

Introduction

The title of this study is taken in part from a statement by Gene Roddenberry, the creative genius behind *Star Trek*. He said, "It is only when you look at what unites humans, rather than what divides them, that you have some idea of what it means to be human."¹ Humanity was his greatest fascination, its diversity, its nature and its spirit.

Star Trek in its original manifestation and its later sequels and continuations has offered countless millions of viewers all over the global village a fictional cosmos in which the fundamental question of what it means to be human (and non-human) has been rehearsed, reiterated and reinforced for thirty and more years.

Star Trek was first broadcast in America on September 8th, 1966. After much wrangling and compromise with National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) executives, 79 episodes were eventually filmed and shown. The *Enterprise's* five year mission was culled to three, the program ending on June 3rd, 1969, barely six weeks before man walked on the moon. *Star Trek: The Next Generation* began on September 28th, 1987 and ended on May 30th, 1994, after seven seasons containing 178 episodes. Immediately after *Star Trek* was cancelled, it went into syndication and was again shown across America. In 1969, novelist James Blish wrote in a letter preface to one of his *Star Trek* novelisations: "Even though *Star Trek* is no longer a network television show, it is as popular as ever. As a syndicated show, it is presently being exhibited on over a hundred stations throughout the United States, and in England, too." The show was sold to many countries. Another letter to Blish came from an American Army Captain (named Kirk!), stationed in Vietnam during the war. He told Blish that he and his fellow soldiers watched the show, and that the Vietnamese also liked it.² *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is also shown in many countries. Letters Blish collected give an insight into the audience of the original program. He stated that he received fan mail "from children under ten, through college undergraduates (a large subgroup), to housewives. ...In short, the evidence is strong that *Star Trek* has created an almost entirely new audience."³ Every episode of both *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is available on

¹ Fern, Y Gene Roddenberry The Last Conversation University of California Press, California, 1994, p 18

² Prefaces to *Star Trek* episode compilations no.s 04 and 06, collected in Blish, J. and Lawrence, J.A. Star Trek - The Classic Episodes 01 (25th Anniversary Edition) Bantam Books, New York, 1991

³ Quoted in Whitfield, S.E. and Roddenberry, G. The Making of Star Trek Ballantine Books, U.S.A., 1968, p 15

video, *Star Trek* in an improved and reissued format, and episodes from both shows are currently played on Australian television three times a week. The shows are widely broadcast and widely viewed by millions around the world.

The original *Star Trek* was written and aired in a turbulent era. The Vietnam War was well underway and it was also a time of political uncertainty - President Kennedy had been assassinated only two years before the pilot was made, and his brother Robert was killed in 1968, as was civil rights advocate Dr Martin Luther King. Racism continued to be a prominent social issue, fuelled by the war in Asia and the Federal abolition of segregation, which nonetheless did little to change ingrained views. *Star Trek: The Next Generation* entered the arena at a slightly less volatile but equally uncertain time. Seven astronauts had been killed the year before, and the American public was still in shock. The United States of America sent forces in an attempt to subdue hostilities in the Persian Gulf and the U.S.S.R. was dividing and disintegrating. With such internationally important events happening around them, the writers of both *Star Treks* had ample inspiration for plots, allowing them to comment on twentieth century events in a futuristic context.

Star Trek and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* explore twentieth century social issues and twentieth century society and life by placing them in a futuristic context. Contemporary issues are dealt with by twenty-third and twenty-fourth century adventurers who are sufficiently recognisable for an audience to relate to, but set apart enough to teach and inspire that same audience through their futuristic experiences. Twentieth century viewers are able to discover things about themselves and their way of life through the stories. D.C. Fontana, episode writer for *Star Trek*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, once wrote: "The original show still gets fan mail, and many people write to say how *Star Trek* has changed or influenced their lives for the better."⁴

The *Star Trek* programs may be studied through the application of a number of different theories. I have chosen to generally apply the theories of emotional realism and mythology throughout my thesis as a means of delimiting what is basically a critical approach to *Star Trek* through the examination of many individual episodes. Emotional realism is "... the interpolation of the personal and the experimental into the realm of the fictional help[ing] to cement the close identification many fans feel with series characters and their world."⁵ The

⁴ Fontana, D.C. "Introduction: "The Process of Creation"" in Blish, J. and Lawrence, J.A., op. cit., p 02

⁵ Jenkins, H. Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory, quoted in

Tulloch, J. and Jenkins, H. Science Fiction Audiences Watching Doctor Who and Star Trek Routledge, London, 1995, p 40

characters experience events which are believed by the program makers to mirror situations possibly experienced by audience members, especially where home and family are concerned.

Harold Jenkins, writing about emotional realism, claims that it stands “at the point of intersection between textually-preferred meanings and larger social ideologies...”⁶ He determined that *Star Trek* fans compare and contrast their own lives with those of the characters, make critical judgements about their own society and lives, make changes in social structures such as gender relations, and the justice system and make decisions “... based more fully upon notions of equality and acceptance of the difference.”⁷ Jenkins goes on to say that emotional realism is “... an empowering audience psychology ... shown, for example, by the “military wife who approved of the new *Star Trek* policy of “taking the family along”.”⁸

Star Trek presents the audience with elements with which a viewer may relate. Though the series are set more than two centuries in the future, *Star Trek* attempts to inject realism by presenting convincing characters, and practical situations and resolutions in each episode. During the course of an episode, the audience is shown new and undeniably distinct humans and beings, places and planets - revelations they will have little or no chance of experiencing in their own lifetimes. Regardless of the extensive exposure to the strange and exotic, the programs are underlaid with a familiarity bred from issues and situations pertinent to the society in which *Star Trek's* putative audiences are assumed to live.

Although characterisation is given, the characters are further and ‘externally’ embellished as viewers relate to them through their personal experience. The understanding of the motivations for a character’s actions vary, depending upon a viewer’s own experiences. The audience seemingly feels a real, emotional bond to the characters, and share in and grow from the characters’ experiences. Every character deals with his or her share of problems, whether these take the form of issues with which audience members may contend in their daily lives, or difficulties which they would not confront. Thus Deanna, Worf and Riker each have family problems, while Worf, Spock and Data deal with their ‘alienness’ when surrounded by predominantly human crews. Regardless of their alien identities, Worf and Spock face many of the same personal situations that the human crew members do. Family members are regularly the cause of difficulties and complications for Worf, Spock and Data, revealing a fundamental ‘sameness’ between the aliens and the rest of the crew. The ways in which the situations are handled often reflect twentieth

⁶ *ibid.*, p 176, quoted from Jenkins, H., p. 176

⁷ *ibid.*, p 41, quoted from Jenkins, H., p 177

⁸ *ibid.*, p 40, quoted from Jenkins, H., p 175

century American life. The concepts of reality held by a particular viewer affect the way in which he or she regards a situation. While emotional realism is of considerable importance to *Star Trek* as a source of its viewer popularity and its perception of social relevance, hard and fast assertions of precise, let alone generalised, interpretations by audiences or effects on viewers are difficult and contentious.

The original *Star Trek* deals with issues such as prejudice, xenophobia and discrimination, however the situations addressed within *Star Trek: The Next Generation* have become more relevant to the contemporary watcher, with greater freedom of speech and thought prevailing both in society and the media in the 1980s and 1990s. Tulloch and Jenkins conducted a survey of science fiction watching Massachusetts Institute of Technology students, gauging their reactions to *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Many of those surveyed felt that, even though the storylines mirrored Western society, the programs did not deal with the issues as quickly or deeply as the audience desired. It is the authors' belief that "... fan activity reflects both a fascination with media content (which leads them to continue to work with and upon the original programme material) and a frustration with the producer's inability to tell the kinds of stories they wish to see (which results in their progressive rewriting of the programme ideology as the characters and situations become the basis for their own subcultural activity)."⁹ The problems of humanity are discussed by *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, but the face of human society in the latter part of the twentieth century is changing more quickly than in previous years. The ability - or, as is often the case- inability, to reach the perfect solution has become more genuine, with the infrequency of a 'happy ending' reflecting the uncertainty and turbulence of twentieth century existence. With conceptions and convictions so divided, no one solution is universally approved.

After reviewing the data he collected from his survey, Jenkins further expanded his theory of emotional realism by saying, "... a series text like *Star Trek* which in many cases gave them [the surveyed fans] their initial exposure to abstract notions of justice, equality, cultural difference and human progress, is criticized by fans for not being responsive to their changing beliefs about sexism, racism and so on. In this way, fans can become increasingly critical of the producer's failure to conform to their understanding of the series' ideological commitments¹⁰.

Characters and characterisation were also examined by the survey. The criteria against which the surveyed students measured the worth and ability of a *Star Trek* character was the same criteria by which they measured themselves and those

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p 41

around them. 'What makes a good *Star Trek* character would seem to be what makes a good... student, though the students have particularly strong feelings (either positive or negative) towards characters which allow them to explore conflicts they face in their own lives.'¹¹ Jenkins continues: 'What makes the characters such 'evocative objects'... is the fact that they *do* face internal conflicts which mirror those the students confront in their daily lives... '¹² Jenkins discovered that the fans feel an identification with the characters in the series and feel that the way the series evolves should mirror the way society is evolving. Jenkins gives as an example the views of military wives who were happy to see families aboard the *Enterprise-D* in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Although the audience feels such an emotional connection with the characters, the student interviews conducted by Tulloch and Jenkins seem to imply that it is the emotional and human scenes themselves that produce the most quips and gibes amongst the programs' viewers. "Richard... said that the old series was 'particularly bad when they try to have a touching moment between friends or something...'"¹³ Tulloch and Jenkins study also found that 'Deanna Troi is particularly a focus of ridicule... since her entire role on the programme centers around her ability to read emotions...'¹⁴ It would seem that the audience members interviewed prefer to imagine the characters' interactions themselves. Deanna's voicing of the emotional (as opposed to the scientific) appears to instil uneasiness, a sign that perhaps the viewers do not want to be privy to the deeper emotion responses and reasons for actions. Scientific explanations appear more solid and absolute, whereas emotional responses are frequently controversial, and based on feeling, not fact.

Data and Spock are able to control their emotions and think clearly and act logically, whereas Deanna Troi and Wesley Crusher rely more upon the emotional aspects. Tulloch and Jenkins deduce that "... characters like Spock and Data or actors like Brent Spiner, Leonard Nimoy or Patrick Stewart ... [have an] ability to achieve a proper balance of the emotional and the rational while characters such as Deanna Troi and Wesley Crusher and actors like William Shatner ... [display a] lack of emotional control."¹⁵ My analysis does not fully support this.

Emotional realism is a device used intentionally by the series' creators and writers to great effect, irrespective of the views of those in the selective survey. Either the *Star Trek* production crew is not 'in touch' with their audience, misinterpreting

¹¹ *ibid.*, p 233

¹² *ibid.*, p 234

¹³ *ibid.*, p 231

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp 231/22

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p236

responses, or this survey is not truly indicative of the views held by the majority of *Star Trek* viewers. The students may have been unwilling to voice their inner feelings in the survey environment, indicating some of the difficulties associated with surveys of this kind. My analysis tends toward contradicting many of Tulloch and Jenkins' survey findings.

Chapters four, five and six of my thesis, whilst not specifically dealing with audience response, explore emotional realism. Issues addressed, such as homosexuality, loneliness, the status of being different and/or an outsider, interracial relationships, and family, friendship and love, all have the potential to evoke emotional responses in audience members and, as mentioned previously, give the viewers a basis 'for making critical judgements about their own social situations...'16

Star Trek utilises the forms and conventions of science fiction as a televisual genre as a means of conveying contemporary myths which then accumulate to produce a *Star Trek* mythology. Within its own specific mythology, twentieth-century problems are dealt with by humans and beings living in future times. The *Star Trek* universe is more widely explored than the contemporary universe with non-human inhabitants from countless planets, new hostilities, new diseases, and new social problems. But as vast as the *Star Trek* cosmos has become, its relevance to twentieth century life cannot be ignored. *Star Trek* is a myth - its style and its presentation designate it as such. *Star Trek* frequently addresses an issue or uncertainty from contemporary society which results in either a solution being reached or, if no solution is forthcoming, the formulating of some way to overcome at least some aspect of the problem.

According to Albert F. McLean, myth is in some ways close to realism, but often goes a step beyond. He maintains that "... [myth is] a constellation of images and symbols, whether objectively real or imaginary, which brings focus and a degree of order to the psychic (largely unconscious) processes of a group or society and in so doing endows a magical potency upon the circumstances of persons involved."17

The argument, that "... myth can be defined as a pattern of narrative known throughout the culture and presented in many different versions by many different tellers..."18 has been adopted by many scholars. Thomas Schatz defines myth "...

16 *ibid.*, p 41

17 McLean, A.F., *American Vaudeville As Ritual*, quoted in Feuer, J. "The Self-Reflexive Musical and the Myth of Entertainment", in Grant, B.K. (ed.) *Film Genre Reader II* University of Texas Press, U.S.A., 1995, p 443

18 Cawelti, J.G. "*Chinatown* and Generic Transformation in Recent American Films", in Grant, *ibid.*, p228

according to its function as a unique conceptual system that embodies elements specific to the culture which realizes it.”¹⁹ As *Star Trek* originated in the United States, many of the ‘types’ and situations portrayed are likely to be familiar to the twentieth-century American audiences that live in the culture to which *Star Trek* is specific. Schatz’s reading of myth encompasses Ernst Cassirer’s view that “... the function of myth is not that of explanation but is, instead, practical and social, to promote a feeling of unity and harmony between the members of a society and also with the whole of nature or life.”²⁰

In *The Savage Mind*, Claude Lévi-Strauss defines mythical thought as, “a whole system of reference which operates by means of a pair of contrasts: between general and particular on the one hand, and nature and culture on the other.”²¹ Lévi-Strauss also claimed that “[m]yths are systems of concepts placed in binary opposition and repeated in countless variations. They are, by definition, stories that have no teller. They are made up entirely of character and action.”²² *Star Trek*, as a complete entity, functions as a mythology, but each episode within the entity is in itself a myth. In each episode, at least one set of binary oppositions is significantly present, concealed within the storyline and played out to a different conclusion.

Jim Kitses, in *Horizons West*, applies Lévi-Strauss’ findings on binary oppositions, putting forward a set of antinomies - binary oppositions - which he uses to analyse the Western genre. Even though Kitses wrote his binary oppositions to be applied to the western, they are still relevant to the study of science fiction, albeit with some modification. What the western achieved on film, *Star Trek* achieves, mythically, on television.

Although Kitses’ notion of the antinomies which shape the Western and his articulation of them find echoes in my analysis²³, I avoid over-simplification and reductiveness when using binary oppositions and follow my interpretation of the oppositions without using them as a checklist. With certain changes in category and terminology, much of Kitses’ antimony grid for the Western applies to *Star Trek*. What follows is my modification and utilisation of Kitses’ binary oppositions as appropriate to the *Star Trek* cosmos:

¹⁹ Schatz, T. “The Structural Influence: New Directions in Film Genre Study” in Grant, *ibid.*, p 95

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Lévi-Strauss, C., *The Savage Mind* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Hertfordshire, 1966, p 135

²² Andrew, D. *Concepts in Film Theory* Oxford University Press, New York, 1984, p 78

²³ Examples of this can be seen in chapter one, dealing with Individuality and Community, in chapter two, which deals with opposite states within a being, and chapter three, dealing with social systems and belief systems. These are only some of the many applications of binary oppositions throughout the thesis.

THE COSMOS

20TH CENTURY CIVILIZATION

The Individual

freedom
honour
self-knowledge
integrity
self-interest
solipsism
passion
desire
sacrifice

The Community

restriction
institutions
illusion
compromise
social responsibility
democracy
balance
duty
revenge

Nature

purity
good
experience
empiricism
pragmatism
brutalization
savagery

Culture

corruption
evil
knowledge
legalism
idealism
refinement
humanity

Space

United Federation of Planets
the frontier
equality
new species
change
the future

Earth

America
the world
class
racism
tradition
the past²⁴

Some of these terms are interchangeable - e.g., self-interest and social responsibility, solipsism and democracy, experience and knowledge, brutalization and refinement, and savagery and humanity - as the known universe becomes larger and more species are discovered.

Roland Barthes defines myth as "... a system of communication, ... a message ... a form."²⁵ He believes that "... everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a

²⁴ Kitses, J. Horizons West British Film Institute, London, 1969, p 11. The bold print indicates my changes to Kitses' opposition grid.

discourse.”²⁶ To his way of thinking, “... mythology *harmonizes* with the world, not as it is, but as it wants to create itself...”²⁷ Myth is a culture speaking to its members in an attempt to resolve the society’s contradictions and uncertainties. The resolution is not complete because the contradictions and uncertainties remain after each specific myth-narrative has been told. Invariably, new myth-narratives are created as further attempts to explain the complications which persist. Barthes goes on to say that “[a]ny myth with some degree of generality is in fact ambiguous, because it represents the very humanity of those who, having nothing, have borrowed it.”²⁸

Joseph Campbell states that mythology develops in a bounded society²⁹, and that when mythologies collide, more complex mythologies are the result.³⁰ He believes that every myth which exists in today’s society “... has some point of origin in our past experience.”³¹ The God or gods and divine activities form the basis of several myths, with Campbell defining these gods as “personification[s] of a motivating power or a value system that functions in human life and in the universe - the powers of your own body and of nature.”³² Myths are the “metaphorical of spiritual potentiality in the human being...”, the semblance of god in human form. There exist myths and gods which pertain to a particular society and culture - therefore there are two different ‘orders of mythology.’ Campbell theorises on the relationship between myth and culture, and comments on the significance of myth to the life of every individual. “Every mythology has to do with the wisdom of life as related to a specific culture at a specific time. It integrates the individual into his society and the society into the field of nature.”³³

As Campbell is discussing mythology in a broader cosmological sense, the application of his theories to individual episodes is not apparent. Overall, Campbell’s notion of mythology can be applied to *Star Trek* in its totality, enabling the program to be into context. Mitchell’s concept of myth, involving the hero or

²⁵ Barthes, R (trans. Lavers, A.) Mythologies Paladin Books, Granada Publishing, Great Britain, 1985, p 109

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*, p 156

²⁸ *ibid.*, p 157

²⁹ Flowers, B.S. (ed) Joseph Campbell’s The Power of Myth, with Bill Moyers Anchor Books, U.S.A., 1991, p 27

³⁰ *ibid.*, p 28

³¹ *ibid.*, p 27

³² *ibid.*, p 28

³³ *ibid.*, p 66

heroine's role in his or her society, is more pertinent to the study of individual *Star Trek* episodes.

Edward Mitchell states that, "... popular myths have a way of mixing and combining with little or no regard for history."³⁴ Myths are frequently created by taking something and making it bigger than it really is. This is a style widely used in gangster films and in 'loving family' films. The hero or heroine, often 'larger than life', must overcome amazing odds and dangers on the journey towards his or her goal, often changing or saving lives in the process.

John Cawelti goes on further to say, "...the myth itself is at least partially affirmed as a reflection of authentic human aspirations and needs."³⁵ *Star Trek* is myth translating to popular culture - it takes popular myths and builds upon them. Thus the heroes and heroines all face extraordinary odds to achieve, odds which at times prove insurmountable. The retention of identity and virtue, morals and ideals, is very important. In the *Star Trek* cosmos, the safeguarding of friendship is also important, with characters prepared to sacrifice their lives to preserve the lives of others.

The way in which different planets, races, species and cultures treat others is scrutinised. How human beings act in the present affects the way in which the future is imaginatively presented within the series. The way in which other species deal with issues such as intolerance, racism and xenophobia, genetics and warfare is explored. Versions of Earth's history are often used as an example of the type of atrocities carried out in the *Star Trek* past. The wars in the twentieth century (also the 'Eugenics Wars' (1992-1996 in the chronology of the *Star Trek* universe), mentioned in "Space Seed" (*ST* s 01), barbaric rituals and events carried out by the inhabitants of Earth are mentioned as things to avoid repeating.

The *Star Trek* phenomena plays out humankind's hope for the future. It offers a new world in which every human race is united and contact with other planets has yielded a rich reward - as well as cultural exchanges, the United Federation of Planets has developed.

In this study I do not deal with the movie series. Within the seven movies, different narrative conventions are used and greater character development is possible. Some characters exist only within the movies and provide character history not mentioned or used within the television programs. Characters such as: Captain Kirk's lover and their son; Vulcan officers, some of whom are involved in treachery and commit murder; Spock's older half-brother who abandoned the

³⁴ Mitchell, E. "Apes and Essences: Some Sources of Significance in the American Gangster Film", in Grant, op. cit., p 204

³⁵ Cawelti, op. cit., in Grant, op. cit., p 242

pursuit of logic so as to explore his emotions; and Lieutenant Sulu's daughter - the inclusion of these characters within this study would colour and alter the characterisation as it is presented within the 50 minute long television format, would complicate the analysis. The length of the movies allows more background to be explored, concerning both significant events and the characters involved in them. *Star Trek* 'spin-off' series are still being produced, with the 50 minute television programs *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *Star Trek: Voyager* currently being produced in America and being well received in both the U.S.A. and around the world.

The tenet of *Star Trek*, the diegetical ideology of the characters and institutions within the programs, is "to boldly go where no man or no one has gone before", and is quoted in the introduction to every episode of both programs. The philosophy of both programs is the Prime Directive, the mandate that states that "Starfleet personnel and spacecraft are prohibited from interfering in the normal development of any society, and that any Starfleet vessel or crew member is expendable to prevent violation of this rule."^{36 37} It is the concept that every Starfleet officer takes an oath to maintain and it is also one of the hardest concepts to which to adhere. The non-involvement principle is continually broken by officers, especially Captains Kirk and Picard. Their ideals regarding the existence of societies often overshadow their ideology and, on occasion, even their commitment to the binding rules of Starfleet.

In this study I deal with the idea of humanity in *Star Trek*, both the original series and the *Next Generation* series. I discuss the wide meaning of humanity and its implications partly by drawing on 'clusters of values' which explore the notion of what humanity might mean. I also look at how humanity, or the lack of it, is indicated through the narrative situations and circumstances within the story-lines of each episode. Aspects of humanity and the human condition are addressed in every episode in both series.

I need at the outset to make clear the ways in which certain recurring terms will be used in the discussions that follow. Certain concepts are important in understanding and appreciating the episodes.

Throughout, I refer to aliens as "the difference" or "the other", meaning species which are not human (i.e. not biologically *Homo sapiens*). The terms *Star Trek* universe and *Star Trek* cosmos, meaning the entire diegetic universe created by the

³⁶ Okuda, M., Okuda, D. and Mirek, D. [The Star Trek Encyclopedia - A Reference Guide to the Future](#) Pocket Books, New York, 1994, p 261

³⁷ Captain Kirk placed his own proviso on the Prime Directive when he told Spock that it only applied to societies which were "progressive and improving", in "The Return of the Archons", (*ST* s 01)

episodes, are interchangeable. Throughout the study I frequently use gender specific pronouns for aliens as well as humans, allotting the gender by using evidence which the various episode narratives provide, or which I interpret from clues and codes embodied in the texts, or the mis-en-scene, or both. This evidence may include voice, physical features, and direct references by other characters. Both crews address their *Enterprise* as feminine, referring to it as 'her', their lady. I do so as well.

During the course of the programs, interpretations of the concept of 'good' have been offered by certain characters. The computer Landru, in "Return of the Archons" (ST s 01), tells Kirk and Spock that "The good is the harmonious continuation of the body [Landru's people as a whole]. The good is peace, tranquillity. The good of the body is the directive." Good is seen as the cessation of war, hostilities, and ill-will and the peaceful coexistence of one with others.

In "The Enemy Within"(ST s 01), Kirk is split into two halves, referred to by those around him as his negative half and his positive half. While the negative Kirk cares nothing for his crew, the positive Kirk feels the plight of those who depend on him and finds making decisions which affect their lives agonising. Mr Spock considers Kirk's positive side to contain his good attributes, characteristics such as compassion, love and tenderness. Their existence complements the darker side of the individual and both halves are necessary for the survival of the individual. Seen in this context, goodness covers those aspects of the personality concerned with gentleness, and the desire to protect and preserve.

Although it is in the motion picture *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* that Spock maintains: "Logic clearly dictates that the needs [the good] of the many outweighs the needs of the one", throughout the television series he constantly illustrates his convictions concerning that philosophy. In "The Enemy Within", Spock tells Kirk that he doesn't have the right to be vulnerable. He says that if he is not perfect the crew will lose faith. Spock's logic makes him aware that for the good of the crew and for the continued smooth running of the ship, Kirk has to be strong and in control of himself.

The question of ethics is frequently raised in both *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Wallach and Wallach write at length about ethics, the multi-faceted issue that "...Plato and Aristotle saw ... [as] based on human desires."³⁸

...the typical liberal and secular humanist outlook that links tolerance and respect for differences with asking little ethically of others (and of ourselves):

³⁸ Wallach, M.A. and Wallach, L. Rethinking Goodness State University of New York Press, Albany, 1990, p 45

what might be termed ethical minimalism. We are not to infringe on others' rights, we are to respect their values and opinions - but apart from this, ethics is a matter of personal feelings. Going by one's feelings and allowing others to do the same preserves the autonomy of the individual, and this autonomy is held sacrosanct. Keeping ethics minimal is understood to be the only way of supporting what liberalism achieved.³⁹

Lexicographic, sociological, biological, cultural and ideological definitions all vary regarding human, humane, and humanity. Both series have in common their central theme of the search for and improvement of humanity. Many episodes explore the obstacles faced in the quest to be 'truly' human. In both *Star Treks*, 'humanity' and 'humane-ness' cannot refer simply to the human species, to people born on Earth or Earth colonies. It must have a wider meaning, incorporating every life form within the *Star Trek* universe. Humanity can refer to the appropriate codes, ethics and conditions of existence. Sometimes the conclusions drawn from the analysis of an episode do not concur with any of the definitions of humanity.

In my study, I use the term 'humanity' to refer to the 'humanness' or 'humane-ness' of a certain individual or species. I do not use humanity merely to describe the biological condition of being human, but as the quality of being humane. 'Humanness' and 'humane-ness' refer to behaviour, and the way in which one individual or species treats another, and why. The use of the word human invites confusion - while human *does* refer to the state of being human, it also refers to the nature of being. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, I make use of both terms - humanness and humane-ness. A universal definition of humanity drawn from the *Star Trek* series is not possible because its meaning and application differs from species to species, therefore I employ notions and concepts such as humanness and humane-ness to better address the question of humanity.

Humanity can refer to the one being or species shows towards others, whether it be kindness, benevolence, compassion, generosity and sensitivity, or hatred, intolerance, racism, viciousness, or malice. In other words, humanity is the humane qualities one species affords another.

In the *Star Trek* cosmos, the term humanity cannot refer only to humankind or the state of being a biological human (i.e. a *Homo sapiens*). Humanity is the *quality* of being humane, not merely of being a *human*. In the wider sense, the humanity of a species or being, whether human or otherwise, is measured with regard to the compassion, the benevolence and the generosity afforded others. Humanity is much more than a human characteristic or a human response. For example, the

³⁹ *ibid.*, p vii

character Data is an android but he displays more humanity than many humans. Or again, the Metrons in the original *Star Trek* are very alien compared to humans, but they live by a code of ethics which assures humane, merciful and tolerant behaviour, both toward members of their own race and towards others that encounter them. Their acceptance of a new species relies upon their judgement on the actions of the race. Kirk's ability to show mercy toward his opponent convinces the Metrons that humankind has the ability to live in peace with other races. The Organians predict that one day the Klingons and the Federation will live in peace, although at the time that peace seems an impossible dream. Tolerance and acceptance, two *humane* concepts, finally allow both species to accept one another and to achieve the peace the Organians foresaw.

...the Organians, being more than human, elect to use their power to stop humans from corrupting the galaxy with war. These mysterious beings find humans "most distasteful" to be around. Having long ago evolved beyond their need for physical bodies and their related limiting qualities, the Organians do not like to be reminded of what they once were.⁴⁰

A definition of 'humanity' in regards to the *Star Trek* cosmos, whether unitary or simple, is not possible. One definition which might be applied, offered by the Oxford English Dictionary, reads, 'the character or quality of being humane; behaviour or disposition towards others such as befits a human being'. In the *Star Trek* cosmos, the designation 'human being' must be extended, with the accepted behavioural standard also applying to members of other species. As will be seen in the course of the study, each species has its own idea of humanity, and how one member should act in regard to another. Humanity crosses species and cultures, with each society providing its own interpretation, so humanity is patently undefinable as an absolute.

To enjoy the best humanity, benevolence, honor, and compassion are required. Placing the good of the community and other individuals above the good of the self is also required of each individual, whether alien or human, under almost any circumstances. The search for the 'best humanity' throughout the two series is constant, the most determined effort to produce perfection coming in an episode titled "The Masterpiece Society" (*STTNG* s 05). The attributes of the 'best humanity' are many and varied, and the success of such a society is limited. Within the diegetic timeline of the *Star Trek* universe, the humanity practiced by mankind does, however, improve as the centuries go on until its compassion and tolerance

⁴⁰ Asherman, A. The Star Trek Compendium Pocket Books, New York, N.Y., 1993, p 62

comes close to resembling the zenith of 'best humanity'. Humankind learned from many of its mistakes. Tolerance becomes ultimately and universally practiced by humankind and other species sympathetic to tolerance and peace, and this allows the Federation community to integrate many different life forms into the one community.

In *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, the definition of humanity changes often on Earth so it is not surprising that aliens fall short of fulfilling the definition. Alieness, as defined in my study, is the state of being considered alien by members of the Federation. Aliens work within the Federation, but they are viewed by human-appearing members almost as 'honorary humans'. Klingons were considered a hostile alien species in the original *Star Trek*, but in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, in the eyes of the Federation, they are considered aliens no longer, but members of the United Federation of Planets.

From my interpretation of both programs, aliens seem easier to embrace when they are bipedal and humanoid, their features uncannily resembling those of Earthlings. In this way, the humans know better what to expect - when the aliens look very much like them they seem a little less dangerous and a little more willing to compromise. Aliens such as the Horta strike fear into humans on sight. The creature appears more of a threat because communication is non-existent, and the Horta appears to kill without provocation.⁴¹

On occasion, the aliens depicted appear more human than the humans, and in some cases, they *are* more human. Some of the aliens and androids look at human beings with all their flaws and imperfections, and still want to be human more than anything. Data, Q, and the Gamesters of Triskelion all had their reasons for wanting to be human. Others do not want to be human at all. Spock spent his life denying any human feelings or emotions within himself.

Chapter Summaries

In chapter one I argue that a sense of individuality is of the utmost importance to some species, while community is considered the more important to others. The concept of the self differs from race to race, altering each 'entity's' own concept of who they are and the part they play within their culture. This is illustrated in many episodes as I argue in chapter one. A number of topics are discussed, including the affect of loyalty and morality on the individual and the community, and becoming aware of the self.

⁴¹ The Horta from "The Devil in the Dark" (*ST* s 01) is discussed in greater detail later.

In chapter two, I explore in greater detail the concepts of duty, obligation and responsibility, loyalty, desire and emotion. I examine here how each can function properly whilst each can have a positive and a destructive nature.

In the next three chapters, three to five, I discuss the discovery and accommodation of those considered by humankind as 'different' - encountered aliens and new life forms. The Prime Directive, the policy of non-interference in the 'new life and new civilisations' mentioned in the opening credits of both *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, is Starfleet's basic policy. Finding, investigating, and accommodating newly encountered life forms provides the fundamental substance of the shows - the basis of its plot, and the show's credo. It is also of the utmost importance to honor that which is discovered, although this is not always the easiest task to perform. Morality and ethics then come into question.

The beliefs of other species, discussed in chapter three, are part of their definition of humanity. Also discussed in chapter three are different concepts of paradise and utopia, and the existence of evil, the morality associated with it, and the mitigating circumstances which sometimes accompany evil acts.

In chapter four I look at a number of issues raised in both *Star Trek* series, including racism and prejudice, peace and war, homosexuality, and loneliness, amongst others.

Tolerance of the political and the religious values and convictions of the outsider is purported to be vital, and an explanation of the notion of tolerance is included in chapter five. Included are certain examples of tolerance of the religions and the politics of others in western society - their 'liberal ideologies'. The Creation myth expounded in the series strives to prove a link between humanoid species. The *Next Generation's* "The Chase" discusses the ways in which the 'seeding of the galaxy' took place. Also in chapter five, I investigate genetics and cloning, and interracial, interspecies, and intracultural love, as well as the issue of the "outsider" being denigrated and/or punished. In chapter six I deal with the concepts of love, friendship and family, and the many varying forms it takes within the two series.