

Gender and Racial Identity in *Star Trek: The Original Series*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *Star Trek: Discovery*



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Introduction

Since its first airing in 1966, the television series *Star Trek* has become a worldwide phenomenon which, considering the recent films and CBS-series, is still a significant and appealing franchise in today's popular culture. As Sir Patrick Stewart (protagonist of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*) argues, *Star Trek* "has become common cultural currency in its almost five decades of existence" (Pearson 1). In other words, the franchise and its characters are known around the world and have left their mark on generations of fans, but also more casual viewers. Moreover, George Gonzalez points out that *Star Trek* "significantly contributes to an analysis of the contemporary world" (1). Over the last five decades, *Star Trek* has mirrored and reflected on many socio-political developments in American culture. Scrutiny of its major themes reveals that the TV show can be understood as a barometer of sorts of the *zeitgeist* of the post-war decades, defined by professor Dirk Goettsche as "a particular tendency that we see, or drive that we see, in our own time....something that stands out as typical in our own time....something critical which needed to be named." Two critical socio-political aspects of post-war American culture that are explicitly explored within the various incarnations of *Star Trek* are the changing roles and identities available to women as well as concerns about the increasing complexity of racial identities in an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic America. This thesis explores the themes of gender and racial identity in three generations of the *Star Trek* series: *The Original Series* (1966-69), *The Next Generation*, (1987-94) and *Discovery* (2017-18). It will reveal that the producers of the show altered the representation of female characters and obviously "other" aliens to meet the changing understandings of gender and racial identity of the audience belonging to different generations that formed the target audience of the TV series: the baby boomers, Generation X and the Millennials respectively.

In short, the baby boomers were “the product of the sudden increase in U.S. births occurring between 1946 and 1964....the result of the renewed confidence and security that followed the economic hardships and uncertainties of the Great Depression and World War II.” This generation “spurred a suburban boom in affordable housing, schools, places of worship, shopping malls, and the road, rail, water, and electrical lines that served them” (Rafferty). This generation, growing up in the post-war era, has become associated both with an embrace of material prosperity and urban comfort, as well as the development of a counter-culture that “chang[ed] the country’s attitudes toward drug use, sexuality, and how the country viewed those in power” (Rafferty). Generation X-ers, as Douglas Coupland explains, grew up with “an inflated emphasis on the self and a dislike of answering to other” (80-81). They believed as youths that “things will somehow work out for the best and that the world is generously supplied with safety nets” (81). To the contrary, as the 1980s progressed, they became “a generation profoundly disenchanted with society, that feels unable to effect change and that registers this sentiment by non-participation” (81). According to Coupland, the “antagonism Xs feel towards boomers is one of the silent schisms of our era” (85). Millennials, in turn, are described as “more numerous, more affluent, better educated, and more ethnically diverse” and “are beginning to manifest a wide array of positive social habits that older Americans no longer associate with youth, including a new focus on teamwork, achievement, modesty, and good conduct” (Howe & Strauss 4). They can be said to embody former American President Barack Obama’s “yes we can” slogan.

Before presenting the close-textual analysis of key *Star Trek* episodes from *The Original Series*, *The Next Generation*, and *Discovery*, which will highlight how the representation of gender and racial identity in the series has changed with each new generation of actors and

audiences, it is important to explain the way in which Science Fiction, as a genre, has been closely related to the themes of gender and racial themes. Science Fiction is inherently and often critically engaged with contemporary socio-political problems and events, giving the texts the potential to be read allegorically as socio-political critiques of the present, despite their futuristic trappings. According to David Seed, works of Science Fiction “are not producing arbitrary fantasy but rather reworking key metaphors and narratives already circulating in the culture” (2). Obviously, contemporary issues are meant to be familiar to the audience, thus creating a narrative in which the audience might find recognition. Moreover, as Luckhurst argues, Science Fiction narratives “speak to the present concerns of their specific moment in history” (3). This thesis will show that *Star Trek* does what Luckhurst and Seed argue is true for Science Fiction in general. Series such as *Star Trek* enable the audience to recognize present concerns – such as gender and racial identity – and, because of the futuristic setting, are able to provide a critique on these concerns.

As for the portrayal of gender roles, Helen Merrik argues that Science Fiction “has ... functioned as an enormously fertile environment for the exploration of sociocultural understandings of gender ... [which] refers to the socially constructed attributes and ‘performed’ roles ... mapped ... in historically and culturally specific ways” (241). In other words, gender in Science Fiction refers to society’s contemporary ideas, or “an implicit set of cultural assumptions” (242). As this thesis will show, the *Star Trek* series present female roles that are heavily influenced by the cultural assumptions of the three distinct generations discussed earlier.

As for the representation of racial identity, Elisabeth Anne Leonard argues that “Science Fiction about race nor criticism of it have achieved the same prominence that works about gender issues have” (253). Moreover, Leonard argues that Science Fiction “deals with racial tension by

ignoring it” (254). She denounces this approach towards racial identity by explaining that race is not always mentioned or, if mentioned, is “irrelevant” to the story (254). However, as this thesis will show, the *Star Trek* franchise does mention racial backgrounds in great detail. This has to be done in order to provide the audience with some context: the various species need an introduction in order to be recognizable for the viewer. As this thesis develops, the (generational) shift in cultural assumptions regarding race will become clear.

In order to show the generational changes in the three series, this thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter one will focus on the generational values regarding gender roles and the schism between white Americans and minorities which influenced the three series, starting in the 1950s until the generation of today. Chapter two will focus on *Star Trek: The Original Series*, which implements the stance towards gender roles and racial identity of the baby boomers. Chapter three will focus on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which – as the title suggests – implements a new, more progressive point of view of more equal gender roles and the minorities’ struggle for acceptance. Lastly, chapter four will focus on *Star Trek: Discovery*, which meets the altered understandings of today’s audience in terms of female power and being in between cultures in the United States. This thesis will show that *Star Trek: The Original Series* does not present a futuristic worldview, despite the futuristic setting of the series; however, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* already implements a much more progressive stance in terms of gender roles and racial identity, which is done so even more elaborately in *Star Trek: Discovery*.

1: Notions of Gender and Racial Identity in Post-War American Society

As described in the introduction, the *Star Trek* franchise implements gender and racial identity in accordance to the contemporary values of the audience. As for *Star Trek: The Original Series*, the audience is able to recognize the arbitrary cultural norms and values of the 1960s. In this period, the prescribed gender roles for men and women were rather conservative and racial identities were underscored by an equally essentialist ideology. Women were to be subordinate to their husbands and minorities were separated from the white population because of ongoing racism and apartheid. A more progressive stance was introduced in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which implements cultural values of the 1980s. In this period, the prescribed conservative gender roles and stance towards racial identity of the 1960s were abandoned by the new generation, which attempted to treat each other more equally. Moreover, the acceptance towards minorities resulted in a rise of interracial marriage in the United States. The current gender ideology and stance towards racial identity of American society are implemented in *Star Trek: Discovery*, which employs present concerns of the 2010s. In this period, the prescribed gender roles are freely drawn: both men and women have corresponding opportunities on the work floor. Simultaneously, gender roles have been reversed, which means women are able to provide for their family, while the husbands stay at home. As for the stance towards racial identity, this period revolves around the idea that minorities are to be treated equally and are to be supported by the white population. Due to the rise of interracial marriage in the 1980s, the new generation of the 2010s lives in between cultures, resulting in American society being more intermingled than ever.

1.1. Gender and Racial Identity in the Era of *Star Trek: The Original Series*

According to Carolyn Johnston, “women's empowering and stifling experiences in the family in the 1950s helped lead to the emergence of feminist consciousness” (202). These experiences were exemplified in Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), in which she describes the minds of American women and their thoughts on their daily work in and around the house. As Friedan mentions, American women – particularly American wives – were not content with their role and wondered whether this was all life had in store for them. As Johnston argues, American women experienced a “paradox of female domestic power” in the 1950s. On the one hand, women were discouraged from having an actual job outside the house, but were relatively powerful within their family. An example of a television series that portrays such a role is *Leave It To Beaver* (1957-63), in which June Cleaver, the mother of the household, is clearly dedicated to serving her family. According to Dale Bailey, June Cleaver became such an influential role model that it is possible to speak of a June Cleaver ideology in the late 1950s and early 1960s (33). On the other hand, women were seen as “economic parasites” and lacking in public power. These contradictions resulted in a stressful environment from which women – steadily – tried to escape, leading many “to a feminist consciousness” (206-207). Thus, women began to experience less individuality, especially after World War II and their task to work so-called “war jobs,” which were seen as a temporary occupation till the men returned (Johnston 208). As Friedan argues, women in the 1950s “accepted a sense of martyred superiority” which meant that the American housewives were “brainwashed” into thinking that their careers, which consisted of being at home and looking after the family, were even more important than being, for example, a part-time secretary.

Johnston also explains that women had to forfeit their identities “in exchange for security, marriage, and motherhood,” which became a contradictory factor: women had “contingent

domestic power [but] relative powerlessness in the public sphere,” which would help the feminist movements to emerge in the 1960s (202). Moreover, as Elaine Tyler May argues, anti-feminists thought that the empowering of women would result in the “collapse of the one institution that seemed to offer protection: the home” (113). In other words, women were not allowed to be more independent due to the fact that the home had to be maintained in order to fulfil another “national obsession”: togetherness. This feeling of coziness and watching the television with your family ensured that women were not that keen on protesting for more power – or rather, less powerlessness. The limited possibilities in the public sphere were another reason women “donned their domestic harnesses” in the 1950s (May 113).

With the emergence of feminist consciousness, women started to become aware that they had the potential to change their role within society. However, with the arrival of feminist concepts in public discourse, anti-feminist beliefs were also on the rise. These beliefs were primarily based on fears of a changing hierarchy within the family. Other (early) feminist concepts were focused on a diverse set of controversial ideas, such as the shift from private to public sphere and women’s decisions in terms of contraception. Despite the many arguments against these concepts, many members of society gradually began to understand and accept the upcoming changes and their consequences. With the arrival of the birth-control pill in May 1960 – which can be seen as an unmistakable example for women to be more autonomous – women were able to initiate their campaign towards more independence and self-control. The so-called liberal (pro-family) feminists were trying to obtain more freedom for women in terms of politics and economics and wanted to “reconstruct the family by empowering women as achievers and men as fathers” (Johnston 243-244).

By the end of the decade, “autonomy and women’s self-esteem were at the heart of the [feminist] resurgence,” but “covert power was no longer sufficient” because of a backlash caused by “extreme emphasis on domesticity of the 1950s” (Johnston 243-244). In other words, some women were more radical in terms of reforming the existing sex/gender roles and wanted to change society in a more fundamental way. For example, in a cultural context, radical feminists tried to change the ways in which women were seen and portrayed in films. As Johnston points out, many films of the 1960s “portrayed women variously, as sex objects ... and as victims,” which meant that women played “subordinate roles, were sexual playmates, or were simply absent” (245). With the arrival of the birth-control pill, which accelerated the sexual revolution, writers and directors were able to focus on women’s sexuality, which also triggered a new essential part of the female role: nudity and promiscuity.

According to Johnston, the role of women on television was to be subordinate. Contrastingly, women were to be pretty and sensual at the same time. An example can be found in *Star Trek: The Original Series*, in which many female crew members are simultaneously beautiful and docile. These provocative characters were not meant to be protagonists of the narrative. Rather, these women were passively seductive, which means that the characters were initially innocent – maybe even naïve – but gorgeous still. As for the female characters in *Star Trek*, these characters wear short skirts and dresses in colors corresponding to their rank. Moreover, rather than being part of the narrative in terms of opinion or actions, these characters are present purely to sell the product – in this case, a television series. Especially in the first few episodes of the first season, the female crew members do not play a role in terms of decision making on the *USS Enterprise*. For example, Lieutenant Uhura simply follows Captain Kirk’s orders and does not question his behavior or his decisions, though it is clear to the audience that

some of his thinking seems to be a result of his manhood, which would be a point to address for his female colleagues. Nonetheless, the female characters sometimes do intervene with Captain Kirk's plans in terms of moral lessons, but they are primarily there to either be victimized or sexualized – or both. Because the series takes place in the future, writers could have included controversial portrayals in order to criticize these conservative gender roles – and to boost the feminist concepts – for women in the 1960s.

Another essential theme of the 1960s is the struggle for racial equality in the United States. According to Eric Foner, the United States “was still a segregated, unequal society” (960). As William Chafe and Harvard Sitkoff argue, African-Americans were not able to change their situation because of “an environment shaped and defined by white supremacy” (147). Moreover, “by the 1960s, it had become evident that only when blacks forced white institutions into action could any substantive change be anticipated” (148). With Martin Luther King's “I have a dream”-speech in August 1963, the Civil Rights Movement began to convince Americans to consider changes in terms of the inequality in their country. As Thomas Guglielmo and Earl Lewis argue, this movement is “the most powerful and influential of postwar movements,” although the various protests also resulted in resistance by the (still privileged) white population (185). Especially in the South, resistance against integration “taught many African-Americans ... that if progress were to be made, they would have to rely on their own actions and their own pressure from below” (188). According to Foner, the Civil Rights Movement “challenged the United States to rethink ‘what it really means by freedom’ – including whether freedom applied to all Americans or only to part of the population” (973).

As Timothy Meagher argues, President Lyndon B. Johnson showed support for the civil rights movement by signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which “suggested that race relations

in the United States had reached an historic pass” (193). Because of these acquired rights, African-Americans “remade understanding of American racial and ethnic relations” which resulted in “a language of ‘minorities’ ... that set [them] apart against an undifferentiated white America” (194). Thus, despite the growing acceptance towards one another at the end of the 1960s, the minorities were still separated from white America in terms of their cultural differences, which ensured their own, unique, identity. This identity was seen as adequate, but it prevented the minorities from fully integrating within the predominately white American culture.

In *Star Trek: The Original Series*, the emergence of this racial identity is presented by Mr. Spock, who is half-human and half-Vulcan. This results in Spock’s character consisting of two distinct identities; that of a human, and that of a Vulcan. In several episodes of the series, Spock is seen struggling with his two-sided identity, which sometimes makes him question himself and his abilities to fully function as a Vulcan. Thus, his identity consists of two separate cultures, which can be analyzed as a portrayal of an American citizen with a black father and a white mother, or vice versa. When analyzing Spock’s character in the original series accordingly, his struggle for identity mirrors the African-American struggle for identity in American society in the 1960s.

1.2. Gender and Racial Identity in the Era of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*

In the wake of the feminist movement of the 1950s and 1960s, women were able to build their careers and remain single longer. That said, magazines such as the *Ladies Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping* still portrayed women to be “happy homemakers.” Such magazines did acknowledge that more women were employed, rather than staying at home and subordinately following their husband, which resulted in “an updated, sexier version of the feminine mystique”

(245). Thus, the end of the 1960s can be seen as a transition period in terms of equality between male and female roles, especially when considering the fact that the gender roles were being redefined for future generations in the 1970s.

In the 1970s, feminist movements, such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), continued to fight for more equality. Women already had more independence than in the 1960s, but ideologically they were still bound to their role within the family – being a happy homemaker. According to Johnston, women did not want to give up their family life because they may have felt “ambivalent about abdicating control in the one area in which they have some power.” Moreover, women feared that “insisting on sharing housework and child care will be perceived as a withdrawal of love.” Another reason as to why women did not rebel against the roles is the economic power they possessed, or, rather, which they did not possess. They could not “back up their requests for sharing of domestic and childcare responsibilities” (286). Thus, women understood that their role in the public sphere was still too insignificant in order to become a full-time working mother.

Following the revolutionary developments in terms of birth control in the 1960s, a new point of discussion arose. In 1973, the Supreme Court allowed women to think for themselves in terms of arranging an abortion. The *Roe vs. Wade* case ensured that women were able to make such life-changing decisions for themselves. However, in the late 1980s, a decision was made which “sent shock waves throughout the society and framed the most passionate political issue of the next decade” (Johnston 291). In 1989, the Supreme Court declared a Missouri law which reversed the decision made in 1973. Although this law was only declared in Missouri, it was an immense step back for the national feminist rights movements. One of the essential rules in this law had to do with the fact that doctors were allowed to decide whether to operate on a fetus

which was thought to be viable. In other words, women were no longer capable of deciding for themselves. Rather, doctors gained more authority and were able to stop women from getting abortions, which resulted in women having to deal with unwanted pregnancies, thus putting their lives on hold in terms of careers and financial independence.

By the late 1980s, Generation X, which consists of people born around the late 1960s to early 1970s, had reached adulthood. These individuals were raised by a generation that witnessed a change in terms of gender roles, which resulted in Generation X's distinct expectations of the world and their lives in general when comparing them to their parents. For example, their image of a family consisted of two working parents whom were not as present throughout the educational period due to the possibility for a mother to work as well. As a result, Generation X grew up being under protected and strings were not pulled in terms of sexual explorations at a young age. Due to this generation's unfettered lifestyle, life-changing diseases, such as AIDS, were on the rise. Moreover, thinking so freely about sexual escapades, which is the result of the sexual revolution of the 1960s, resulted in the idea that creating – and maintaining – a traditional family was “no longer ... the norm” (Johnston 289). Furthermore, the altered gender roles were changed even more due to the rise of “androgynous behavior,” which revolves around the idea that people were able to possess both male and female characteristics (Codrington). Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell explains that “the unisex clothing of the 1960s and 70s aspired ‘to blur or cross gender lines’; ultimately, however, it delivered ‘uniformity with a masculine tilt,’ and fashion’s brief flirtation with gender neutrality led to a ‘stylistic whiplash’ of more obviously gendered clothing for women and children beginning in the 1980s.” However, despite the more rigidly gendered fashions of the high street, from the outset of the 1980s an androgynous subculture thrived that momentarily reached the cultural mainstream through successful British

pop-acts like Duran Duran, Culture Club, and American glam-rock bands such as Twisted Sister and Poison in the middle-years of the decade. Through mainstream media like MTV, American teenagers of the 1980s were shown that successful men and women could wear whatever they pleased. By embodying this female-centered gender identity, these groups and individuals made a statement of disapproval regarding the mainstream gender roles. Thus, it is not surprising if Generation X focused more than the baby-boomers on being independent, being free from authority, and had less difficulty in being accepting towards one another.

In terms of women's roles in society, Johnston argues that films in the 1980s "reflected this new challenge of trying to combine professional careers and marriage" (283). One might expect films such as *Baby Boom* (1987) and *Working Girl* (1988) to focus on successful business women who are capable of fulfilling this challenge of work and domestic life. However, as Johnston exemplifies, these popular films focused on a successful woman whom, in the end, chose to be with her dream man, rather than pursuing her career any further. Moreover, women were portrayed "more sinister" in films, such as *Fatal Attraction* (1987), where women were seen as "objects of intense hostility." However, the used themes – which included rape and other horrific attacks – also "subliminally warn women of their vulnerability to male violence and the hazards of independence" (283).

The 1980s also gave rise to strong, female roles in films. For example, Sigourney Weaver's Ripley in Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979) provides the audience with a strong, female leading role. Several scenes focus on her strength and her ability to fight other (male) characters, illustrating a strong, female action hero. Other examples of strong female leading roles are Christine Cagney and Mary Beth Lacey in *Cagney & Lacey* (1982-88), a police detective show

that according to Graham Thompson was also directly engaged with the position of women in a traditionally masculine workplace:

Mary Beth Lacey (Tyne Daly) was frequently shown at home with her family, often discussing her work and the cases she was involved with, and her increasingly strained relationship with husband Harvey (John Karlen) was [the] centrepiece of the show. The birth of her third child was also a major storyline. In contrast, Christine Cagney (Sharon Gless) was a single woman struggling to find a man and trying to face up to her alcoholism. Cagney and Lacey combined these continuing storylines with traditional crime-solving, but the whole show was always inflected by the social issues of the day (117).

Moreover, Linda Hamilton's role of Sarah Connor in *The Terminator*-films (1984-91) provides the audience with a heroic and strong female role. As for literature, the 1980s gave way to feminist Science Fiction writers, such as Lisa Goldstein, Jane Yolen, and Pamela Sargent, to produce narratives which provide the reader with a different perspective when comparing these writers to male Science Fiction authors. Thus, rather than being seen as sex objects and dressing in short skirts, women were slowly becoming more equal in terms of film roles and their male counterparts.

Several points discussed above can easily be identified in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The title implies a new generation has come to amaze the viewer with new intergalactic adventures, but the term generation in *The Next Generation* can also be read as a reflection on the audience to which the show must appeal and the social and political concerns

that the show will address. In order to stay relevant, the creators had to ensure that their narratives would appeal to the new audience – which consisted to a large extent of more free-thinking, hard-working men and women who had plenty of other options in terms of interesting television series. Due to this new audience – thus, a new generation – one is able to identify different gender roles and explicit themes, such as the focus on several sexual encounters. These differences represented the social and psychological concerns of the audience, with respect to gender identity. Especially the new opening credits, “where no *one* has gone before,” clearly show that this new series aspired to do what the original series could not: remaining progressive.

In the 1980s, the struggle for racial identity was not as prominent as it was in the 1960s. As described before, minorities were able to remake the understanding of American racial and ethnic relations (Meagher 194). When Stokely Carmichael took over the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) in 1965, he became the spokesman “for a new vision of Black goals and strategies,” which included the emergence of “Black Power.” This emergence “marked a major turning point in racial and ethnic relations in the United States” (196). Despite King’s approach of multicultural protests, Carmichael’s stance resulted in riots across the United States, implying “there was a palpable shift in sentiment” from King’s towards Carmichael’s camp (197). Eventually, Carmichael stated Black Power rejected the goal of assimilation into middle class America, which was seen as a “rhetorical assault on Anglo-American culture” (198). Simultaneously, the Anglo-American culture, in this case, the American culture, changed in terms of its acceptance towards the ethnic shifts which it encountered. Anti-miscegenation laws in a dozen states prohibited “interracial marriages between whites and blacks,” but these laws were seen as “unconstitutional,” some years later, thus the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the earlier decisions in 1967 (Khanna). Graham Thompson explains that during the 1980s, “mixed-

race marriages were also increasing dramatically” (33). Because of the greater acceptance of interracial marriage, a “biracial baby boom” occurred in the 1970s, although critics point to the fact that this was already happening in thirty four states in which anti-miscegenation laws were not applied (Khanna). Still, this rise in numbers implies that the two separate cultures were growing closer, which meant that the racial identities of African-Americans were no longer to be subdued. Rather, despite the continuing economic disparities, the two cultures were more accepting towards one another than ever before and America was becoming “an increasingly multicultural society” in the 1980s (Thompson 33). As a result, television series began to portray this multicultural society:

It was *The Cosby Show* (1984-1992) that embodied this new sense of confidence within the African-American community on mainstream television. Thompson explains that telling the story of the Huxtable family, with Bill Cosby playing a successful gynecologist and his wife a successful lawyer, the show created black characters that fell well beyond often-seen stereotypes. Cosby is a strong father figure and the family is, at heart, strong too. An emphasis on education runs through the show. The eldest daughter is a student at Ivy League Princeton University, while the next youngest daughter eventually goes to an all-black college. This latter storyline points to an under-stated racial pride that runs through the show and is evidenced by the African-American art on the walls of the Huxtable house and the jazz score which is woven into the transitions between scenes (121).

While Thompson notes that “the values represented by the Huxtables in some way make them safe black characters,” the show does reveal an acceptance of African-American middle-class success, and an openness within mainstream TV towards a racially diverse mainstream American culture (121).

The growing awareness of the need to open up to and accept racial difference and diversity within a multi-cultural society is also implemented in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Aboard the *USS Enterprise*, one character stands out in terms of heritage and cultural background: Mr. Worf. Worf, being fully Klingon, seems to be an unusual alien aboard the Starfleet vessel, but as the series progresses, the audience is presented with his backstory: as a kid, Worf was saved from his home planet by a human Starfleet officer, who took Worf home and nurtured him (StarTrek.com). Thus, as Worf develops, so does his nurtured human side, which results in an alien-looking crew member aboard the *Enterprise*, although his identity has formed into a human one, rather than a Klingon identity. Yet, some episodes focus on Worf’s natural heritage, rather than his nurtured one, which results in Worf showing his Klingon side. However, he actively recognizes his formed identity: despite his Klingon appearance, he chooses to be in touch with his human side. Thus, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* clearly implements the contemporary racial struggles of the 1980s.

1.3. Gender and Racial Identity in the Era of *Star Trek: Discovery*

In the case of the new millennium, one has to focus on the so-called Millennials in order to understand the stances related to gender and international relations of the United States of today. Millennials were born between 1983 and 2000, so the youngest members of this group were around eighteen years old when *Star Trek: Discovery* was released. In order to interest this

specific group of young adults, the creators of *Discovery* had to make sure that the story and its characters remained accessible to almost of the members of this generation. For example, the *Next Generation*-generation (or Generation X) primarily grew up with the idea of being free from authority and being accepting towards one another without any concerns or boundaries. These people, eventually, realized that this particular mindset was not to be passed on to their own children, which resulted in a generation which was raised in a “tightening” environment (Codrington). Moreover, this new generation did not engage with the individuality used by Generation X to make a statement about their diverse identity. Rather, millennials “return to a common look” in order to feel included within their group or culture (Codrington). Due to the increasing value of the Internet and its growing number of users, this new generation brought along even more support for diversity, such as the (still) growing acceptance of gay marriage.

In terms of gender roles, millennials were raised in a Western environment in which women were more equal to men when comparing it to previous generations. As Mary Blair-Loy argues, “American women today have the opportunity and experience to be highly successful in a world that previously excluded them” (1). However, the changed attitude towards successful women has a downside: in many situations, women are still accountable for their family at home, thus being “torn between ... commitments to work and family” (1). The rise of female full-timers also resulted in a rise “of marital dissolution” because of “more liberal values” and “economic independence” (Mencarini 1350-1351). In their article “It Helps When Men Help,” Letizia Mencarini and Daniele Vignoli argue that a woman can only be successful in her field of work and in a marriage when her husband chooses to (partially) embrace the traditional female role of maintaining the household. Surely, this is a two-way system; parents need to work together to make a family work. Naturally, the fact that women are finally able to expand their experiences

by working “in traditionally male jobs” is a big step forward (Blair-Loy 1). Yet, only few women reach the top of their firms, which explains why it is still problematic to have two co-existing careers: emancipation is obligatory.

Despite the many opportunities available today for women aiming to start (and maintain) a professional career, there is still one specific point of protest that needs to be addressed: the wage gap between male and female co-workers. Although women are allowed (or even expected) to continue their education in order to have a good start on the job market, their journey upwards within companies cannot be said to be as straightforward as that of men. As Carmel Niland argues, one of the more common assumptions among male colleagues is the fact that women are not capable of a “masculinized profession” due to it being “too physically demanding” (3). Moreover, “women’s destiny is biologically determined,” which means that a female colleague will not be as successful as her male counterpart because “women get pregnant, get periods, get PMS and hot flushes” (3). Thus, despite the fact that women are equal to men in terms of rights, women do not receive the same income as men do. Moreover, the career path of a successful woman is usually frowned upon by (male) coworkers, which shows that equality is not as natural as one might expect.

In *Discovery*, these career-related concerns are confronted right away. The creators of the series could have decided to focus on a male protagonist in order to show his stance towards his female colleagues aboard a Starfleet vessel. Rather, the series’ protagonist is a female member of Starfleet named Michael Burnham, a highly intelligent and courageous woman. The crew aboard the *USS Discovery*, which consists of several essential female characters, acknowledge her expertise and follow her lead. In addition, Burnham’s first name (Michael) can be analyzed as a critique on the male-oriented stance which Niland’s addresses: by naming the protagonist

Michael, her female character becomes more masculine, which means she is able to do this masculine job. Moreover, Burnham's role also consists of being in between cultures because her adoptive parents are Vulcan, which implements a different theme in this series; racial identity.

A foreshadowing of the new millennium in terms of race was created by Jennifer L. Hochschild in 1998. In her article, she predicts that the African-Americans in the United States will either "lose all faith ... [or] regain their faith that the American creed can be put into practice." This will be determined by "political engagement and policy choices," implying that the fate of African-Americans in the twenty-first century of the United States is in the hands of its leaders. Hochschild's prediction of regaining faith came true with Barack Obama's presidential election in 2008. His election indicated that American society showed its support for a leader with a minority background. As Nikki Khanna argues, an individual identity "may also have effects beyond the personal; identities may also have implications for the racial communities to which they belong." Thus, as Obama's election already implied, American society did not show its support to him alone; rather, society showed its support to all citizens with a minority background. However, a new struggle arises: the struggle of being in between cultures. As described earlier, the number of interracial relationships has been rising since the 1970s. As a result, families consist of multicultural children, whose children will also be part of a multicultural family. This results in multicultural identities, which means these people have to adapt to both cultures in order to be able to be in agreement with themselves. As Khanna argues, "biracial people ... are frequently raced as black by larger society," thus implying that a biracial individual who happens to have both black and white ancestry has to struggle in order to be accepted by society.

These struggles for acceptance from both yourself and society are clearly visible *Discovery*. In this series, Burnham's identity consists of two cultures; a human one, and a nurtured Vulcan one. Her struggle between these distinct cultures is clearly visible at the beginning of the first season, when her background is examined further. During her time at the Vulcan Science Academy, she struggles with certain questions about the Klingon raid on research facility *Doctari Alpha*, her former home. During this raid, her parents were killed, which explains why she does not want to answer this particular question. When she speaks to Sarek, her adoptive father (and Spock's actual father), she asks whether she is allowed to learn the Vulcan language in order to answer the questions more quickly. However, Sarek answers that her "human tongue is not the problem. It is your human heart" (00:22:50-00:23:00). This scene already implies that Burnham will never fully adapt to the Vulcan ways of logical and emotionless thinking. However, when Burnham is introduced to Starfleet, she has to adapt to their ways in order to be fully employable as a human officer. Thus, Burnham's struggle in between cultures clearly exemplifies society's concerns in terms of racial identity in the United States of today.

2. Star Trek: The Original Series

In September 1966, a revolutionary television series was added to the genre of Science Fiction. *Star Trek* amazed audiences by presenting a futuristic world in which interstellar travel and adventures were part of the routine. The narrative follows the journey of the *USS Enterprise* and its crew, which is led by Captain James Tiberius Kirk (played by William Shatner). Other essential characters are first officer Mr. Spock (played by Leonard Nimoy) and chief medical officer Leonard “Bones” McCoy (played by DeForest Kelley). Due to the charming characters and formed friendships between the members of the crew, the audience was able to form an everlasting love for the amiable characters, which explains why this original series gave way to a successful franchise which is still a successful popular culture phenomenon today. After three action-filled seasons and 79 episodes, the original series came to an end.

This chapter will focus on the portrayal of gender and racial identity in *Star Trek: The Original Series*. The analysis of Vina, Yeoman Janice Rand, and Officer Nyota Uhura in 2.1. will show that the original *Star Trek* series portrayed a futuristic society in which the gender ideology of the 1960s was still dominant and prescribed to the fictional women in the TV show the same role that women were expected to play in American society. The analysis of Mr. Spock in 2.2. will reveal that in terms of attitudes towards racial difference, the original *Star Trek* presents Spock as an outsider with peculiar habits who is adopted into and respected by the community on the *Enterprise* despite his obvious alien features and mentality.

2.1. The Inferior and Objectified Position of Women in *Star Trek*

2.1.1. Subordinate Portrayal of Voluptuous Vina

The character Vina (played by Susan Oliver) appears only once in the original pilot episode “The Cage,” which features Jeffrey Hunter as Captain Christopher Pike. However, this episode was canceled by NBC and was never aired until its re-emergence in 1986 on VHS, thus the contemporary audience of the 1960s did not meet Vina before this delayed release in 1986. According to William Shatner, the original pilot episode was “too slow” to be released in the eyes of NBC, thus a second pilot episode was made in order to convince the audience of the series’ potential (119). Interestingly, the canceled original pilot was included into the two-part episode “The Menagerie,” which aired November 17 and 24, 1966, thus the particular story was aired after all. This already implies the pilot episode was not canceled because of the sexualized portrayal of Vina, which means this portrayal was not seen as controversial or old-fashioned. Thus, the portrayal of Vina was acceptable for the audience and exemplifies the gender ideology of the 1960s, which will be analyzed in the following section.

The original pilot episode focuses on a radio call which leads the crew to believe that they have found a group of survivors from a scientific expedition on a (seemingly normal) planet. The captain encounters a woman named Vina and is dazzled by her beauty, which results in the captain being captured by the inhabitants of the planet, the Talosians. These human-like creatures are able to create illusions, which means the distressed radio-call was not real. Vina is not part of the illusions, however; she is part of the Talosians’ plan to repopulate the planet with human slaves, which means they desperately need the help of Captain Pike. Moreover, as Vina reveals at the end of the episode, she actually was part of the scientific expedition that had crashed eighteen years before and was disfigured, which was resolved by the Talosians who

were able make her beautiful again with their illusions. In the end, Vina remains on the planet with an illusion of Captain Pike and the crew of the *USS Enterprise* can return safely.

The episode described above exemplifies what the radicalized feminist were rallying against: women were portrayed as dependent, helpless, but still lustful creatures who were in desperate need of a man. Moreover, the female character is dressed in such a way that Captain Pike does not really need to imagine what she looks like under her clothes; she is wearing a costume that barely covers her ribcage and is clearly meant to foreground the voluptuous nature of the character (see fig. 1). As it turns out, Vina's appearance means a lot to her and she does not want to leave this lifeless planet because her illusion-powered looks will vanish.

Furthermore, Vina's character is rather defenseless and powerless, considering the fact that she has been the only human being on that planet for over eighteen years. Obviously, for an isolated human to escape such a planet without any vessel or radio contact seems unlikely, but in the universe of *Star Trek* it seems possible that Captain Pike (or any other male protagonist) would have been able to depart. Together with the controversial plot twist of Vina being used as a breeding machine, which is seen as a solution for the Talosian's concerns in terms of understaffing, her characterization can be seen as that of a helpless, sexualized object.



Figure 1 – Voluptuous Vina.

2.1.2. Less Dependent, Still Sexualized Portrayal of Yeoman Janice Rand

In the episode “Charlie X,” which was the second official episode to be aired in 1966, Yeoman Janice Rand (portrayed by Grace Lee Whitney) plays a rather different female role. The episode focuses on Charlie Evans (played by Robert Walker Jr.) who was raised by a computer aboard a deserted transport ship and has strange powers. Therefore, his manners and behavior are very peculiar, which results in some amusing scenes aboard the *USS Enterprise*. Especially his relationship with Janice Rand produces some moral lessons for the young Charlie. For example, Charlie’s guidance in the past resulted in him being unaware of many inappropriate things, which come to a climax when Charlie slaps Janice on the rear after some small talk. Charlie does not understand what is wrong with “going around slapping girls on the ...,” which Janice tries to explain to him (00:07:28-00:07:45). While Charlie tries to acquire control of the *USS Enterprise*, he desperately wants Janice to be his. However, she refuses and tells him “You don’t walk into a room without knocking... I’ll lock it when I please,” which is seen by Charlie as a rejection (00:35:50-00:36:05). Driven by his passion and anger when she refuses, he makes her disappear. Eventually, Janice is returned safely and even starts to cry when Charlie is removed from their vessel.

A comparison between Janice Rand and Vina reveals that Janice’s is a more modernized characterization of a female crew member than Vina’s portrayal, even though the two episodes were produced in the same year. Yeoman Rand actually gives advice to Charlie about his behavior and is portrayed as an independent woman who knows what she wants. Especially, the scene in which she speaks up against Charlie clearly shows that Rand’s character is strong and confident, which is very different from Vina. Moreover, Rand’s lessons about the handling of women and Charlie’s disregard of these policies are also very distinct from the otherwise more

mainstream representation of women in *Star Trek*. Yet, Yeoman Rand's character is still part of the objectification of women when considering other characteristics. For example, Rand is dressed in clothing that foregrounds her female figure and makes her an object of the male gaze. (see fig. 2). Rather, the producers could have dressed her in some kind of unisex uniform, which would have been cheaper for the production in terms of re-use, but it would also be more believable in terms of the set date (the year 2265). Instead, the creators decided to let her wear a revealing costume, which complies with the objectification of women on TV discussed in chapter one. Thus, despite the fact that the script includes lectures by Rand on how to interact



properly with women and she retains a resolute posture throughout the episode, the creators of *Star Trek* still did exactly what feminists desperately wanted to end – they objectified a woman so that she would satisfy the male gaze of the audience.

Figure 2 - Yeoman Rand as a desirable object.

2.1.3. Interracial *Star Trek*: Captain Kirk and Nyota Uhura

One essential character to be analyzed further is Lieutenant Uhura. As described before, Uhura does not interfere with Kirk's decision making, which already implies her role is not that different from the other female roles. However, Uhura's role is significant in terms of her incorporation in essential scenes, such as the scene in which Captain Kirk is forced to kiss her in the episode "Plato's Stepchildren," which was the first interracial kiss on television (see fig. 3). As Kelefa Sanneh argues, this interracial kiss "was a bit of a dud" because the kiss had to take

place “in outer space, in the twenty-third century,” which shows the controversy of the subject (46). Furthermore, as actress Nichelle Nichols recalls, “It was quite clear from the story that Kirk and Uhura are kissing against their will.” Moreover, she remembers the executives “almost lost their nerve” due to the viewer’s opinions, especially the “southern affiliates” (in Sanneh 46).

This illustrates that the show’s creators were primarily occupied with improving the ratings, rather than creating a futuristic series filled with controversial feminist portrayals of women, which would have been a critique of American society’s attitude towards the development of women rights.



Figure 3 - First interracial kiss on television.

Thus, these examples illustrate that the dominant gender ideology of the 1960s was still dominant and prescribed to the fictional women in the TV show the same role that women were expected to play in American society. Women were to be obedient and subordinate to their husbands, which is exemplified by Vina and Uhura. A more independent portrayal of a female crew member is exemplified by Yeoman Rand. However, her wardrobe suggests her character is primarily employed to show a woman’s sexiness, rather than her intellect. Despite the efforts of female rights movements in the 1960s, the portrayal of women in this television series followed the gender ideology of subordinate, sexualized women.

2.2. The Racial Struggle for Equality

2.2.1. Collaborating With Mr. Spock: Accepting the Other

For the original series, one character stands out in terms of origins, originality, and popularity: Mister Spock, half-human/half-Vulcan and the *Enterprise*'s second-in-command. Throughout the series, Mr. Spock is portrayed as being both Vulcan and human. As described before, Spock's identity consists of two separate cultures, which can be analyzed as a portrayal of an American citizen with a black father and a white mother, or vice versa. When analyzing Spock's character in the original series accordingly, his struggle for identity mirrors the African-American struggle for identity in American society in the 1960s.

Initially, actor Leonard Nimoy was not fond of Mister Spock's appearance. He was afraid that Spock would be perceived "as a television freak" (Solow 37). The producers, too, doubted Spock's ears and eyebrows because of their "satanic" appearance, which resulted in a "no ears, no pilot" campaign (232). However, after some episodes had aired, it became clear that Mister Spock was bound to be a fan-favorite, and eventually "Spockmania" erupted (235). Spock's popularity can be explained by considering his peculiar character and stance, which resulted in Mister Spock stirring "the imagination of millions" (238). Especially Spock's logic and servitude result in him being a gentleman, rather than a diabolical creature. However, this stance implies that it is only acceptable to include an alien as long as he is subservient to a human captain, rather than being able to act and think for himself. Thus, this clearly exemplifies that Spock's character is mirroring the struggle for racial "others" in America in the 1960s: their rights are slowly becoming more equal, but their place in society is still dominated by the white population and their rules.

Spock's distinct reasoning originated in a culture "dedicated to the complete mastery of logic, learning to suppress their once-violent emotions in nearly every aspect of their existence" (StarTrek.com). Next to these Vulcan traits, Spock's character also incorporates human values, although these values, which are primarily driven by emotions, are usually not as outspoken as the Vulcan ones. His role aboard the *USS Enterprise* is that of a rational counselor, although his Vulcan traits are seen by the crew as something to be overcome. Thus, Spock's logic is exploited by Kirk in order to resolve problems which are not easily unfolded, but his Vulcan heritage is not seen by the crew as a positive trait. In a way, Spock is seen by the human crew as the "other" rather than being part of the human-orientated crew unconditionally. Especially Captain Kirk and Bones mock Spock's pragmatism occasionally and try to make Spock more human by criticizing his logic-oriented side, which is seen as useful, but aggravating. Despite the differences between the human crew and the Vulcan first officer, Spock is accepted by the crew because of his usefulness and obedience towards Captain Kirk – and, thus, Starfleet – which results in the development of his character in terms of the emergence of his human side. This section will analyze two episodes: "Amok Time," the first episode of season two, and "Journey to Babel," the tenth episode of the same season. The analysis will consist of three parts; the crew's attitude towards Spock, Spock's human traits, and the portrayal of Vulcan women.

The episode "Amok Time" aired on September 15, 1967. In this episode, the Vulcan culture is introduced to the audience in an elaborate way. The narrative focuses on Mr. Spock's health issues caused by "pon farr," which is explained to be the natural Vulcan urge to find a mate (00:15:50). Due to this urge, Spock's behavior changes: he is aggressive and does not think in his usual rational way. Eventually, he is able to convince Kirk to go to Vulcan for Spock to marry T'Pol. When they arrive, Kirk, Bones, and Spock are welcomed by the Vulcans in a

traditional way. Despite Spock's loyalty to T'Pol, she decides he has to fight for her, which leads to a fight to the death between Spock and Kirk. Spock, clearly not being himself, defeats – and kills – Kirk, after which the effects of the “pon farr” fade. He then realizes what he has done to his friend, which obliges Spock to resign. However, Kirk turns out to be alive because of Bones' cleverness, which means the *Enterprise* can continue its voyages with Kirk as its Captain.

Throughout the episode, the main crew members are concerned with Spock's health and his strange behavior. For example, Ms. Chapel (played by Majel Barrett-Roddenberry) wants to console Spock by presenting some “Vulcan plomeek soup,” which Spock initially declines (00:00:49). However, Ms. Chapel does not lose hope and tries again, which illustrates her sympathy towards Spock. Moreover, both Captain Kirk and Bones want to know what is happening to Spock, which results in them inquiring about his health throughout the episode. Thus, despite Spock's aggressiveness towards the crew and his irrational thinking, these three characters try to save Spock's life.

When Spock is finally allowed to go to Vulcan, he informs Kirk and Bones “by tradition, the male is accompanied by his closest friends,” which is his way of inviting them to his wedding (see fig. 4) (00:23:07).



Figure 4 - Three friends.

Ultimately, Mr. Spock's “otherness” is cast aside when Captain Kirk confesses his devotion to Spock: “I can't let Spock die, can I, Bones? ... I owe him my life a dozen times over.

Isn't that worth a career? He's my friend" (00:19:01-00:19:14). This implies that Kirk and the crew want the best for him, despite Spock's differences. They even joke about his worsening condition which will become "an insanity, which you would no doubt find distasteful." Kirk responds by mocking his own decisions: "You've been most patient with my kinds of madness" (00:21:46-00:22:00). Another joke is made by Bones when they have arrived on Vulcan. Spock shows them his home and tells them about the *Koon-ut-kal-if-fee*, which means "marriage or challenge" (00:24:50). Kirk and Bones discuss Spock's restlessness and his urge to find his mate. Bones labels Spock's struggle as "the price they pay for having no emotions the rest of the time" (00:25:25). All in all, these scenes illustrate that the crew of the *Enterprise* does try to include Spock within their own culture, despite his sometimes aggravating reasoning and logic.

Furthermore, the episode mainly focuses on Spock's deteriorating health. His well-being changes because of the "ancient drives" within him, which results in Spock becoming emotional rather than rational (00:16:45). When Captain Kirk asks Spock about his behavior, he notes that "most of us overlook the fact that even Vulcans aren't indestructible," to which Spock replies:



Figure 5 - Discussing Vulcan marital concerns.

"No. We're not" (see fig. 5) (00:05:21). His logical reasoning fades even more when Kirk discovers that Spock ordered the *USS Enterprise* to set course for Vulcan, rather than continuing the set course by Kirk. When questioned, Spock does not remember doing so and demands to be locked away, for he "do[es] not wish to be seen" (00:08:33).

Moreover, the surfacing of Spock's human side is exemplified further by his attitude towards the other crew members. For example, Ms. Chapel's sympathetic feelings towards Spock are somehow noticed by him and are even answered. This happens when she tries to console him once more in his chambers, where she finds Spock lying on his bed. Initially, he does not notice her presence, but when she decides to leave the room, Spock suddenly awakens. She informs him that Captain Kirk decided to help Spock after all, which makes her emotional. While Ms. Chapel cries, Spock tries to console her, which implies that Spock does understand this human emotion and the reasoning behind her tears. Following this, Spock asks for her Vulcan plomeek soup, which she gladly makes for him. This scene illustrates that Spock is not that different from Ms. Chapel. On the contrary, Spock wants to console her and tries to distract her from her emotions by asking for some of the Vulcan soup. Thus, the audience is shown that different parties may have distinct features and traditions, but they are still capable of providing a gesture of understanding.

Ultimately, the episode illustrates Spock's shifting his allegiance from Vulcan to Human. The emergence of Spock's human traits initiate an inner struggle within him. Despite his human-like behavior, he keeps focusing on the fact that he is not "a man. I'm a Vulcan" (00:16:35). During the scenes on Vulcan, T'Pol addresses Spock's emerging human traits by asking him: "Are thee Vulcan or are thee human?" (00:34:08). His Vulcan identity, therefore, is questioned by both his colleagues and his Vulcan family. After the battle, Spock returns to his old, logic-based self. However, he is noticeably upset and utters: "I have killed my captain and my friend," which illustrate that Spock's character traits are both human and Vulcan (00:46:18). Spock's

inner struggle with his two sides resurfaces for a final time at the end of the episode, when it is shown that Kirk was not killed after all. When Kirk reveals himself, Spock's initial reaction is to grab Kirk by the shoulders. This reaction expresses emotions, which results in Spock quickly returning to his normal self in



Figure 6 - Spock's happiness.

order to save his Vulcan character (see fig. 6). However, Spock's Vulcan character is still influenced by Starfleet's culture and their humanist ideology of showing emotions. Thus, this scene illustrates that Spock is, indeed, between both races and cultures: on the one hand, he is a Vulcan who represses emotions and utilizes his mind only rationally. On the other hand, he is a human who expresses emotions, thus using his mind for both emotions and rational thinking.

Despite the focus on Spock's human traits, this episode is also fixated on the Vulcan culture. Especially the Vulcan attitude towards women stands out in terms of hierarchy and decision-making. For example, during the scenes on Vulcan, Spock's soon-to-be wife, T'Pring, seems in control when she interrupts his attempt to strike the gong. As T'Pau explains to the "out-worlders" Kirk and Bones, this interruption means T'Pring chooses "challenge over marriage" (00:28:15). However, when T'Pau prepares the ceremony, she asks T'Pring whether she is "prepared to become the property of the victor?" (00:31:22). Thus, despite the wife's deciding role, T'Pring will become the property of her husband. This is exemplified again when T'Pau exclaims: "Here begins the act of combat for possession of the woman, T'Pring. As it was

at the time of the beginning, so it is now” (00:37:05). However, this does not mean that Spock approves of this stance. On the contrary, Spock usually approaches women with consideration and respect. As Spock proclaims in this episode, “It is undignified for a woman to play servant to a man who is not hers” (00:03:21). At first glance, this statement seems to conclude that a woman should only be a servant to her husband. However, this comment has to be interpreted as Spock’s response to Ms. Chapel’s attempt to comfort him with her soup, which he sees as the responsibility of a servant, rather than a female colleague. Thus, Spock’s own views do not align with the views of his culture because of the humanist ideology he encountered during both his youth and his stay aboard the *Enterprise*.

The episode “Journey to Babel” aired on November 17, 1967. The episode focuses on the arrival of Spock’s parents aboard the *Enterprise*, which carries multiple species on their way to the Babel Conference. Captain Kirk does not know about the connection between Spock and the Vulcan ambassador until Spock informs him after they have boarded the vessel. Ambassador Sarek and his human wife Amanda demand a tour of the vessel, which is given by Kirk. When Sarek wants to retreat to his quarters, Amanda remains with Kirk and tells him about Spock’s relationship with his father, which seems to be broken. This broken relationship is ultimately tested because of Sarek’s health issues, which results in a blood transplant in order to survive. A suitable blood donor is found in Spock, who has the required T-negative blood type. When Kirk is injured by a member of the Andorian delegation, Spock changes his priorities and postpones his father’s surgery because of Spock’s role during Kirk’s absence. In order to save Sarek, Kirk pretends to be healed, which results in Spock returning to sickbay and providing his blood. During the operation, Kirk tries to defeat an alien vessel, which is speculated to be of Orion origin. Despite the multiple attempts to destroy the *Enterprise*, the alien vessel does not succeed.

Due to Kirk's clever acting, the ship is defeated and the *Enterprise* is saved from destruction. Simultaneously, Bones finishes the operation and Sarek's life is saved by Spock's blood.

At the beginning of the episode, Bones asks Spock how to greet a Vulcan. Spock shows him the famous V-shaped fingers, but Bones is not able to stretch his fingers as well as Spock. This question from Bones implies that the ship's doctor wants to learn more about the Vulcan culture, especially when the ambassador himself comes aboard the ship. However, Bones'



Figure 7 - Irritated arguments.

attitude towards Spock slowly changes from friendly to annoyed because of Spock's overall posture. Especially his stance on saving his father enrages Bones to such an extent that he wants Spock to "shut up" at the end of the episode (00:48:58). When comparing this episode to "Amok Time," one can

conclude that the approach towards Spock is different from the approach in the previously discussed episode because his character does not deserve any sympathy from any of the crew members (see fig. 7).

A critical comparison of the characterization of Spock in "Journey to Babel" and "Amok Time" reveals that Spock behaves according to his Vulcan traits more in the former episode. When Kirk asks Spock's mother, Amanda, about Spock's youth, she explains that Spock's life was not easy because of one defect; Spock is "neither human nor Vulcan" (00:06:58). This struggle is addressed further when Bones asks Amanda whether Spock had any human-like traits when he was a child. She answers that he had a "sehlat," which she explains as being "some sort

of fat teddy bear.” Bones starts to smile: “a teddy bear?” However, Spock answers Bones’ mocking by explaining that these bears “are alive, and they have six-inch fangs,” which makes Bones’ conclusion less applicable (00:11:00-00:11:28).

Throughout the episode, Spock remains his Vulcan-self and continuously provides the audience with logical un-emotional lessons about his duty aboard the vessel which he cannot abandon. However, Spock’s behavior becomes more human when he decides to donate his blood in order to save his father, which is an emotional decision, rather than a rational one. His father’s life is not to be saved because of his status or class, which would make Spock’s decision rational. Rather, Spock wants to save his father because he is his son. However, being his son means his blood is the only usable blood aboard the *Enterprise*, thus Spock’s decision is also partially rational because his blood is the only blood available to help his father. Despite this decision, Spock does not want to continue with the procedure when Captain Kirk is injured, which automatically makes Spock the commanding officer. Spock deems this role “my first responsibility,” thus he decides to ignore his father’s deteriorating health. His mother wants him “to turn command over to somebody else” in order to help his father, whose condition is now critical. His mother questions his stance, because “it’s not human” (00:31:51-00:32:45). She desperately wants his human side to dominate, rather than his Vulcan side, which makes Spock seemingly upset (see fig. 8). His response suggests that he



Figure 8 - Motherly advice.

understands his mother's frustration, but his Vulcan traits remain the dominating factor.

Eventually, Spock is relieved from his duties as commanding officer and continues with the operation, which goes well despite the damaging attack from the unknown vessel. After the operation, Spock asks himself why he was not able to provide a solution for this alien ship earlier. Kirk says he "might have had something else on your mind," to which Spock responds "that hardly seems likely." His mother asks whether Sarek wants to thank his son, to which he replies that his son "acted in the only logical manner open to him. One does not thank logic, Amanda" (00:47:42-00:48:15). His mother, understandably, becomes rather irritated by this response and the Vulcan's obsession with logic.

The Vulcan culture and its attitude towards women is not as heavily discussed as in the previously discussed episode. One of the instances that does include the Vulcan stance towards women is initiated when Captain Kirk is showing the *USS Enterprise* to Spock's parents. During Kirk's tour of the ship, Sarek wants to retreat to his chambers and insists that his wife continues the tour. Kirk says it sounded like a command, which is replied to by Amanda saying: "Of course. He's a Vulcan. I'm his wife" (00:06:29). This rather sarcastic statement illustrates the way Vulcans treat their wives, whether these women are Vulcan or human. Amanda's human



Figure 9 - Love between species.

background is made visible, which explains the rather sarcastic tone of her response. As a human, she knows the Vulcans do not treat their women as equal as the human species. However, Sarek's stance does not influence Amanda's love for him, which she

frequently shows by touching her partner's fingers with her own (see fig. 9). In a way, the audience is invited to view Amanda as being content with her life, rather than reading her character as being a victim of Sarek's inherited attitude towards women.

Thus, these examples provide evidence for Spock's role as the "other" aboard the *Enterprise*. As exemplified above, Spock is presented as an outsider with peculiar habits who is adopted into and respected by the community on the *Enterprise* despite his obvious alien features and mentality. Spock's attitude towards the other crew members is rather kind, but always build upon his Vulcan logic which is employed in order to resolve any problems or alien threats aboard the *Enterprise*. Yet, a schism exists between him and the other crew members. Especially Bones employs this separation as a humoristic device, rather than being intentionally insulting towards Spock and the cultural differences between them. This attitude among the crew exemplifies the existing schism between African-Americans and the white communities in the 1960s: the two cultures live alongside each other, but the cultural differences between them ensure that the cultures are not assimilated. All in all, this cultural schism mimics the existing alienation between the black and white communities in the United States of the 1960s.

3: *Star Trek: Next Generation*

Following the conservative *Star Trek* series of the 1960s, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* gave way to a new, more modern series in the franchise of *Star Trek*. The series' pilot episode was released on 28 September 1987 and introduced a new crew aboard the *USS Enterprise*. The franchise no longer focused on Captain Kirk's crew and their journey in the year 2265. Rather, a new leader was introduced: Captain Jean-Luc Picard (played by Sir Patrick Stewart). Together with Commander William Riker (played by Jonathan Frakes), Geordi La Forge (LeVar Burton), and the Klingon Worf (Michael Dorn), the crew aboard the *USS Enterprise* was bound for multiculturalism and diverse, more modern adventures in the year 2364. After seven seasons and 178 episodes, the series ended on 23 May 1994.

The representation and exploration of the themes of gender and racial identity are very different in comparison to the original series. The targeted audience for this series was Generation X. In terms of gender and sexuality, this generation had grown up, on the one hand, with the freedoms brought about by the sexual revolution of the late 1960s and 1970s; whilst, on the other hand, it now faced the specter of AIDS that had materialized in the early 1980s and was closely associated in the media with the sexual freedoms enjoyed by Generation X-ers (Thompson 20-25). In terms of racial identities, as chapter one explains, 1980s television had become more accepting of African-American middle-class success and more open to recognizing the racial tensions that remained part of the American social fabric.

As the title of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* already suggests, the series will focus on a new generation and its norms and values, rather than continuing the mindset of the 1960s in order to extend Captain Kirk's journey twenty years later. Section 3.1. will focus on the portrayal of female characters in the series. This portrayal is much improved when comparing it to the

original series, especially the independence and importance of the female crew members, which is in accordance with the gender ideology of the 1980s. Racial identity will be discussed in 3.2., in which the portrayal of Worf will be the primary focus. In contrast to Spock, Worf is not presented as an outsider aboard the *Enterprise*. Rather, Worf's childhood caused his Klingon mindset to be replaced by a human one, which results in him being treated as part of the community, despite his alien features. However, a part of his Klingon nature is still present, which is focused on in several episodes which revolve around the Klingon culture. This representation of racial identity is in accordance with the American approach towards the racial "other" in the 1980s.

3.1. Equal Roles For All Aboard the *Enterprise*

3.1.1. A New Generation: From Skirts To Skants

In the two-part first episode of *The Next Generation* named "Encounter at Farpoint," several items of women's clothing left over from the original series can be recognized. For example, counselor Deanna Troi (played by Marina Sirtis) wears several short skirts and dresses that imply that like her 1960s counterpart in the original series, she is present primarily as an object of the male gaze. An audience member familiar with the original series may well wonder despairingly whether this outdated traditional *Star Trek* wardrobe will be employed throughout this series. However, the other episodes include very different fashions, for both men and women, which shows that the creators understand that the rather revealing pieces are no longer acceptable in the society of the 1980s because of the sexualized looks of the female crew members. In the course of the series it becomes clear that Deanna and other essential female crew members are allowed to wear whatever they please, which is a great step forward in comparison to the original series.

In several episodes from seasons one, two, and three, observant viewers will notice male crew members wearing garments that resemble traditional dresses. These pieces of clothing are called “skants,” which is a mix of the words “skirt” and “pants,” although they do appear to be actual dresses, rather than culottes (Laundrie). These characters are present in the background occasionally, which implies that the creators did not want to put a lot of emphasis on these costumes (see fig. 10). As explained in *The Art of Star Trek*, “the skirt design for men ‘skant’ was a logical development, given the total equality of the sexes presumed to exist in the 24th century” (in Mitchell). This explanation does not focus on the question why they chose to employ these dresses as unisex-clothes in such an obvious way. Possibly, these unisex-clothes are the product of equality among the crew members. However, one can argue that the creators wanted to show the audience that they acknowledged their criticism regarding the costumes in the original series, thus creating an explanation as to why all the women had to wear these outfits – men wore them too. However, another explanation can be found when considering the fact that the main audience is part of Generation X, a generation which built on the idea that men and women were not to be bound to typical pieces of clothing. This androgynous behavior gave rise to the idea that men were able to wear female clothing, thus making the “skants” less unnatural to acknowledge. Despite the fact that not everyone was androgynous in the 1980s, this distinctive behavior was not as censured as it would have been in previous decades.



Figure 10 - Wearing a skant.

3.1.2. Explicit Themes: Sexual Encounters

The Next Generation explores the anxieties in the 1980s over sexually transmitted diseases in the wake of the AIDS epidemic in the episode “The Naked Now.” This episode, which aired on October 5, 1987, focuses on the crew of the *USS Enterprise*’s adventure aboard the *SS Tsiolkovsky*. When responding to a message from this science vessel, the crew (including Commander Riker, Lieutenant La Forge, and Data) discovers that all 80 crew members aboard the *Tsiolkovsky* are dead. The ship itself looks messy and most bodies appear to be (half-)naked. As it turns out, a contagious disease infected the *Tsiolkovsky*-crew and turned them into drunk, delirious, and “willing” people. Eventually, Dr. Beverly Crusher (played by Gates McFadden) discovers that the disease is transmitted through physical contact. Fortunately, Crusher discovers a cure and everyone infected – including Captain Picard – returns back to normal.

When comparing this story to the various stances employed in the original series, one can conclude that this narrative would never have been produced in the 1960s due to its explicit, erotic scenes (see fig. 11). Especially the scene between Data (played by Brent Spiner) and the willing Tasha Yar (played by Denise Crosby), who wears a revealing outfit and persuades Data



Figure 11 - Yar and Data.

to have sex with her, illustrating that Data is “fully functional,” would not have been accepted when utilized in the original series (00:25:25). However, when watching this episode, one can easily identify the Generation X-aspects which have been discussed earlier, such as the dissidence towards the dominant gender ideology and authority in general.

Several crew members, especially Wesley Crusher (played by Wil Wheaton), obstruct the remaining healthy crew members with their obnoxious behavior and unwillingness to help find a cure. Moreover, the gender roles in this episode (rather, in the entire series) are very different when comparing them to the roles aboard Captain Kirk's *Enterprise*. The women are equal to the male crew members – some of them even seduce their male colleagues, rather than the other way around as was done regularly in *Star Trek: The Original series* – and the cure is ultimately created by Dr. Crusher in a very functional pantsuit.

Thus, as this section exemplifies, the gender ideology of the 1980s – more independence and more sexual freedom for women – is clearly integrated in *The Next Generation*, as is the anxiety about sexually transmitted diseases. The creators' decision to integrate the "skants" for male crew members is in accordance with the rise of androgynous behavior in the 1980s. Simultaneously, female crew members are allowed to decide for themselves what to wear, whether their choice is a sensuous dress, or a functional pantsuit. All in all, the examples above illustrate that *The Next Generation* clearly implements the gender ideology of Generation X.

3.2. Integrating Other Cultures Aboard the *USS Enterprise*

The attitude towards other species in *The Next Generation* is noticeably different in comparison with the original series. Rather than presenting a character similar to Mr. Spock, *The Next Generation* includes another alien species on the bridge. The crew's multicultural environment is illustrated by the incorporation of Lieutenant Worf, a Klingon adopted by "a human engineer," who tries to help Worf during his "hard time adjusting to less-violent human culture." During a game of soccer, he "unintentionally" kills a boy by breaking his neck, which results in Worf "forever guilt[ing] him into a life of restraint among humans" (StarTrek.com). However, in time,

Worf becomes fully adjusted to the human way of life. This shows that Worf's character arc focuses on nurture over nature, thus illustrating that even an alien species like the Klingons can be fundamentally changed because of their nurture. Thus, the focus on assimilation is still present, as in Spock's case in the original series.

Due to his popularity Worf also appeared in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. According to Greenwald, Worf is likeable because of his "complex and sympathetic character" (79). Moreover, Worf's notable childhood and his assimilation into human culture results in the audience accepting him from the beginning. Therefore, his "otherness" does not originate because of his alien appearance or his Klingon characteristics. Rather, his "otherness" is primarily foregrounded in the episodes in which Worf is confronted with other Klingons – and thus confronted with his past. As for this Klingon culture, which resurfaces throughout the series, Worf has not forgotten its norms and values. The Klingons, being "a warrior race," have a "genetic predisposition to hostility" and "hold honor above life" (StarTrek.com). These characteristics clearly foreshadow that Worf's identity is culturally constituted because of his adoptive parents and their human culture, rather than Worf employing the Klingon cultural norms and values. This is in contrast to the original series, in which Spock's identity is genetically constituted. Thus, Worf is fully Klingon in terms of species, but able to take on humanistic ideals and ethics through education and absorption into the culture.

3.2.1. Nurture Versus Nature: Worf's Racial Identity

The episode "Heart of Glory" aired on March 21, 1988, as the twentieth episode of the first season. In this episode, the *USS Enterprise* is confronted with an inoperative cargo vessel, the *Batris*. When boarding the damaged ship, Commander Riker discovers three Klingons whom he takes back to the *Enterprise*. Unfortunately, one of the Klingons dies due to his injuries, which

results in two guests remaining: Korris and Konmel. Despite their guest status, these Klingons turn out to be radicalized members of the Empire, rather than being compliant with the alliance between the Federation and the Klingons. Eventually, they try to persuade Lieutenant Worf to join their cause, which is condemned to fail because of the interference of Klingon Commander K’Nera, who informs Picard about their criminal status. Ultimately, the Klingons have to pay for their crimes.

Worf’s culturally constituted identity has the upper hand in this episode. This is exemplified by the sometimes hostile stance of the Klingon guests towards Worf. When Korris and Konmel gaze at Worf when he enters the room with Picard, the audience is introduced to their hateful attitude towards Worf. From the moment they meet Worf, both Korris and Konmel do not trust him and mock him for being part of Starfleet. Korris and Konmel taunt him by asking what is it like “for the hunter to lie down with the prey? Have they tamed you, or have you always been docile? Does it make you gentle? Has it filled your heart with peace?” (00:19:15-00:19:30) (see fig. 12).



Figure 12 - Worf interrogated.

Their stance changes for the worse when they realize Worf was taken by his adoptive father “before the age of inclusion,” thus making him even less Klingon in their eyes (00:22:40). This also illustrates that being Klingon is not only about appearances; being Klingon means fulfilling the traditional cultural formalities and incorporating the norms and values of the culture. Korris and Konmel try to persuade Worf’s of his “otherness” among the humans by sketching scenes in which Worf’s inherited aggression resulted in situations that the humans “did

not understand” (00:23:25). Worf claims that “those feelings are part of me. But I control them. They do not rule me.” However, Korris replies by arguing that he controls these feelings “to fit in, the humans demand that you change the one thing that you cannot change. Yet, because you cannot, you do ... I salute you.” During this conversation, Korris and Konmel try to persuade Worf that his current situation “is like a living death,” but Worf does not respond (00:23:58-00:24:30).

Eventually, the Klingons want to anger Worf “to see if it is still possible,” to which Worf replies “it is” (00:19:50). Thus, despite Worf’s human side, his Klingon side is still very much present within him. This is exemplified due to the fact that Worf still knows how to mourn the dead, which is done twice in this episode. During the scene in which the injured Klingon dies,



Figure 13 - Mourning ritual.

Korris, Konmel and Worf illustrate an aspect of the Klingon culture. When the injured comrade breathes his last breath, the three remaining Klingons on the *Enterprise* roar simultaneously, which suggests they are mourning their deceased friend (see fig. 13).

This seemingly formed bond can also be seen when Worf clearly hesitates between the two camps. Especially when Korris and Konmel are to be arrested, Worf’s struggle is awakened once again when they utter he should help them for he is “not of these people” (00:29:21).

However, his human side remains clearly visible, which is illustrated when Korris and Konmel share their thoughts on Klingon glory. As it turns out, the two guests are against any “illusion of

peace,” which results in an even wider gap between them and Worf. However, Worf counteracts their ideas by saying that their “dreams of glory no longer fit the time” (00:26:20).

Worf’s struggle between his nurtured and natural identity comes to a climax at the end of the episode, when Korris tries to persuade Worf of his Klingon side one last time in order to escape the *USS Enterprise*. Worf declines the offer, which results in Korris insulting Worf once again by saying he is “weak like them.” Worf, being “a sham,” kills Korris and is finally released from Korris’ hateful words (00:41:10). His actions are ultimately rewarded by Klingon Commander K’Nera when he invites Worf to serve aboard their vessel when his “tour of duty on the *Enterprise* is complete” (00:43:10). K’Nera even addresses Worf as a “brother,” rather than an outcast. Despite Worf’s positive response, which he explains as “just being polite,” he ensures Captain Picard and Commander Riker that he has “no desire to leave the *Enterprise*” (00:44:10).

Worf’s presence and influence aboard the *Enterprise* illustrate that the crew deem him their equal. For example, when Lieutenant Yar talks to Worf about the arrest of Korris and Konmel, she says she thought “we had a problem” (00:30:45). Following this statement, the audience expects her to ask Worf about his hesitation between the two camps. However, she explains herself by telling Worf she was worried there would be a hostage situation, rather than Worf being drawn to his own kind. Her trust, therefore, illustrates Worf’s position within the crew. His appearance might indicate his true origins, but his heart is committed to humankind. As Captain Picard declares at the end of the episode: “the Bridge wouldn’t be the same without you” (00:44:20) (see fig. 14).



Figure 14 - Worf's true position.

3.2.2. Humans Versus Klingons: Clash Between Cultures

The episode “A Matter of Honor” aired on February 6, 1989 as the eighth episode of the second season. In this episode, the relations between different species is the central theme. At the beginning of the episode, a Benzite named Mendon boards the *Enterprise* as part of Starfleet’s exchange program. As Captain Picard informs Riker, this blue-skinned creature’s eagerness to please “is a Benzite trait” (00:02:45). As a result of Mendon’s assignment to the *Enterprise*, Captain Picard suggests that Commander Riker is to be part of this Starfleet exchange program, too. As a result, Riker is assigned to a Klingon ship named *Pagh*, led by Captain Kargan. As Captain Picard recalls, he never heard “of a Federation officer serving ever on a Klingon vessel” (00:03:10). Before Riker’s departure, Worf tells him about the Klingon traditions in order to prepare Riker for his stay aboard the *Pagh*. During his stay, Riker has to show his strength and knowledge of the Klingon culture in order to survive his exchange. Due to an “unknown substance on the aft quarter of the exterior skin of the dorsal section,” both the *Enterprise* and the *Pagh* are damaged and need repairs. After some precarious decisions, both ships are freed from the substance and continue their journey, with Commander Riker – as usual – aboard the *Enterprise*.

This particular episode differs from the one previously discussed in terms of the portrayal of Klingon traditions and values. The narrative begins with Captain Picard telling Riker: “We know so little about them. There really is so much to learn. This is a great opportunity. I envy you, Mister Riker” (00:09:40). Thus, Picard is aware of the uniqueness of this experience and encourages his second-in-command to be as open as possible in order to get a better understanding of Klingon culture. Riker does so by eating Klingon food before his departure in order to prepare himself for his journey. When he is aboard the *Pagh*, his knowledge about

Klingon delicacies results in him being accepted by the crew, even by his subordinate commander. Riker is relieved he is accepted by the crew because he knows that any sign of weakness could be the end of him, which is one of the Klingon traits Worf warned him about before leaving the *Enterprise*.

This episode shows the Klingon culture from the human perspective, rather than from Worf's. This change of perspective results in Commander Riker being the "other" aboard the *Pagh*. Fortunately for him, his knowledge about the food and his Klingon-like jokes tend to make him less strange from the Klingon perspective. Due to this bonding between Riker and his



Figure 15 - Klag, a friend.

subordinate Klag, Riker begins to understand that his position aboard the *Pagh* is safe, which results in him preventing Captain Kargan from destroying the *Enterprise*. Following Riker's decisions and heroic actions, Klag says: "you understand the Klingons better than I thought, Commander," to which Riker replies: "Thank you, my friend"

(00:43:00) (see fig. 15).

In this episode, Worf plays an essential role because of his practical knowledge of Klingon culture and his ability to foreshadow events. For example, when Picard discusses the exchange program with Riker, the latter argues this program "might prove to be beneficial," to which the captain replies: "having Worf on board certainly has been" (00:03:18). Worf's usefulness is illustrated when he informs Riker on the Klingon traditions and manners, which eventually saves Riker from leaving the *Enterprise* unprepared. During their talk, Worf provides Riker with an emergency transponder in order to insure Riker's return. Due to this device, the

Enterprise is able to locate the *Pagh* when the two vessels are searching for one another, which gives the crew an advantage. Ultimately, Riker tells Worf he is part of “a very brave and unique people. I’m glad you’re with us on the *Enterprise*” (00:44:19). This appreciation, together with the unique perspective in this episode, results in a narrative in which the “other” is to be respected – and accepted – even more (see fig. 16).



Figure 16 - Thanking a friend.

3.2.3. Benzites Doing Good

The episode “A Matter of Honor” includes another species which is to be analyzed: the Benzites. As Captain Picard informs Riker on the Benzite trait of willing to please, the audience is introduced to the Benzites as being a species that can be trusted because of their hard work. However, a Benzite’s willingness to please also results in lying in order to please their superiors. One can see this background information as a foreshadowing of events; the eagerness to please will play an essential role in this episode, especially with Ensign Mendon aboard the *Enterprise*. Eventually, Mendon’s traits are shown; his eagerness to impress Captain Picard results in Mendon’s decision to not tell the crew about the dangerous unknown substance on the ship. As he explains, it is “a Benzite regulation” to not report “whatever is out of the ordinary” (00:19:30-00:19:46). Thus, rather than adapting to the norms aboard the *Enterprise*, Mendon’s own norms and values have the upper hand.

The differences between the two species are illustrated in terms of the disturbed hierarchy aboard the vessel and the crew’s approach towards Mendon. As Mendon mentions, his species would never report an unordinary event when their analysis has not been completed. Due to this

Benzite rule and Mendon's decision to ignore his orders, the *Enterprise* is accused of damaging the *Pagh* by Captain Kargan, which almost results in an act of war. Moreover, Mendon's



sophisticated approach to his employment results in agitated members of the crew who continue to be astounded by Mendon's bluntness. Especially Worf seems to be bothered by Mendon's decisions, which results in an even tenser environment (see fig. 17).

Figure 17 - Worf's fortitude.

When comparing Mendon to Mr. Spock in the original series, it becomes clear that these characters do not differ in terms of their outspoken opinions about their employment aboard the vessel. Thus, despite the creators' attempt to include an alien aboard the *Enterprise* who becomes more popular among the audience because of his nurtured humanization, *The Next Generation* also includes this Benzite in order to illustrate that the universe is still very diverse. Seemingly, these other, less integrated, species were created to serve as a critique of the original series and its attempts to create an alien which – in itself – served as a critique of the struggle for racial identity in the 1960s.

Thus, the struggle by racial minorities for acceptance into the cultural mainstream of the 1980s is exemplified by Worf. He chooses to be in touch with his human side, despite his backgrounded Klingon nature. This biracial role fits in perfectly with the closing gap between the black and white communities in the 1980s. Moreover, his professional attitude towards his employment aboard the *Enterprise* results in various complements from his human colleagues. They acknowledge his Klingon nature and its benefits in terms of Worf's knowledge about the

Klingon culture, which they employed more than once during their journey. Altogether, Worf's role implements the racial ideology of the 1980s: both nature and nurture are essential for one's identity, but it is one's own decision which identity to employ.

4: *Star Trek: Discovery*

With the arrival of streaming services such as Netflix, the 2010s have become a decade filled with immensely diverse television series available to a broad audience. The idea to add a new *Star Trek* series to this list ultimately resulted in *Star Trek: Discovery*, which is set a decade before the journeys of Captain Kirk in the original series. The story is focused on former First Officer Michael Burnham (played by Sonequa Martin-Green) aboard the *USS Discovery*. Other crew members include Saru (Doug Jones), the *Discovery's* First Officer and a member of the Kelpien species, Lieutenant Ash Tyler (played by Shazad Latif), and Captain Gabriel Lorca (Jason Isaacs) of the *Discovery*. The series premiered on September 19, 2017, its last first season episode aired February 11, 2018. A second season was ordered following the premiere in 2017, which implies this new arrival within the franchise is a success.

As described in chapter one, this new series' target audience consists of Millennials. The gender ideology of the 2010s will be discussed in 4.1. This section focuses on the leading female role of Michael Burnham. When considering the previously discussed series and their portrayal of female crew members, a woman in a leading role is yet another step forward. Burnham is portrayed as an intellectual, strong woman who is capable of leading the crew of the *USS Discovery*. These characteristics are clearly a critique of the male argument that women are not physically capable of a men's job; Burnham can shoot and run just as efficiently as her male colleagues. Moreover, *Star Trek: Discovery* implements the theme of diversity, which is yet another essential theme for Millennials. Racial identity will be discussed in 4.2., in which the portrayal of Saru will be the primary focus. Saru, being a Kelpien by nature, is fully adapted to the human culture aboard the *Discovery*. None of his colleagues regards his alien features as being peculiar, which illustrates that Saru is fully integrated despite his "other" appearance.

Moreover, Burnham's nurtured Vulcan identity serves as a bridge between the themes of gender and racial identity. On the one hand, Burnham is a female protagonist in a formerly man-ruled series. On the other hand, Burnham is a human raised within the Vulcan culture, which results in her being in between two distinct cultures.

4.1. Women Ruling the *Star Trek* Universe

4.1.1. A Strong Female in A Leading Role: Michael Burnham

As described in the previous sections on gender, the *Star Trek* franchise tends to mirror America's gender-related issues and values in terms of emancipation and the altering of gender roles. In this case, series can focus on growing number of women who occupy more essential roles within a company. When applying this to *Star Trek: Discovery*, one is able to identify several aspects that have been discussed in chapter one, which results in an imminent conclusion: women play most of the essential roles in this series. For example, protagonist Michael Burnham is the first black woman to lead a *Star Trek* television series. Moreover, Burnham was the first human to attend the Vulcan Science Academy and became a First Officer aboard the *USS Shenzhou*, which shows that this female character has quite some accomplishments on her resume. This could not have been done without the women's liberation in the workforce described earlier. As for the *USS Shenzhou*, which is led by Captain Philippa Georgiou (played by Michelle Yeoh), most problems aboard the vessel tend to be resolved with the help of female crew members. Yet, the ultimate female role – next to the protagonist – is the Emperor of the Terran Empire, which is (yet again) portrayed by Michelle Yeoh in the mirror universe. Her cold-blooded character makes every man (and woman) tremble, which shows that the *Star Trek* universe did evolve in terms of gender roles. This role of emperor, however, implies that this

mirror universe is ruled by autocratic political systems in which power and opportunities are not equal by law, which creates a contrast when comparing these systems to Burnham's normal universe and its acceptance towards diversity and the evolved gender roles. In a recent interview with *Time*, Yeoh addresses the fact that two women were cast in a leading role: "People always think you put two women in the same place and they compete with each other. 'She's older, so she's going to be jealous of the young one. They're going to fight over a man.' It's all absolutely not true, and it's a silly thing to encourage." In other words, the female roles in *Star Trek:*

Discovery are not meant to be traditional and can be seen as a newly formed tradition within the world of *Star Trek* (see fig. 18).



Figure 18 - Michael Burnham ready for battle.

The altered leading roles played by women also resulted in the omitting of *Star Trek's* voluptuous clothing. This series does not concentrate on Burnham's beauty or any of the sexualized women who were somewhat centralized in previous *Star Trek* series, such as Vina's outfit in the original pilot episode. As described before, the female crew members in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* were already portrayed as less voluptuous, exemplified by Dr. Crusher, but the clothing was still addressed by the creators because of their decision to employ skants. These skants were promoted as being unisex, thus persuading the audience that the original series was not as sexist as it actually was; men wore these outfits, too. In a way, *Star Trek: Discovery* does not remind the audience of the rather sexualized characters in the original series and Captain Kirk's amorous explorations of the galaxy. On the contrary, *Discovery* fixates on Burnham's

intellect, craftiness, and perseverance. Although Burnham is not the captain of the *USS Discovery*, she is portrayed as a worthy leader and her colleagues are almost drawn to her because of her qualities. Whether they are her superiors or not, the Starfleet crew realizes what Burnham can bring to the table, which is the complete opposite of today's looks on career-making women. Together with the fact that all crew members wear similar unisex outfits, this series can be seen as a new breakthrough in terms of the further disregard of the traditional ways of *Star Trek* (see fig. 19).



Figure 19 - Vina, Dr. Crusher, and Michael Burnham: Three generations of women in the *Star Trek* franchise.

An example of Michael Burnham's intellect and perseverance can be found in the episode "The Butcher's Knife Cares Not for the Lamb's Cry," which is episode four of season one. In this episode, Burnham is assigned to study a certain unknown creature by Captain Lorca (played by Jason Isaacs). During her research, she is continuously interrupted by Commander Ellen Landry (played by Rekha Sharma), who is asked by Lorca to keep an eye on Burnham. Landry decides to sedate the creature, which goes horribly wrong and results in Landry being killed. During this scene, Burnham is constantly aware of her surroundings and even warns Landry about the dangers of her plan. This aspect is even more impressive when considering the fact that Landry is the ship's head of security, making her a military trained crew member with years of experience. Burnham remains calm and succeeds in luring the creature back in its cage,

which ultimately results in Burnham solving the mystery of the creature's abilities. Thus, despite Landry being accurately trained and weaponized for these situations, the solution is provided by Burnham and her intellect.

Michael Burnham's appearance in this series can also be analyzed in terms of her name. The name Michael, being a traditional male name, was chosen by Bryan Fuller, the director, in order to continue his tradition of naming "his lead women with names that would typically be associated as male." Aaron Harberts, who was part of the production team of *Discovery*, explains that they chose the name Michael because there are only a few female Michaels to be found, which makes this name even more special. Moreover, Harberts points out that the name "had a lot of potency" when considering the fact that an archangel is also called Michael. This archangel symbolizes purity, righteousness, and divine power; the term exudes traditional masculinity. Thus, when using this male name for a female character, this decision foreshadows that this female crew member will have these masculine characteristics. Another explanation is given by actress Sonequa Martin-Green, who decided "for [Michael's] creation and for [her] background and whatnot that I was named after my father," which shows that alternative explanations for such a name can also be part of an actress' personal view (in Topel). All in all, the name Michael



Figure 20 - Michael Burnham on the spot.

is a name to be remembered within the *Star Trek* universe, whether the name is chosen in order to stand out, or to blend male and female characteristics (see fig. 20).

4.1.2. Advertising Starfleet's Diversity

Star Trek: Discovery does not solely focus on women and their growing role within society. The acceptance of other gender-role related developments in today's society, such as gay marriage, are also included. During the first season of *Discovery*, the audience is introduced to the relationship between Paul Stamets (played by Anthony Rapp) and Hugh Culber (played by Wilson Cruz). This relationship, as Aaron Harberts explains, has been part of a "slow rollout for the first out gay characters in the *Star Trek* universe," which is "a vision of a homosexual relationship that is rarely given" (in Reynolds). In this television series, the relationship between Stamets and Culber is not romanticized or stereotyped. For example, a stereotypical gay character would be Jack McFarland in *Will & Grace* (1998 – present), who utilizes the gestures, vocabulary, and intonation mostly associated with a homosexual identity. In *Discovery*, the two men work and live together without being flaunting their sexual orientation. The only domestic scene they share includes them brushing their teeth and discussing the events that took place during the day (see fig. 21). As Harberts argues, this relationship is "something we haven't seen before," meaning that these two men represent a new approach to diversity within the *Star Trek* franchise (in Reynolds). In previous series, creators did not elaborately include gay relationships.

When considering that both actors (Rapp and Cruz) are out gay actors, one can conclude that this new television series creates an entirely new tradition within the *Star Trek* universe.



Figure 21 - Culber and Stamets share their daily stories.

Thus, as these examples illustrate, the gender ideology of the Millennials is present in *Star Trek: Discovery*. With Michael Burnham in a leading role, the series differentiates itself from previous *Star Trek* series in terms of providing women with an actual spotlight. This spotlight is no longer focused on a woman's allure, but on a woman's capability in terms of surviving in a universe previously dominated by men. Moreover, the series portrays diversity by implementing the gay relationship between Culber and Stamets, which has not been done in such an elaborate way in previous *Star Trek* series. In terms of gender and diversity, this new series clearly is the start of a new path for the franchise.

4.2. Absolute Assimilation in *Star Trek: Discovery*

As the series is structured as an ongoing drama, rather than a series of individual stories, it can focus more on themes of long-term integration. The subject of integration is exemplified by the narrative of Saru, which highlights how the show focusses on the complete integration of an alien into the multicultural world of *Discovery*, a microcosm of the *Star Trek* universe.

Moreover, the international relations are represented by the inclusion of the Klingons. As the series is set in the past, before the era of Kirk, the history of the relationship between the Federation and the Klingon Empire can be shown elaborately. By setting the show in the past, the makers are able to represent the Klingon Empire as a socio-political structure that is of the past and needs to be modernized in order for the Klingons to develop as a race. Due to L'Rell's victory in the end, gender plays a role in developing from an aggressive feudal style order to a more communal based order characterized by cooperation, which eventually will lead to several periods of peace between the Federation and the Klingon Empire. Thus, this section will show that this series integrates the other completely, in both figurative and literal ways.

4.2.1. Fully Adapted to Human Culture: Saru Aboard the *USS Discovery*

A comparison of the representation of otherness in the latest Star Trek series and to the two series previously discussed, clearly illustrates that in *Star Trek: Discovery* inter-species relations have developed further and notions of national and ethnic identity are approached with more subtlety. One peculiar member of the crew is Mr. Saru, a Kelpien. The Kelpien are “an alien race biologically determined to be predator or prey” (StarTrek.com). During the first season of *Discovery*, Mr. Saru’s appearance turns out to be the only peculiar thing about him. His norms and values are fully adapted to the human traditions and he speaks English perfectly, which are two essential aspects for an alien character who is present in all episodes. Aboard the *USS Discovery*, Saru clearly is a gentleman with a critical stance and a perceptive mind, which makes him one of the more loveable characters of the series. Considering these characteristics, the creators clearly utilized Mr. Spock as an example for Mr. Saru’s persona. Moreover, Michael Burnham’s character can also be analysed in terms of being different from the rest, thus making her the “other.” Especially her Vulcan background creates an intriguing persona with several mixed aspects and traits. Furthermore, the “other” is also illustrated considering the Klingons in *Star Trek: Discovery*. These characters are to some extent even more “other” than the Klingons in previous series, which will be explained later on.

Saru’s “otherness” is only visible because of his appearance; although he is built like a human, his skin is pink and his face consists of several gaps and ledges (see fig. 22). However, his looks are not portrayed as being weird, thus the other crew members no longer recognize Saru as being different. The only traits that actually indicate Saru’s “otherness” are his so-called “threat ganglia” (StarTrek.com). These ganglia are like exposed nerves which emerge on the back of Saru’s head when he senses danger, something the Kelpiens desperately need on their

home planet, on which they are prey. Despite these attributes, Saru's appearance does not intervene with any opportunities along the way. On the contrary, the ganglia are employed throughout the series in order to foreshadow any danger ahead. In a way, Saru's senses are an asset which are utilized in order to assist him, the *USS Discovery*, and its crew members. Thus, just as with Mr. Spock's logical reasoning and Mr. Worf's knowledge of the short-tempered ally, Mr. Saru's integration brings along the benefit of his inherited attributes. However, in the case of Saru, his idiosyncratic traits are part of his physical rather than his mental make-up, which makes



the recognition and accessibility of his qualities easier for people around him.

Figure 22 - Saru on the Bridge.

Because the story of *Star Trek: Discovery* develops over the course of all the individual episodes, Saru's character is present and of great importance during the entire first season. During several fight scenes, Saru's ganglia are exposed to foreshadow danger. Moreover, his intelligence and logical reasoning provide the crew with clever solutions, which they happily employ. This accepting attitude creates an even bigger contrast with the original series, in which Mr. Spock is not always seen as a helpful member of the crew, and at times is presented as a hindrance to their progress.

In the eighth episode of season one named "Si Vis Pacem, Para Bellum," which aired on November 5, 2017, Saru's role is slightly different in comparison with other episodes. During this particular episode, Burnham, Ash Tyler, and Saru are sent to Pahvo in order to find a

solution for the cloaking technology utilized by the Klingons. During their stay, Saru acts strangely and wants to know more about this seemingly deserted planet. Surprisingly, the planet is inhabited by lifeforms that look like little floating lights. Saru tries to communicate with them in order to come up with a solution for the Klingon cloaking techniques, but he is introduced to their intellect. Their minds are filled with the idea of peace, which means they do not want to engage in a war with the Klingons. Saru's mind seems controlled and he wants to stop his colleagues from leaving Pahvo, thus turning aggressive against them. When Burnham tries to contact the *USS Discovery*, Saru almost destroys the transmitter, which results in them quarrelling. Eventually, Burnham convinces Saru of the necessity of continuing the war, but Saru still does not want to listen. Ultimately, the lifeforms of Pahvo appear to speak to Saru, which seems to be a lecture on his aggressiveness towards his friends. Burnham intervenes and tells the lifeforms about Starfleet seeking harmony, just like them. Saru tries to convince the lifeforms to not help Burnham, but they give in eventually. However, when they are back aboard the *USS Discovery*, Captain Lorca informs Burnham that the transmitter does not work as planned, making their journey to Pahvo a failure.

Aboard the *Discovery*, Saru seems defeated and depressed. He explains he feels ashamed because of his actions, which are forgiven by Burnham because Saru was not himself. However, Saru explains that he was himself on Pahvo due to his Kelpien background. He tells Burnham Kelpiens "are born afraid ... It's how we survive." During his life, Saru has never known "a moment without fear. The freedom of it. Not one moment. Until Pahvo" (00:35:30-00:36:20). Burnham seems to understand Saru's inner struggle, which illustrates his place among the crew; Saru is like family, he is one of them and needs to be protected when necessary (see fig. 23). Rather than fighting Saru during their quarrel on Pahvo, Burnham tries to convince him this is

not the way to deal with things, exclaiming: “Saru, this isn’t you.” Moreover, despite Saru’s attempts to stop Burnham from leaving, Burnham still includes him in her speech about peace and war, saying: “Saru, we need you” (00:31:19-00:32:20). These signs of friendship clearly illustrate Saru’s role, both aboard the *Discovery* and in Burnham’s life.



Figure 23 - Burnham convincing Saru.

4.2.2. Michael Burnham In Between Cultures

Michael Burnham can also be analyzed in terms of the “other.” As explained before, Burnham was adopted by Spock’s parents and spent many years on Vulcan. She was even accepted to attend the Vulcan Science Academy, which clearly illustrates that Burnham tried her very best to be one of the Vulcans, rather than an “other.” Throughout the series, Burnham’s Vulcan characteristics keep emerging. Especially the Vulcan trait of logical and rational reasoning is employed by Burnham more than once in order to convince Captain Lorca or Saru. During her stay among other humans or human-like creatures whom are fully adapted, Burnham is seen struggling with her Vulcan background, although her human traits and values slowly resurface as the narrative develops (see fig. 24). Unfortunately, the series does not focus on Burnham’s struggle elaborately; the struggle is pushed into the background because of several other – more essential – missions and events. If the creators of *Star Trek: Discovery* wanted to create a character which would evoke sympathetic and nostalgic feelings, they could have wielded this

struggle between Vulcan and human traits as the center of an episode. Such an episode would



Figure 24 - Ash Tyler introduces himself.

have been appreciated by fans because Burnham is Mr. Spock's foster sister and shares similar Vulcan traits.

4.2.3. The “Other” Among Klingons

Another missed opportunity can be found when considering the Klingons in this series. Despite the extended focus on Saru as being the ultimate alien in this series, the Klingons in *Discovery* can also be analyzed as being the “other.” The Klingons in *Star Trek: Discovery* are very different from the Klingons portrayed in previous series. As Chaim Gartenberg points out, in the most recent series “basically everything about the Klingons — their religion, technology, visual design, and culture — doesn’t gel with *The Original Series*’ Klingons.” The newly designed costumes, backgrounds and features were created in order to sell the series to the audience, rather than being in agreement with previous Klingon characters, which is one of the main criticisms of the show expressed by Trekkies.

Furthermore, the Klingons are different in terms of their appearance, which is seen by fans as “the most African they’ve ever looked” (Trendacosta). In order to explain the choices in *Discovery*, executive producer Alex Kurtzman argues that they want to represent “both sides of the war in a way that is understandable and relatable,” they want to “humanize them” (in Trendacosta). However, as Katharine Trendacosta herself argues, the portrayal of Klingons and

their culture “is othering, it does play into stereotypes of savages that specifically plays as a contrast to white and western aesthetics.” Thus, the altered portrayal of Klingons and their culture has been criticized because these characters are still part of the “other”-camp, rather than being more assimilated (see fig. 25). The only positive difference is the fact that the Klingon Voq (played by Javid Iqbal) becomes an outcast because he has a white skin color. This aspect strikes the audience because it can be seen as reversed racism, which pressures the audience into considering the ongoing struggle for racial identity which is still happening today.



Figure 25 – L'Rell (left), T'Kuvma (center), and Voq (right).

The Klingon culture and traditions are shown throughout the first season. Despite the fact that Klingons are still portrayed in a way which makes them the “others,” the show represents them in such detail that the viewer has the opportunity to become interested in the “other” culture and is invited to develop a better understanding of it. By contrast, in the original series alien cultures often functioned as an obstacle for the *Enterprise* crew to overcome. One of the shown aspects of their culture, however, is quite controversial: female Klingon L'Rell (played by Mary Chieffo) admits to have had sexual relations with Starfleet officer Ash Tyler, which results in him being traumatized. Moreover, Ash Tyler plays another essential role in terms of assimilation of the “other,” although this assimilation can be taken literally, rather than figuratively. During the season, Tyler discovers more about his time among the Klingons. The audience learns that

the Klingons transferred the Klingon Voq inside Tyler's mind and body, thus creating a Klingon mind in control of a human shell. Voq's plan is to infiltrate Starfleet in order to win the war for the house of T'Kuvma (played by Chris Obi), a Klingon leader killed by Burnham at the beginning of the season. Thus, despite the Klingon's still being the "other," Voq's plan resulted in an "other" to be among the dominant group. During the season finale, L'Rell is able to unite



Figure 26 - Tyler addresses L'Rell.

all Klingon houses and put an end to the war, which convinces Tyler to stay with her, making him the "other" among the Klingons in terms of physical appearance (see fig. 26).

This section has shown that Burnham's position in between two cultures illustrates that the struggle for racial identity still exists in this new *Star Trek* series. Yet, this conflict is no longer a focus point, which mirrors the developments in the United States of the 2010s: rather than feeling separated, the society shows its support to all citizens with a minority background. However, *Star Trek: Discovery* still implements the "other" in their narrative in terms of Ash Tyler (or, Voq), but this "other" eventually becomes the "other" among the Klingons due to his human physical appearance. By showing the Klingon side of the story, the creators engage with this perspective, thus inviting the viewer to acknowledge the "other."

Conclusion

The three *Star Trek* series discussed in this thesis clearly mirror and reflect upon the changing gender ideologies and identity struggles of racial and ethnic minority groups within the United States over the last fifty-two years. This explains why *Star Trek* is still popular: the franchise has managed to develop and change along with American society at large and Americans' experience of their gender and racial identity. Not only do the different series represent the changing notions of what constitutes gender and racial identities, as well as the ideologically prescribed social roles for men and women of different colors that are developed accordingly, they contain narratives through which America's increasingly multi-cultural and gender-diverse audience can identify with the human and alien fictional characters struggling to adapt to the changing situations in which they find themselves, which results in a series that is both entertaining and conforming for the crowd.

The analysis of *Star Trek: The Original Series* revealed that the first series follows the gender ideology dominant in the United States of the 1960s, which revolved around the idea that women are to be subordinate, stay-at-home wives, rather than entering the public sphere as their husbands did to participated in business and politics. The series presents the female crew members as dependent, sexualized objects, rather than providing a critique of the gender ideology which it encounters. Despite the fact that American women in the 1960s started to become aware that they had the potential to change their role within society, this series does not implement any feminist ideas that can be associated with the feminist movement of the era or the gender and sexual revolution that would follow at the end of the 1960s. Rather, the series stays faithful to the more conservative values as embodied by the June Cleaver ideology, resulting in inferior female roles aboard the *Enterprise*.

In contrast, *Star Trek: The Original Series* is more progressive when it comes to the theme of racial identity. While it seems to affirm the dominant gender ideology, the series mirrors the rise into consciousness of the human rights struggle amongst many American citizens and the increased awareness of acknowledging all those Americans of non-European and mixed backgrounds as true American citizens. The mixed-race alien Spock's struggle for identity on board the *Starship Enterprise* mirrors to a large extent the African-American and other minorities' struggle for identity in a society that was becoming increasingly multi-cultural. The crew accepts his "otherness," but his Vulcan logic and rational thinking is sometimes seen as irritating. Spock is seen struggling with his two-sided identity in several episodes, which echoes the struggle for Americans who had a two-sided racial or ethnic background (black and white; Hispanic and European; Chinese-American) in the 1960s.

The analysis of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* revealed how the franchise was able to modernize itself as the new series integrates the very different norms and values of the 1980s, known as the decade of Generation X. In contrast to the more "conservative" American society of the late 1950s and early 1960s, this generation mainly focused on being independent, being free from authority, and being accepting towards one another. These values are clearly visible in this new *Star Trek* series in terms of the independence of the female crew members, who are able to wear less revealing and more functional uniform. Furthermore, the female crew members are given authority aboard the *Enterprise*, which results in more agency for them, and leads to several problematic situations being resolved by women.

The analysis of Worf's role aboard the *Enterprise* highlights the extent to which the new series emphasizes the importance of accepting individuals from other racial and ethnic backgrounds into the community. His racial identity is not presented in a negative way; rather,

Worf is fully adapted to the human culture aboard the *Enterprise*, and is allowed to hold on to and even practice Klingon cultural traditions, such as mourning a fellow Klingon by growling. As for the Klingon culture, *The Next Generation* provides the audience with an elaborate picture of this “other” culture. This is done in order to broaden one’s mind in terms of acknowledging the “other,” in this case African-Americans in the United States. With the inclusion of Benzites, the series attempts to illustrate that our universe consists of many more species which are all to be accepted and integrated.

The analysis of *Star Trek: Discovery* has revealed that the latest series in the franchise incorporates the gender ideology of the 2010s by installing a strong, relatively masculine woman as the protagonist of the series. This clearly illustrates that the *Star Trek* franchise implements the gender ideology of this decade; whereas the original series, with its voluptuous female supporting characters and macho Captain Kirk, still suggested that women were ultimately not capable of doing a man’s job, *Discovery* presents an independent, intelligent woman who is clearly capable of leading the crew, despite not being the actual captain of the *USS Discovery*. This portrayal shows that *Star Trek: Discovery* recognizes the current developments in the field of gender emancipation in the United States of today.

In *Discovery*, the growing awareness in contemporary mainstream American society, and on mainstream American media, to acknowledge and respect the many different racial identities that make up the American nation is mirrored by Saru, who is a fully integrated “other” aboard the *USS Discovery*. Despite Saru’s Kelpien nature, his physical differences are not considered to be peculiar by the crew. Simultaneously, Michael Burnham being in between cultures echoes the situation in the United States in terms of being biracial in a time of acceptance. Thus, Hochschild’s prediction in 1998 came true: African-American society has mingled with the

white population to a greater extent than ever before, which is clearly visible when watching *Star Trek: Discovery*. As for the Klingons in *Discovery*, their story invites the viewer to develop a better understanding of the Klingon culture, which is also an essential aspect of racial acceptance in the 2010s.

As this thesis has illustrated, the discussed series clearly implement the ever-changing gender and racial ideologies of the United States in the 1960s, the 1980s, and the 2010s, and reflect the different ways in which American TV-producers and audiences thought about women's roles in society and the relation between white America and the many other racial and ethnic minorities that have always made up the nation's citizens. Throughout its history, audiences have been able to recognize the zeitgeist of their times in the futuristic settings, costumes, and alien physiognomies of the *Star Trek* universe. The show's penchant to appeal to the mainstream, while simultaneously containing subtle expressions of critique or progressive alternatives to the status quo, has made this franchise one of the most popular and long-running television franchises in history. With the arrival of the *Discovery* series, one can unquestionably expect the franchise to live a little bit longer, and to prosper more than ever.

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