Who mourns for Adonais?" McCoy comments about Lieutenant Carolyn Palamas, specialist for archaeology, anthropology and ancient civilizations aboard the Enterprise: "... *on the other hand she is a woman. All woman. One day she'll find the right man, off she'll go. Out of service.*"

And to Kirk it seems just as clear that she cannot possibly find the right man, get married and continue to be a

¹⁹⁵ Asherman, Allan, *The Star Trek Interview Book* (New York: Pocket Books, 1988), 69

¹⁹⁶ Nichelle Nichols in an interview *Star Trek's 25th Anniversary Special*; quoted in Holahan, Terrie, *A Tour of the House of Popular Culture with Star Trek as a Guide*, Senior Honors Thesis, (Northern Kentucky University, Fall 1992), 123

good Starfleet officer: she will have to leave her job and look after her husband. From time to time female scientists or diplomats appeared, but they "*almost inevitably did nothing, stood around looking pretty or acted like bitches.*"¹⁹⁷

As Selley points out guest stars playing non-crew women on Star Trek are either "*angels, who must die ..., or, what is more commonly the case, demons.*"¹⁹⁸

Angels first.

In "The Paradise Syndrome" Kirk loses his memory on a planet whose inhabitants resemble American Indians. They call him "Kirok" and assume he is a god sent to save them. Custom decrees that he should marry the chief's daughter Miramanee.

Shortly after, Miramanee is pregnant and "Kirok" deliriously happy. When the Enterprise returns two months later, Spock saves Kirk with a Vulcan mind meld. With

¹⁹⁷ Peel, 28

¹⁹⁸ Selley, 97

his memory restored "Kirok" becomes Kirk again, and Miramanee dies from internal injuries sustained when she and Kirk were stoned earlier.

Sister Edith Keeler in "The City on the Edge of Forever", another angel, suffers a similar fate. Kirk and Spock arrive in America in 1930 to correct a time accident caused by McCoy, which has changed history.

Kirk falls in love with Ms. Keeler, who is running a soup kitchen in 21st Street Mission. Kirk admires her optimism and altruism, but Spock discovers that Edith Keeler has two possible futures.

She will either begin a pacifist movement that will delay U.S. entry into World War II long enough for Germany to win, or she will die in a traffic accident. In the end Edith Keeler has to die in order to restore history to its proper course.

As for the demons: they are portrayed as artful and intelligent seductresses.

Some of them - like Elaan in "Elaan of Troyius", Lenore in "The Conscience of the King", and Sylvia in "Catspaw" - even try to murder Kirk.

The very last episode aired, "Turnabout Intruder", features Dr. Janice Lester, a woman scientist who built a machine to switch her mind into Kirk's body, and vice-versa.

Back in Starfleet Academy she once had a romantic involvement with Kirk, but her love turned to hatred. She wanted to become a starship commander, but Starfleet did not accept a woman as captain. As Kirk, Dr. Lester is emotional to the point of hysteria and totally incapable of commanding a spaceship.

The episode "climaxes" in a court-martial in which Lester-as-Kirk charges Scotty and McCoy with mutiny and imposes the death penalty. The only woman ever to be a starship captain is not only a complete failure, but also mentally ill.

Summing up, Star Trek's record on equality for women was not at all what it could have been. The series con-

firmed old stereotypes and failed to look forward to a more equal future for both sexes.

3.4.2 Social Equality

In "The Cloudminders" the Enterprise travels to the world of Ardana and its rich supply of zenite. Zenite is a crucial and rare element urgently needed to stop a botanical plague on planet Merak II.

The substance is excavated by the Troglytes,¹⁹⁹ miners who are forced to live on the harsh surface of the planet in impoverished conditions and never see the sun. By way of contrast, the ruling class resides in Stratos, a luxurious city high above the planet, as Spock remarks "a totally intellectual society" enjoying art, science, and generally the best in life.

The Stratos dwellers believe that Troglytes are workers, uncivilized, crude and naturally inferior beings, who do

¹⁹⁹ "Troglytes" is an abbreviation of "Troglydote" meaning "cave dweller", "a person living in seclusion", "one unacquainted with affairs of the world" or "a person of degraded, primitive or brutal character".

not act reasonably and can only understand violence and torture.

The Troglytes withhold the zenite consignment and Kirk is drawn into their struggle for social equality. Their beautiful leader Vanna is caught in subversive action in the city of Stratos and subsequently tortured.

When Kirk protests, Plasus, High Adviser of Ardana's ruling council, orders him "to return to your ship at once". Back aboard the ship Kirk learns from McCoy that zenite in its raw state "*emits odorless invisible gas that retards the intellectual functioning of the mind and heightens the emotion, therefore it releases a violent emotion.*"

A filter mask could protect the Troglytes from the gas and achieve intellectual equality for them.

Against Plasus' orders Kirk transports back to Ardana, directly into Vanna's confinement quarters and tries to convince her that the filter masks would improve the Troglytes' situation. She pretends to believe him and seemingly agrees to deliver the zenite. They break out

and return to the mines, where Kirk is taken hostage. He intentionally causes a cave-in isolating Vanna and himself and then orders Scotty to beam Plasus into the mine with them.

After being exposed to the gas all of them start to act aggressively. Vanna and Plasus are finally convinced that the invisible gas is responsible for the Troglytes' mental state. Gas masks are delivered and all is well.

The episode is little more than a remake of Fritz Lang's science fiction classic "Metropolis" (1926), which situated its workers in an underground factory environment while the idle ruling class lived in a luxurious city filled with skyscrapers, landscaped gardens, multi-leveled highways and numerous land and air vehicles.

"The Cloudminders" does not match the original and avoids to tackle the topic of social equality, the real issue at stake. The social inequality is solved by the delivery gas masks.

The script of this episode was based on an outline by David Gerrold called "Castles in the Sky", and according

to Gerrold the original conception of the story "*was far more disquieting, because there was no easy answer to the situation.*"²⁰⁰

And indeed, on Earth it was not so simple. America emerged from World War II as one of the world's richest nations, but nevertheless poverty remained a problem throughout the economic boom of the fifties and sixties.

In the autumn of 1963 Kennedy had begun to consider poverty a central issue. The Council of Economic Advisers classified twenty percent of American families as poor and the attack on poverty became part of Johnson's plan for a "Great Society".²⁰¹

Star Trek largely ignored this subject.

3.4.3 Racial Equality

During the Sixties the ideal of America as a melting pot for all races rapidly came apart and to quote a title of a

²⁰⁰ Gerrold, 158

²⁰¹ Blum, 148-152

contemporary study about ethnic immigrant groups in New York City, America moved "Beyond the Melting Pot".²⁰²

In contrast, Star Trek presented a world that has overcome racism:

"This approach expresses the 'message' basic to the series: we must learn to live together or most certainly we will soon all die together."²⁰³

We have seen in the second part of this thesis that Roddenberry made significant changes to the crew of the Enterprise after the series had been accepted by the network.

After these changes the bridge of the U.S.S. Enterprise resembled a microcosmic reproduction of American society, a reproduction which in contrast to the reality of the Sixties worked: a black communications officer, a

²⁰² Glazer, Nathan and Daniel Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1970)

²⁰³ Gene Roddenberry, quoted in Whitfield, 112

white Southern medical officer, a Russian Ensign, a Japanese Helmsman, a Scottish engineer, a Vulcan science officer and an American Captain working together to explore the final frontier.

The same attitude also applied for the rest of the crew and guest-stars. In episodes like "The Ultimate Computer" and "A Private Little War" blacks were cast in racially neutral starring roles.

The episode "Plato's Stepchildren" is best remembered for the kiss between Kirk and Uhura - the first interracial kiss on network television and many Star Trek episodes are concerned with prejudice.

The Vulcan concept of appreciating the existence of infinite diversity in infinite combinations (page 79) is an eloquent statement on the issue.

Tolerance is in most cases even extended toward alien life forms. Episodes like "The Devil in the Dark" or "Is There In Truth No Beauty?" both offer a subtle exploration of how differences between life forms that have nothing in common can be solved. Interestingly enough,

in all these instances it is Spock, being half Vulcan and half human, who acts as mediator and interpreter between alien life forms and humanity.

Spock himself is the object of prejudice in "Balance of Terror". In this episode the crew discovers that the mysterious Romulans, who are threatening the Federation, are in fact an offspring of the Vulcan race.

Therefore they look very similar to Vulcans, which causes Lieutenant Stiles to express his distrust of Mr. Spock. In the end, Lieutenant Stiles realizes his prejudicial attitude to be wrong.

"The Savage Curtain" contains another taunt at racism. Soon after a powerful energy source scanned the ship, a bearded figure, clad in traditional dark suit and stovepipe hat, materializes on the main viewing screen while floating through space in a comfortable high chair, and says: "*I am Abraham Lincoln.*"

The figure requests to be beamed aboard and on seeing Uhura, Lincoln exclaims "*What a charming negress!*" to which she fiercely responds "*In our century we've*

learned not to fear words." Kirk then explains to his ideal that humanity has learned to take delight in differences.

3.4.3.1 "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield"

The third season episode "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield", aired on January 10, 1969, specifically addressed the issue of racial prejudice in a somewhat simplistic but nevertheless effective manner.

The Enterprise intercepts a stolen Federation shuttlecraft and its thief, a humanoid named Lokai from the planet Cheron, significantly located "*in the southernmost part of the galaxy*". Lokai has a noticeable pigmentation: he is black on one side and white on the other.

Soon after his arrival, Bele²⁰⁴ appears on the bridge. He claims to be Cheron's "Chief Officer of the Commission

²⁰⁴ "Bele" is pronounced "biel", as in "Beale Street Blues"

of Political Traitors" and is in pursuit of Lokai, who in turn asks Kirk for political asylum.

It soon becomes obvious that the two are filled with a deep mutual hatred. When Starfleet command refuses to hand over Lokai to Bele, the following argument evolves:

Bele: It's obvious to the most simple minded that Lokai is of an inferior breed.

Spock: The obvious visual evidence, Commissioner, is that he is of the same breed as yourself.

Bele: Are you blind then, Commander Spock? Look at me. Look at me.

Kirk: You're black on one side - and white on the other.

Bele: I am black on the right side.

Kirk: (slowly) I fail to see the significant difference.

Bele: Lokai is white on the right, all of his people are white on the right side.

The reason for Bele's and Lokai's irreconcilable hatred is sheer racial prejudice. The starship arrives at Cheron

only to discover a dead world: the inhabitants have killed each other with their insistent hatred. Bele and Lokai chase each other down to their dead planet where they continue their senseless fight.

When Lokai at one stage asks whether there is persecution on Earth, Sulu answers "Yes, but it happened way back in the twentieth century. There is no such primitive thinking today." However, Star Trek was produced in that century, and at the time there was.

In 1966, there was exactly one black actress on television with regular employment in a continuing role: Nichelle Nichols as Lieutenant Uhura. The first black man in a serious dramatic role was Raymond St. Jacques in the final year of "Rawhide" and the only black actor in a show was Bill Cosby in "I, Spy", which many NBC affiliates refused to carry until forced to do so. The score on oriental actors and actresses was not better. Their first regular roles were in Western shows like "Bonanza", usually as comic characters. As incredi-

ble as it may sound: in 1966, "Star Trek had exactly half of the ethnic actors in regular roles on television."²⁰⁵

Compared to its contemporary TV environment and given the pressures of television production, Star Trek went a long way to break down race barriers. It presented a future in which humanity has overcome segregation and racial hatred.

In Star Trek, Martin Luther King's version of the American Dream had come true.

²⁰⁵ Peel, 34

3.5 Manifest Destiny

One of the most important elements of the American Dream is the firm belief that America had been chosen by God to free the rest of the world from despotism and darkness.

This belief can be traced back to the Puritan intention of building "a city upon a hill". It survived secularization and as "Manifest Destiny" influenced the conquest of the West and America's national identity until today.

During the quest for national purpose in 1960, there was a consensus among authors that America's mission was "the liberation of humanity" and this notion became integral part of Kennedy's "New Frontier".

As we have seen, Star Trek endorsed other parts of the New Frontier and the following chapter will examine whether or not Star Trek's exploration of the final frontier was influenced by the belief in America's manifest destiny.

3.5.1 The Prime Directive

Starfleet had a number of General Orders designed as rules of conduct for its personnel. The most important is the Prime Directive, which has been called "a wise, but often troublesome rule which prohibits starship interference with the normal development of alien life and societies."²⁰⁶

In the episode "A Private Little War", Kirk explains why the Prime Directive was developed:

"We once were as you are. Spears and arrows. Came a time when our weapons grew faster than our wisdom, and we almost destroyed ourselves. We learned from this to make a rule during all our travels: never to cause the same to happen to other worlds."

A short dialogue in "Bread and Circuses" gives a hint as to what the content of this rule might be. After beaming down to planet 892 IV, Kirk mentions that prior to the

²⁰⁶ according to the third revision of the *Star Trek Writers' Guide*, quoted in Gerrold, 147

Enterprise there has only been one starship in this sector:

Spock: Then the Prime Directive is in full force, Captain?

Kirk: No identification of self or mission. No interference with social development of said planet.

McCoy: No references to space or the fact that there are other worlds or advanced civilizations.

Kirk: Let's go.

Starfleet's General Order Number One demands non-interference with social development of other societies and puts this rule above every other.

In "The Omega Glory", Kirk tells us that

"... a Star Captain's most solemn oath is that he would give his life, even his entire crew rather than violate the Prime Directive."

All Starfleet members swear an oath that they would rather die than disobey the directive of non-interference. It is after all the Prime Directive.

The exact wording has never been stated and thus it remains a somewhat elastic clause.

However, there were many hints and references and the Prime Directive has been summarized as follows:

As the right of each sentient species to live in accordance with its normal cultural evolution is considered sacred, no Star Fleet personnel may interfere with the healthy development of alien life and culture. Such interference includes the introduction of superior knowledge, strength, or technology to a world whose society is incapable of handling such advantages wisely.

Star Fleet personnel may not violate this Prime Directive, even to save their lives and/or their ship, unless they are acting to right an earlier violation or an accidental contamination of said culture. This directive takes precedence over any and all other considerations, and carries with it the highest moral obligation.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ this is from *Frequently Asked Questions*, updated January 4, 1994 (InterNet: ottoh3@cfsmo.honeywell.com); the source is of course "non-canon" but the phrasing is nevertheless helpful in discussing the Prime Directive

Not exactly New Frontier-style, but there are loopholes: it can be ignored *"to right an earlier violation or an accidental contamination of said culture."*

This means that Kirk is allowed to put a society back on its proper course after someone else had - accidentally or intentionally - tampered with it.

A classical example for an accidental interference is given in the episode "A Piece of the Action," where the inhabitants of the isolated planet Iotia modeled their culture after a book left behind on their world by the U.S.S. Horizon a hundred years earlier.

The book was about Chicago Mobs of the Twenties and inspired the Iotians to duplicate the gangs of old Chicago. Kirk, by out-mobstering the mobsters, sets up a united government with the Federation as super-boss.

In essence he is faithful to the directive by correcting an *"accidental contamination of said culture."*

An example for an intentional interference with the normal development of an inferior culture is second season

season episode "A Private Little War"²⁰⁸ in which the Klingons attempt to take over the planet by arming one segment of the population and the Federation restores balance of power.

Those are the only official loopholes in the directive. However, as David Gerrold remarked, *"the Prime Directive was to be more honored in the breach than otherwise. In fact, the only time we ever heard about the Prime Directive was just before Kirk broke it. There never was a story told where he obeyed the rule."*²⁰⁹

I have mentioned the episode "The Return of the Archons" in which the Enterprise finds a society controlled by Landru. After learning that Landru is a computer, Kirk decides to destroy it: ²¹⁰

Kirk: Mr. Spock, the plug must be pulled.

Spock: Sir?

²⁰⁸ for a discussion of "A Private Little War" and its references to Vietnam, see page 142

²⁰⁹ Gerrold, 147 (italics there)

²¹⁰ for "The Return of the Archons", see page 116

Kirk: Landru must die!

Spock: Captain, our prime directive of non-interference.

Kirk: That refers to a living, growing culture. Do you think this one is?

This remark represents a serious restriction to the validity of the Prime Directive: It applies only "*to a living, growing culture,*" and whether or not a culture is living and growing is left to Kirk's discretion.

3.5.1.1 "The Apple"

Another example for interfering with a culture that does not qualify for non-interference is given in "The Apple".

The inhabitants of Gamma Trianguli VI are a gentle, childlike people who live in a seeming paradise and do not know violence, work, or sex.

They call themselves the "Feeders of Vaal". Vaal is a computer which provides them with everything they need and which survives by metabolizing the natives' offerings of food.

In one scene, McCoy approaches Kirk and Spock who watch the feeding of Vaal and asks:

McCoy: What's going on Jim?

Kirk: Mess Call.

Spock: In my view a splendid example of reciprocity.

McCoy: It would take a computerized Vulcan mind such as yours to make that kind of statement.

Spock: Doctor, you insist on applying human standards to non-human cultures. I remind you that humans are only a tiny minority in this galaxy.

McCoy: There are certain absolutes, Mr. Spock, and one of them is the right of humanoids to a free and unchained environment. The right to have conditions that permit growth.

Spock: Another is their right to choose a system which seems to work for them.

McCoy: Jim, you're not just going to stand by and be blinded to what's going on here. These are humanoids. Intelligent. They need to advance and grow. Don't you understand what my readings indicate. There's been no change or progress

here in at least ten thousand years. This isn't life. It's stagnation.

Spock: Doctor, these people are healthy, and they are happy. Whatever you choose to call it, this system works despite your emotional reaction to it.

McCoy: It might work for you, Mr. Spock, but it doesn't work for me. Humanoids living so they can service a hunk of tin.

Kirk: Gentlemen, I think this philosophical argument can wait until our ship's out of danger.

McCoy calls "the right to a free and unchained environment" an absolute and asks his Captain to do something about it.

Implicitly, he demands that the Federation should, in Kennedy's words, "assure the survival and success of liberty."²¹¹

Spock on the other hand does not believe that interference with Vaal's culture is justified. While McCoy sleeps in the background, he discusses the subject with Kirk:

Spock: I am concerned, Captain. This may not be an ideal society, but it is a viable one.

Kirk: Bones is right. These people aren't living, they're existing. They don't create, they don't produce, they don't even think, They exist to service a machine.

Spock: If we do what it seems we must, in my opinion, it would be a direct violation of the non-interference directive.

Kirk: These are people not robots. (music) They should have the opportunity of choice. We ought to - interfere.

And they do.

The Enterprise liberates the planet by destroying Vaal and Kirk introduces its populace to the Federation way of life, extending "*the opportunity of free choice*" as recommended by the Presidential commission on Goals for Americans.²¹²

²¹¹ from Kennedy's Inaugural Speech, quoted in Boorstin, 939

²¹² see page 41

Whenever the Prime Directive is mentioned and endangered, Spock is usually the one defending its integrity. While Kirk and McCoy agree with him on principle, both tend to emphasize the pre-eminence of "certain absolutes" such as liberty and the opportunity of choice.

Which is not surprising: the Vulcan Philosophy of Nome appreciates the diversity of all things and Spock is therefore likely to accept given conditions even if they do not fit his personal standards.

Kirk and McCoy on the other hand are Americans and their creed reaches back to the Declaration of Independence which held that all men are endowed with certain unalienable rights, including liberty.

Governments are only instituted to secure these rights and it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government should it become destructive of these ends.²¹³

²¹³ the words in italics are literal quotes from the Declaration of Independence

Therefore governments that do not secure liberty or the opportunity of choice can rightfully be abolished.

The Declaration of Independence is Kirk's point of departure for interpretation of Starfleet's Prime Directive and *"despite its nagging of its conscience Spock, the series subscribes to McCoy's [and Kirk's] benevolent imperialism."*²¹⁴

In his Inaugural Address, Kennedy said that the United States of America are prepared to *"pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty."*²¹⁵

And so was the United Federation of Planets.

3.5.2 The Pueblo Incident

The U.S.S. Pueblo, a Navy spy ship, had been seized by North Korea on January 23, 1968.

²¹⁴ Tyrrell, "Star Trek as Myth", 714

²¹⁵ from Kennedy's Inaugural Address; quoted in Boorstin, 939

Commander Lloyd M. Bucher had surrendered without a fight on the grounds that, as he was armed with only two machine guns, resistance would have been foolish and futile.

The Koreans claimed the ship was spying, which the US denied. The crew was released only after signing an apology for the incident. After their return to the USA, the Navy launched an investigation designed to blame the ship's officers for the high command's mistake.

Although it was the Navy that had sent an unarmed, unescorted vessel to spy on North Korea, only the ship's officers were censured. Navy investigators wanted to court-martial them, but the Secretary of the Navy declined on the grounds that they had suffered enough.²¹⁶

²¹⁶ O'Neill, 409

In "The Enterprise Incident" Dorothy Fontana intended to retell the Pueblo Incident, but NBC rejected the idea as "*too dangerous. It has to be something else.*"²¹⁷

The production team rewrote the story and the actual episode aired on September, 27, 1968, was something else indeed: Kirk appears irritable and overworked, (seemingly) goes crazy and orders the Enterprise into Romulan space. The Enterprise is seized and Kirk (seemingly) killed.

Back on his ship we learn that the whole incident has been staged to steal the Romulan cloaking device. Kirk puts on a Romulan disguise, beams back aboard the Romulan ship and gets the cloaking device.

David Gerrold calls the story "*as dishonest as anything ever presented on American television, and representative of Star Trek's worst failures.*"

²¹⁷ Gerrold, 160; D. C. Fontana was second season script consultant and wrote several stories and/or scripts including "Tomorrow Is Yesterday", "This Side of Paradise", "Journey To Babel", "By Any Other Name", "The Ultimate Computer"

The episode suggested that the ends justify the means and ignores that means shape the ends.

According to Gerrold, Star Trek would have had the chance *"to comment on one of the most shameful American adventures - as it had the opportunity to comment on all of them - and muffed it thoroughly."*²¹⁸

3.5.3 Vietnam

Another trauma of the Sixties was Vietnam. The episode "A Taste of Armageddon" is indirectly related to Vietnam and discusses the horrors of war.

Second season episode "A Private Little War" contains direct references to the war in Vietnam and will be analyzed in some detail.

3.5.3.1 "A Taste of Armageddon"

In the episode "A Taste of Armageddon", aired on February 23, 1967, the Enterprise travels to planet Eminiar

²¹⁸ Gerrold, 159-161

VII to establish diplomatic contact. A landing party discovers that Eminiar has been at war with a neighboring planet for centuries and witnesses an attack in which the Enterprise is said to be destroyed.

However, there are no explosions, no radiation, no evidence of an attack, and Scotty, in charge of the Enterprise, seems well and alive. Kirk and Spock learn that the Eminians fight their war with computers and that the attacks are launched mathematically.

"Casualties" on both planets willingly enter disintegration chambers and die to prevent all-out destruction. Thus civilization lives although people die and, as Eminiar's council head Anon 7 puts it, *"the culture goes on."*

The landing party is imprisoned, but Kirk and Spock escape and manage to overpower the high council. Kirk explains to Anon 7:

"Destruction, disease, horror. That's what war is all about. That's what makes it a thing to be avoided. You made it neat and

painless. So neat and painless, you had no reason to stop it."

Kirk destroys the computers and facing the horrors of war, Eminiar and its rival begin to talk peace.

The point in the story is that death had been made "neat and painless." By restoring the horrors of war, Kirk put an end to it and thus performed a similar function to that of television in the Vietnam war.

Since 1865 the USA had fought wars only on foreign soil. American soldiers had died in many wars, but to the public death remained invisible and clean. No bomb was dropped on America and the fighting was thousands of miles away.

So was Vietnam, but there was a difference to earlier wars: television. Vietnam was the first war extensively covered by television and has in fact been called the "television war."²¹⁹ The horrors of war were not hidden

²¹⁹ Bailey, George, "Television War: Trends in Network Coverage of Vietnam 1965-1970, *Journal of Broadcasting*, 20:2 (Spring 1976), 147-158

by abstract figures of casualties. Television removed the veil of abstraction.

Its reality reached directly into the homes of Americans. There was no escape. John Peel stated that

"What finally prompted the conflict in Vietnam to end was television. Seeing the reality of war, the average American began to realize the war was terribly real.

The peace movement grew only when the reality of war filled the living rooms of the American people."²²⁰

Although reality was not quite that simple, television did have an important impact on the reception of the Vietnam war in America.

When Kirk destroyed the Eminian war computers, Anon 7 asked him whether or not he realized what he had done and Kirk answers "*I have given you back the horrors of war.*"

²²⁰ Peel, 55

During the so-called "conflict overseas", television did exactly the same thing to Americans. It gave them back the horrors of war.

3.5.3.2 "A Private Little War"

On January 31, 1968, North Vietnam launched the Tet Offensive, which took the American public completely by surprise as officials had insisted that the Viet Cong were too weak to launch a major attack and that the war would be won within a matter of weeks.

The TV news reports of the Tet Offensive spoke a different language.

Two days later, on February 2, the episode "A Private Little War" was aired. In this episode, written by Gene Roddenberry, the Enterprise travels to the planet Neutral.

Kirk had visited that planet thirteen years before and had befriended Tyree, leader of the Hill People who lived in peace with the Villagers, the only other tribe on the

planet. The episode starts off with another reference to a seeming paradise:

Spock: ... it's a Garden of Eden.

Kirk: Or so it seemed to the brash young Lieutenant Kirk in command of his first planet survey.

Spock: Class M in all respect. Quite earthlike.

Kirk: Except these people stay in their garden of Eden. Bows and arrows for hunting, but absolutely no fighting amongst themselves. Remarkably peaceful and tranquil.

However, things have changed. The Villagers have flintlocks and are fighting the Hill People. Back aboard the ship, Kirk learns that a Klingon ship is in orbit around the planet and automatically assumes that they supplied the arms to the Villagers: "*If the Klingons are breaking the treaty, it could be interstellar war.*"

Kirk and McCoy beam down to investigate and Tyree, a dedicated pacifist, tells them "*the firesticks first appeared nearly a year ago*" and that the Villagers make the weapons themselves.

They sneak into the village and find a Klingon military advisor supplying the necessary know-how and material to Apella, leader of the Villagers.

When Kirk teaches Tyree and his people to shoot, McCoy objects:

Kirk: Bones, the normal development of this planet was a status quo between the Hill People and the Villagers. Klingons changed that with the flint-locks. If this planet is to develop the way it should we must equalize both sides again.

McCoy: Jim, that means you're condemning this whole planet to a war that may never end. It could on for year after year, massacre after massacre ...

Kirk sharply interrupts him and after a long pause asks: "*What is your - sober, sensible solution to all this?*"

McCoy does of course not have one, but insists that "*furnishing them firearms is certainly not the answer.*"

Kirk continues:

Kirk: Bones, do you remember the 20th century brush wars on the Asian continent? Two giant

powers involved, much like the Klingons and ourselves. Neither side felt they could pull out.

McCoy: Yes I remember. Went on bloody year after bloody year.

Kirk: What would you have suggested? That one side arm its friends with overpowering weapons? Mankind would never have lived to travel space if they had. No. The only solution is what happened back then: balance of power.

While Kirk persuades Tyree to fight with weapons the Federation will provide, his wife Nona steals Kirk's phaser and takes it to the Villagers, who kill her before she can demonstrate its power.

Her death turns Tyree into a fighting man. Holding up a flint-lock he tells Kirk "I want more of these. Many more."

Kirk and McCoy are very saddened that they could do nothing to end the hostilities and ordered a hundred flint-locks for Tyree.

After thus having restored a temporary balance of power they left: "*We're very tired, Mr. Spock. Beam us up home.*"

The first-draft script of "A Private Little War" contained more specific references to Vietnam: Apella, for instance, was distinctly described as a "Ho Chi Minh type."²²¹

Therefore the episode is based on the following analogy:

Federation	USA
Klingons	USSR
Hill People	South Vietnam
Villagers	North Vietnam
Apella	Ho Chi Minh

However, if the Hill People represent South Vietnam, Tyree would have to be President Diem - and this would have been rather flattering for the latter.

²²¹ Asherman, *Compendium*, 90

Tyree's mystic and beautiful witch-wife Nona might bear a slight resemblance to Diem's sister-in-law Madame Nhu, but Tyree is portrayed as an understanding, well-liked leader, who refuses to fight or kill. That description does not exactly fit President Diem, who led a corrupt, arrogant and repressive regime.²²²

All in all the story is little more than a rationalization for American involvement in Vietnam. According to this episode the "private little war" in Vietnam was inevitable.

The Klingons were responsible, and the Federation had no other choice but to restore balance of power.

Which in a way is surprising, given that a few months after "A Private Little War" was aired, Roddenberry signed a resolution opposing "the participation of the United States in the war in Vietnam."²²³

²²² for further details on President Diem, his regime, and Madame Nhu see O'Neill, 77-83

²²³ published in the magazine "If", vol. 18, No. 6, June 1968. Among the other authors who also signed were James Blish, Harlan Ellison, Isaac Asimov, Norman Spinrad, and Philip K. Dick; quoted in Schäfer, 259-261

When Star Trek came on the air in 1966, Vietnam was in a sense at the core of the American dilemma. While episodes like "The Apple" and "A Private Little War" were shown, the belief in America as the world's policemen was coming apart, although the quest for national purpose at the beginning of the 1960s had shown that the country's intellectual elite still believed in America's "*global mission*."²²⁴

Star Trek did not question this conception.

Despite the Federation's Prime Directive there were many episodes in which the Enterprise engaged in New Frontier-style cosmic meddling in order to extend liberty not only throughout the world but throughout the universe.

Any one of those episodes made a specific point which taken on its own is valid, but, as Gerrold points out, "*cumulatively the effect is quite different:*"

²²⁴ cf. Jeffries, 470

"... there is an implication of Starfleet's attitudes that reflects seriously on the attitudes of American television, as well as the American culture.

The subtext of the series, the subvocal message, is that if a local culture is tested and found wanting in the eyes of a starship Captain, he may make such changes as he feels necessary."

The Enterprise was the galaxy's policemen and all too often Kirk said in a benevolent and somewhat chivalrous but nevertheless decisive manner: "*Your culture isn't as good as mine, therefore I have the right to effect whatever changes I feel necessary. I want to make you into a carbon copy of me because I'm so good ...*"²²⁵

The United Federation of Planets appears as a 23rd century variety of the United States of America.

In other words, Star Trek's

²²⁵ quotes from Gerrold, 159 and 156

"innocent optimism conceals the unexamined premise that the 'American way of life' will somehow prevail in the universe ...

[It is] an effective format for reinstating in the realm of fantasy some of the American values that floundered against ugly obstacles in Vietnam."²²⁶

Roddenberry's opposition to the American involvement in Vietnam did not mean that he did not believe in the validity of the American Dream.

²²⁶ Jewett, Robert, "*Star Trek* as the Pop Religion of the 'American monomyth'", quoted in Huff, 100

4 A Conclusion

The historical roots of the American Dream reach back into ancient times.

After the discovery of the new continent, the mythic vision of a perfect utopia and the belief that civilization progressed in a westward pattern resulted in the concept of America's special destiny.

English Puritans had developed an apocalyptic theological conception based on Calvinism which held that history was progressing toward world salvation and would climax in the Millenium, Christ's return to reign on Earth for a thousand years.

The Puritan settlers also believed that providence had concealed America until the arrival of the Reformation and that they were chosen by God to go to the Promised Land and build a "*Citty upon a Hill*" as a model for the world.

Thus the notion of America as a "redeemer nation" pervaded its culture long before secularization resulted in

the ideal of a democratic utopia, which found expression in the Declaration of Independence.

These mythical, religious and political roots, combined with the geographical realities of the new continent, led to the fascinating vision of the American Dream. Its most important elements are

"The twin promises of societal progress and individual success, the inspiring challenge of ever new frontiers to man's power and ingenuity, the belief in America's manifest destiny derived from her role in civilization's westward movement, her function as the home of God's chosen people and her unrivaled form of democratic government granting liberty and equality to all her citizens, and the myth of the melting pot with its fascinating promise of a new beginning."²²⁷

²²⁷ Freese, p. 27

However, the splendid promises of the American Dream were during the 1960s increasingly contrasted by the unpleasantly conspicuous shortcomings of its reality.

Its main constituents were overshadowed by their respective opposites and the Dream turned into a Nightmare. Progress resulted in the rape of natural resources, manifest destiny guided the way to the trauma of Vietnam, the melting pot broke, and democracy suffered from Watergate.

America in the late Sixties did not look like the "shining city upon a hill" the Puritans had envisioned.

At the beginning of the decade, a television series called Star Trek was conceived. Today, almost thirty years after it started, "*the little science fiction show that refused to die*"²²⁸ is still being shown all over the world.

Its success is without parallel in the history of television and the Enterprise and her crew have undoubtedly be-

²²⁸ Gross, Edward and Mark A. Altman, *Great Birds of the Galaxy: Gene Roddenberry and the Creators of Trek* (New York: Image Publishing, 1992), 28; quoted in Holahan, 1

come an important cultural artifact. What is so special about Star Trek?

On a superficial level, Star Trek delivered an optimistic view of the future at a time when optimism was most welcome. It holds that humanity will be able to handle its problems and finally overcome them.

However, if it was not more than just an escape from the gloomy reality of the time it should have slowly faded away. Instead it lived beyond the nightmares of the Sixties.

The appeal of the series is based on something more profound than just an optimistic outlook and there is a deeper mythical structure of meaning, directly related to the myths inherent in the American Dream.

Although set in a future environment Star Trek is, in Selley's words, "a quintessential American romance" and reflects the values of the 1960s and not the 23rd century.

Star Trek picks up many of the main elements of the American Dream: the lost challenges of the frontier, the notion of progress, the concern for liberty and equality, the belief in manifest destiny, the concept of a multi-racial society.

These myths came apart during the Sixties and left a vacuum which Star Trek readily filled by projecting them into the future and affirming that they will be valid in the 23rd century.

But Star Trek is more than a mere continuation of the American Dream. It did not only reflect its main elements and project their ideal realization into the future - within the limits of television production conditions it modified at least some of them.

Star Trek restores the lost challenges of the frontier and endorses Kennedy's vision of a New Frontier in many respects.

Although not much is said about the culture of the 23rd century it appears that societal progress toward perfection has continued. Earth is member of a United Federa-

tion of Planets and society seems a logical continuation of today's positive dispositions.

Technological progress has continued and the Enterprise is proof of that, but the series also confronts contemporary anxieties about technology and emphasizes that although technology is important machines will never be able to replace men.

According to Star Trek, women will in the 23rd century not have achieved equality. In the original format, Roddenberry had tried to place a woman as second-in-command, but the network rejected his idea and women are mostly portrayed in traditional roles.

Star Trek's strongest stance is on racial equality. The crew is multi-racial and racism is quite clearly marked as a thing of the past. Mankind has learned to take delight in differences.

A central part of the United Federation of Planets' philosophy is its Prime Directive of non-interference. This is quite different to the American Dream's belief in manifest destiny. The Prime Directive explicitly forbids inter-

ference with the social development of other cultures. Admittedly, the Prime Directive was more honored in its breach than otherwise, but it was a beginning and even a superficial analysis of Star Trek - The Next Generation shows that Captain Picard of the new Enterprise takes the Prime Directive much more seriously than his predecessor.

At a time when the American Dream had turned into a Nightmare, Star Trek confirmed its validity by showing it as the reality in the 23rd century.

Star Trek - The American Dream continued?

In a sense yes, but rather than a simple statement of traditionally nationalistic themes, Star Trek promotes a form of literally universal humanism.

5 Appendix

5.1 Bibliography

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5.2 The Original Series: Episode List

Sea. = Season; Eps. = Episode; P.C. = Production Code (Order of Production)

Sea.	Eps.	AirDate	P.C.	Title
I	00.	-PILOT-	01	The Cage
	01.	Sep 8, 1966	06	The Man Trap
	02.	Sep 15, 1966	08	Charlie X
	03.	Sep 22, 1966	02	Where No Man Has Gone Before
	04.	Sep 29, 1966	07	The Naked Time
	05.	Oct 6, 1966	05	The Enemy Within
	06.	Oct 13, 1966	04	Mudd's Women
	07.	Oct 20, 1966	10	What are Little Girls Made Of?
	08.	Oct 27, 1966	12	Miri
	09.	Nov 3, 1966	11	Dagger of the Mind
	10.	Nov 10, 1966	03	The Corbomite Maneuver
	11.	Nov 17, 1966	16	The Menagerie (Part One)
	12.	Nov 24, 1966	16	The Menagerie (Part Two)
	13.	Dec 8, 1966	13	The Conscience of the King
	14.	Dec 15, 1966	09	Balance of Terror
	15.	Dec 29, 1966	17	Shore Leave
	16.	Jan 5, 1967	14	The Galileo Seven
	17.	Jan 12, 1967	18	The Squire of Gothos
	18.	Jan 19, 1967	19	Arena
	19.	Jan 26, 1967	21	Tomorrow is Yesterday
	20.	Feb 2, 1967	15	Court Martial
	21.	Feb 9, 1967	22	The Return of the Archons
	22.	Feb 16, 1967	24	Space Seed
	23.	Feb 23, 1967	23	A Taste of Armageddon

	24.	Mar 2, 1967	25	This Side of Paradise
	25.	Mar 9, 1967	26	The Devil in the Dark
	26.	Mar 16, 1967	27	Errand of Mercy
	27.	Mar 23, 1967	20	The Alternative Factor
	28.	Apr 6, 1967	28	The City on the Edge of Forever
	29.	Apr 13, 1967	29	Operation: Annihilate
II	30.	Sep 15, 1967	34	Amok Time
	31.	Sep 22, 1967	33	Who Mourns for Adonais?
	32.	Sep 29, 1967	37	The Changeling
	33.	Oct 6, 1967	39	Mirror, Mirror
	34.	Oct 13, 1967	38	The Apple
	35.	Oct 20, 1967	35	The Doomsday Machine
	36.	Oct 27, 1967	30	Catspaw
	37.	Nov 3, 1967	41	I, Mudd
	38.	Nov 10, 1967	31	Metamorphosis
	39.	Nov 17, 1967	44	Journey to Babel
	40.	Dec 1, 1967	32	Friday's Child
	41.	Dec 8, 1967	40	The Deadly Years
	42.	Dec 15, 1967	47	Obsession
	43.	Dec 22, 1967	36	Wolf in the Fold
	44.	Dec 29, 1967	42	The Trouble with Tribbles
	45.	Jan 5, 1968	46	The Gamesters of Triskelion
	46.	Jan 12, 1968	49	A Piece of the Action
	47.	Jan 19, 1968	48	The Immunity Syndrome
	48.	Feb 2, 1968	45	A Private Little War

	49.	Feb 9, 1968	51	Return to Tomorrow
	50.	Feb 16, 1968	52	Patterns of Force
	51.	Feb 23, 1968	50	By Any Other Name
	52.	Mar 1, 1968	54	The Omega Glory
	53.	Mar 8, 1968	53	The Ultimate Computer
	54.	Mar 15, 1968	43	Bread and Circuses
	55.	Mar 29, 1968	55	Assignment: Earth
III	56.	Sep 20, 1968	61	Spock's Brain
	57.	Sep 27, 1968	59	The Enterprise Incident
	58.	Oct 4, 1968	58	The Paradise Syndrome
	59.	Oct 11, 1968	60	And The Children Shall Lead
	60.	Oct 18, 1968	62	Is There In Truth No Beauty?
	61.	Oct 25, 1968	56	Spectre of the Gun
	62.	Nov 1, 1968	66	Day of the Dove
	63.	Nov 8, 1968	65	For The World Is Hollow, And I Have Touched The Sky
	64.	Nov 15, 1968	64	The Tholian Web
	65.	Nov 22, 1968	67	Plato's Stepchildren
	66.	Nov 29, 1968	68	Wink of an Eye
	67.	Dec 6, 1968	63	The Empath
	68.	Dec 20, 1968	57	Elaan of Troyius
	69.	Jan 3, 1969	71	Whom Gods Destroy
	70.	Jan 10, 1969	70	Let That Be Your Last Battlefield
	71.	Jan 17, 1969	72	The Mark Of Gideon
	72.	Jan 24, 1969	69	That Which Survives
	73.	Jan 31, 1969	73	The Lights of Zetar
	74.	Feb 14, 1969	76	Requiem for Methuselah
	75.	Feb 21, 1969	75	The Way to Eden
	76.	Feb 28, 1969	74	The Cloudminders

	77.	Mar 7, 1969	77	The Savage Curtain
	78.	Mar 14, 1969	78	All Our Yesterdays
	79.	Jun 3, 1969	79	Turnabout Intruder

5.3 Acronyms

canon	what Roddenberry/Paramount decides is "real" Trek. Roddenberry has declared every novel (including the one(s) he wrote) to be non-canon.
DS9,DSN	Deep Space Nine
FTL	Faster than Light (warp speeds)
IDIC	Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations aka Philosophy of Nome
LLaP	Live Long and Prosper (Vulcan Greeting)
NCC	Naval Construction Contract (mentioned in "Spock's World" and elsewhere)
PaLL	Peace and Long Life (answer to PaLL)
pilot	usually an episode or episodes shot for the purpose of pitching a series idea to a network (like "The Cage" and "Where No Man Has Gone Before" in TOS).
SF	Star Fleet or Science Fiction (depending on context)
TAS	The Animated Series
teaser	the short scene that comes before the opening credits.
TFF	The Final Frontier (ST5)
TMP	The Motion Picture (ST1)
TNG	The Next Generation
TOS	The Original Series (or The Old Series)
trailer	previews (commercials) for the next EXCITING episode.
Trekker	see page 81
Trekkie	dto.
trekker	(with a small "t") A person who travels vast distances.
Treknician	A fan who enjoys collecting data (and debating with others) on the technical aspect of Star Trek (warp technology, transporter technology, shields, etc.).

Treknologist	A fan who enjoys collecting Star Trek technical literature and trying to logically and rationally explain continuity errors in the show.
TSfS	The Search for Spock (ST3)
TUC	The Undiscovered Country (ST6)
TVH	The Voyage Home (ST4)
TWoK	The Wrath of Khan (ST2)
UFP	United Federation of Planets
USS	United Space Ship (according to Kirk in an early TOS episode, though The Making of Star Trek claims it stands for United States Spaceship)
VOY,VGR	Voyager
YATI	Yet Another Trek Inconsistency/Yet Another Technical Inconsistency

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