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**Teaching towards the twenty-fourth century: The social
curriculum of Star Trek in the schools**

Anijar-Zapolsky, Karen, Ph.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1994

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TEACHING TOWARDS THE TWENTY-FOURTH CENTURY:
THE SOCIAL CURRICULUM OF STAR TREK
IN THE SCHOOLS

by

Karen Zapolsky-Anijar Ph.D.

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro
1994

Approved by


Dissertation Advisor

ANIJAR, KAREN ZAPOLSKY, Ph.D. *Teaching Towards the Twenty-Fourth Century: The Social Curriculum of Star Trek in the Schools.* (1994)
Directed by Dr. Kathleen Casey. 316 pp.

My collection and analysis of Trekker teachers' narratives highlight the role of social "dialect" (Bakhtin, 1981), "collective subjective" (Gramsci, 1980), "general cultural repertoire" (Popular Memory Group, 1982), or "interpretive community" (Fish, 1980; Casey, 1993). The social self can only be understood in "relationship to the specific others with whom she is actually in conversation, and with reference to the interpretive traditions to which she has access" (Casey, 1993: 1). The self is both contextual and contingent (Goffman, 1959; Vygotsky, 1987), therefore there can be no "generic teacher." Thus, the teachers whose narratives are presented here can only impart a curriculum which is significantly shaped by a world view that utilizes *Star Trek* as its aegis.

The Trekker teachers interviewed construct identity in an area of the southern United States known as the "Bible Belt." Their sense of (southern) place deeply structures these narrators (re)interpretations of *Star Trek* in relationship to technology, religion and the military. Further, all these factors influence how these narrators understand their identities as teachers.

The (re)visions of *Star Trek* presented in the narratives of the Trekker teachers (re)construct the prevailing discourse of education while never completely rejecting it's ideology. The narratives in this dissertation present a radical alteration of "reality," new social relations of production, and new class

formations.

The lack of national consensus on the purposes of American education is dramatically demonstrated by this kind of narrative research. Further, questions surrounding the very nature of our collective premises on the nature of American public education is brought into question by looking at narratives of teachers who gain their sense of affiliation with particular interpretive communities.

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APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We shall never reach the real substantial roots of any given single utterance if we look for them in the confines of the single individual (person), even when that utterance concerns what appears to be the most private and intimate side of a person's life (Bakhtin in Clark and Holquist, 1984: 182).

The first aim of this dissertation is to explore an often overlooked dimension of education: social identity in interpretive community. The second aim to allow a particular interpretive community's story to emerge from accounts narrated by teachers in that group. These teachers' own perspectives are placed at the center of my research agenda. The third aim of this research is to demonstrate the ways in which the "postmodern condition," induced by the shift to a post industrial order and the restructuring of the capitalist system, is (re)created by a television show, *Star Trek* and by its audience. The fourth aim is to acknowledge Bakhtin's contribution to my own theorizing.

Star Trek a television show originally aired from 1966-1969, consisting of seventy-nine original episodes. NBC cancelled the series after a third somewhat unsuccessful season. The "fans" of the series were so enamored by the program that they eventually began to band together into fan groups and organizations. The popularity of the program after cancellation snowballed and the original program began to play in syndication in repeats. From that point on

the show took on a "new life." Books were written using the characters; an animated cartoon series was produced; six movies have been made (with a seventh in production), and two "new" Trek shows (with a third in production) are currently aired in syndication. *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, now in its seventh season, is the most popular program ever produced exclusively for syndication and is the cornerstone of Paramount studio's empire.

Over the twenty seven year history, fans and fan organizations involved in the perpetuation "Trek" elevated the program to a uniquely American cultural icon. The narratives of the teachers whose stories appear in the pages of this dissertation identify themselves as Trekkers. It is through watching the television show and participation in the fan organizations that the teachers construct a social identity.

The Trekker teachers interviewed also construct identity in an area of the southern¹ United States known as the "Bible Belt." Their sense of (southern) place deeply structures these narrators (re)interpretations of *Star Trek* in relationship to technology, religion and the military. Further, all these factors influence how these narrators understand their identities as teachers.

As we read the narratives presented here we need to remember that while *Star Trek* may be just a TV program, over time it has been elevated to the status of cult(ure). Culture is not, nor has ever been "a single unified set of patterns passed down from generation to generation which governs life in a community" (Quantz and O'Conner, 1988: 95). Hebdige (1979: 104-105) has argued that

"Media representations that inform official culture are recoded by subcultural groups in order to inform their own identities. So it is with *Star Trek* and the Trekkers. In this dissertation I will argue that the (re)visions of *Star Trek* presented in the narratives of the Trekker teachers (re)construct the prevailing discourse of while never completely rejecting it's ideology. The teachers' (re)interpretations recognize that "(s)ubcultures ... are not isolated from the powerful, their culture is set into relation to the dominant cultures surrounding them; they are not portrayed as outside of time, but seen in relation to historical forces" (Quantz and O'Conner, 1988: 105). The undermining and reconstructing discursive practices of Trek teachers allow them collectively to change the subject with regard to their identities as rural Southerners.

The construction of community from television shows,² the significance of the simulacra, and hyperreal translations of the textual create a radical shift in both epistemological and ontological notions. With the advent of virtual reality looming on the horizon,³ the narratives in this dissertation present a radical alteration of "reality," new social relations of production and new class formations.

The theories of Bakhtin are the cornerstone of my own interpretations of the narratives. I realize that

literally hundreds of articles, reviews and essays covering virtually every aspect of Bakhtin's thought have appeared and his central concepts have been applied to an astonishing array of cultural and literary texts ranging from Homer's Iliad to Soviet puppet theatre to 'rap' music (Gardiner, 1992: 1).⁴

The appropriation of his work by often antagonistic discourses and competing schools of thought,

each claiming 'Bakhtin' as their own clearly demonstrates his theories of "polyphony" and "author-ity." He has been portrayed as a poststructuralist long before Derrida and Foucault decentered the subject, a Russian formalist (albeit a rather unorthodox one), a nascent modernist or post modernist, and even a religious thinker (Gardiner, 1992: 2).

From my vantage point, despite the lavish and conflicting attention given to his theories, his work does have much to offer the field of education and contributes greatly to "a radical cultural theory and politics" (Gardiner, 1992: 2). Stewart (1986), and Gardiner (1992), to give just two examples, appropriately place Bakhtin "among theorists of ideology rather than among theorist of linguistics and semiotics" (Stewart, 1986: 49).

Bakhtin celebrated social difference rather than concealing, suppressing or dismissing it in order to celebrate cults of individuality. Through the cultural practices of the everyday, he traced how diversity sustains, us pronouncing a faith in the liberating potentialities of popular cultural forms, undermining and subverting authoritarian political structures. Throughout this dissertation I argue that, because the self is both contextual and contingent (Goffman, 1959, Vygotsky, 1987), that there can be no "generic teacher." Thus, the teachers whose narratives are presented here can only impart a curriculum which is significantly shaped by a world view that utilizes *Star Trek* as its aegis. Central to my discussion is the notion that shared sets of concepts, statements and

explanations are developed within cultural groups. The mythological perception of the past serves a fundamental function in the promotion of group cohesiveness.

Thus, my collection and analysis of Trekker teachers' narratives highlight the role of social "dialect" (Bakhtin, 1981), "collective subjective" (Gramsci, 1980), "general cultural repertoire" (Popular Memory Group, 1982), or "interpretive community" (Fish, 1980, Casey, 1993). The social self can only be understood in "relationship to the specific others with whom she is actually in conversation, and with reference to the interpretive traditions to which she has access" (Casey, 1993: 1).

Communal concepts, statements and explanations or social representations are developed within groups. These serve to occasion a structure and a consensual universe within which each group member feels at home, sheltered from areas of disagreement and incompatibility. Whatever is said or done tends to confirm the accepted assumptions and meanings. Collective subjective behavior is characterized by the persistence of a mythological perception of the past in the form of social representations. The mythologized past serves a fundamental function in the promotion of group cohesiveness and group consciousness.

Trek exemplifies the notion that stock knowledge and typifications create a paramount reality that shapes and guides all social events (Schutz, 1967). The norms promulgated by the sense of "paramount reality" bestow a taken-for-

grantedness in the social world in which each Trek teacher interacts. Stock knowledge is acquired and the development of an interpretive community is achieved through socialization within a common social and cultural world. The presumption of a common world holds Trek culture together.

It is quite extraordinary to realize that these teachers are employed in public schools, given the public rhetoric on education based on such a dramatically different ethos. Recent research suggests that there are other groups of teachers whose fundamental values do not correspond to those of the dominant discourse (Casey, 1993). The lack of national consensus on the purposes of American education is dramatically demonstrated by this kind of narrative research. Further, questions surrounding the very nature of our collective premises on the nature of American public education is brought into question by looking at narratives of teachers who gain their sense of affiliation with particular interpretive communities.

Television As Education

When considering language, and the construction of meaning within language, we must not forget the television that blares incessantly in our living rooms, kitchens, dens, and bedrooms. Frank Lloyd Wright called television "chewing gum for the eyes" (Kellner, 1990: 1). The quasi-conscious nature of television viewing is further exemplified by the words of Erik Barouw,

The luminous screen in the home carries fantastic authority. Viewers everywhere tend to accept it as a window on the world, and watch it for hours each day. Viewers feel that they understand from television alone, what is going on in the world. They unconsciously look to it for guidance as to what is important, good and desirable, and what is not (Barouw cited in Kellner, 1990: 1).

In a world where there are "in excess of 750 million television sets in more than 160 countries ... watched by 2.5 billion people per day" (Kellner, 1990: 1), and in a country where "almost every home ... has a television set that is tuned on for more than seven hours per day" (Kellner, 1990: 1) television constitutes a major portion of our "social world" and indeed our lives. Americans spend "more time watching television ... than in school" (Kellner, 1990: 1).

The tube has been as much a fixture in ... homes as mom and dad ... the TV even outlasts the father in many homes. American kids now devote 22-30 hours to television each week. By the end of high school, they will have spent 22,000 hours in front of the set, versus only 11,000 hours in the classroom (Kottak, 1990: 3).

Clearly, television's penetration into our everyday lives can not be ignored as part of the educational discourse. However, few critical studies or educational studies of television situate the medium within the "institutional and systematic framework" (Kellner, 1990: 3) of the prevailing social order. Even fewer studies have looked upon various programs as constituting community. The anthropological definition of culture (and enculturation) is not considered in the varying critiques of television. "Culture is collective, shared, meaningful. It is transmitted by conscious and unconscious learning experiences. People

acquire it not through their genes, but as a result of growing up in a particular society" (Kottak, 1990: 8). Kottak writes of his students:

Hundreds of culture bearers have passed through the Anthropology 101 classroom over the past decade. Many have been unable to recall the full names of their parents' first cousins. Some have forgotten their grandmother's maiden names and few contemporary students know many Biblical or Shakespearean characters. Most, however, have no trouble in identifying names and relationships in mythical families that exist only in televisionland.

As the Bible, Shakespeare and classical mythology did in the past, television influences the names we bestow on our children. For example, "Jamie" rose from the 70th to the 10th most popular girls' name within two years of the debut of the *Bionic Woman* ... In other cultures children still receive names of gods (Jesus, Mohammed) and heroes (Ulysses). The comparably honored Olympians of contemporary America lead their glamorous, superhuman lives not on a mountain top but in a small square box. We don't have to go to church to worship them, because we can count on them to come to us in weekly visitations (1990: 8).

Television's effects are undeniable. Yet, the effects of television are most often investigated in terms of a positivistic cause and effect pathology. The trivialization of television-generated culture is quite ludicrous considering the "average American household has more television sets (2.2 per home) than bathrooms" (Kottak, 1990: 7).

Television thus has many critics, commentators and celebrants--but few theorists. The critiques themselves have largely been determined by the political views of the critics. Conservatives, for example, claim that television is a liberal medium that subverts traditional values. Liberals and radicals, by contrast, often criticize television for its domination by business imperatives and conservative values. Liberals decry trends toward monopoly in television, restrictions on freedom of the press, and what they see as distortions and misuse of television in certain instances (Skornia, 1985;

Bagdikian, 1987). Radicals argue that television reproduces a conservative status quo and provides powerful tools for managing social conflict and for selling the values and life-styles of corporate capitalism. Theories of television thus tend to focus on television's political functions, and values, and often reproduce the political perspectives of theorists (Kellner, 1990: 3).

Within the critique of television there is little research concerning viewers' interpretation of the medium. Television, much like education, is too often understood as a monolithic institution of socialization. Everything that comes in contact with our irredeemably mediated eyes (I's) has differing meanings, interpretations, and degrees of significance

in the discourses of the particular social groups who talk about them. In the conventionally political sphere, as well as in the politics of knowledge, differing social groups in this country speak distinctive languages for valuing education (Casey, 1993: 3).

The same thing is true for the valuing of what is seen on our television screens.

(A)t any given moment of its historical experience, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epoches of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the presents, between tendencies, schools circles, and so forth, all given a bodily form. These 'languages' of heteroglossia intersect with each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying 'languages' (Bakhtin, 1981: 291).

The politics of the everyday, and the day to day struggles of teachers usually has little significance in national debates on education or the media. It is the voices that are most often silenced that need to be heard. It is the voices that are disregarded that need to be brought to the forefront. We are not merely

puppets inscribed upon. Every voice in the world is an active one. "I live in a world of other's words," writes Bakhtin (1986: 143); "And my entire life is an orientation in this world, a reaction to other's words."

"No one utterance can be either the first or the last. Each is only a link in the chain, and none can be studied outside of this chain" (Bakhtin, 1986: 136). "It is the utterance articulated in an array of possible heteroglossic possibilities whose intonation shapes values into forms. All of us are authors, and are constantly in the process of expressing world views from a point of view. The same words can mean different things depending on the particular intonation with which they are uttered in a specific context: intonation is the sound that value makes" (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 10). Every word, every meaning "lives a tense life on the borders of someone else's consciousness" (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 242).

Cultural and Economic Formations

The temporal structure of the wor(l)d and the various intonations in our "typifications" of the world meets in a clash of accents. What difference does it make that these teachers are also Trekkers? Further, what difference does it make when a Trekker teacher is from the rural, conservative, South? It is within such junctures that the intertextual and multilayered construction of meaning can begin to be understood.

Star Trek in its relatively long history (considering the length of most television shows) is everywhere. It is inescapable. The popularity of Trek is an

enduring and popular force in the terrain of American culture. *Star Trek* much like Durkheim's religious forces is a dieification of our society, displayed in full polyphony. *Trek* presents a text so rich, so diverse, and complex, that it speaks in a multiplicity of manners, depending on the "context" and translation of the text within varying interpretive traditions. This dissertation explores one particularly rich version of the *Trek* discourse within a particular class fragment of the educational community.

As Raymond Williams (1977: 121) wrote, "The complexity of a culture is to be found not only in its variable processes and their social definitions -- traditions, institutions and formations -- but also in the dynamic interrelations, at every point in the process. The extraordinary complexity of *Trek* discourse(s) can be demonstrated through an examination of Williams' definition of dominant, residual and emergent codes. The dominant mode is really quite self-explanatory in relation to the hegemonic. In *Trek* we see Pax Americana par excellence. The only difference in *Star Trek* from an idealized perception of the United States and the United States military is the setting. Yet the nature of the dominant code becomes more clear when seen in relationship to the residual and emergent elements also present in the post modern pastiche that is *Trek* discourse(s). The mythic, utopian and nostalgic versions of American democracy which are (re)constructed in *Trek* teachers' narratives (re)present residual forms of culture.

By residual I mean something different from the archaic through in practice these are often very difficult to distinguish. Any culture includes available elements of its past but their place in the contemporary cultural process is profoundly variable...The residual by definition has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present (1977: 122).

So it is that in the process of selectivity, the authors (including the audience) of *Star Trek* use past definitions to address current problems while situating the story in the future.

Of course, as Williams (p. 123) points out,

(T)he dominant culture cannot allow too much residual experience and practice outside itself, at least without risk. It is in the incorporation of the actively residual -- by reinterpretation, dilution, projection, discriminating inclusion and exclusion -- that the work of the selective tradition is especially evident ... against the pressures of incorporation, actively residual meanings and values are sustained.

The reformulation of the past in the narratives of the teachers is seen in relation to the religious impulse, and the development of a "myth of mythlessness." The teachers project traditional Southern Baptist religious values into a wholly new syncretized version creating a truly selective tradition within their collective subjective.

At the same time, the deification of the scientific and the emergence of a techno-scientific elite in *Trek* discourse(s) speaks to what Williams (pp. 123-126) calls as the cultural formation of the "emergent."

By emergent I mean, first that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships are continually being created ... Cultural emergence in relation to the emergence and growing strength of a class is always then of major importance and always complex ... What matters, finally in understanding emergent culture as distinct from both the dominant and the residual is that it is never only a matter of immediate practice; indeed it depends crucially on finding new forms or adaptations of form.

The polysemic richness of the Trek text seen in relation to Williams' "cultural formations" speaks to the power of the fetishized artifact that has appeared on the screen for almost three decades. The production and proliferation of images creates new modes of experience, culture, and hegemony. These new modes of experience, analyzed at length by McLuhan (1964) and Baudriillard (1978), among many others, must be understood, as Kellner (1990: 160) points out, only in terms of "personality over profound competency, image over discourse, style over substance, and simplicity over complexity," but also in terms of "economics and the role of material interests." Ignoring economic and material interest obscures the ideological, and the importance of structural and cultural formations in the text of television programming. Certainly, capitalist and material interests in the television enterprise serve as a powerful ideological tool for the maintenance of the status quo. Yet, this dissertation focuses on the translation of the ideological and the reformulation of a cultural institution into the politics of the everyday, and the politics of the classroom.

The Chapters

Chapter Two of the dissertation discusses the methodology and theory behind the research project. I address the problems posed by positivism and postmodernism and I show how the theories of Bakhtin, Gramsci, and Casey have enabled me to collect the narratives that form the base of this dissertation. I also explain the actual procedures used.

Chapter Three through Six interrogate the narratives of the teachers. Chapter Three explains how particular versions of mythic, utopian and nostalgic characterize the ideology implicit in the teachers' narratives. Chapter Four discusses the teachers and their narrative texts in relation to the military. Chapter Five looks at the role of the religion in Trek and in the stories of the teachers. Chapter Six looks at the teachers' own curriculum theorizing in relation to their curriculum planning and practice.

All of the chapters in this dissertation have been influenced by the work of Casey (1993: 5); similar to I Answer With My Life, in my own work,

in each of these chapters individual teachers' narratives have been examined for constructions common to the group, and these patterns have been assembled in the form of a discourse, a consistent system of controlling metaphors, notions, categories and norms which develop and delimit its speakers' conceptions. Teachers' self-identities are considered, as are their assessments of the institutions within which they have worked and their relationships with the children they have taught.

In the concluding chapter I return to myself, and to my world view. I discuss my own perceptions of Trek-based curriculum, allowing my own voice to be

heard. I situate myself in relationship to the teachers' narratives; I also attempt to place my own feelings and fears in context, in relation to the discourse presented. I expect that the presentation of these narratives will demonstrate the significance of interpretive community thereby dispelling the myth of the generic teacher. I also hope to show the importance that television has in, and over, our lives.

End Notes

1. I do not want to oversimplify for there are many different "Souths." The teachers reside in areas that all too often are regarded as "the" stereotypical version of the rural South. To present the South as a monolith is to disregard the wonder and complexity of the area. Chapel Hill, North Carolina is not the same South as Aiken, South Carolina, which is not the same South as Jackson, Mississippi, which is not the same South as Seagrove, North Carolina etc. For lack of any other definition to explain the "collective subjective," I use the word South in conjunction with other identifiers, i.e. "rural," and the "bible belt."
2. In Guilford County, North Carolina school(s) have used the Andy Griffith show to discuss family and community values. Last year a national debate on "family values" was intensified because of a television show; Murphy Brown.
3. The advent of virtual reality clearly will cause a shift in the ways in which we conceptualize the world around us. How can we define and separate the "real" from the "unreal" if experience itself becomes a simulation? Further, as I sit and write this chapter I have been in the house for three days without end. My computer produces "virtual" words, and I eventually will print out a "hard" (real) copy. My television (as distraction and entree in-to the outside) brings a plethora of images into my isolation (from the forty odd channels on my cable TV). transforming the silence into noise. Kottack (1990) wrote of a student who was not in his class, studying in his lecture hall, because, she needed the background noise. I am alone, but I am certainly not lonely, there is a constant

din of electronically produced images and background noise. I am certain that if my child was home right at this very moment he would be "fighting evil" on his Super-Nintendo or Sega lost in a world, a maze of images that comprise a segment of his day and his reality.

4. The recent proliferation of interpretations of Bakhtin's works have "prompted the American literary critic Edward Said to refer to the 'cult of Bakhtin' in fairly disparaging terms" (Gardiner, 1992: 1-2).

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The Problem of Positivism

From the very onset this project sought to break down the barriers of communication and power. The ideological framework of positivism defines the relationship between researcher and subject as an impersonal one. The logic of positivist methodology (and even its language) prescribes prediction and control. It is difficult for one who is trained in such a conceptual framework to step beyond it and ask what kind of person such a methodology presupposes (Unger, 1983: 11).

From my own post-positivist perspective, understanding must be seen as a social process, not as an end in itself. "Popular Memory¹ can only begin where empiricist and positivist norms break down" (Popular Memory Group, 1982: 226). Claims of *knowledge, facts, truth* are designed to mask the power of popular memory, and interpretive traditions. To say that the research "paradigm" adds to the accumulation of a corpus of general knowledge, urges stasis and resists change (what Bakhtin [1984] labelled as centripetal forces). The Sergeant Friday (Dragnet) research design, where we ask for "just the facts ma'am," does not ask questions about power, does not ask *whose facts, or whose power*. Testing for validity and for truth subsumes voice, subverts the narrative by

imposing an "official version." In other words "the culturally constituted character of the sources themselves are disguised" (Popular Memory Group, 1982: 223) "they are seen only as bearers of fact, and little concern is given to their cultural frameworks of meaning" (Casey, 1993: 12).

The a priori, apolitical assumptions that guide traditional research practices "at [their] its worst results in an obsession with bias, distortion and the 'trustworthiness' of sources" (Casey, 1993: 12). The relationship of researcher and informant are constituted on unequal terms, and "the practice of research conform(s) to and deepen(s) social divisions which are also relations of power and inequality" (Popular Memory Group, 1982: 219). The unequal structure of the traditional research model does nothing to create understanding between divergent discourses and opens the possibility of alliance and subsequent transformation.

The world is not something that is orderly, and easily classified, and like Bakhtin I celebrate the mess and the complications. "Order needs justification, disorder does not" (Morson, 1990: 30). There must remain "tension between competing historical and political aims and interpretations" (Popular Memory Group, 1982), derived from the "social" languages that constitute interpretive traditions and communities. Within the Bakhtinian tradition of disorderliness, languages comprise more than professional jargons.

In that case, the specialized vocabulary of the profession could simply be recorded in a dictionary, and the idea of a unified language would not be

threatened (Morson, 1990: 141).

Language is the community. What constitutes and shapes languages is inherently extra-linguistic, inherently ideological and stalwartly political.

What constitutes these different languages ... is ... a specific way of conceptualizing, understanding, and evaluating the world. A complex of experiences shared (more or less) evaluations, ideas and attitudes "knit together" to produce a way of speaking. The term *strastat'sia* meaning to knit together -- to inculcate, or grow together in the way bones grow together -- suggests an organic process of blending separate entities. It is evidently chosen to avoid suggesting that these languages are systems or subsystems of the whole. Insofar, as there is a whole, it is a growing together of numerous elements, which have themselves been formed by inoculation, that is by a daily process of adjustment and growth.

We might also say: Each language reflects in its particular unsystematic clustering and clumping the contingent historical and social forces that have made it (Morson, 1990: 141).

The linguistic component of a language is not in itself a decisive characteristic.

Rather the linguistic component remains as consequence as "trace,"

"crystallizations," or "sclerotic deposits of these attitudes" (Morson, 1990: 141).

More than that they remain the totality of living in particular fashions.

And so, discourse lives as it were, beyond itself, in a living impulse (*napravlennost*) toward the object; if we wholly detach ourselves from this impulse all we have left is the naked corpse of the word, from which we learn nothing at all about the social situation or the fate of a given word in life (Morson, 1990: 141).

Herein lies the significance of the intonations experienced in heteroglossia, for what these languages retain in common, actually

the only thing they have in common -- is that they are specific points of view on the world, forms of conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views each characterized by its own objects, meanings, and values (Bakhtin in Morson, 1990: 142).

There are no "neutral words" (Bakhtin in Morson, 1990: 142). Words are in themselves dialogized.

The concept of dialogized heteroglossia is of particular importance to both the theory and methodology of this dissertation. I speak many different languages due to the attendant positions that I occupy. Consequently, I speak wholly different sets of languages on different occasions all related in a multiplicity of constitutive voices incumbent on the particular role(s) I occupy. Each of the languages interanimate (Bakhtin, 1981) one another, reintonating, recreating and revisioning meaning. The multiplicity of accentuity in my own creation of words and worlds cannot be set apart from my research. I cannot divorce myself from the position where I stand, I am happily part of the world which I study (Burawoy, 1988).

Within the pea soup of shifting alliances in shifting social relations my task is not to seek out truth, but rather "to improve the theory by introducing auxiliary hypotheses that will turn anomalies into exemplars" (Burawoy, 1988: 27). To do this I must locate myself within a particular theoretical tradition, (that of Bakhtin, that of Gramsci, and Casey); I do not "shop around" (Burawoy, 1988: 27) for a specific fit (i.e. placing theory before narrative), but locate myself within a tradition and allow a dialogical discourse to begin. In this way "popular memory"

can not subsumed under the hegemonic neutering of "other voices," which resides in "traditional" author-ity. For

It is useful to distinguish the main ways in which a sense of the past is produced through public representations and through private memory (which, however, may also be collective and shared) ... In speaking about the ways in which these representations affect individuals or groups conceptions of the past, we might speak of dominant memory ... and the part they play in winning consent and building alliances in the processes of ... politics ... The field is crossed by competing constructions of the past, often at war with each other. Dominant memory is produced in the course of these struggles and is always open to contestation (Popular Memory Group, 1982: 220).

Wittgenstein argued that

the meanings of words are social constructions, part of a language game one has learned to play and so linked to the following of rules that allow members of a community to understand one another. Words are not pictures of the world, and they are not derived from private ideas but from social practice. Thus, as I have said, there is no neutral language by means of which reality as is, in itself, can be described (Polkinghorne, 1988: 26).

All "reality" is mediated, continually filtered through a constantly changing vision; interpretation attempts to make sense of what is perceived through our collective subjective lens. Nothing is experienced as unmediated "fact," for there are no "facts in themselves," there is only the narrative.

Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell and hear told, with the stories that we dream or imagine or would like to tell. All these stories are reworked in that story of our own lives which we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semiconscious, virtually uninterrupted monologue. We live immersed in narrative, recounting, reassessing the meanings of our past actions, anticipating the outcomes of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories

not yet completed (Polkinghorne, 1988: 160).

Acknowledging the narrative rendering, and allowing theory to emerge from narratives, significantly changes the political dynamics of the research project, design, implementation and conclusions.

Elliot Mischler notes that soliciting stories from respondents is not a problem for the interviewer ... There is a cumulative suppression of stories though several stages of a typical study: interviewers cut off accounts that might develop into stories, they do not record them when they appear, and analysts either discard them, as too difficult to interpret, or select pieces that will fit in their coding systems (Polkinghorne, 1988: 163).

What emerges from my collection of narratives, is mediated by my position and perspective; I cannot escape that, but I do not seek to *impose a truth*. I chart an *epistemic map*, guided by and from the narratives of the teachers. What arises from their narratives is their own curriculum theorizing. "The principal value of oral history is that its information comes complete with evaluations, explanations and theories, with selectivities and silences which are intrinsic to its representation of reality" (Casey, 1993: 13).

"Oral history, read in all its rich wholeness will illuminate conscious human activity in a way positivism never can" (Casey, 1993: 13). To do any differently would, as Bakhtin says, monologize in a manner akin to a feeble attempt to "transpose a symphonic (orchestrated) theme on a piano keyboard" (Morson, 1990: 4). Yet my own position and perspective does interact with that of the story tellers, with whom I am in conversation. The world clusters and unclusters.

Particular elements interact with existing aggregates, which in turn are modified by interactions with other aggregates; particular elements are also continually detached from aggregates, cluster anew and form the basis for yet more unforeseen interactions (Morson, 1990: 45).

There is nothing in the world that ever comes to us complete, and finished.

Everything is continually in process. Unfinalizability is not present in traditional notions of history, theory, or method.

Existing forms of knowledge inevitably monologize the world by turning open ended dialogue into a monologic statement "summarizing" its contents but misrepresenting its unfinalizable spirit. The dialogue of life requires a dialogic method" (Morson, 1990: 60).

To make my position and politics clear, therefore, in the spirit of the dialogical, I must begin with my own narrative.

The Autobiographical Trek

Casey (1993) writes, "Let me introduce my discussion of the theory, methodology and politics of this research project with a brief life story, one which focuses on the ways in which my own modes of interpretation have been influenced by my personal relationships and lived experiences." I could not of written anything more appropriate. A colleague of mine said during our dissertation seminar, (I am paraphrasing) "*Everybody* here knows about education and knows about Trek." I am no different. I too believe that Trek has been important to me at many levels, throughout my life, now, even more than in the past, as I have immersed myself in all "things" Trek over the course of the

past two years.

My first conscious memories were forged out of a particular space (Miami) and a particular time (the Cuban Missile Crisis). Despite living in a world of incredible privilege, sheltered from poverty and from need, these were not happy, joyful memories, but childhood obsessions with unbelievable destruction and anguish at worst and annihilation at best. Certainly, growing up Jewish in the generation immediately following the "Shoah" (Holocaust),² did nothing to ameliorate my feelings, neither did my brother's death,³ or my father's drug addiction.⁴ My family's personal tragedies were unapproachable, unmentionable subjects reserved for adult conversation in other languages, heard through the muffled sounds of closed doors. The apocalypse was not further away from me than those doors. I was consumed with the unmentionable, filled with inevitable destruction that awaited me as my fate.

I remember hearing stories through the *closed door curriculum* of my parents' own construction: should they take horses through the center of the country up to Canada, or boats down to New Zealand to avoid "the fallout?" I remember the air-raid sirens, and "Timmy the Turtle" advising us to duck and cover for our lives; I remember the pain on my mother's face when she mistook an air-raid drill for the "real thing," not knowing which one of the three of us (my sisters and I were at three different schools) she should run to get before "the bomb" fell. I remember *The Twilight Zone* (which I was not allowed to watch because of my all too "vivid imagination") and movies about post-nuclear mutants, and looking

at my face, wondering, how would I be deformed, if I survived? I remember hoarding mangoes under my bed, because I did not want to eat canned fruit, and I remember everyone in our neighborhood building bomb shelters, and my father sarcastically saying "Yeah, like it'll help."

As these memories came flooding to the surface, I wanted some validation; they seemed so disjointedly depressing and depressive, so far from the experience of my own child. I asked my mother what I was like then, and what happened. She told me (and I quote, because I recorded her response) that "You didn't believe there was going to be a future. You never made any long range plans. You would say, 'Why bother? There is no reason to plan anything, we're all going to die.' " She also said that I thought that I would not die, but survive as a mutant, looking somewhat like (but much more burned than) the Hiroshima maidens, whose photos I had in a book on my shelf. She said that I would sit in front of the mirror contorting my face with my hands attempting to envision myself as an adult after the apocalypse.

The crescendo of the crisis did not erupt in a big bang. The housekeeper took the rotten mangoes out from under my bed, admonishing me for wasting fruit, and attracting bugs; the sirens subsided; the bomb shelters were converted to recreation rooms; and "Timmy the Turtle" was replaced by "Paco the Seagull" (a "pet" found on the beach with a broken wing), and "Mickey Mouse," and life went on, and so did silence. And even though every couple of years, the hand on the nuclear clock would hit a minute to midnight, and then it would slide back,

there was still an under-girding of fear that permeated my consciousness, that I would never become an adult. My mother told me "sometimes you would cry, because you would never have the opportunity to have a baby, or have a home of your own." And as these despondent memories come flooding to the surface, I see the rooms, and smell the heavy swampy air. But, I also begin to remember *Star Trek!*

Here we were, all united, no more wars, no more "No niggers, Jews or dogs allowed" signs, and we were cruising the stars, and earth was a paradise. And here was a captain so handsome, so competent, so decisive, that he competed with John Lennon, Richard Chamberlin and my own "true love" in my prepubescent sexual fantasies. I was smitten. I never missed a show. For in *Trek* was the possibility of possibility, and within that was a new frontier of thought, mind, and life.

So, my friends and I would sit on the bridge that went over our canal, and it became our starship. And I would be the captain, or the first officer, and we would explore the galaxy (or at least North Miami Beach), and we would go to other planets that had been annihilated by nuclear tragedy and help the survivors, because we had come through!

Trek was an obsession. I realize that in retrospect. I recall my father once had taken us to a Knicks playoff game in New York City. Suddenly, I became aware that it was Friday night, and it was rapidly approaching "Trek time," I begged him to take me to the hotel, home, anywhere where there was a TV. He

said, "You'll see it in a rerun," and I began screaming and shouting, kicking my feet, and I believe, banging my head on something, pleading with him, and he took me back, and we missed the game.

I got older, Trek went away after three seasons, and it faded from memory. My own "true love" became far more important to me than the trials and tribulations of the Starship Enterprise. There were reruns; I didn't watch them. There was a cartoon series; I could have cared less there was a *Trek-O-Thon* in Tallahassee, where I was attending college. It was to be 24 hours of continuous Trek on television, culminating with a trivia contest. We all thought it was a pretty "campy" reason for a party. So, we painted our faces green, brought out our guitars (to make up Trek songs and play the blues), and tried to see if we could watch the show for a whole 24 hours, trying to see who was more "macho." I remembered the number of the ship; I won the trivia contest; I decided to choreograph a Trek ballet (which now makes my skin crawl), and that was that. I went home to Miami over vacation; there was a Trek store that had just opened ("Starship Enterprises"); I bought a uniform shirt, and paraded proudly around Tallahassee that winter garnering comments "Like, wow, where did you get that? I gotta get one! That is just so cool!" But, this wasn't serious, I thought, it was camp!

And then that phase too faded away into the mist of memory, to be called upon, and rehabilitated, recreated, and recouped when necessary. I didn't think about Trek. It became another version of "Puff, the Magic Dragon." I went to

graduate school, danced, got married, started teaching in the dance program at the University of Miami, got divorced, had Joshua my son, married my own "true love" and got divorced.

Through Joshua I met my good friend Brian, who, like me, had just been granted a divorce, and had a son named Joshua, but most importantly harbored latent Trek-itis. Brian (re)exposed me to the world of high tech. play through laser-tag, and to Trek (again). We were the first people in line to see *Star Trek 1*, (the movie) and when a new version of the show came on TV, Brian recorded every episode as we spent Saturday afternoons, phone off the hook, lights off, watching new adventures, never letting on to our significant and not-so-significant others that we were closet "Trekkies."

When I moved to North Carolina five and a half years ago, I continued to watch *Star Trek* diligently, while working in the public schools in Randolph County, North Carolina. To say the least I was miserable up there. I harbored a pastoral fantasy of raising my child in the country, baking bread, living the simple life, and discovering America. I did not consider the cultural or social differences that were not merely part of the Eastern Continental Divide, but were as large as several oceans. One afternoon I was sent to a North Carolina Alliance for Arts Education meeting, held in Wilson, North Carolina, where I met a young woman, who I thought was *Latina*⁵ and must therefore, (I felt) hold the key to some of the answers about the chasms I felt in Arts Education in the state. We began talking, and she gave me her phone number. I called her later that

week. No, she wasn't Latina but African-American, and, yes, she was a Trekkie! That particular conversation lasted several hours, and a deep and lasting friendship ensued, initially based on our mutual knowledge of Trek. What I thought was so remarkable was that Trek spoke to both of us. Here was a woman who was from what she calls "I-95 and Stuckey's" in the Eastern portion of North Carolina, and here was I from the most "postmodern city" in America (or Cuba depending on your perspective), and Trek had meant so much to both of us, in a re-couperative way. Trek had given us both vision and possibility, resonating to two young women from entirely different "worlds" for entirely different reasons.

I would not have considered Trekker teachers as a topic for research, let alone a dissertation, until I took a class in Narrative Research. Because I was physically situated in rural North Carolina, I decided to engage in a research project concerning fundamentalist Christian teachers in the public school system. Subsequently, for my master's thesis in Dance Education, I used the methodology developed in my interviews with the fundamentalist teachers to interview Cuban American teachers in Dade County. I began to clearly see the significance of social identity in interpretive community and how that informed what I perceived to be an overwhelming oversight in curriculum theorizing. There is no generic teacher, generic student, or generic place, so why create generic curriculum? And so, I embarked upon my doctoral studies with a

plethora of problems, including the definition of a dissertation topic that would truly investigate the role of interpretive community. Also, how would such an, interpretive community inform curriculum theorizing? And then it hit me!

Actually it all came together one Sunday afternoon last year. I had gone to see *Star Trek 6* with my son Joshua, because I still like *Star Trek*. While we were watching the show, I made a comment for Joshua's ears alone. "Doesn't that look like Wharf on the screen?" A man sitting behind me in full Trek regalia (Vulcan ears, T shirt, and communicator pin) tuned to me, and in the most condescending tone, said: "Don't you know about the Kittimer massacre?" The intonation in his voice was so reproachful, I felt as if I did not know the most fundamental of historical stories at the basis of the culture that I live in. After the movie was over, I decided to feign ignorance, and strike up some sort of discussion with the man. Being the great conversationalist, I said: "Nice shirt you have." He told me I ought to go to the local *Star Trek* store and he gave me directions.

So I went out of curiosity and in search of new trinkets and baubles. I did not expect to find in Greensboro, North Carolina, the most suburban of cities, an "All America City" award winner, located in the midst of the Bible (or babble, depending on your perspective) belt, a haven for the Trek world. But there it was on High Point Road, and inside were tricorders, and tribbles, and a bulletin board with notices of Starship meetings, Star Fleet Meetings, Romulan clubs, and Klingon anthropological groups. I wanted to find out what "this" was about.

What had happened to my favorite program?

Trekkers Seek Members; I Seek the Trekkers

Recruitment for the various "Starships" (which are labelled as clubs by the members) and manifold permutations takes place in a variety of manners, all insuring that the privacy of those recruited is protected as well as confirming that the membership is knowledgeable (enlightened) about the treatises of Trek. In the words of one Trekker narrator,

They go to conventions and they set up a table. Like there is a science fiction comic book convention coming up called _____(city's name)-con and I didn't find that interesting. I'm not interested in comic books; but they'll set up a table there and they'll put in notices in the local papers in _____ and _____ saying that there's a meeting at this library at this date or whatever the building. And then through Star Fleet they get referrals. So that if someone had heard about Star Fleet but not the local ship they become a Star Fleet Member. And then there's a card that they fill out where they live and all that. And then Star Fleet says "OK, this person is nearby you are going to contact him."

Or as one very innovative Star Fleet member told me, showing her checks:

They come from ... I don't have it here I will have to get it for you ... You can't get them but from one place now. You know what happens when I write a check? Do you know the kind of attention I get with my check? I have a business card for the local ship, and so when somebody is interested I give them a card. They call the captain and make arrangements to join. I have sent five or six people.

I was in _____ a couple of weeks ago and gave a man a check and gave him a card and said, "You know ... you and your local ship will be different here." He says, "I don't care, all I want to know is something about Star Fleet."

You run into people all the time and you think: Well, gee! Shouldn't they know that there's a local ship: I assume everybody should know but then I realize I went for five years, and didn't know there was a ship in this area or anything about Star Fleet. So it's people, strange people, you know, businessmen, attorneys. I have an attorney that picked up one of my cards the other day. I do some public relations work for a local doctor and I had to drop some paper work off. And I was showing his secretary my checks. The attorney walked over and said: "Oh, I want to get involved." You know, and I said OK and he said: "Hey, look, I'm a Classic Fan. Tell me more about Star Fleet."⁶

Trekkers who are teachers also engage in membership "drives" through a variety of means, utilizing their positions within the public realm to procure members for their individual ships. One teacher explained to me in great detail how her daughter and her daughter's friends have meetings after school⁷ to study Trek. They question what she calls "school things" from a variety of the characters' perspectives, coming up with solutions through the interpretive lens of each of the characters. The students learn Trek. They do problem-solving via Trek; they then learn to articulate the discourse of Trek, and in the process, students are then recruited for Star Fleet, all the while "improving their grades," and "developing" what this teacher calls "critical thinking skills."

Another *Trekker* teacher uses her own children in conjunction with the children whom she teaches to obtain members for Star Fleet. Specifying the type of student that is sought, she says:

Well, my daughter had her annual picture taken in a Star Fleet uniform. She has recruited about eight students. All of them are ROTC naval students. Now we are not talking about a bunch of dumbbells. We are talking about straight-A students, honor society students, have been recruited into Star

Fleet. In fact, we can't figure out why the dumbbells haven't figured out what's going on yet. But we're not talking about below-average students. We are talking about the sharpest academic science students available in Star Fleet . Because it's not fiction. It's not junk. It is something that they think they will see the beginnings of.

Despite the Trekkers' clearly sophisticated ways of seeking membership, I was still left with the conundrum of finding Trekkers who would name themselves as such, who ultimately would lead me to "Trekker-teachers." I did not want to violate the sanctity (or security) of their organizations and join Star Fleet, or Star Fleet Command, the Romulan Attack Corps, the Klingon Attack Corps, or the Klingon Anthropological Group, etc., with an expressedly ulterior motive. Yet, I realize without a doubt that my ability to engage in a Trek discourse (citing episodes and plots), and my love for all sorts of kitsch (including Trek paraphernalia) could identify me within the community.

Fortunately, one day several weeks after seeing *Star Trek 6*, I was walking through a university parking lot and I noticed a brown van. On the sides of the van were painted pictures of the "Starship Enterprise," and a license plate read "NCC 1701." There were bumper stickers placed strategically around the car saying: "Beam me up Scotty ... there is no intelligent life on this planet"; "Don't buy a used starship from a Ferengi," Recalling the Gnostic Christians and how they used to place fish symbols on walls as a way to find each other, I realized Trekkers do much the same thing. The symbols placed on their automobiles were postmodern graffiti; the car as American identity(fier) had tremendous

symbolism. I left a note to the owner expressing my fervent desire to talk to him/her about Trek, and left my phone number on the hood. As I walked through the lot, I began to see other cars which had similar symbols. Once I opened my eyes, I could see a world of signs that I had never noticed before, once I knew what to look for I began to realize how common it was.

Two days later he called me. I told him what I was considering doing, even though I had no idea of what direction the project would take. He invited me to a meeting held on campus. And we began speaking about the significance of Trek in his life. He invited several friends to join in our conversation, and ultimately we left the large meeting room, retiring to his office until the wee hours of the morning.

He told me he knew of one teacher who was a Trekker, and several professors on campus who were. He gave me their phone numbers, and I left. I knew I wanted to talk to public school teachers. So I called the number he had given me; I was stymied and disenchanted to find the number had recently been disconnected.

The next week I read in the paper that there was going to be a *Trek-O-Rama* Convention in Greensboro. I decided to attend. Joshua in tow, I went out "seeking new life and new civilization" not boldly, but meekly. I was not prepared for what I saw! There were hundreds, maybe thousands of people, mostly dressed in expensive uniforms, or in Klingon, Vulcan, Romulan, or Borg garb. Families attended, all dressed up not in their Sunday best, but in their

Trek best. As William Shatner, who played the lead role in the original television series commented on these conventions.

I really don't understand it ... I recently attended two of the Star Trek conventions in New York -- they have them all over the country, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Frankly, it was an experience that was perhaps unique. I was asked to appear in an auditorium of some 8,000 to 10,000 people there just because of "Star Trek." They were crazed. I don't know why the fanaticism has attached itself to the show. You wouldn't believe what they have at these conventions ... Why this is happening defies rational explanation (Jewett, 1976: 2).

I met policemen who were Trekkers, attorneys and physicians who were Trekkers, professors who were Trekkers, a minister who was a Trekker, a stockbroker who was a Trekker, several computer and high tech. industry people who were Trekkers, and one public school teacher who was a Trekker. The latter told me she did not have the time to be interviewed. As I was about to leave, thinking that perhaps this project would be impossible to instrument, I decided to try once more, this time asking the merchandisers who were integral to the convention experience if they knew any Trekker-teachers.

One very sympathetic merchandiser lead me to the Admiral of Star Fleet, after I bought a mug from the 10-Foward Lounge, and a pair of shorts from Star Fleet Academy. The Admiral, referring to her "duty roster" (membership list), gave me names, addresses and phone numbers of teachers who were members of Star Fleet. The teachers whom I called were elated to hear from me, and after I explained my project to them, were all very willing and actually quite excited to

participate. The teachers, in turn, gave me names, addresses, and phone numbers of other teachers who were Trekkers, and they in turn gave me names, addresses, phone numbers, and introductions to other Trekker teachers.

Symbolism once more became very important. I would call, and discover recording machines that had Trek messages. I would receive notes of confirmation on Star Fleet stationary. We talked about the program over the phone, and in correspondence. I realized that it was very important to the teachers that I display my "cultural capital," i.e. knowledge of public schools *and* my knowledge of Trek. So I began a year-long journey traveling throughout the Southeastern United States interviewing Trekkers who were teachers, as they welcomed me into their respective worlds.

I have never encountered such generosity. I was taken to lunch and dinner, and not one of the teachers would allow me to "pick up the tab." Each and every teacher offered me tours of his or her community. Several were quite insistent that I stay at their homes, for they didn't want me driving so many hours (although I had already decided to stay at a motel in each respective area). The hospitality was overwhelming. There was a "brother-sisterhood" within the community that I had never encountered with any other group of people that I had previously interviewed.

With each interview my list of Trekker-teachers to be interviewed grew. There was no physical way that I could possibly interview all the people whose names were given to me, despite the fact that the Trekker-teachers who were

interviewed had called up the others on their respective lists and had "arranged" meetings for me. Often I would feel compelled to call teachers I did not interview on the phone and apologize to them, for they too wanted their stories told.

Collecting and Analyzing the Narratives

In the end I conducted eighteen face-to-face interviews during 1992 and 1993, each interview lasting between four to six hours. After I had made an initial phone contact with each teacher, (sometimes our conversations would exceed an hour) I let each teacher decide upon a convenient location and time for the interview. The locations varied considerably, from trucks to school rooms to restaurants to motel rooms. They were able to identify me at the prescribed meeting place by Trek symbols (i.e. a Star Fleet T-Shirt, or Communicator Button). I asked each teacher before we began our interview if s/he wanted to ask me anything about my involvement with Trek or about my own life or experiences teaching in the public school. I felt, as did Casey (1993: 18), that "only by being an insider, someone who identified with and sympathized with the person speaking, could I become part of the conversation." There would have been no commonality if I could not speak the language of Trek.

The interviews began with and often lapsed into, conversations, as each teacher interviewed me "deciding what we had in common, and establishing the nature of the dialogue which would take place. Some common ground needed to be established, then face-to face encounter could proceed (Casey, 1993: 18).

I asked each teacher to tell me about three things: teaching, Trek and the story of their lives. Narratives are "highly constructed texts" (Popular Memory Group, 228), so I was not surprised to see consistent stories presented to me during the first portion of the interviews. It was as if there was an "official story," a particular "party line" in the telling of the stories, focusing on how "we are not different than anyone else." Somehow the teachers knew a particular script derived from a very specific "general cultural repertoire." This was not an aberrant manifestation, but, rather, something to be expected, for we all assume particular roles at particular times (Goffman, 1959). Further, because we are all part of specific interpretive communities situated in a particular culture, our stories are not either very individual, or very original. Indeed, if this were so there could be no interaction between people.

Yet an unusual phenomena occurred after approximately three hours; "the official version" disappeared, and a much more elaborate personal version emerged in the narratives, sometimes focusing on tremendous pain and anguish, or highly religious renderings. Had I not left my recorder on, these dimensions would have been lost. Grumet (1987: 325) wrote,

our stories are masks through which we can be seen, and with every telling we stop the flood and swirl of thought so someone can catch a glimpse of us, and maybe catch us if they can.

The chasm that the teachers crossed after the three hour period brought the narrative renderings to a different, much more intimate level. Eventually these

narrators were able to tell their personal stories without fear of reprisal, or condemnation.

Crossing the chasm and making the leap of faith towards trust was a highly conscious political act on the part of these narrators. As we (both the researcher and the narrator) reached out to each other in understanding the structure of the power relationships changed. My voice too was recorded on the tape; I revealed myself, as they revealed themselves; "the opening up" equalized our positions in the project to some extent, dismantling part of what Casey (1993) terms as the "asymmetrical power relationships" usually evidenced in positivist research designs.

History is "a ground of political struggle" (Popular Memory Group, 1982: 214); "oral history gives history back to the people in their own words, and in giving a past, also helps them towards a future of their own making" (Thompson, 1978: 226). The narrative act becomes an act of liberation, from the perceptions of the teachers and myself. Castigating the rehearsed version which diffused their own political stance, the teachers were able to (re)construct a plot that articulated the voice of their own interpretive community.

Had I not revealed my knowledge of Trek and my own Trek narrative, there would have been no common terrain on which we could struggle. The "collective subjective" (Gramsci, 1972) of Trek positioned me in the Trek world. As part of the community of Trek, and as part of the community of teachers, and as someone who knew their language, I was deemed trustworthy enough to hear

their stories, even though my version of Trek is significantly different from theirs.

Only one teacher who was contacted who refused to be interviewed. I met her at the *Trek-O-Rama* I attended. She said she was not really a Trekker, and she was very busy at her school and did not have the time. All the other teachers who were contacted graciously gave up much time to provide me with the narratives for this project. They gave me suggestions about books to read, programs to watch, movies to see, and other Trekkers to contact. They gave me gifts of articles, arts and crafts, and other *Star Trek* related paraphernalia. They gave me access to their homes and to their hearts. One male teacher thought I would rather meet him in the city, so he took a bus and then a train in order to meet me there. In his hands was a "Vulcan parchment" he created. The welcome I received showed me clearly that these interviews represented a form of catharsis for the teachers. As I thanked each of them for all of their time, meals, and gifts, I would more often than not be thanked by the teachers for letting them tell their stories and for providing a conduit through which they could safely reveal themselves.

After the tapes were recorded, and I left each respective meeting place for what was often a very long drive back to Greensboro, I got into the habit of playing the narratives on my tape deck on the way home. When I arrived, I immediately played each tape again, and then transcribed it. Each playing of the tape revealed new insights into the narratives of the teachers. Only after all the narratives were collected did I print several "hard copies." There was an

underlying political and theoretical implication of tremendous significance to me in proceeding in this fashion. It is essential to let the categories emerge from the narratives themselves. To posit pre-existing categories and to attempt to fit the narratives within my own structure would disempower the words of the teachers. I feel strongly that a principle focus of research, and perhaps the nexus of my research design, ought to be for the emergence of categories and metaphors arising from the narratives. So I solved "the problem of fit, relevance, forcing and richness (Burawoy, 1988: 10).

In the first stage the researcher is attempting to uncover the structure of the experience and therefore "takes each bit of the subjects report and scrutinizes it to uncover its meaning." Crucial to this process is a way of thinking called *imaginal variation* in which a given feeling, thought or outcome is compared with other possibilities. The second stage of analysis involves construction of "analytic categories" that emerge from the themes identified in the first stage. "To the greatest extent possible one strives to allow the categories to emerge from the data themselves, rather than from a preconceived theoretical or empirical framework." Finally, the researcher attempts to describe the relationships among the various categories in order to identify the "pattern" or "structure" of the experience -- the ways in which the elements combine to create a unified whole (Hornstien summarized and quoted in Fonow and Cooke, 1991: 93).

With several hundred pages of transcripts strewn along my very tiny living room floor, I began to see the metaphors emerge from the narratives. I labelled several boxes, and then cut out those portions of my transcripts that emerged as similar categories within the narratives. Those categories became the headings within the chapters that interrogate the narratives. Only after seeing where the similarities occurred throughout the stories did I begin to write about their

gestalts. Burawoy's (1988) methodological precepts in Ethnography Unbound continually resonated in my ears: the situation ought to inform the description (narration), the theory ought never precede the context. "Theory is often used to protect us from the awesome complexity of the World" (Lather, 1986: 267). Knowing that "A given theory may fail to address an aspect of a particular ... phenomenon that once included, compels the reconstruction of theory" (Burawoy, 1988: 10). I made that a conscious and an active decision. The active voice of the subject needs to be heard in the account; human beings can not be reduced to an objectified object of study. Nevertheless my position as researcher inevitably interprets and, therefore, reconstructs to some extent. It is, however, imperative to acknowledge that people are in the act of reconstruction and interpretation and are active agents in their own lives. It is not my place, intent, or position to view the teachers' perceptions as suffering from false consciousness, to assume the arrogance of omniscience which posits the researcher as author(ity) over the realm of somebody else's experiences. I acknowledge and embrace the notion that interpretation must place the researcher *as part of the* social relations of the research. "Reconstruction should reveal the underlying social relations that eventuate in the daily lives we are studying" (Fonow and Cooke, 1991: 146), creating a study *for and about* rather than *of*. I look at my research design as the implementation of a study *for and about* Trekkers. My role is in the *listening* to the stories, and providing a forum for the silence to be broken.

Rappaport (1975) coined and used the term "collaborative interviewing and interactive research." This is not merely my own research project, but a mutual effort of all those involved.

The interviewee is the teller of the story, the interviewer the hearer ... Solidarity should be established between the interviewer and the interviewee and that a context should be built in which both people are engaged in a process of trying to understand important aspects of their lives ... Mischler comments, 'If we wish to hear respondents stories, then we must invite them into our work as collaborators, sharing control with them, so that together we try to understand what the stories are about' (Polkinghorne, 1988: 164).

Although, I often disagree with the teachers' renditions from my own vantage point, it is of the utmost importance in the construction of teacher knowledge that all voices be heard, even those voices that normally we may not want to hear.

Narrative inquiry is, however, a process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling and restorying as the research proceeds. In the process of beginning to live the shared story of narrative inquiry the researcher needs to be aware of constructing a relationship in which both voices are heard (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990: 4).

The second part of my procedure, was to look at the literature that comprised "*Trek-Studies*." This included academic literature and popular literature, including the television programs, movies, fanzines, fan books, newspapers, and magazines. That existing body of (re)interpretation spoke to the narratives that the teachers presented, allowing a resonance and (re)capitulation of the metaphors evident in the narratives to occur, and presenting another layer of intertextual conversation and interrogation.

The third portion of my schema involved talking to and interviewing three other people in depth, friends who come out of the same tradition of Trek as I do. Only by understanding the similarities between the discourse(s) could the distinct voice of the different versions of Trek be heard. Through the versions presented by my own interpretive community, I was able to compose another layer of intertextual thought. My own (re)interpretation and that of my peers created a dynamic dialogue speaking to the divergent and sometimes antagonistic interpretative communities of Trek. The bond or cement of Trek evident in my own interpretive tradition allowed me to hear overlaps, and make what would normally be seen as an antagonistic position to my own, *part of a* larger collectivity. The polysemic qualities of discourse(s) about Trek became very apparent from this perspective.

Finally, I was able to employ the methodological precepts prescribed by William Pinar (1980), and reflected upon what each individual theme represented in my own life. I adapted Pinar's framework of utilizing the regressive, progressive, analytic and synthetic lenses of my own perceptions as a fourth aspect of the methodological framework utilized to create this dissertation. Throughout the process of the research, I kept journals regarding my life history and my own reactions to everything that had transpired over the course of the past year. Attempting to comprehend the experiences of others (mediated through my own experiences and interpretations), I positioned myself and my reactions through autobiographical reflection. As the facilitator of the

research project, I have been afforded the privilege of sharing in the intimate details of the teachers' private thoughts and lives. There could be no foundation, no trust, no sister-or brotherhood created if I was not willing to engage in the same process. Nevertheless, because the version of *Trek* presented here is one that is significantly different to versions I have encountered previously, there remains a tension between my social identity and the *Trek* identity of the narrators. These teachers forge their identities within conservative, rural, southeastern spaces;⁸ they are "Anglos;" they come out of a particular Protestant fundamentalist tradition; I forge my identity out of leftist, urban, Jewish, "Hispanic"⁹ (re)created northeastern-in-the-tropics roots.¹⁰ Although there would seem to be a "continental divide" between the teachers and myself, our roles overlap as both allow substantive communication to begin.

When we work with life history, the autobiographical act is not complete until the writer of the story becomes its reader and the temporal fissure that has opened up between the writing and the reading invites negation as well as affirmation (Grumet, 1987: 325).

The Problems of Paradigms

As I sat crosslegged (and admittedly cross-eyed) on the living room floor looking over pages and pages of transcripts, the stories that the teachers told began to overlap in particular ways that were not influenced by pre-conceived notions of what I might have found. The texts produced the metaphors addressed in the analysis sections of this dissertation. Following the

methodology of Casey (1993: 19) I used Bakhtin's theory of discourses, together with models for the analysis of metaphors (Kliebard, 1975), and languages (Huebner, 1975), of curriculum to interrogate the narratives. There are pages and pages of metaphors that could not be utilized in the formation of this dissertation; although provocative conceptually, they did not contain the explicit overlaps of religious, and mythic/utopian/nostalgic language, or other characteristic elements that could only be understood in light of a particular social identity derived from a specific interpretive community.

The use of preconceived categories to define and limit interpretations of curriculum does nothing more than silence the voices of groups who do not fit into a variety of "paradigmatic categories." Lather (1992) has suggested that we are in a post-paradigmatic age. Perhaps. Yet, it is my feeling that we never were in a "paradigmatic age." I see the paradigm as a conservative "project," which lulls other-ness into complacency and creates a "fit" that might not otherwise exist. Bakhtin's descriptions of the richness and complexity of many voices constantly in the process, shifting alliances and of translating and creating meanings is a much more appropriate vision of the world.

I assert that "we" (as if there is a "we") never existed exclusively within the categorical structures that have been "imposed" upon us, through the presumption of a "common taken-for-granted world." The overlaps, the protrusions, the penetrations, and vicissitudes that bring together and subsequently divide the discourses into segments of a constantly shifting web of

alliances and antagonisms betray the suppositions of the "paradigmatic." The paradigmatic is "mythological," creating illusory notions of parameters while fostering a hegemonic (re)articulation serving various sundry "elite" assumptions embedded within the illusion of a consensual national melting-pot culture. Alas, for many contemporary theorists, notions developed over the past several years incorporating post-modernism and poststructuralism occupy another (albeit somewhat different) privileged position.

However, at times the perspectives of, say, postmodernism and postructuralism have been appropriated in ways that make them into simply the cultural capital of a new elite within the academy ... some individuals have lost any sense of "real" political issues over culture and power in schools (Apple, 1993: 6).

Beginning in the 1960's there was a great deal of discussion concerning paradigm shifts, in which one construct is coerced and compelled into destruction in order for another emerging construct. However, Bakhtin expressly posits that every word has its homecoming.

There is neither a first word or a last word. The contexts of dialogue are without limit. They extend into the deepest past and the most distant future. Even meanings both in dialogues of the remotest past will never be fully grasped once and for all, for they will always be renewed in later dialogue. At any present moment of the dialogue there are great masses of forgotten meanings, but these will be recalled once again at any given moment in the dialogue's later course when it will be given new life. For, nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will someday have its homecoming festival (Bakhtin in Clark and Holquist, 1984: 348, 350).

There has never been a *singular* neutral concept, a *universal construct*, and there is no *absolute* common ground. "We" can never encounter reality *unmeditated from our varying "general cultural repertoires"* (Popular Memory Group, 1982). Everything resonates through metaphors, stories, and interpretations filtered through a constantly changing, shifting, "collective subjective" (Gramsci, 1980).

A paradigm is a static entity, a monolithic concept, a meta-theoretical construct seeking to explain everything within particularistic parameters. Apple (1993: 6) reminds us of "the danger of losing our political soul on the altar of grand theorizing." In the work of some theorists, boundaries, separations, and apportionments impose an artificial external reality of an absolute unwavering veracity, categorizing experience(s) into methodical, orderly receptacles, diminutizing the magnitude, and the range of conceptualizations and interpretations. Bakhtin contradicts such notions by reminding us that every utterance into a multitude of renderings entirely *dependent on the context* rather than a comprehensive singular meaning.

The context of unwavering paradigmatic assumptions in the educational world is dismantled by the narratives of the Trekker teachers. Categories in curriculum theorizing are not immobile boxes, as the teachers' stories clearly demonstrate. The teachers, for example, respond to the paradigm of the scientific with existential questions, and they answer existential and aesthetic questions with technological and religious responses. The teachers (as does

everyone else in the world) dialogically engage in "architectonics of answerability" (Clark and Holquist, 1984) creating their own order and sense out of what is presented to them in the world.

The individual educator's professional sensory and cognitive system is a delicate instrument for detecting shifts in his educational world. His responsiveness takes the form of new actions and new speech. Fortunately all educators have not been shaped by the same conditioning agents, their sensory and cognitive systems detect different shifts, and their responsiveness takes different forms (Huebner, 1975: 218).

Hence, there is no "generic" human being; there is no "generic" teacher; there is no "generic" curriculum. In order to fully discern any construct it is imperative to realize that the construct itself can never be divorced from the social factors that brought it into language. When the narrators discuss and celebrate technology in terms of the religious, they dialogically interlace and intertwine social polysemy of meaning-making, and they create truth out of what is presented to them.

In the late sixties and the early seventies, the demarcation of competing conceptual frameworks ("paradigms", "discourses", "languages") and the disclosure of their underlying assumptions became a central project for theorists in a number of academic fields. Huebner (1966) delineated a set of "languages for valuing curriculum." An avowed intention of this many-sided model was to escape from the confines of the existing one-dimensional way of talking about curriculum; a major effect was the decentering of the dominant tradition, and the affirmation of alternative perspectives (Casey, 1988: 24).

Kliebard's (1978) delineation of three metaphors of curriculum is a product of the same impulse. Neither Huebner nor Kliebard intended to create inflexible paradigmatic categories of curriculum theorizing; rather I see in their project(s) a dialogic both/and (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 7), which is Bakhtinian in its inclusive, constantly (re)created, (re)visioned and ceaseless activity. What Bakhtin (1984: 7-8) terms *centrifugal* forces which "compel movement, becoming and history; they long for change and new life; opposed to *centripetal* forces which "urge stasis, resist becoming, abhor history, and desire the seamless quiet of death" (1984: 8). It can be implied that centripetal forces reduce "cultural life to a static system of categorical relationships which leave untouched many critical factors involved in the construction of cultural exchanges" (Quantz and O'Connor, 1988: 95).

Bakhtin's nemesis was monologism, monologism embodied or realized in the various reductionist theories stemming from the European Enlightenment and fomented in a cacophony of paradigmatic underpinnings such as rationalism, utilitarianism, and positivism.

Huebner's and Kliebard's curricular schemes expressly demonstrated and disavowed mythic monologic precepts that had dominated traditional curricular thought. Indeed, Huebner (1978: 234) proclaimed: "The teacher and the students can be freed from the demands of utilitarianism."

Because there was no previous language available, the creation of these models (not "paradigms") was a significant step in the then somewhat nascent

field of curriculum theorizing. Huebner realized this when he wrote "that no language system is so good or significant that other language systems cannot eventually take its place" (1978: 220). Both Huebner and Kliebard provided an anterior "epistemic map" on which the terrain of the curriculum could be brought to the forefront. Nevertheless, *no singular system of classification, category or categories or categorical models can comprehend all curricular possibilities*. No single theory or body of theory explains everything. Each given theory, each given insight gives way to new theorizing. There are always gaps and silences. There are always combinations and permutations, which in turn give way to other combinations and permutations. Looking at curriculum theorizing in this light perhaps can "provide the only meaningful escape from an endless oscillation between dead abstractions" (Morson, 1986: 6).

"A given theory may fail to address an aspect of a particular ... phenomenon that once included, compels the reconstruction of theory" (Burawoy, 1988: 10). The Trekker narrators whose stories comprise this dissertation radically reconstruct any notions of exclusivity or the categorical within curriculum theorizing. Although elements of the models demarcated by Kliebard (1978) and Huebner (1978) are present in the teachers' chronicles, the categories intermingle, adopting and adapting within each utterance spoken. In this light curriculum theorizing can be seen as a process, and never as a static end in itself.

End Notes

1. Popular Memory shifts the relationship(s) of power in the historical project.

The teller and expert in the historical story is "the people." As an interventionist program, history is as much a part of the present as of the past.

2. I think that the early 1960's remained too recent a time for my parents to discuss what transpired in Europe. I remember asking questions about "why" I did not have one side of my "family," and so my parents created "quasi-relations" that were to be addressed as "aunt" or "uncle," but who were really "friends." I also recall my friend Gail's mother having "numbers" on her arm. When I asked my mother about the tattoo, she did not answer. So I assumed that her mother wasn't bright enough to remember her phone number and therefore tattooed her arm.

3. My brother David died at the age of two from an allergic reaction to a penicillin shot. I discovered a box in a closet, with pictures and a bracelet with my name, his name in the center, and my sister's name on it as well. When I asked about it, I was met with a silent stare, and admonishment for entering the closet, and the box. I reasoned that "David" was probably someone that they wanted us to marry or something, in some sort of "pre-arrangement."

4. We used to call my father's methadone, "Daddy's blood-pressure medicine." I want to state, however, that I never experienced any adverse affects because of my father's consuming, constant, thirty year long addiction. Quite the contrary. I feel fortunate to say that nobody could have asked for a better, more concerned,

or caring parent.

5. *Latina* like the word *Hispanic*, represents an unusual construction of reality, encompassing as it does populations as diverse as Mexicans, Chicanos, Argentines, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Panamanians and others. It seems to be designed to paradigmatically categorize the uncategorizable. Blending disparate and distinctive cultures, and politically antagonistic groups (i.e. Cubans in Cuba as opposed to Cubans in Miami) into a convenient "racial (erasure) category." Cuba is an African-American Island, where the majority of the population is Black, yet all Cubans are categorized as *Hispanic*. In Mexico the majority of the population is Native American, yet all Mexicans are *Hispanic*. The only thing that can possibly be seen as *Hispanic*, or *Latino* is a language. That too is problematic. In Peru, for example, Guarani is certainly spoken as much as Spanish, yet all Peruvians are considered "Hispanic." Certainly, the "Castillian" spoken in Spain is considerably different than the dialects spoken in different countries and in different areas in different countries. Therefore the use of the word *Latina* or *Hispanic* should only be seen in a bracketed form. I too, am considered *Hispanic*, although for most of my life I have always felt "Anglo," or certainly more "Anglo" than the community surrounding me. It was only upon leaving South Florida that I began to realize how much my experience of being raised in Miami and in Colombia separated me from other "Americans." Because of my problems with the word *Hispanic* and because I am Jewish. I have chosen to use the adjective *Sephardic* to describe and name myself.

Therefore, I am not betraying my mother's ancestry, and her family's Spanish (speaking) origins, and my love for the myriad of Spanish-speaking cultures, or the language which nurtures my aesthetic sensibility. But I am dismantling an imposed category created by the government in order to categorize and count me and millions of others in a singular category designed to erase the richness of differences.

6. There seems to be two ways to interpret the use of *classic*. One in the sense of *classic culture* (i.e. to the ancient Greeks and Romans) the other is in the commodified sense, as in "Coca Cola *Classic*."

7. When I was in high school, alternative religious discourses were being tested. One of my high school teachers used to take me to yoga and meditation classes on Wednesday evenings. The most clandestine group, however, was that which was labelled the "Jesus Freaks" who used to meet at someone's house under the tutelage (I am told) of older (college) students and teachers. This was a radical "group" in a community that was either Jewish or Catholic. When I heard about the after-school meetings I was immediately reminded of the alternative after school (religious) group meetings that occurred in my own school experiences.

8. Again this is problematic insofar as there are many versions of the South and Southeast, and to paint it as a monolith is to erase its disparate cultural quilt. The South can not be envisioned in any monolithic sense. Not in terms of geography, but certainly not in terms of culture. Further, when dealing with

particular white, rural discourses in the lowlands and the Piedmont of the Southeast, we are dealing with several distinct "ethnic" enclaves as well. Clearly, the region has its own culture(s) evidenced in everything from food(s) to dialect(s).

9. If there ever was, at the present there is no unproblematic use of ethnic naming.

10. Miami is itself quite problematic. Geographically located in the extreme Southeastern United States, it shares nothing with any other "space" in the region. Although there are a myriad of "ethnic enclaves" and cultures in the city. It could be said that Miami is the "Greater Metropolitan Area South," or alternatively it is the Havana of the North. So our consciousness is informed by that of "New York and Latin America."

CHAPTER III

UTOPIA, MYTH AND NOSTALGIA IN TREK NARRATIVE(S)

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias -- Oscar Wilde

Utopia, as it is used in terms of Trek, and the analysis of the Trekker narratives that takes place in subsequent chapters, must be distinguished from conventional definitions. Certainly, Sir Thomas More's work Utopia has created a pun-like confusion surrounding the word, since it connotes "somewhere" and "nowhere."¹ The Utopian differs significantly from the religious insofar as the "other world" is "immanent in the world of human endeavor, dominion and hypothetical possibility" (Widmer, 1988: 4). Utopia ought not be looked upon as merely escapist fantasy but rather a significant part of the human political and philosophical condition, which perceives goals and shapes perceptions. Kumar (1991: 5) has suggested that "Utopian conceptions are indispensable to politics and to progress; without them politics is a soulless void, a mere instrumentality, without purpose or vision."

What difference does it make if a teacher is a Trekker? Clearly, how each person constructs their ideal of the "perfect world" is of consequence to how we teach, who we teach, and why we teach. The Trekker version of the Utopian

drives the everyday experience in the classroom of my narrators. A world that is envisioned that as more Trek-like can have its "seed" planted in the minds of the pupils, leading to the ultimate fulfillment of transformative possibility.

Within the context of this study, the Utopian can be envisioned as the politics of desire, and the politics of possibility. Fantasy can not acknowledge social criticism, nor is fantasy based in conceptualizations and desires of the "real world." Fantasy is, at best, a desire to escape. Utopia is a transformative longing. "The significant nowhere images of Utopia, of course, come out of somewhere realities, though turned in abstracted time and space to larger and often somewhere different resonances" (Widmer, 1988: 34). Utopia takes abstractions embedded in social and political theorizing and grounds "the good world, the just world, the good life" in the concrete. Utopia contains the particularistic insofar as it demonstrates the operation of the good and the just, "what the results spelled out in everyday life are supposed to look like" (Kumar, 1988: 32).

Utopia confronts reality not with a measured assessment for the possibilities of change, but with the demand for change. This is the way the world should be: It refuses to accept current definitions of the possible because it knows these to be part of the reality that it seeks to change. In its guise as Utopia, by the very force of its imaginative presentation it energizes reality infusing it, as Paul Tillich has said, with "the power of the new" (Kumar, 1987: 107).

In this sense there is "compared with abstract social theory a basic honesty, and transparency in Utopia's way of doing sociology and social philosophy" (Widmer,

1988: 32). Certainly, Utopian theorizing is a form of social theorizing.

Television therefore represents the medium par excellence for concretized Utopian aspirations, and *Star Trek* shows the Trekkers the good and just society in operation. The Trekker teachers, translate their Utopian aspirations into concretized curriculum theorizing that shapes classroom experiences (as do we all).

The polysemic possibilities of Utopian theorizing include competing renditions of myths. Thus, a Marxist Utopia can be understood as "reactionary on the grounds that it sought to impose an ideal plan upon reality rather than seeking in that reality the means of social change" (Levitas, 1990: 59),² or progressive; ideas in the form of myths in Sorel's version (Sorel, 1925), could potentially perform a mobilising and transformative function (Levitas, 1990: 59). Karl Mannheim, whose work laid the foundations for contemporary Utopian theorizing foresaw the transformative potential in the Utopian. Although superficially, this may seem an exceptionally divergent viewpoint from that of Sorel, the definitions of Sorel's myth bear a striking resemblance to Mannheim's Utopian definition.

In Ideology and Utopia (1936) Mannheim distinguishes between the ideological and the Utopian. The distinction is based entirely on social function. "Both ideologies and Utopias are ideas, and are ideas which are incongruous with, and transcend the reality within which they occur, being oriented towards objects which do not exist in the actual situation" (Levitas, 1990: 68). However,

ideologies in the Mannheimian definition operate to maintain the existing social order, whereas Utopias operate to transform them. As I demonstrate elsewhere, the Trekkers certainly seek a transformative project.

Mannheim is quite explicit in discerning that "form and content are not the defining characteristics of Utopia" (Levitas, 1990: 68). He ascertains that "the Utopian element in our consciousness is subject to changes in content and form ... It is not always the same forces, substances, or images which can take on a Utopia function, i.e. the function of bursting the bonds of the existing order" (Mannheim, 1936: 141). This is not an ideal typology of a social or state order as in the Weberian or liberal-humanist positions. The form and content of the Utopian aspiration may well be historically mutable, but the "defining characteristic is the capacity to transform the situation and realise itself " (Levitas, 1990: 69). The causality embedded in Mannheim's argument envisions the Utopian as not merely

a matter of anticipating the future -- of wanting something which the future turns out to hold -- but of Utopia creating the future. A Utopia is an idea which is acted on (passes over into conduct), changes the situation (shatters the prevailing order) and realises itself (Levitas, 1990: 75).

Finally, then, all Utopias, have an ideological dimension.

As Ricouer (1986) attempts to demonstrate, "ideology and Utopia are not irreconcilably opposed concepts, but ... complementary elements of a more inclusive system of social action" (Gardiner, 1991: 130). Nevertheless, the

Utopian dimension is representative of a particular positionality from which our own social arrangements can be viewed, and clarified from a differential less hegemonic perspective. According to Ricoeur, an important element of the ideological is social integration. The Utopian is, and operates as, a form of social subversion. While the ideological operates to produce "a hidden surplus value of belief vis-a vis the legitimacy of authority, in order to secure the normative adherence of the majority of the population, Utopia exposes this surplus to public view and poses awkward questions about the moral and political validity of the system itself" (Gardiner, 1991: 130).

This development of new, alternative perspectives defines Utopia's most basic function. May we not say that imagination itself -- through its Utopian function-- has a *constitutive* role in helping us *rethink* the nature of our social life? Is not Utopia the leap outside -- the way in which we radically rethink what is family, what is consumption, what is authority, what is religion and so on? Does not the fantasy of an alternative society and its exteriorization 'nowhere' work as one of the most formidable contestations of what is? (Ricoeur, 1986: 16).

The pathology of ideology has an analogous construct in the realm of the Utopian. Utopia's very nowhereness, "which gives it its rhetorical potency and critical force, also results in a kind of escapism, a headlong retreat from the possible into the manifestly impossible" (Gardiner, 1991: 35). In its most consummate incantation, the Utopian is an impregnable weapon in the struggle and resistance to the effects of the overwhelmingly oppressive forces of a hegemonically inscribed dominant discourse, but at its worst it represents a

mournful, somber, and doleful nostalgia for the virtues of paradise lost.

"Ideology mirrors the social order, whilst, simultaneously occluding an understanding of its social constitution; Utopia, on the other hand aims at the dissolution of the order through projecting a vision of an alternative existence" (Gardiner, 1991: 131). The Trekker version of the utopic (re)creates the perception of time. "For there to be a real sense of becoming ... the future ... must be seen as significant, valuable and open to change ..." says Bakhtin; "Ethical responsibility, no less than creativity is thoroughly impoverished unless the future is viewed this way" (Morson, 1990: 397). The chronotopic construction characteristic of the mythological/Utopian "empties out the future, dissects and, as it were, bleeds it white" (Bakhtin, 1981: 148). The historical inversion contained in myths of paradise, a heroic age, a Golden Age, locate "purpose, justice, and perfection in the past rather than in the future" (Morson, 1990: 397). So, for the Trekkers whose future is located in a mythological golden age, the Utopian is trans-positioned, specifically, locating the future in the past, enriching both the past and present at the expense of possibility and expanse of the future. Therefore:

Utopia refers not simply to a past state, but to the past as immanent in the present. Conservatism is future-orientated only in the sense of preservation and restoration; its purpose is to maintain existing inequalities and restore lost ones' and its means to command and coerce those who would otherwise reform or destroy ... There is an image of a desired society here, one where there is unquestioned loyalty to the state (and where trade union activity is seen as a form of subversion), where there is hierarchy, deference, order, centralised power -- and incidentally where the patriarchal family is the

fundamental unit of society and where sexuality outside of this has been eliminated or at least effectively suppressed (Levitas, 1990: 188).

The *Star Trek* post-World War II Utopian vision was perhaps "the last in a long American visionary tradition which included the Puritan's City on the Hill, the agrarian empire of the nineteenth century, and the glittering vision of the 1880's fashioned from steel, steam and railroads" (Sandels, 1986: 146). Underlying this "momentous thread" in Utopian theorizing and thinking was not just the dependence on the technological, but the "pervasive sense of mission which required power, freedom to act, and relentless destruction of opposing forces" (Sandels, 1986: 146). The *mission* embedded in the Utopian framework syncretizes constructs of past as future and future as present. The notion of mission embedded in fundamental monomyths (overarching singular mythological notions) that tend to pervade Western culture (one need only read Homer to comprehend the justification of mission as a rationale for existence), serve as ideological constructions of the neo-conservative inversion of the historical that is the Trekker pragmatic version of the utopic.

Television Ergo Sum -- I Am Televised, Therefore I Am -- Is Our New Ontology (Himmelstein, 1984: 281).

The mythic and the Utopian are joined together. The psychoanalytic does "make important connections between the individual's dream life and the culture's myth life" (Himmelstein, 1984: 1). Undoubtedly both the mythic and the dream like employ symbolic language, and both respond to conditions in the tacit

everydayness of the world at hand. "Recurrent dreams and recurrent myths express a *leitmotif*, or a significant main theme -- the former in one's life, and the latter in the collective life of the culture" (Fromm, 1951: 156).

The mythic transmutes ideological inscriptions into stock typifications. "Myth transforms the temporal common sense of ideology into the sacred realm of cultural prehistory and thus of eternal truth. Myth thereby serves an important political or organizational function" (Himmelstein, 1984: 4), dissolving any oppositional tendencies, and opposing ideologies that endeavor to emerge from the hypostatized space of the normative. Bakhtin argued that historical social formations, demarcated by an overarching monolithic discourse, tend to display mythic consciousness.

Mythical thought encourages a relatively stable fusion between a particular meaning and a corresponding linguistic expression, which reflects and strengthens the world-view of the secular and religious elite. Hence, a mythological consciousness fetters the free, unhindered development of dialogic intercourse and dampens the world's capacity for greater expressiveness (Gardiner, 1991: 35).

Mythological monoglossia³ renders resistance and opposition into merely disruption, for the mythic is moored to hegemonic language.⁴

The temporal confusion evident in the Trekker mythic/Utopian parallels both Adorno's and later Marxist critiques of mass culture insofar "as its substitution of mythic repetition for historical development, the replacement of the immobility of an ever-identical moment for time" (Andrae, 1987: 137) destroys the openness of the future. For the future that is a non-future inhibits both needs and desires. The

Trekkers, by grounding the mythic/Utopian in a non-future that is physically placed in the future (i.e. the past), consign possibility into the realm of what unerringly *is*.

Unquestionably, by relegating the mythic to a pre-positivist, pre-scientific, aesthetic Utopian fantasy, we empower Mythology. The political, economic or social domains in which the myth operates have been largely ignored.⁵ According to Mircea Eliade the mythic did act as a socializing force in traditional society.

"Myth is a 'true history' because it always deals with *realities*" (Himmelstein, 1984: 4). Eliade's version of "myth" corresponds to Durkheim's "sacred." Myth is integrative, bonding the individual emotionally, politically and intellectually to the group, organizing world views, and creating individual meaning from group norms.

Roland Barthes situates the myth in the overarching domain of the political, also demonstrating the ways in which the myth achieves the illusion of depoliticization (by attempting to diffuse ideological contestations), and "intentionally camouflage(ing) social inequities existing within a culture" (Himmelstein, 1984: 6). Further, as Barthes contends, "myth has a double function: it points out and it notifies it makes us understand something and it imposes on us" (Barthes, 1972: 117). The purpose of myth is distorting and deceptive; the meaning of myth is grounded in economic and historical "realities," presenting "a kind of knowledge, a past, a memory, a comparative order of facts, ideas, decisions" (Barthes, 1972: 117). But according to Barthes, "myth 'distances' this history by converting historical reality into an illusory image of the world as 'nature' " (Himmelstien, 1984: 6). Positing the historical as the "natural" creates the illusion of timelessness and

value-neutrality, making the myth unchallengeable. This creates a world view without contradictions, "because it is without depth" (Barthes, 1972: 143). "Myth is thus employed in the service of ideology -- the process of transforming history into nature for the sake of the constant renewal of the dominant class" (Himmelstein, 1984: 6).

Myth is not "action," as is revolution ... It is "gesture" that seeks to camouflage, among other things, the human inequities evident in the history of the relationship of labor to capital. Myth, wrote Barthes, is essential on the political "right," especially if it legitimizes the value of order. The ultimate goal of myths "is to immobilize the world: they must suggest and mimic a universal order which has fixated once and for all the hierarchy of possessions ... Myths are ... this insidious and inflexible demand that all men recognize themselves in this image, eternal yet bearing a date, which was built for them one day as if for all time (Himmelstien, 1984: 6).

Myth obscures the social relations not only of production (for the element of commodification ubiquitous in television myths), but also in the inanities of everyday life. The critical examination of the *Star Trek* "Enterprise," and its interrelationship to the Trekker community, demonstrates the manner in which constructed meanings and hegemonic relationships are produced in television texts, and therefore perpetuate particular ideologies deeply embedded in the larger social order.

Star Trek's message of revitalized mythic narratives, brought directly to the emotional needs of the viewer, engendered the feeling that the shows were more than escapist entertainment. They had meaning. That meaning transformed the 48 minute episodes into rituals and rituals being group creating, led to clubs and to the convention (Tyrell , 1977: 712).

Dymythologizing the ideological "will reveal the constructed nature of representations of reality given to us by television, as well as highlight their suppressed ideological functions" (Himmelstein, 1984: 6). By recognizing the mythologically ideological, alternative and opposing realities can be proposed.

Star Trek is at best a bourgeois myth. Seldom, if ever (perhaps only in reference to the greed of the Ferengis as comic relief) are economic relationships discussed. "It prefers instead to emphasize the military half of the military industrial complex" (Byers, 1987: 331). The elimination of the economic, in a universe that is filled with plenty, clearly depicts a mythologically Utopian status quo. Further, the elimination of class,⁶ race, and gender conflict presumes a successful melting (melted) pot, where all work happily for the supreme white male leader Byers, (1987: 331) calls this "resurrecting our WASP fathers." In *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, the protestant ethos of hard work, expertise, objectivity and meritocracy is realized.

The only true villain is the mad, overweening egotist, Khan. His extreme personality places him outside the social order. For one thing he's too intellectual and eccentric⁷ -- to be "one of us" (as we are represented by the crew of the *Enterprise*), for he reads Shakespeare and even quotes Melville. More importantly, he's finally brought down by blind, tumultuous *passion* for vengeance⁸ ... Khan lacks or rejects the technocratic values of moderation, self-control, obedience to authority and objectivity. Consequently he is a "bad father," who leads his band of disaffected youths to their deaths,⁹ and are thus opposed to Kirk's clean cut uniformed "children" (his word) whom he commands on a "training mission," that becomes a rite of passage. (U)niformity ... here is a sign of proper allegiance.

Moreover, Khan's people are ... terrorists; they seek to weaken the power structure by attacks on innocent third parties. In a world where there are no political problems, however, their violent actions are ... emptied of historical justification ... such actions only serve the leader's desire for personal

revenge, the desire of an idiosyncratic, warped, and malevolent mind. The question of whether terrorism is politically or historically justified is evaded in favor of a mythification that implies that things are really all much easier than that: terrorists are simply Khans, selfishly aggrieved loonies who refuse to accept our wonderful world, and all the happiness it offers uniformly to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, or gender (Byers, 1987: 332).

I Am Looking to the Future with Nostalgia -- Mayor Richard M. Daley

Nostalgia (derived from the Greek *nostos*, to return home and *algia*, a painful condition) literally means a painful yearning to return home. First coined by a Swiss physician named Johannes Hoffer in the seventeenth century, the word implied a pathological condition afflicting Swiss mercenaries fighting in other countries. Clearly, the etymology of the word presents a peculiar paradox, derived from the pathological and invested into popular speech during the 1950's¹⁰ in America, representing an aggregation of feelings and conditions that the word "homesick" or "homesickness" could not possibly represent. Here is a word "created" to describe a special reality, previously unarticulated in our culture.

Strategically, the nostalgic is presented as oppositional. The most apparent dichotomy in the nostalgic realm is that of the past/present.¹¹ Clearly, the oppositional is hierarchical as one word (the present) is degraded, while the other designation (the past) is elevated to the illustrious, and exalted. It is irrelevant if that past authentically existed, for, what is important is the locus of authenticity and goodness given the past. In other words "mythic pasts become real" (Doane and Hodges, 1987: 9). The mythic past of going home to a place that never existed, but could be created, prevails in the Trekker discourse. In the nostalgic mode that can

be labelled as Disney realism, "Distory,"

the past was to be cleaned up -- "vacuum cleaned," in Mike Wallace's words. Unpleasantries would be dropped from history and stories of the past would be told in the carefully (and commercially re-mythologized) form to which Americans were becoming used to through the movies and television ... In a relatively uncynical and optimistic fashion the world would be a better place if history could be rewritten leaving in only the parts that "should have happened." Furthermore, this Distory did (and does) tap into people's nostalgia for a false history -- for the reasonably benign makings of a community of memory. Disney not only has told stories to help fill out these memories but has become a central part of U.S. shared experience -- America's guardian, as Dick Schaap's son put it. Finally, as visitors spend money to experience history as pastiche and to purchase souvenir's as tokens of their encounter with Disney, Disney realism keeps the controller happy (Fjellman, 1992: 59-60).

In the "Distory" sensibility, history becomes confused with nostalgia for a past that never was. The shallow post-modern pastiche of selective icons, (re)presented in a particularistic pattern creates a peculiar notion of the historical placed in opposition to the present. The past is pleasant, good, and "natural."¹²

We think of the "idea of a small town" (Fjellman, 1992: 170); nostalgic yearnings recreate the town in terms of innocence and goodness (as opposed to the disordered, impersonal world of the present):

The small town ... is a repository of American longings. When translated into the realm of popular culture, it becomes one of the most significant symbols of the American ethos. It is tied to sacred icons which simplify and symbolize behavior and institutional structure, e.g. the virginal white kiosk where patriotic oratory flows out across a village green under the American flag, surrounded by town hall and the familiar facades of Main Street storefronts (Francavalgia, 1981: 155-156).

The Trekkers perceive the "small town of America" riding on the ship where everyone "gets along," like "one big happy family."¹³ The retrospective nature of the nostalgic realm can clearly be adapted to the future within the boundaries of a conservative project(ion).

The Trekker version of American nostalgia is unique. The American myth implies an escape from the past, an imagery of elsewhere, where one can find nature and goodness; "in the American past, the image of elsewhere presented a bright and possible future" (Louv, 1983: 5). If Americanism is part of the Trekker religion, "then nostalgia is its liturgy" (Louv, 1983: 5). To the Trekkers, therefore, to go beyond is to go back.

Utopia serves several functions; the first is the revitalization of the present, which clarifies for us the idea that this world is not the only possibility. Utopia also relativizes the future in the exploration of "alternative outcomes of the present. Utopia portrays the future as a set of competing projects ... Utopia criticizes the present, postulates a desired alternative which requires effort to bring it into being, and which is not inevitable" (Levitas, 1979: 22). Thus, there is a definitive connection between concepts of time and the mythic, the Utopian and the nostalgic.

Mannheim saw different kinds of Utopia as embodying different kinds of time, ... Polak observes that the "images of the future man has created are intimately related to time concepts he has held," and that his changing time-concepts had their impact on these images (Levitas, 1979: 25).

The placement and position of the Utopian-mythic-nostalgic triad in the temporal realm creates the imperative for an envisioned brighter future emanating from the perception of the perfectible past. In this sense the Trekkers, by placing their nostalgic universe in the future, sense their vision is the catalyst for social change. However, the vision is actually a socially and culturally static vision, grounded in the past, nevertheless placing the locale in the future.

The idea that Utopia would emerge out of the present was never evenly distributed throughout society. Such a conceptualization is perhaps, as Mannheim suggests, the prerogative of those who see the existing society as on their side and who see it as possible to realise their ends in and through society as it is; it depends upon the extent to which people see themselves as in control of and benefitting from the present (Levitas, 1979: 27).

Trek does not purport a radical break from the dominant discourse; on the contrary, it sees social "change" towards an inevitable good as an evolutionary process, not a revolutionary one. The idea of a straightforward linear progression towards the certainty of the "better world" is crucial to the relationship of both the content and context of the Trekker Utopia towards the existing culture.

The postmodern culture of Trek has a peculiar relationship to a rather "weightless version of time, history, and memory" (Joyrich, 1992: 238). In the signs and fragmentations of the future perfect, we begin to inhabit a space that is synchronic rather than diachronic, creating a grave scenario in which the convergence of time (past, present, and future) and space all become convoluted in the utopic-mythic-nostalgic sign.

To paraphrase Fredric Jameson, our relationship to the past is one of historicism effacing history -- as even the illusion of a full or authentic relation to history dissolves, we are left with a random collection of images to which we turn in a frantic effort to appropriate a collective past ...TV narrative provides a present method of consuming the past (Joyrich, 1992: 238).

To recognize the translation of the utopic/nostalgic/mythic into everyday terms, is to acknowledge its effects, and its power in and over the lives of its participants.

As Raymond Williams has always insisted, culture is ordinary. It is the extraordinary in the ordinary, which is extraordinary, which makes both into culture, common culture. We are thinking of the extraordinary symbolic creativity of the multitude of ways in which young people use, humanize, decorate and invest with meanings their common and immediate life spaces, and social practices -- personal styles and choice of clothes, selective and active use of music, TV, magazines, decoration of bedrooms, the rituals of romance and subcultural styles; the style, banter, and drama of friendship groups, music making and dance. Nor are these pursuits and activities trivial or inconsequential. In conditions of late modernization and the widespread crisis of cultural values, they can be crucial to the creation and sustenance of the individual and group identities, even to cultural survival of identity itself. There is work, even desperate work, in their play (Willis, 1990: 2).¹⁴

The Trekker myth-as-ideology "functions by naturalization, by transforming history and culture into nature" (Gardiner, 1992: 145). The political is stripped, for praxis and agency are quite frankly deleted in mythic representations of the utopic/nostalgic past, imparting a "natural" and eternal legitimization (Gardiner, 1992: 146). It is as Barthes states:

[Every] day and everywhere, man is stopped by myths, referred by them in this motionless prototype which lives in his place, stifles him in the manner of a huge

internal parasite and assigns to his activity the narrow limits within which he is allowed to suffer without upsetting the world: bourgeois pseudo-physis is in the fullest sense a prohibition for man against inventing himself. Myths are nothing but this ceaseless, untiring solicitation, this insidious and inflexible demand that all men recognize themselves in this image, eternal yet bearing a date, which was built of them one day as for all time. For the Nature in which they are locked up under the pretext of being eternalized, is nothing but a usage. And it is this usage, however lofty, that they must take into their hands and transform (Barthes, 1973: 157-158).

It would seem that we as a culture have never developed what Jewett termed a "telomythic critical theory" (1977) that would sensitize television audiences to the techniques of propaganda which lend credibility to ideological content on television shows. Public debate about television is concerned with violence and sex, but certainly not the political. Nevertheless, as Postman (1987: 421) points out, "the television curriculum is both pervasive and powerful." Undoubtedly its effects can be experienced at all levels of the culture. The tendency to shrug off notions of the explicitly ideological in television programming by relegating it to mere entertainment, or, in the pejorative, to consign television's power to the reduction of reading test scores, the increase of attention deficit disorders, and pathological psychosis,¹⁵ does not address the explicitly ideological *functions* (as in Mannheim's Utopian) on both covert and overt levels of the medium.

Film and literature matter as much as they do because they are versions of mythmaking ... Campbell has observed that myth's understood function is to serve as a powerful picture language for the communication of traditional wisdom (Roth, 1987: 159).¹⁶

Star Trek presents a mythic reformulation, an overarching monomyth and, a rearticulated scientific fundamentalism masked as a pop culture artifact that has been translated into a "perceived reality" on the part of the Trekker "collective subjective."¹⁷ *Trek* is inherently and explicitly ideological, but the ideological is couched under the rubric of the mythic/Utopian/nostalgic. Consider the following parallel drawn by Jewett:

Whereas the classical monomyth was based on rites of initiation, the American monomyth derives from tales of redemption. It secularizes the Judeo-Christian redemption dramas that have arisen on American soil, combining elements from the selfless servant who impassively gives his life for others, and the zealous crusader who destroys evil. The supersaviors in pop culture function as replacements for the Christ figure, whose credibility was eroded by scientific rationalism. But their superhuman abilities reflect a hope of divine, redemptive powers that science has never eradicated from the popular mind. The presentation of such figures in popular culture has the power to evoke fan loyalties that should be compared with the more traditional forms of religious zeal; among those who resist overt fandom, the superheros seem to offer a mythic message that soothes and satisfies. It imparts the relaxing feeling that society can actually be redeemed by anti-democratic means (Jewett, 1977: xx).

The (re)presentation of the dominant discourse is the foundation of the *Trek* myth. The investiture of meaning into the universe of *Trek*, tacitly humanizes the technological realm.¹⁸

"The monomyth is described by Joseph Campbell as the one shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story which underlies myths, fairy tales, literature, and religion" (Roth, 1987: 159). An obvious example of mythic representation and recapitulation is presented in *Star Trek II*. The movie is, without a doubt, "a treatment of the penultimate stages of the monomyth in which the hero descends

into the underworld and is reborn" (Roth, 1987: 159).

The film's premier metaphor for education about the death-rebirth cycle is the Kobi ashi muru test. In a conflict simulation, a student commander is lured into a doomed battle with enemy spaceships. Lieutenant Saavik, one of Spock's pupils, fails the test despite what appear to be logical decisions and controlled actions. Afterward, Kirk admits to her that there is "no correct resolution. It's a test of character." He lectures her superciliously that "how we deal with death is at least as important as how we deal with life." Saavik is told that Kirk was the only Star Fleet officer to best the Kobi ashi muru test. Repeatedly through the film, she inquires how he achieved this. Kirk does not divulge this information until his descent into the underworld when he discloses that he altered the rules of the test by reprogramming the simulation. "I don't like to loose," Kirk boasts to Saavik, who perceives correctly that he has "never faced that situation, faced death." Because Kirk is unwilling or unable to confront or accept death, he cannot personally evolve beyond it in the monomythic pattern.

Roth's considerable insight into the monomythic patterns of *Star Trek II* reveals other levels of meaning that resonate with the Trekker ethos. Spock, by choosing to die, saves "Kirk spiritually as well as physically" (Roth, 1987: 164). Spock's death is translated into a painful, albeit "educational" experience, since the hero [Kirk] resists this stage of his development, his psychic double [Spock] must undergo that experience as a lesson to him" (Roth, 1987: 164). Choosing individual death so that the "greater" good (of civilization) can survive "eternally" transforms assumptions of life and death. The classically heroic statement, "How we deal with death is just as important as how we deal with life" (Roth, 1987: 165) lends credence to the "altruistic suicide" committed by Spock as an exemplar to be followed.

The film audience, and undoubtedly the Trekkers, recognize themselves through the double hero of Kirk/Spock. The film represents a mythic morality play, where the hero and the audience engage in active meaning-making, learn and are schooled in morality and notions of immortality (from Kirk's statement of life and death). It also translates the lesson into the ethos grounded in the Trekker interpretive community. The symbolic translation of Kirk's words become therefore a treatise on the interdependence of life and death. As in all (Trek) myths the storytelling, although epigrammatic and pointedly obvious, remains within the boundaries of the culture's mores, and folkways, and norms. At the end of the movie, the optimistic philosophy is resoundingly clear.

While marooned in the underworld, Kirk quotes Spock as a teacher who is fond of saying, "Where there is life, there are possibilities." The film also teaches that death has possibilities: for example, the rebirth of the human spirit. All storytelling is didactic (Roth, 1987: 164-165).

The original *Star Trek* mission (to explore strange new worlds, etc.) can at one level be seen as a semi-autonomous space probe, with the crew playing the role of sheriff, plenipotentiary, imperialist crusader, and colonial emperor. Nevertheless, the show resonates with "Americana" in mythological terms; it destroys temporal considerations by placing the mythic in the future as already achieved. The future is represented in terms of the ideal(ology) of America at its height (both in terms of self-perception and power).

To counter these threats and cope with the weird aggressive powers that seem to inhabit all earthlike planets of the universe, the *Enterprise* acts as a galactic redeemer in episode after episode. As Gerrold explains "The *Enterprise* is a cosmic Mary Worth," meddling her way across the galaxy ... to spread truth, justice, and the American way to the far corners of the universe." The format of *Star Trek* accentuates this role by keeping Kirk and his ship out of communication with Earth. The captain becomes the sole arbitrator of Federation law wherever he traveled ... a law unto himself." The story fits into the genre of the isolated hero or nation, answerable only to a higher law and fighting for right whenever called to do so, a theme America has tried to act out in recent times (Jewett, 1977: 6).

Resonating with our best picture of the American dream, *Trek* presents a Utopian vision ensconced in the nostalgia of America, ideologically recapitulating dominant cultural interpretations of justice, truth, and righteousness.

The moral vision of *Star Trek* thus partakes of the spirit and rhetoric of Pax Americana. Its basic moral principle is zeal for its mission. This is in effect what authors Lichtenberg, Marshak and Winston celebrate in their comprehensive fan book *Star Trek Lives!* (Jewett, 1977: 6).

The heroes of *Star Trek* (both Spock and Kirk) are seen by the Trekkers as embodying the

rarest of all things among men ... unbroken integrity ... each remains dedicated to the striving, extravagantly willing to pay the price. But when one measures this moral quality against standards forbidding deceit, adultery, and violence, the lack of restraint is striking. What we have here is moral zeal attached solely to the mission and to their own vision of what amounts to the "American Way." It is a zeal transcending both due process and the moral code of the Federation's non-interference directive, which Kirk has sworn on pain of death to uphold. This directive is consistently broken in *Star Trek* episodes when "necessary" for the fulfillment of the mission (Jewett, 1977: 6).

The American positivist, pragmatic ethos purports to castigate what would be at first glance merely seemingly "mythological." Nevertheless, in the *Trek* redefinition of the mythic and the Utopian, notions of expertise, meritocracy, and faith in technology (or a set of technological myths) become grounded in the mythic of the past.

At the surface level *Star Trek* stories seem to defy interpretation as mythic material with powerful unconscious appeal. The entire series takes a singularly dim view of myths, not to speak of legends, fables, and their primitive religious accoutrements. *Star Trek* celebrates the freeing of the human spirit from superstition and narrow-mindedness. It wears the cloak of empirical science. It purports to be a future chapter in what Joseph Campbell called the wonder story of mankind's coming to maturity (Jewett, 1977: 9).

But *Star Trek* is more than the transposing of visuals and motifs, more than the shifting from one metaphor to another. Myths are narratives with the power to move our psychic energies toward integration of self and of self with the cosmos. Myths define an image of the world within and without and relate us to it emotionally. Myths put in narrative form the unconscious assumptions that constitute the spirit of a culture. They can inspire and direct those energies to monumental achievements of good or ill (Tyrell, 1977: 712).

In one particular episode entitled "Who mourns for Adonis," Kirk tells Apollo that "we have outgrown you ... you have asked for what we can no longer give." Kirk "admits the time of the gods is gone" (Jewett, 1977: 11). The episode described attempts to convey the message that the era of myths is over and "science" could explain everything including the presence of gods. In *Trek*, philosophical constructs of science take on the role of the god, reaffirming and recapitulating dominant cultural themes, making the program culturally salient to the viewer (disciple)ship.

Certain episodes such as 'Who Mourns for Adonis?' do explicitly draw on Greek or other mythologies but when the past available to the cultured viewers is evoked it seems obsolete and distant or significantly transformed ... *Star Trek* makes a direct appeal to those of us well versed in the various mythologies of the past (Blair, 1979: 308).

David Gerrold, one of the writers of the original series, "Classic Trek" (as it has been defined for me by some of the Trekkers)¹⁹ explains that "the background is subordinate to the fable" (Jewett, 1977: 11). Although science has replaced god as monomyth, the original mythical tradition remains omnipresent in the discourse. Therein lies the power of Trek, a pervasive social power that Bakhtin attributed to the epic.²⁰ In Bakhtinian theory, myths are not merely text "designed for leisure or entertainment" (Gardiner, 1992: 43);

rather they have an enormous capacity to shape contours of mass consciousness, and they can play a decisive role in the organization (and the subversion) of ideological hegemony. More specifically, Bakhtin argues that the epic and similar genres are wedded to a doom-laden eschatology, an apocalyptic vision ... which functions to legitimate the dominant force and truth in society. Furthermore, continuous changes in the nature of heteroglossia in the social world make possible a re-accentuation of images and languages ... This, the meaning ... is never fixed or stable: "Each age reaccentuates in its own way the works of its most immediate past" [Bakhtin, 1981: 421]; (Gardiner, 1992: 43).

When one compares the themes of the series with the content of classical myths, similarities are immediately apparent. Isolating program content from the genesis and function of myths, three mythic patterns emerge in the episode, "Who mourns for Adonis?"

The first is *saga*, which features a protagonist journeying to unknown and dangerous regions, undergoing trials to test his strength and wit. In the classical monomyth delineated by Joseph Campbell, a journey is undertaken in response to the requirement for each human to move from his childhood to maturity through the crooked lanes of his own spiritual labyrinth." But in materials embodying the American monomyth, the saga of maturation tends to be replaced by the defense of malevolent attacks upon innocent communities ... Thus in the saga of Apollo's planet, the Enterprise had to be mortally endangered by the gigantic face on the scanner, and it was essential for the protagonists Kirk and Spock to leave their command post and come face to face with the foe. It was obviously bad military and space travel strategy, as many critics have pointed out. No sensible commander would send himself and the key technical officers on a landing party like this. But it is essential to the saga format and thus is characteristic of every episode (Jewett, 1977: 12).

There is something more substantive in the (re)-creation of the saga in *Star Trek*. Tyrell asserts that because television works on a non reasoning emotional level, there is no willful suspension of disbelief that needs to occur; television is the medium best suited to the creation of myth. *Star Trek* is exploitative on varying levels; it certainly exploits the power of intimate communication that occurs between the individual and the television.

Consider the second mythic pattern present in classical mythology and visible on *Star Trek*, the pattern of sexual renunciation:

The protagonist in ... mythical sagas must renounce previous sexual ties for the sake of his trials. He must avoid entanglements and temptations that inevitable arise from Sirens or Loreleis in the course of his travels. Thus Lieutenant Palamas is tested in the episode with Apollo, her sexual liaison endangering the survival of the *Enterprise*. After she renounces her passion, the saga can get back on course. In the classical monomyth this theme plays a subsidiary role in the initiation or testing phase. The protagonist may encounter sexual temptation symbolizing 'that the pushing, self-protective, malodorous, carnivorous, lecherous fever is the very nature of the organic cell,' as Campbell points out. Yet the 'ultimate adventure' is the 'mystical marriage' ... of the triumphant hero-

soul with the Queen Goddess of knowledge. In the current American embodiments of mythic renunciation there is a curious rejection of sexual union as a primary value (Jewett, 1977: 13).

In *Star Trek* both the heroes and devotees are locked in a conscious renunciatory pattern closely related to the continuing mission saga. In the initial series, Kirk, as well as the rest of the crew, were not accompanied by any family. This is an obvious connection to the myth contained in the stories of ancient mariners on large sailing vessels during the epoch of the extended voyage (Ulysses and Penelope). To not engage in renunciation would violate the norms contained in the mythic paradigm.

So, Rodenberry describes the renunciation pattern: 'Long ago Captain Kirk consciously ruled out any possibility of any romantic interest while aboard the ship. It is an involvement he feels he simply could never risk. In a very real sense he is 'married' to his ship and his responsibilities as captain of her.' In numerous episodes Kirk is ... forced to choose between an attractive sexual partner and his sense of duty to his mission. The authors of *Star Trek Lives!* report that female fans ... vicariously thrill to Kirk's sexual exploits with gorgeous females of every size, shape, and type -- from stunning lady lawyers, biologists and doctors who have loved him, to the vicious and breath-taking Elaan of Troyius, who ruled a planet but was willing to risk destroying her entire solar system for him ...

Many see Kirk's loves as having a tragic element. There is affection and warmth in his response, and evidently the capacity for deep love. But very often the situation is impossible. He loses not through his faults but through his virtues, because of the demanding life he has chosen.

They go on to describe the renunciation of sexual bonds for the sake of loyalty to the *Enterprise* and its crew. 'Time and again, he had to make a choice between a woman and his ship -- and his ship always won' (Jewett: 1977: 13).

In the twenty seven years of the *Star Trek* saga, sexual renunciation exists as a theme with all the major characters in both television series and movies.²¹ To

experience bonded-ness to humans outside the discourse of the ship means certain death. Kirk's illegitimate son dies in the movie; Kirk's true loves (and there have been many) all die in the Classic series. On the Next Generation series, Wharf's wife died and Dr. Crusher's husband died. When Tasha Yar (the first security officer on the Next Generation) engaged in sexual relations with an android (Data), she too was destined to certain death. Although families can exist on the Next Generation ship, usually within the realm of the main characters, it is in the construction of single parent with a single child. Examples include Wharf and Alexander, and Dr. Crusher and Wesley and on the on Deep Space Nine series, Commander Cisco, and his son, Jake. Further, even brief dalliances (which are all equated with "romantic notions of love") are circumspect; ill fated examples include Dr. Crusher and Dax (who has been conveniently recreated as female for Deep Space Nine), and the (platonic) lovers Rikker and Dianna Troi. Certainly Picard exemplifies the renunciation of sexuality in its human form on the series; he is wedded to his ship, and his ship only. Unlike his predecessor Kirk, it is rare indeed when Picard even considers engagement in any dalliance or sexual encounter.²²

The renunciation of sexual love for the sake of loyalty to one's comrades goes far beyond the classical monomyth. It is seen perhaps most clearly in the person of Spock. He is loyal to Kirk and his comrades at the expense of risking his life for them again and again, but he persistently resists the temptation of entanglements with the opposite sex. Nurse Christine Chapel, a beautiful and talented crew member who is hopelessly in love with Spock, receives the cold shoulder in story after story. Here is a man capable of the prodigious outpouring of passion triggered by the irresistible *pon farr*²³ and yet incapable of lasting emotional ties with women.

Sex is an autonomous force here, distinct from Spock's personality and capable of destroying his ability to reason. Since he cannot integrate it with his personality, it must be rigidly repressed until it overpowers him in the rutting season. Spock bears within his person the temptation threatening every saga with disaster -- it must be fiercely renounced for the mission to succeed. Such a motif may not be true to life, and it is certainly improbable that there are sophisticated planets with *pon farr* rites derived from Puritan fantasies, but it is true to the mythic paradigm (Jewett, 1977: 14).

The final mythical pattern is that of redemption. It too, is present on *Star Trek*.

In the classical monomyth the beautiful maiden must be redeemed from the clutches of the sea monster, the endangered city spared from its peril, and the protagonist redeemed by fateful interventions in the nick of time. This pattern is much more diffuse in the classical monomyth than in modern materials standing closer to the American pattern. The classical hero may experience supernatural aid as he crosses the threshold into the realm of the initiatory adventure and then returns, and he may confront trials embodying the redemption of others. But his own redemption takes the form of gaining mature wisdom, achieving atonement with his father, enjoining union with the goddess, and returning home with benefits for his people. The redemption scheme in materials like *Star Trek* has nothing to do with the maturation process. It fits rather the pattern of selfless crusading to redeem others. This form of selfless idealism has been elaborated most extensively by Ernest Tuveson in *Redeemer Nation*. As so frequently in American history, the Enterprise sense of high calling leads to violations of its "noninterference directive." If Kirk and his crew encounter an endangered planet, their sense of duty impels them to intervene. It may not be legal, or right, or even sensible, but the zealous imperative to redeem is all pervasive. While Gerrold may have overstated in claiming that among the seventy nine *Star Trek* episodes there never was a script in which the *Enterprise's* mission or goals were questioned, he has accurately described the series as a whole (Jewett, 1977: 15).

Striking examples from the *Next Generation* include the redemption of the universe from the assimilating forces of the Borg. While confronting the malevolent yet ubiquitous force of the "Q continuum" the Enterprise once again is redeemed (through human bravery), and therefore all of "humanity" is delivered from the

throes of oblivion.

While the *Enterprise* regularly plays the mythic redeemer role, Mr. Spock embodies it in a particularly powerful way. His half Vulcan origin makes him a godlike figure, peculiarly capable of effecting redemption. Spock consults his computer with superhuman speed to devise the technique of saving galaxies and men from prodigious threats, leading the audience to view him with a kind of reverence that has traditionally been reserved for gods. Leonard Nimoy's interview, approvingly cited by the authors of *Star Trek Lives!* points toward audience yearnings for an omniscient redeemer. The viewer sees Spock as someone who knows something about me that nobody else knows. Here's a person that *understands* me. Here's a person that I'd like to be able spend time with and talk to because *he would know what I mean when I tell him how I feel*. He would have insight that nobody else seems to have. In short Spock is perceived as a god, which matches the requirements of the mythical pattern, namely that without a superhuman agency of some sort there is no true redemption (Jewett, 1977: 16).

Data takes the role of Spock to new proportions within the confines the mythic, for Data is the God that would love to be human rather than super-human. In his angst to become human, however, his "love" consistently provides human salvation.

Classical mythical themes embedded in the Trek discourse and the ideology of the Trekkers focus on a particularly paradoxical conundrum contained in the ongoing saga; although *Star Trek* consciously subscribes to the notion that it is necessary for humans to castigate mythology, *Star Trek* is completely and unequivocally mythical.

To use Joseph Campbell's terms, it is as if space-age man, having emerged from the "cocoon" of mythic ignorance, awoke to find himself enmeshed "in the dream-web of myth." This paradox of *Star Trek* reveals a myth of mythlessness. Its implicit claim to be antimythical and purely scientific is itself a myth--that is, a set of unconsciously held, unexamined premises (Jewett, 1977: 17).

The existence of a paradoxical myth of mythlessness convinces its audiences that there is no substitution of one myth for another, but rather a castigation of mythos. It seems that one fundamental key to the acceptance of the monomythic inherent in *Star Trek* is its emphasis on technology in the details of production. Gene Rodenberry labeled this the "believability factor."

The language contained in *Trek* is really not one of science, nor of technology, it would seem to be a language more analogous to religious experience. The ideology of the Trekkers in this study is actually is a translation of fundamentalist religious experience in the guise of the technological and scientific. *Star Trek* is not merely a television show, but rather, an interpretative tradition whose discourse is premised on a nostalgic Utopia that takes place in the technological future when humans are saved.

The appropriation of this kind of belief system by individuals is described at great length by the authors of *Star Trek Lives!* They cite examples of individuals deriving a sense of courage and meaning from encountering this reality system. "In *Star Trek*, the fan escapes not from reality but to reality -- to a reality where failure is only a prelude to success, where strength, determination and integrity can earn triumph just as Spock has won his battle by virtue of his strength." In other words there is a reality in the *Star Trek* fantasy that transcends petty problems, and it thus provides a means of salvation. The television programs communicate this higher reality to the audience, evoking faith and courage. Such language, is suitable for inclusion in William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* (Jewett, 1977: 20).

Akuta comes forward: "But it was Vaal who put the fruit on the trees, who caused the rain to fall. It was Vaal who cared for us."

Kirk: "You'll find that putting fruit on the trees is a relatively simple matter ... You'll have to learn to take care of yourselves ... you might even like it ... You will be able to think what you wish, say what you wish, do what you wish. You will learn many things that are strange, but they will be good. You will discover

love; there will be children." From episode "The Apple" (cited in Jewett, 1977).

Star Trek creates a future world where the glories of the past are pristine and the failures and doubts of the present have been overcome. It gives us our past as future, while making our present the past which like any historical event for the future-orientated American, is safely over and forgotten. One way that myths function, particularly those of creation, is to anchor the present to the past, and place the worshipper in the time of first beginnings. Something similar is the source of *Star Trek's* power. Myths no longer link us to the past, since we know that the past is gone and is of historical not immediate relevance to the present ... *Star Trek* by disguising our past as our future, puts us in it -- not the historical past but the mythic past of our first beginnings. There ensues a feeling of permanence, stability and renewed confidence. That is what is different about *Star Trek* (Tyrell, 1977: 713).

"Virtually all societies have some myth or memory of a Golden Age, a time of beginnings in which humanity lived in a state of perfect happiness and fulfillment" (Kumar, 1991: 4). *Star Trek* presents a somewhat reversed notion of the loss of paradise; where the fall is *not* associated with evil; evil *exists in* the paradisa. In paradise the collectivity of happiness destroys the "individual work ethic" and therefore the "individual." Evil is presented as the dichotomous opposite of individuality. The Borg exemplify the totality of all possible evil, for, as automatons, they exist without individuality, and only in collectivity. The Borg's sole purpose is assimilation. Without individuality, without struggle to achieve individuality, there is no possibility of fulfillment. The teacher-narrators provided the following pejorative comments in referring to the Borg.

The Borg were short-circuited when the crew took that young Borg. The crew captured "Hugh" when they put the idea of individuality into him and he's piped

into the rest of the Borg now they all have that and I think there is a short circuit. Probably people want to see what happened to them so probably it's not the last time we'll see them but I think that since everybody is hooked up to the same idea now in the Borg of an individuality in effect you've planted a revolutionary idea. Its really a democratic revolutionary idea put into a totalitarian system.

There's a Borg a culture. What they do is turn everybody into Borgs. They're not born Borgs they're created to become Borgs. I think they had a baby Borg. And it was like and it was like just a regular baby. So, I guess there is a Borg culture and Picard has introduced something new into it. But I don't think Picard is inconsistent with the prime directive. He only said: "We treat you like an individual" and from that statement he internalized it.

Still he was trying a deep down Picard was trying to fight becoming a Borg. It really hit Picard very strongly where he lived. He prided himself on control. Remember when he went home he was fighting with his brother and he started to cry, because his Borg experience really hit him where he lived. He was upset at the destruction he caused while part of the Borg. But he was also upset that he lost himself and for a man who has the kind of self control that Picard has that was a personal hurt, in addition to hurting the other people.

Individual initiative in a hierarchy of "work" offers the individual a chance not merely to "get ahead," but for self-actualization. The leveling effect of collectivity denies a member of "the species" the ability to mark himself off to maintain an individualized sense of worth apart from the group.

Paradise is usually a place of play, not work, where man's only activity is ritual obedience in return for all needs to be met. After the fall, work emerges as a form of penance done for the glory of God, or the good of humanity, in shirt [hair] in expiation of one's sins. On the *Enterprise* however, it offers the individual ways of expanding his skills and of interacting with the world. A similar shift in attitudes concerns the desirability of social distinctions. In the traditional paradise although Vaal has a spokesman no one is richer (because he works harder) or more highly-placed. Once again, on the *Enterprise*, hierarchy and distinctions between individuals are essential orchestrations of the working network of relationship (Blake, 1979: 311).

For the Trekkers, meritocracy and hierarchy are essential components of the "human condition." Work and hierarchy which are traditionally associated with God's punishment after the fall, and ensuing exile from the garden of Eden, are not envisioned as penance, but as a necessary (given) precursor in the human condition. Work is liberation. Work celebrates the "individual's" ability to achieve. The democratic "cult of the individual" is constructed under very particular parameters where, individual strength and individual initiative thwart the leveling effect of a collectivity. Only great men and women truly distinguish themselves from the masses of others. As one teacher explained, "in Star Fleet situations occur that allow the cream to rise to the top." According to the teacher-narrators a particularly important *Next Generation* episode demonstrates the significance of individual initiative, and immediate response. Actions that are passionate and often precipitous ultimately gain recognition from the larger group. Passivity, and "playing by the rules" gains nothing at all. In this episode Picard (the captain) "dies" and is granted the opportunity to live his life over again. The condition of this vaguely Dickensian fable is that Picard must change "something" in his life that he has regretted.

He didn't want to lose his girlfriend. But he knew he had to punch that other cadet out. When he went back he didn't beat up the other cadet. He didn't cheat that other race of people to win the game. Even though the other group, I forgot what they were called, fixed the game, or something like that. He always mourned that one decision. But if he didn't do what he did, look what he would have been, nothing, a big giant zero!

So, by changing his decision, and his course of action, Picard is not *called* to immediate action, he can not demonstrate initiative, he does not struggle on an upwardly mobile path and therefore can not become meritorious in the hierarchical structure (becoming *the man* he ought to be). In his reincarnated, rewritten life story, Picard cannot be considered as anything more than a junior officer. In Trek, one must be a team player, but demonstrate through competition that there is *the spark* of individual difference and initiative that validates superiority over others in similar circumstances within the group. *The individual* must stand out from the masses through works, deeds, and actions.

This theme is played out on several occasions including the Trek novel Imzadi (which was on the New York Times best-seller list). Commander Rikker (due to a complicated time-travel twist) does not rise to what ought to have been his rightful place in history, because of the death of Troi (his beloved Imzadi). He stagnates on a space station living a life that he felt was not his own. He did not take individual action to prevent Troi's death, thus, he is condemned to mediocrity. Another episode with Commander Rikker (aired originally on January 15, 1994) echoes this theme. Rikker's former Captain (now Admiral) commits an act of treason. He has developed Federation "cloaking" technology, despite a sixty year treaty with the Romulans preventing this occurrence. Twelve years before, while a young officer aboard another ship, Rikker merely followed orders. The older and wiser Rikker questions orders for the greater good of Star Fleet. His betrayal of the Admiral's intentions, and technological secrets, saves the Federation from war with the

Romulans.

Leadership and achievement are based in an individual response to a given situation. However, response ultimately concerns not the individual but the group. In *Trek*, too much satisfaction or dissatisfaction can only breed mediocrity. Satisfaction is seen as part of the Edenic, and dissatisfaction as equivalent to disenfranchisement. The disenfranchised can never belong to the group. Dissent may be penalized, but if done for the "greater good" will ultimately be rewarded. Dissatisfaction, on the other hand, can only lead to stagnation, for the dissatisfied individual does nothing for society. In the *Star Trek* world, work can and does set the individual free, within the parameters of archetypal constructions of duty, allegiance, and the call.

For the men of *Star Trek* as for the pioneers, paradise is to be explored. Open land beckons the plow, giving way to the new beginning that brings rebirth. It is the dreams of our ancestors followed westward; it launches our descendants into space. Inseparable with rebirth and death: natives of paradise too contented to appreciate the virtues of progress and advancement are reeducated ... *Star Trek* assures us of its validity by showing it as the unquestioned truth of the 23rd century (Tyrell, 1977: 714).

In the United States, the myth of the Garden of Eden has been particularly influential. In *The Machine in the Garden*, Leo Marx (1964) explores how the vision of the pastoral has affected the general cultural repertoire of white protestant Euro-Americans since these settlers first landed on its shores. Confronted with the vastness and splendor of the continent, the Europeans contemplated their dreams of a place filled with harmony. Yet when faced with the barren wasteland of the

west, "the myth of the garden so essential to Jacksonian democracy prevailed." The plough was invoked, that "most sacred of agrarian symbols, the instrument whose magical stroke calls down the life-giving waters of the land" (Blair, 1979: 315). The dialectical tension between man and nature in Marx's analysis emerges in Trek precepts in much the same manner as in Virgil's eclogue.

In *Genesis* the serpent mediates between Man and God, as well as between Man and Woman. In the myth of the frontier, the trapper, hunter or scout is the anomaly between White and Red. Fundamental to the psychology informing the myth is the tension between the longing for paradise and the knowledge of its passing. But both paradise myths, *Genesis* and the Frontier, link this tension with others -- social, sexual and moral. Such is the way paradise is treated in *This Side of Paradise*. Paradise as an idea, desirable but manifestly impossible, is mediated by the alien Spock. Paradise as a place lost yet sought after is mediated by the... *Enterprise*. ... (When) Spock ... returns to duty, he does so knowing his loss. He sacrifices the happiness of the spores to his responsibility to others. The cost of the sacrifice is made real through the love affair with Leila... Given the characterization of Spock as a constant struggle against emotions and the sexual feelings he has aroused in viewers, the affair expresses poignantly the pain of paradise lost (Tyrell, 1977: 714).

In this episode, paradise is sacrificed both knowingly and willingly for platonic love of other crew members and for the sake of duty. Duty enables the crew to continue on their quest, their holy mission. Paradise in the *Star Trek* philosophical constructs can lead only to stagnation, for paradise denies the need for the quest. Without the quest, without the taming of the un-tameable, we risk regression at best, or annihilation at worst.

"If we're wise," Rodenberry claims,

the human adventure is just beginning. And this is a powerful statement to a young-minded people, to think that the explorations and discoveries and challenges ahead of us are greater than anything in the past (Penthouse interview [March, 1976] quoted in Tyrell, 1977: 715).

The pursuit, the challenge, and the quest are then engines that drive the locomotor of progress.

For such an attitude as Rodenberry's paradise, a state of wholeness, of unity can only be stagnation ... Sandoval, head of the colony, says after his release from the spores: "We've done nothing here. No accomplishments. No progress. Three years wasted. We wanted to make this planet a garden."

Kirk pronounces the moral of the episode: "Maybe we weren't meant for paradise. Maybe we were meant to fight our way through. Struggle. Claw our way up. Scratch for every inch of the way. We must march to the sound of the drums."

Edifying but unpleasant. There is a third way, one suggested by the structure of the story: responsibility to others. Spock tells Leila: "I have a responsibility. To this ship. To that man on the bridge. I am what I am, Leila. If there are self-made purgatories, then we all have to live in them. Mine can be no worse than someone else's" (Tyrell, 1977: 716).

Spock's method of self-evaluation, reaffirms the exigency embedded in the American ethos: to be present for duty and to be responsibility to one's "job." The message Spock's message resonates with the capitalist ideology of work. Work provides the individual with a primary sense of affiliation. Work becomes self-actualizing because "being with friends on a mission (of) undoubted worth confers upon existence ready-made meaning and purpose" (Tyrell, 1977: 718).

The pastoral picture of Omicron Delta III (a planet)(symbolically speaking), the American Garden of Eden, expressed in a simplistic (but no less potent) nostalgic yearning for the past. The vision of Kirk utterly alone on the bridge of the ship amid all the technological marvels of the universe is a bleak picture. Certainly, the anguish of leaving the past behind for an uncertain future is here portrayed. Nevertheless, humans were not meant to live in paradise and must continue the saga, renouncing and sacrificing paradise for future progress toward an inevitable good. Paradise needs to be (re)created in terms that (re)define progress as paradise.

Another episode, "The Way To Eden," presents such a notion. In this version the agrarian pastoral becomes so antithetical to the human condition that it is *fatal*. In the deadly garden, the leader of a group of "space hippies" finally find their lush green paradise with the help of Spock, who represents the technological saviour. His actions as mediator between "technological/romantic man," and "pastoral/nostalgic man" reconfirm his role as the eternal "other," the alien. They also demonstrate the superiority of logical, unemotional "scientific" thinking, as opposed to emotional impulses. In this episode, the nomadic band find that the land burns their feet. Their leader Seavrin takes a bite out of a lush, red apple and dies. No serpent is necessary; the concept of a communal paradise is the serpent in itself.

Blair (1979: 314) notes that the word "paradise comes from the Persian word *pairidaeze* meaning not garden but wall or enclosure." In this sense, paradise can

be as a prison, "a construction of the human mind, just as the circle is a mathematical construction ... To seek an undifferentiated unity where there are no walls, no distinctions, is to seal an unconscious and untimely death" (Blair, 1979: 314). Even so,

paradise is a fundamental theme of the series, the subject of at least 13 of 79 episodes. It is imagined as the lost Eden of Genesis or as the garden of the New World that lies just beyond the Western frontier. Paradise is destroyed, the victim of *Star Trek's* unquestioned identification of tranquility with stagnation (Tyrell, 1977: 713).

The ideological rupture created by industrialism, post-industrialism, and capitalism in Western history mandates a reconceptualization of the paradisaical order. *Paradise* (as with any word, idea, or tradition) changes in order to validate the concept through time, and changing historical, and material conditions.

Star Trek addresses just this problem of how to combine spiritual values and civilization. *Star Trek* embraces the desert of outer space whose solemn silence is seldom broken even though it cannot be transformed into man's image of the ideal garden. Instead within the Enterprise we have a new model for a human garden where work, knowledge and change contribute to the cultivation of human nature (Blair, 1979: 316).

In Trek philosophy, meritocracy, work, and technology are celebrated. So the trajectory of the Enterprise is not seen as *fall*, but as *flight*; (Blair, 1979) attention is shifted from the garden as the location of paradise to the machine as an instrument which sustains and expresses the human consciousness which created it. Everything is delineated by an ethos circumscribed and defined by technological

flight. Everyone has a job, an individual identity, and a distinct place within a hierarchical order from which s/he derives satisfaction. Now man can create paradise through his technological labor. So the human community is the garden and the garden is the machine.

The American myth of the frontier, translated into outer space in the form of what producer Gene Rodenberry called "the wagon train to the stars," carries new messages amidst familiar resonances (Blair, 1979: 308).

I call it *Bonanza* in space! (From a Trekker teacher).

Kirk was my hero! It was like watching cowboys and Indians only with phasers and photon torpedos. So, for me, growing up in the world of space travel, it just seemed more realistic than anything else. It seemed more real than the cowboy shows (From a Trekker teacher).

Science fiction is the modern-day analogue to the Western (Roth, 1982). "Henry Nash Smith has noted that the myth and philosophy of the American Western offered no intellectual apparatus for taking in account the industrial revolution" (Roth, 1982: 9).

In a post-industrial, post-modern era, the setting of science fiction accommodates notions of reality better than the Western. It has nothing to do with progress, for *Star Trek* is nostalgic; but the setting in mechanical/technological terms rather than organic/agrarian terms is more easily assimilated into a technological world view. The icons however remain the same in Classic Trek as in the Western, and the visual motifs and metaphors remain static, the organic isolation of the wilderness becomes the mechanistic isolation of space. In the

Western, isolation is coupled with adventure; the same is true of the space journey, "Space ... the final frontier ... these are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise ... its continuing mission to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilization. To boldly go where no one has gone before."²⁴

One of the teachers interviewed who does not identify herself as a "hard core" Trekker, but rather as merely a fan of the show related the following story which connects the Western myth of Pax Americana with the *Star Trek* discourse.

Armstrong ... 1968 ... it was about that time ... a friend of mine was so excited because his great grandmother had seen ... and had her capacities about her and was seeing the landing on the moon! She had come across this country on a covered wagon and then she lived to see them live to land on the moon! I think I look at my kids today when I teach and I tell them that story I always tell them that story! I And I say, you don't know what you can see in your lifetime. I mean you don't know!

Think about what we seen how in our lifetime I mean calculators used to be this big and you had to find a plug and plug them in and they cost a fortune ... now you've got these little solar things that look like credit cards. I mean it's incredible, I mean, color television. We didn't have color television. They didn't have color television. Back then when I was my children's age, I mean you didn't have color television. We didn't have many channels. I think we had two channels.

The stuff that they talk about on Trek, all that language that they use really is real scientific language, which is kind of neat. It's not like they just make this stuff up. People and ideals don't change, the technology changes.

The similarity between *Star Trek* and the Western is significant as an ideological mechanism. The Western story is an indigenous American myth, perhaps the only "indigenous mythic narrative of the White American" (Tyrell, 1977: 711).

The isolation of a vast unexplored continent, the slow growth of social forms, the impact of an unremitting New England puritanism obsessed with the cosmic struggle of good and evil, of the elect and the damned, the clash of allegiances to Mother Country and the New World these ... are the crucible in which the American consciousness was formed (Tyrell, 1977: 711).

The dominant symbol of the Western myth is the inhospitable frontier. Space, "the final frontier" is conceptualized through the same motifs and themes.

Although Kirk and Spock bend over computer consoles rather than over campfires, they too have forsaken the comfortable world of the safe and the civilized for the final frontier (Selley, 1986: 90).

The rugged romance of the theme of the backwoods is articulated in a Byronic manner by one of the teacher narrators.

I mean, gee; it isn't like you could picture Kirk comfortable as an Admiral. Secretly, I think he was really happy when he got demoted to Captain. Even if in *Star Trek 6* he talks about feeling old versus feeling young, youth for him is out there. To stick him in an office, somewhere on a starbase or on Earth or Vulcan or anywhere would kill him. Kirk is not meant for the creature comforts of the world. He needs adventure. Remember the rock climbing scene? Kirk needs danger; he needs to live on the edge! I don't think he would even do well on *Next Gen*; I mean, that is some posh ship! I mean, time marches on and all of that, but, Kirk was meant to explore, and be first contact!

Consider also the following teacher's narrative rendering discussing *Deep Space Nine*. "*Deep Space Nine*" is a Star Base at the edge of a stable wormhole (another frontier, as the Gamma quadrant of the galaxy remains unexplored) replete with good guys (the Bejorans and the Federation), bad guys (the evil Cardasians), a salon, a holographic house of prostitution, a gambling enterprise, general stores,

and an invincible sheriff (who just happens to be a shape shifter). The teacher explains;

Well it is a frontier post. As a frontier post, with a potential enemy, they have pressures on them. If you are zooming around on a starship, you may not necessarily encounter enemies all the time. Anybody can go to the station. The Federation is there as a beneficial force. They aren't there to impose anything on the Bejorans; nor to force the Cardasians to do anything but to keep up to their agreements with the Federation. As I recall, the Federation was invited in by the new Bejoran government; so, they are there like the UN.

Perhaps the most significant part of the entire Western myth is the encounter with the "Indian." Trek reformulates this in terms of the "alien." "The problem of the alien is essential in every civilization, which inescapably defines itself in terms of what it is not" (Blair, 1979: 313). There are the good aliens: the generous Native Americans of Thanksgiving fame, and their symbolic counterparts, the Vulcans; there are bad aliens: Cardasians and their methods of torture recapitulate stories of "scalping" savages. Other stock characters include "stupid aliens" who must (constantly) be duped, Ferengis, as in the myth of Manhattan island being bought for \$24, and the misunderstood alien, the Horta, who defends only after being attacked.

The Vulcan is perceived as the friendly noble "Indian," the wise man who has educated himself out of savagery, similar to the new age, "ecological" (re)creation of the Native American. As a teacher explained, "You know, the Vulcans were once savages, but they needed to repress the savage, for they were assured of destruction." Nevertheless, "Spock must be half-human for us to appreciate his

Vulcanness, and through him, the even greater alienness of such characters as the bodiless Medusan ambassador, whom only Spock can contact and then translate to us through our humanity" (Blair, 1979: 313). A teacher expressed the subsequent allegory:

I consider myself a Vulcan. It is through their philosophy that I can realize that, if we do not follow their way, we may not be able to overcome many of our problems. There is a book. It is the one called Spock's World. It chronicles the early history of Vulcan and the Romulan way.

One of the Trekker teachers recalled her childhood growing up near the Everglades. There is a romanticizing of the Native American that is quite dominant in this narrative, and technology and ecology are intertwined in a nostalgic longing for the food and setting of childhood:

I used to go to Naples; and then, track inland into the swamp, with the Seminoles. I would get fabric from the Indian women. They would weave a very loose gauze kind of fabric. I would trade that for all kinds of stuff that they wanted from the civilian side of the swamp. Indian woman never came out of the swamp. I used to enjoy going in there 'cause they had such fascinating beadwork and different things. Oh, how they cooked! The sesame seed cookies were just so good! They this one lady made me a batch of seed cookies they were black seeds, so I assume they were caraway, they were so good!

When I was living in Florida, the Seminole Indians still had their drivers licences stamped "Indian." They could not buy liquor. When I was in college, the government decided that it was going to drain the swamp, and build a magnificent airport. The chief now said, "No, you won't!" He said, "If you drain the swamp we're gonna take Cape Kennedy." The airport was never built and the swamp was never drained!

I'll tell you a little secret about the airboat. Only the natives did it! For the most part people normal people didn't do it! When I was living in _____ (town), _____ (company), outboard motors were just beginning their testing on the

lake. They hired the Indian airboat drivers to do their testing. The airboat drivers knew how to handle flips and disasters in the water. The average motor boat driver had no idea. So, the Indians were the ones who were doing most of the testing. We lived on one side of the lake, and the testing area was on the other side. We spent a lot of time going there and watching them run their boats. Now Disneyworld owns it. Epcot Center sits where my house used to be.

People don't realize the Seminoles are very educated people. Most people think of them as savages. They are very creative. They live such a relaxed, wonderful lifestyle, you often wonder why anybody would want to live any other way!

The parallels to the Vulcan, Klingon and Romulan are striking, particularly when compared to the nostalgic embedded in the techno-ecological. One teacher chronicles her Trek-lore, as she elucidates her story.

You know I know that everybody thinks of the Klingons at least when we first met them on Classic Trek in "Let This Be Your Last Battlefield," or was it "Day of the Dove?" I'm sorry I am not really good at titles. I think they were really misunderstood. Sure they weren't Vulcans but still, with the Klingons, everybody just sort of thought they were bloodthirsty savages, but no! It all had to do with honor. Wharf has shown this to us, especially in the episode about his father. They would do things that we, or Vulcans, or maybe even the Romulans would never consider, and sure, they used to stir up a lot of trouble, just like the Cardasians do now. But it was honor. I think they have been misunderstood, and I am glad we are rectifying this!

Do you remember when Rikker went to live on the Klingon ship? And he was forced to eat that awful Graah? Maybe he never learned to like it, but you could tell a people by their food, and Klingons, let's face it, are basically macho types. They certainly do not have any table manners to speak. But Rikker made the attempt and went to their ship and got to understand them better, and perhaps began to realize who they were. He knew a little from living on the ship with Wharf.

I am saddened by the fact that we do not see a Vulcan constantly on the *Next Generation*. After all, they are "first contact." They have a civilization so old, so disciplined, they can just do things we can't. They live such a simple, disciplined life, they have overcome so much. Even with the repression of emotion, who

would ever want to live another way?

A portion of the creation (in imagination and longing) of the myth of the alien is articulated by Tyrell:

The mythmaking imagination has contained the Indian's alienness in two types: Chingachgook, the noble warrior ever outside the White Man's world, and Magua, sly, perfidious, fallen and by that fall, bound to the white world. Both types are found in *Star Trek*. The Romulans, whose name recalls the heroic founders of Rome, are aggressive militaristic aliens. Nonetheless they are "hard to hate."

The Klingons ... ruled by the principle that rules are made to be broken, by shrewdness, deceit or power. There is nothing admirable about them ... Though apparently distinct figures in the series (and perhaps in the creator's imagination), their dark satanic visages reveal Romulans and Klingon's as aspects of a whole, the Indian reborn (Tyrell, 1977: 712).

The Trekker teachers do not concur with Tyrell as to just who represents the "Indian." Certainly, through the "historical development" of the series text, the personages of the Klingons and Romulans have been rewritten, adding new enemies to the group, as older enemies are "civilized" into the realm of the Federation. One teacher says, "It showed it in *Star Trek 6*, I mean the Klingon race could not survive the way they were going unless they signed a treaty with the Federation."

As the Klingons have been historically white-washed into the Federation realm, honor (as evidenced the teachers' narratives) has become associated with the folklore of the Klingon. The same teachers states, "To die with honor means everything to Klingons," recapitulating the Western mythology of the "noble

savage." As the folklore of the "Wild West" was rewritten and became more sophisticated with time, the folklore of Trek became more elaborate with each subsequent manifestation. Listen to the narrative of a teacher as she recapitulates several of the stock races histories from Trek.

I hate Romulans! They have no honor. Just as Wharf says they're sneaky. I think they're the most malevolent enemy that both the Klingons and the Federation is facing, simply because you can't pin them down on anything. They won't keep a treaty. They'll ask for help then stab you in the back. That's the way they are. I don't know much about the Cardasians. Although I get the impression that if there was a treaty between them and the Federation, the Cardasians would reluctantly obey it as long as it suited them. I guess the Romulans might be the same way but they are just sneakier to me; I've had too much experience with them. Ferengi are just a pain in the neck. They're just a threat, but certainly not in the same way as Romulans. They aren't that smart or as sly. You can never see a Romulan coming with that cloaking device of theirs.

Yet the savage must be tamed, and civilized in order for America to fulfill its Manifest Destiny, and so in Trek, the Klingons must be brought into the fold, although, not meekly. There is respect given to an enemy who maintains integrity and fights to the finish. A formidable enemy is to be respected in the mythology of the Western frontier. And Kirk, it seems, is a formidable enemy. According to a teacher,

Kirk is a great warrior! He fights by intuition, and logic. That is a impregnable combination when you are exploring. There is no other way for him to go out, but by being killed, by someone, at one moment when he lets his guard down. He can't just roll over and die. He is like a firecracker that will not eventually be put out. He needs to just go up and go boom! Like in *Star Trek 6*, he got sent to that prison camp. He's always sticking his foot ahead of him without knowing where it is going to land. Then one day, I believe, that is what is going to happen. Specifically what is going to happen, I don't know; I'm not clairvoyant. I

used to think about it. Probably he'd get it by the Klingons or something. But now that we have peace, I just don't know; he is hard to beat!

Another crucial element contained in the Western myth is that the hero forsakes everything for the challenge of the frontier, living out a life in loneliness, austerity, and isolation. He maintains only a single archetypal relationship: that of an individual white man and an individual dark man, both living outside the bounds of "civilization" (for example, the Lone Ranger and Tonto). In tones expressing tremendous admiration, one of the teacher narrators proclaims,

"City on the Edge of Forever!" Now that was brilliant, not only for its social commentary, not only for its representation of true scientific time, but for the understanding it showed of significant relationships. Edith Keeler says, and you remember, she was clairvoyant to an extent, even thought she could not predict her own death. She said something to the effect, it looks like he will always be at your side. She then understands why Spock calls Kirk, "Captain."

April Selley (1986: 90) compares Captain Kirk to Natty Bumppo sensing that the two characters bear a striking, completely parallel resemblance to one another.

In "Admiral Kirk's Preface," Kirk writes of himself and his fellow Star Fleet captains: "We are a highly conservative and strongly individualistic group. The old customs die hard with us. We submit ourselves to starship discipline because we know it is made necessary by the realities of deep space exploration. We are proud that each of us has accepted the discipline voluntarily -- and doubly proud when neither temptation nor jeopardy is able to shake our obedience from the oath we have taken."

The self-imposed discipline is harsh when compared to that which exists in a more civilized world, but it is, nevertheless, necessary in the wilderness in order to ward off both temptation as well as to keep danger at bay, to ensure the pioneers' survival and the eventual taming of an inhospitable, untameable wilderness. In an idyllic segment from the teachers' narratives, one young woman illustrates the teachers' veneration of the Trek characters;

Picard, I think, has fulfilled the *Star Trek* ideal, in that Kirk is the frontier's man and he has to shoot Indians and Klingons and stuff. But that was years before the treaties were formulated. Picard is now cruising around in a more civilized era. I think the comparisons are really not valid. Kirk did what was necessary under the circumstances to survive. It was a different universe!

This quasi-historical reference is quite interesting insofar as the characters themselves can be interrogated.

Thus, Kirk notes that some critics characterize the members of Starfleet as 'primitives.' He readily admits that Starfleet's officers resemble our forebearers of a couple of centuries ago more than they resemble most people today. We are not part of these increasingly large numbers of humans willing to submerge their own identities into the groups to which they belong. The latter breed, according to Kirk, makes a poor space traveler (Selley, 1986: 90).

In April 1993, TV Guide ran a nationwide poll, asking who would be the better captain, Kirk or Picard. The following narrative provided by one of the Trekker teachers refers specifically to that article.

Kirk is a little bit trigger-happy ... Well there was an article in TV Guide some time ago asking, "Who was better, Picard or Kirk?" Certainly you saw that, didn't you? And who would win in a show down? If there was a confrontation between Kirk and Picard, the answer was Kirk would win because, while Picard was analyzing and discussing all the reasons they should not have a shoot out, Kirk would have shot him by then.

Although Kirk (and somewhat unwittingly) consistently interferes with the prime directive, he is seen as the explorer, whereas now that space has become a little less frightening, Picard is seen as more of a diplomat. This is rectified in the narratives of the teachers who explain, "They come from different times, and the requirements of a Starship Captain needed to change." "Each was the best leader for their moment in time." In another comparison to Natty Bumppo, Selly (1986: 91) writes:

As Kirk said "I have never happily invited injury: I have disliked in the extreme every duty circumstance which required me to risk my life." Yet since both Natty and Kirk must constantly confront death, the frontier beyond even the vast forest and limitless space. The possibility of death subtly reminds the heroes (and the reader) that something always remains mysterious and unconquerable. This awareness keeps the heroes' abilities in perspective -- their constant cheating of death endows them with self-reliance and mythic stature, yet their ultimate susceptibility to death as human beings keeps them humble and emotionally sensitive to their own and their friends' transience.

For the Trek teachers this is translated as:

I see this Classic Trek evolved mythology around Kirk. That he was invincible. Even in *Star Trek II*, he always talks of how he has cheated death, how he has skirted it, and gotten away with it! Well people in real life do that, and one day they do it, and then they don't. One day he'll do something that'll put his life in jeopardy.

The impetuous hero is modified by his humane-ness, his morality, his relationship to the Earth (or planet, or universe), and in loyalty to his "alien" friend. He is not an emotionless killer, but an ethical man who must kill in order to survive.

Captain Kirk's code, like Natty's, does not allow him to plunder, exploit, or kill in hate. Kirk is humane, like the United Federation of Planets to which he owes his allegiance. However, as Richard Chase points out about Natty Bumppo, the ideal American image is that of a man who is a killer but *nevertheless* has natural piety. Thus Kirk and Bumppo must retain their passionate killer instinct; it is all the more to their credit if they can control this instinct and utilize it constructively (Selley, 1986: 91).

Several episodes of the program exemplify Kirk's ability to subdue his killer instincts and therefore transform from man-as-animal to man-as-contemplative master of the universe. "The tongue ought to be mightier than the sword," in a universe where instinct and wit are transformed into intellect and duty. In "The Enemy Within," Kirk is divided by a transporter accident into two sides: the good and the evil.²⁵ He discovers that it is his evil side that gives him the power of command. His good side, which remains in charge of the *Enterprise*, rapidly weakens, and with it his ability to command. In another episode of *Star Trek* entitled "Mirror, Mirror," two parallel universes exist; due to another "accident," the crew members are exchanged for their counterparts in the other universe. The other universe is savage, not tamed. At the end of the episode where the crew members are once again united on the bridge, Spock tells Kirk that "It was much easier for you as civilized men, to act as barbarians, then it

was for them as barbarians to act as civilized men." Yet Spock then looks at Kirk as if to say that he knows that Kirk relished his role as savage, because the accoutrements of civilization merely suppress the barbarian contained within him. A Trekker teacher expresses in the following narrative her optimistic vision for the future based on the episode "Mirror Mirror."

I love that episode ... it had a profound impact on my life. "I am a killer but I will not kill today." It showed me that we do have hope, that there is possibility, that we can conquer the savage resting in our souls. Tomorrow, maybe we can see that we can act civilized we do not need to resort to violence, even if we are by nature violent creatures, we can learn, like the Vulcans learned, to suppress that violence and learn how to live within logic, and reason.

Yet, as in all of Trek, optimism prevails, and the homogenizing principle prevails. Eventually, the galaxy will be tamed and civilized, because ultimately we are all brothers, related genetically; again the myth is reconstructed from organic to mechanistic, and again to the techno-organic (which can be seen as a futuristic combination of the two seemingly dichotomous ethos into one). Two teachers explain this "ethos" in the following narrative segments.

When I say, if there is going to be a prize at the end of this, we all think materialism! We don't think that is going to enrich our soul! "Who Watches the Watchers," well, that was really neat because the primitive cult of Vulcans were like our American Indians. Vulcans are vegetarians, but they are hunters and gatherers. In a way it will be sad to see them evolve, but, you know, it is necessary.

The first *Star Trek*, the classic, touched on the same Paradise Syndrome when Kirk went with the Indians. I mean it may seem strange to find American Indians on a different planet. But you have to remember that the

Preservers went around and seeded Indians all over the galaxy!

I thought the statement the Preserver, whoever, made about "we didn't do it for our ego or anything, but you just standing here is a testimony to our race."

I like the fact that the Romulan commander was affected. At least that's one step. Everything has one step. They will probably become friends with the Romulans. Everyone may have to form an alliance now that they have the Cardasians, and let us not forget ever there is still the Borg hanging out there!

According to the teachers' narratives, for old cowboys, cavalry, and starship captains the fulfillment of the original mission further alienates them from the realm of civilization. They find sanctuary only in the wilderness.

Well, Kirk is very much more civilized in the movies than he was in the original series. As Spock said, "only Nixon could go to China." Kirk was trying to fulfill his mission. He would jeopardize his mission because of something personal like that. He did have feelings. Sure, he hated Klingons; could you blame him? But it was a brave new world, a different frontier!

This is ... seven eight years earlier after all sorts of wars with the Klingons. According to the Klingon history, he's the main enemy! In fact, remember there was an episode ... I guess it was two years ago when there was a Klingon ship and they had Wharf and Kaylar dress up as the Klingon commanders on the Enterprise. Well, according to the history, and this is from Star Fleet College of History, that ship was sent to kill Kirk. They would wake up years later and get Kirk when he wasn't looking from behind. According to the history also, Kirk is one of the few non warriors who is regarded as a great warrior in the Klingon book of warriors.

Another teacher articulates,

My father was a Veteran. He could never live with me bringing anything in the house that was oriental. It didn't matter if it was Korean or Japanese or

Chinese or Vietnamese. Forget a car from Japan! I think he fought in all those wars. Anyway, Kirk is sort of the same as my dad. What I mean is that Kirk is a veteran of all the things that happened with the Klingons over all of those years. The world has changed, but he couldn't really be part of the change. He was from another era. Like my dad was from the 40's, 50's and 60's. He isn't useless though. Do you remember John Wayne in *True Grit*? That is one of my favorite movies. Kirk may have grown older and the universe may have changed, but that doesn't make him less of a hero.

As the technological meshes and melds into the organic (of nature), the world is hurled inevitably forward in the Manifest Destiny of the Universe. Three different teachers clarify this tendency in their stories.

I used to think that (Kirk) went to some world and he got lost. Now that he kind of made peace with that part of his life, and now that the Klingons are part of the Federation, who knows, maybe the Cardasians get him! I hope so. I hate to see him just die of old age, or something, to have outlived his purpose or skills.

Ultimately, in *Star Trek 6*, he showed a side that wasn't shoot-first-ask-questions-later. So, I think his character has evolved some. But, the nineties are different, so, we find it hard to stomach Kirk. He reminds me of "Q," because you never know; you always have a surprise around the corner.

He was a bridge. From one period to the next. But then you cross that bridge, there is no going back! But really, considering how arrogant we human beings are, we will always have enemies! We will always have to tame and subdue something!

The Trekker teachers look towards a Utopian future grounded in nostalgia for a time that never was. The presentation of the images on the screen, translate into a "possibility" that is quite apparent in the teachers eyes (after all it is there every weekend at 7 PM). They serve as the bridge ushering in the

future, going from one period to the next. They are the "Captains" of this mythic/nostalgic/Utopian vision. Their "job," their "mission" as teachers is to insure that the Utopian images presented on the screen, are inculcated into the minds of the children that they "serve." The "Federation" of teachers (like the hero Kirk) exist for the moment in time that is necessary to provide the initial ethos for their "vision on the hill." Their hope is that the children will take the "images of Utopia" from the classroom, to progress towards the "perfect world" seen on the screen.

End Notes

1. In the "traditional" Thomas More construction "Utopia is a verbally constructed world located in this world. Utopia is an other world immanent in the world of human endeavor, dominion, and hypothetic possibility and not transcendental in the religious sense" (Widmear, 1988: 4).
2. Both "Marx and Engels would defend themselves against the charge of Utopianism; and they are indeed not Utopian in the sense in which they use the term, even if they may be so according to other definitions ... The reason why the pejorative use of the term Utopia is useful politically now, as then, is that it can be used as a weapon in the invalidation of opposing ideologies and policies. The issues raised here touch on a central political and theoretical debate within Marxism and beyond, namely, that concerning the role of ideological process in social change. For this reason, the place of Utopia in Marxist thought has remained a controversial issue" (Levitas, 1990: 58). The re-insertion of the Utopian in Marxism was on the part of later or Neo-Marxists, although the definitions in classical Marxism consigned the Utopian to the reactionary insofar as it sought to impose an ideal typology of reality, upon reality, "rather than seeking in that reality the means of social change" (Levitas, 1990: 59). Sorel without a doubt shared this belief, and therefore claimed the myth as a transformative and mobilizing force and function.
3. Bakhtin argues that, historically speaking, social formations which are characterized by a monolithic linguistic ideological system tend to display

predominately magical or mythological forms of consciousness. Mythical thought encourages a relatively stable fusion between a particular meaning and a corresponding linguistic expression, which reflects and strengthens the world-view of the secular and religious elite. Hence, a mythological consciousness fetters the free, unhindered development of dialogic intercourse and dampens the world's capacity for greater expressiveness. Yet, Bakhtin speculated that "this situation of monoglossia could not hold sway for long" (Gardiner, 1992: 35). There remains always the possibility of subversion of the official discourse.

4. In

any overarching cultural formation which corresponds to a particular social-ideological conceptual horizon, there can exist a number of distinct national languages. Yet internal to any such national language are always present two or more social languages which Bakhtin describes as 'a concrete socio-linguistic belief system that defines a distinct identity for itself within the boundaries of a [national] language' (Bakhtin, 1981: 386).

Such a social language is distinguished by particular semantic shifts and lexical choices that can be made within the national language in question, and which can be correlated with certain formal linguistic textures and ideological motifs ... Some forms of semantic stratification are relatively enduring and widespread, whilst others live only a brief socio-ideological life before disappearing all together. But they all have something in common: all such heteroglot languages express a particular point of view on the world, a relatively coherent system of values, meanings and time space indices (Gardiner, 1992: 36-37).

Therefore,

at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological

contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These languages of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying languages (Bakhtin, 1981: 291).

5. The definition of myth is quite problematic, and contingent on ideological position.

Even the Oxford English Dictionary falls victim to such a tendency when it defines myth as 'a purely fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions, or events and embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena.' The OED proceeds to distinguish myth from legend, the latter implying a nucleus of fact. This narrow positivist definition of myth holds what is not true is that which cannot be empirically verified (Himmelstein, 1984: 4-5).

6. Since *Star Trek* "smiles on a future whose challenges are met by a reaffirmation of the traditional values, and in particular the repressed and withholding interpersonal style of the white male bourgeoisie" (Byers, 1987: 327), it seems that sacrifice for the white "father" is not questioned at all. Therefore, there is no racial question in *Trek*. A black underling willingly sacrifices his life for Kirk (as great white father) because Kirk's life is the "most valuable."

7. The ship The "S.S. Botany Bay," lead by Khan, was a eugenic nightmare. The *Star Trek* legend (and history) refers to a time on the Earth when there were eugenic experiments. The result was people who were both super-human in strength, ambition, intelligence, and arrogance. The Earth was then

embroiled in a Eugenics War, where un-tampered Terrans (the Trek word for Earthlings) ultimately defeated the "evil eugenics experiment." Rather than be killed, Khan and his followers placed themselves in cryogenic sleep on board the ship, and were awakened by the crew of the Enterprise. Khan is in the Trekker discourse a true villain. Khan is an "overweening egotist ... His extreme personality places him outside the social order. For one thing, he's too intellectual -- and eccentric -- to be 'one of us' (as we are represented by the crew of the Enterprise); he reads Shakespeare and even quotes Melville. More importantly, he's finally brought down by blind, tumultuous passion for Vengeance" (Byers, 1987: 332).

This is different than the "evil" constructed in the original image of the Klingons, or current constructions of Romulans, Cardasians, or Borgs, for in Khan is the evil embodiment of an individual living outside the bounds of meritocracy. Khan can be envisioned as the "evil father" (the Satan) who leads "his band of disaffected youths to their deaths" (Byers, 1987: 332). Even the use of Shakespeare in reference to Khan is different than other Shakespearean allusions in the "Trek text." When finally making peace with the Federation, the Klingon representative said "you should read Shakespeare in its original Klingon" (*Star Trek 6*). Shakespeare in the Klingon sense is used not to demonstrate intellectual arrogance, but to show common cultural groundings.

8. Kirk inadvertently killed Khan's wife (who originally was a historian aboard the Enterprise).

9. "If the example of the Ahab he quotes was a caution against transcendentalism, Khan himself is an exemplary caution against the non-conformist spirit of the 1960's. As for his young followers, they are clearly space hippies in their hairstyles and clothes and are thus opposed to Kirk's clean-cut uniformed 'children' (his word) whom he commands on a training mission that becomes a rite of passage" (Byers, 1987: 332).

10. According to Davis (1979: 5-6), "my sense is that until well into the nineteen-fifties nostalgia was regarded as a 'fancy word.' Easy and unselfconscious use of it was confined mainly to psychiatrists, academic psychologists and relatively few cultivated lay speakers."

11. The hierarchical dichotomy poses several feminist questions. Doane and Hodges (1987: 10) suggest that nostalgic writers implicate feminists "because they challenge belief in fixed sexual difference by exposing the strategies that are used to make sexual differences seem natural ... This writing ... challenges through its politics traditional ways of representing the authentic nature of men and women, but its very volume becomes a force that challenges male authority. Nostalgic writers not only want to put women in their place -- they want writing in its place too."

12. Nature is not only used to describe the conservative "natural order of things" but, also is part of the Protestant ethos and, part of the political

philosophy of the "founding fathers of the United States." One need only look at Locke or Hobbes to comprehend this. "If we look at the initial statement of the American political creed, the parallel between the characteristically American return to nature literary motif and American political principles becomes clear ... An appeal to nature justifies withdrawal from civil society as currently constituted and is then followed by an attempt to find the principles of a truly just society in nature itself. Stating the reasons for their separation and withdrawal from the British Empire in the first sentence of the Declaration, the colonists appeal to the law of nature and nature's God. And in the second paragraph, the Americans lay out the 'self-evident truths' they have found in nature" (Zukert, 1991: 3).

13. *There are several significant parallels here in regard to Durkheim's notion of Altruistic suicide resulting from too much social integration, where one would willingly sacrifice their own life for the "common good."*

14. Clearly, then, the "fun" of Trek must be viewed in a serious context. The "play" of Trek conventions, electronic game boards, et. al., are part of the acculturation, or socialization, into the community.

15. Neil Postman writes that

the electronic information environment, with television at its center is fundamentally hostile to conceptual, segmented, linear modes of expression, thus both writing and speech must lose some of their power...The television curriculum will have none of this though -- or at the least very little. As I have argued, its imagery is fast moving, concrete, discontinuous, and alogical, requiring emotional response, not conceptual

processing. Not being propositional in form, its imagery provides no grounds for argument and contains little ambiguity. There is nothing to debate, nothing to refute, nothing to negate (Postman, 1987: 422-423).

16. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann argue in The Social Construction of Reality that the mythological is one of the arrangements of the conceptual that acts to support a particular group's "universé maintaining symbol system." Fjellman, in a persuasive argument, ascertains that

in the anthropological literature there are two basic theories about how this works. The first, associated with the name Bronislaw Malinowski says that myth performs a 'cultural charter,' which a society's members use to direct and interpret their social rules and behavior. The second theory, presented by Claude Levi-Strauss, is that myth acts to mask and cover over actual contradictions in the institutional structure of society. These contradictions are worked out in myth and thus do not have to be worked out in a structure based social action (Fjellman, 1992: 259).

17. The pragmatic in Trek certainly can be seen in the pseudo-empiricist construction.

One of the most interesting elements of pseudo-empiricism in *Star Trek* is the 'Idic' philosophy that Spock brings from Vulcan. It is a vague series of ideas, including repression of sexual energies into a rut cycle, concentrating on deriving personal profit from competition rather than being obsessed with winning, and placing one's energies in technological manipulations. But the authors of *Star Trek Lives!* are impressed by the fact that ... 'the optimism of the Idic is implicit in the fact that this philosophy is practiced lived, realized by a planet wide culture' ... A large part of *Star Trek* fandom is energized by the belief that this Vulcan concept of peace is the only one which will help our world survive (Jewett, 1977: 19).

18. Trek attempts to display the positive aspects of technology. To engage in Trek is to embrace technological solutions. Therefore Trek presents us with a technological Utopia, which conservatively bridges "rather than widening the gap between the real and ideal worlds by demonstrating their relative proximity" (Fjellman, 1992: 218). Within this proximity is the juxtaposition of the real and the fantastic; the mixture of the two is presented in such a manner that eventually it becomes difficult to distinguish between the two.

Fredric Jameson has argued that something like this euphoric disorientation is a characteristic symptom of people's experience of postmodern culture. It's a kind of giddiness that sets in when normal parameters people use to define reality become occluded in various ways. Joel Achenbach calls the results of this process "Creeping surrealism" (Fjellman, 1992: 254).

19. Even the word "classic" somehow connotes references to the Greeks and Romans. Furthermore, in Trek perennialist knowledge provides the first principle; it is universal and transcends time and space. Caprio (1978: xv-xiv) in her religious treatise on Trek entitled: Star Trek: Good News in Modern Images writes that "*Star Trek* is full of universal images ... *Star Trek* is the message of good news of all faiths."

20. Nevertheless, this also can be seen as liberating. Bakhtin attributes the epic and related genres to both "counter-hegemonic or liberating" (Gardiner, 1992: 43) potentialities.

21. Trekker teachers seem to express a puritanical view of sex. During the initial phases of this dissertation I attended a Trek organization meeting. A young man was talking to me about Trek and the movies. I made a comment, questioning the fate of Captain Kirk, and later asked a question focusing on the relationship between Guinan (Whoppi Goldberg) and Picard (Patrick Stewart). I was told that I had a "very dirty mind." The puritanical sexual nature of the Trekkers may also be the result of several other factors including the person's upbringing, the marginalization of the Trekkers (both physically and socially), and the lack of what might be perceived as social skills. As one young woman told me : "While everyone was busy partying and getting pregnant too young, I was serious about my school work and I was dreaming about future possibilities in Trek."

22. This may be a result of what has been labeled as the new celibacy, brought about by the AIDS virus.

23. The *pon farr* ritual is related to the Vulcan biological cycle. Every seven years every Vulcan must succumb to irrepressible biological urges, and must do everything to reach his/her home planet in order to "mate." This can be compared to Salmon spawning upriver to consummate their particular biological destiny despite overwhelming odds. The ritual drives the normally emotionless Vulcan to profound emotion, and to violence. Pon farr is also a culturally symbolic ceremony, much like mythic medieval jousting tournaments for the damsel. If the pon farr is challenged by another, the Vulcan male must

fight for the "right" for the damsel to the death in order to complete the ceremony.

24. The original series used "Where no man has gone before." This was changed for the movies and the *Next Generation*.

25. The positing of good and evil in Trek is classically constructed, a veritable "Coliseum in the Stars": in an episode entitled "Arena," Kirk is sent to a planet by the Metromes, a superior race of people who were livid at the *Enterprise* for doing battle with a Gorgon ship in the Metromes' part of the galaxy. The barbarian in Kirk allows him to construct weapons to attempt to destroy the Gorgon. Interestingly, the Gorgon is a reptile which speaks to our mythological biblical fear concerning reptiles. He confronts the reptile in a cosmic struggle between good and evil. "Kirk is placed in the role of the archangel slaying the dragon devil" (Selley, 1986: 92). He then decides to spare the Gorgon by saying (and I paraphrase from memory) that "we will not play your game any longer. I will not kill today." He recognizes his barbaric killer instinct, but in order to be fully redeemed, he can not let his barbaric self overcome his more civilized urges. This notion repeats itself in the *Next Generation* when "Q" places the human race on trial as an inherently evil and uncivilized race.

In the episode of the classic Trek entitled "Day of the Dove," Captain Kirk must learn to co-exist with the Klingon empire. "Hatred and attempts at mutual destruction will only lead to an eternal hell" (Blair, 1979: 309). Therefore, in Trek there is only good and evil. There are no "gray" areas.

CHAPTER IV

STAR TREK AS RELIGIOUS AND RITUALISTIC EXPERIENCE

Gliding swiftly through the dark,
Sailing now in starry space,
Silently and free you fly,
Traveling midst time and place.

Like a quiet thing, alive,
Though your engines hum and roar,
Faster than the speed of light,
High above the sky you soar.

Oh! To be aboard you now
As between the stars you roam,
To be once more upon your decks,
The Enterprise -- my home.

(From a *Star Trek* Fanzine quoted in Tyrell, 1977: 721).

When modern television was in its pilot stages in 1938, E.B. White wrote perceptively about the way alternative reality in the picture box would someday threaten to replace the real world (Jewett, 1977: 20).

Q: Will we ever see the Continuum?

Whatever is in your head is better than anything ... When you concretize it it diminishes imagination. The next show will answer a lot of your religious questions.

Q: What if you're not religious?

Then you'll find it even more attractive. (Personal Notes from Question and Answer session with John De Lancie at 1993 *Trek-O-Rama*, Greensboro, North Carolina).

To the Trekker teachers *Star Trek* is both religious and ritualistic experience.

This chapter explains the "Trekker" religion in depth. There is theoretically a separation of church and state in the United States. To assume that the

religious impulse in our schools does not exist because of a "law" is naive, at best. If "religion" is part of the "collective subjective" that defines and shapes our "selves" then it too is present in the classroom and in the interpretation and instrumentation of curriculum. To clearly understand the Trekker evangelical impulse that shapes the Trekker teachers' classrooms, it is of the utmost importance to define and describe a very esoteric set of beliefs that may otherwise go unnoticed in the school.

Although *Star Trek* consistently takes on themes of a "moral" nature, the program presents "morality" ensconced in detailed scientific jargon. The Prime Directive (a prohibition opposing interference with the social and physical evolution of any species) contains "technology in a moral and political framework (Blair, 1979: 308). One of the narrators explained to me during our interview that "Trekker types try to live the philosophy of Trek in my starship! They're a bunch of do-gooders as they go about living under the philosophical doctrines." Another Trekker teacher reconfirms the ethos when she said, "Yeah, I think out of *Star Trek* have come how things should look like, sparking our imaginations, allowing ideas to flow, if someone wants to pursue it far enough!" A third teacher elaborates:

I think one of the 90's movements besides environmentalism is the return to spiritualism. We have gone away from God, or were so caught up in our daily lives that you run and do this and take the kids to do that, and you have no time to sit and think about who you are and how you fit in our universe, our plan. Now people are sitting down and saying, you know, now I need some spirituality and I think with the revival of *Star Trek* on TV I think it has

revived that.

I have noticed that a lot of teenagers from 13-18 really love *Star Trek*. I think they have grown up seeing their parents just so busy, not touching or reaching, God and spiritualism. They go to church and they just get preached to and they feel like there is nothing here. Then they see this spiritualism on *Star Trek*.

Getting in touch with who you are and feeling you know more than just things -- because you get bombarded with things, things, things! Buy me, buy me, buy me! You have to have the right sneakers, the right clothes, and the right toys. You know what I'm saying. Their life, they feel, is like "Is this all there is?" So when they are presented with *Star Trek*, they say, "There is more to this!" There is something for me to attach myself. I could be part of this. They are seeing possibilities! They could go to space and be part of this family, and the closeness on the bridge.

They are seeing more to life! So it is a religion. 'Cause they are getting what we used to get through church when we were young. Through the TV show they are seeing comradery, how you are supposed to be nice to people. Certain teachings from the bible they present in *Star Trek*. They don't just go up to something and kill it. They want to be treated like you want to be treated! *Star Trek* has changed the tide!

"*Star Trek* fought to create a wholly believable technology and a real universe" (Jewett, 1976: 18). The *believability factor* sought after by the creators of the program was not merely created for the sake of technological babble or for "technology for its own sake" (Blair, 1979: 308). The Trekkers continually cite *with reverence* the scientific and technological details in the program which for them "create" an easily realizable universe, and a conceivable technological framework that can be discerned, grasped, and embraced as not merely possible, but also probable. "The beauty of *Star Trek* is they are so meticulous in detail," states one teacher.

At least one crucial caveat is called for here. While exactitude and gadgetry are parts of science, they do not constitute the degree of scientific objectivity capable of calling one's own myths into question. The essence of the scientific outlook is a critical state of mind, which is willing to examine all dogmas, including those of science itself. Karl Popper, a major interpreter of science has even argued that ... what we call 'science' is differentiated from the older myths, not by being something different from a myth, but by being accompanied by a second order tradition -- that of critically discussing the myth ...

This is conspicuously lacking in *Star Trek* because mythical formulas so crucial to the plots are never called into question. Indeed, the myth of mythlessness ensures that they not even be acknowledged. Instead of a rigorously self-critical scientific outlook, *Star Trek* offers *pseudo-empiricism*, an empirical veneer of gadgetry and crew talk applied to a mythical superstructure (Jewett, 1977: 19).

The believability factor in *Star Trek* is essential to the program. Further, the believability factor is cardinal to the Trekker creed. "Things on *Star Trek* look right" (Tyrell, 1977: 712). If the technology did not look accurate, precise or indisputably authentic, if *Trek* did not embody a technological fantasyland, the program content would not be either easily acceptable or easily assimilated within the doctrine. Two different Trekker teachers explain the importance of believability in technological components of the program:

I know when *Star Trek* first came out there was some speculation as to who were the technical advisors. Much was made in the popular press that *real* scientists were advising the producers of the show. What they came out with on *Star Trek* as far as the technology was possible, it wasn't ridiculous. It was based on sound science. It might not be possible with our present understanding of technology, but the principles were sound.

I don't think the things that they do are impossible and they all, if you really listen ... the stuff that they talk about ... All that language that they use really is, you know, real scientific language. Which, is kind of neat. It's not like they just make this stuff up. I just think its absolutely fascinating.

The technology utilized in the *Star Trek* show helps disguise the religious nature of the program by placing it in the language of empiricism and humanism which purports to castigate notions of traditional religion. The Trekkers, however, are acutely aware that the nature of the program content for them is ultimately spiritual. In the words of one of the narrators

What I like most about *Star Trek* is the spirituality, even though I started watching it when I was really young! My very first episode I ever saw was "Arena," where Kirk was going out after the Gorn. And I was like, "Oh, this is cool!" This lizard guy and Kirk were trying to fight and everything. At the end he didn't kill him and I remember sitting, going, "OK. Why don't you kill him?" If it was any other show on TV, he would of killed him! And I was going "kill him." That's the thing! Most things today project "Kill, kill, kill!" And *Star Trek* is saying "Don't kill!" And I remember sitting there, being ten years old, watching that, going, "Ooh, this is different; this is neat!" And then he spoke to that guy, the Metronome, who said, "there is hope for your race." I remember at ten sitting there, going, "this is much more than a show!"

Star Trek revitalizes Christian constructs installing and projecting them into a futuristic quasi-scientific setting. An elementary art teacher explains, "If we were really living in the *Star Trek* era and we were to have an alien life form, would we tolerate it? Oh sure! Why? *Star Trek* has opened our minds and our hearts to tolerance." "In effect *Star Trek* takes our roots and disguises them as branches for some of us to cling to" (Tyrell, 1977: 712). A tenth grade history teacher maintains that

fundamentally the purpose was to show people there was more to *Star Trek* than just a TV program. There is real science involved here! I think the future is being driven by the present and the present is easy to think of or conceive of in static terms, but it's this whole dynamic that's constantly going on. The

overall philosophy of *Star Trek* demonstrates is that there is a tomorrow. We are not going to destroy ourselves. The world isn't going to go up in a big nuclear fireball. There is a bright positive future, if only we strive towards that bright positive future.

According to Nelson (1976: 144), "technology as saviour has two important points: first, it is created by humans (so we can assume we can control it) and second, it has the vocabulary to sound convincing (whereas traditional Christian language no longer does)." *Star Trek's* reliance on technical jargon helps us substitute a rationalistic crypto-technological language for an antiquated Christian language, making assimilation of the same sort of principles savory and comfortable. As one narrator describes

It really is no different than any of the other religious philosophy. It is all based on the same precepts. But it is couched in the future and it is couched in a way that is attractive and exciting where conventional religious philosophy is not. Conventional religious philosophy is couched in fear, dread, which I think is the big difference. The ideas behind *Star Trek* are the technological ideas. *Star Trek* drives the future!

There is "(a) popular belief that the religious impulse is dead. Presumably it lies entombed alongside pagan mythological consciousness -- both victims of a patricidal, secular science" (Jewett, 1988: 23). It would be wrong to presume that *Star Trek* is *merely* a media manifestation and a commercial enterprise. When I consider the narratives of the Trekker teachers, and the whole Trek phenomena I begin to realize that

(r)eligion may have merely changed its theater and neglected to place its name on the marquee. The move from cathedral to the tube, screen, or stereo offers the faithful many of the values sought in traditional religion (Jewett, 1977: 23).

With tremendous conviction, a Trekker teacher elucidates her beliefs

Well, I find, for myself, that show might be like a bible.¹ When I'm in a situation where I have to make a moral decision, I find myself relating to the show. Well, what did they do? Not so much that I want to be a Picard, and I'm not modeling myself after him. But, I think back on an episode, how they handled it and I say, "yeah," and use it in that way. And I handle it in that way! Yes, that's like making it a religion!

A syncretic form of substitution² has been made on the part of the Trekkers.

Certainly, in a late capitalistic age the devotion of the faithful is not something that is discouraged by the producers of the program.

"There are no new answers, merely new and easy forms of the old answers" (Laurel, 1983: 144). This sentiment is both echoed and elaborated upon in the narrative of one of the Trekker teachers:

If you take *Star Trek* out of our society right now, we don't have any answers to the future. We have nothing! There's a possibility there's a Vulcan someplace running around who is going to show up here with a friend and crash land in the lake. And somebody's going to say that he'll come back in 40-50 years with a ship full of them. Now that's a possibility and that possibility can make the difference between death and life in some people!

Within the paradigm of Trek, the present world has not changed; values have all been rearticulated, however, "The religion of Madison Avenue is a slickly packaged and well researched blend of doctrine and sacrament" (Laurel, 1976:

141). The polysemic articulation of (new/old) values creates powerful language which incorporates the perception of change without changing essential elements. The translation of past categories allows the mythic to move into the present, positing conceptions of change, yet presenting a discourse that is grounded in "traditional" positivist premises. Consider the following, related to me by a social science teacher:

"Who Watches the Watchers?," from the second season, was the best episode; it explained so much. There was a primitive cult of Vulcans. "Star Fleet" has come down in a cave and set up an underground complex and a cloaking device. They are all scientists observing development, like Diane Fossi analyzing the apes. They couldn't be seen and therefore not interfere with their cultural development. Their generator blows up and they quickly call the Enterprise.

She continues by explaining that several people were injured in the explosion, including one of the "natives," The decision was made on board to "beam" the man up onto the ship in order to save his life. Although medicine had perfected a "short term memory blocker," it just did not work on this particular race of people. So he had to be returned to the planet, his memory intact. She proceeds:

The guy remembered Picard -- The Picard, the God, and told stories. It made you think about your religion directly, how religions are started. This guy came down and said he was saved and "my daughter saw me resurrected" and "I saw the Picard." So now they start believing in a god called Picard, Picard makes the effort talking to their leader, saying "we are just a machine above your planet; we are not gods."

The teacher then began to articulate the episode in terms of her own belief system:

Stories like Moses splitting the Red Sea. What really happened? From the story we get, was there a miracle? Did we perceive it a certain way? So today we think, he just went poof? But it is easy to see it was some blockage of water or a machine. That wouldn't negate it to me; others would be devastated. It wouldn't bother me

There is a God! Of course! I don't think that God is God like we think. I really think god is another race, existing in another area. I mean if you had the powers of "Q," wouldn't you be tempted to go to a planet and make yourself a god, and wouldn't you be concerned about the welfare of the people? God is not the only Superior Being and humans are not the only people that exist in the universe.

Pseudo-positivist sleights-of-hand ensure that "neither the new believers, the producers, nor even the sponsors comprehend that a strange religion is in the making" (Jewett, 1977: 24).

The South Shall Rise Again --- and Conquer the Universe

"Feelings," Eudora Welty wrote, "are bound up in place." Knowing where one started allows one to understand where he or she is. This relationship between place and feeling is central to curriculum theory's study of place. A sense of place sharpens our understanding of the individual and the psychic and social forces that direct him or her. Without place our appreciation of such particularistic forces tends to be fuzzy and depersonalized. Indeed, place particularizes and conveys embedded social forces (Kincheloe and Pinar, 1991: 4).

All the Trekker teachers interviewed live in a region that is referred to as "The South," a place where, it is commonly held, "you can't be Southern without

religion being an important part of your life." Rodenberry himself explained: "My family was from the South. My mother was very religious" (Alexander, 1991: 9). Yet all these narrators have experienced some degree of alienation from the traditional Christian church, and believe that they have exchanged Christian religious tenets for a seemingly different "myth of mythlessness" (Jewett, 1977: 29).

The Trek belief system, it would seem, is just as evangelical as any Christian revival meeting, and is based on the same ethos embedded in the southern fundamentalist discourse. According to the Trekkers, the organizational demographics of all fan organizations demonstrate that the South has a larger following than the North. Several teachers explain why, one speaker says that Southern Christians

... won't explore any other aspect; they'll live and die in that church with that one religion, with the one view. And that's all they care about. They don't want to find anything else. That's why I think it's really weird that the South has a real following for *Star Trek*. Maybe that's why they're so closet-y. 'Cause they are trying to break off from this pattern. And yet they don't want to cause ... The society down here says that's bad, so they do it in the closet ... Because that's their alternative to their religion that they were ... force-fed.

Another concurs,

Being raised in the South, religion has always been black and white. You live in this box. You don't dance. You don't go to the movies. You don't watch television. And this guy over here is going to hell, and you're not. And that's the only difference in the world. And this guy over here, he's living in this little box and he's got the same kind of beliefs, and you're going to hell. And, this one over here says that you can't cut your hair and can't wear short

sleeves and you can't wear this and you can't wear that and you're going to hell. In *Star Trek* now there are Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Jews, Protestants.

One narrator believes that

Star Trek has made a difference in my life in the way I handle people and live with people across the board. Strangely enough people who are totally involved in *Star Trek* are not prejudicial by race, by religion. In fact, how would you put it?

One "transplanted" Trekker teacher (after thirty years of living in the South, he is still constantly referred to as "Yankee") states:

I think it started down here. It spread out from North Carolina, I believe. But there's a few in the rest of the country. The ship down here is more active for me for because everything is much more concentrated ... I guess that's just a regional thing. It allows you whatever you need but does not prevent you from dealing with someone else of a difference [i.e. who's different].

Another Trekker teacher (who teaches history and coaches football) explains the southern phenomena of Trek this way:

There's a list of membership, and it proves that Trek is more Southern than Northern. Maybe 'cause there's not as much going on in the South; life down here tends to be a little slower. So, maybe it's just a way of expressing a need for imagination in the South. You know, 'cause it's hotter down here. It's just really, I think, it's just imagination coming to fruition.

"*Star Trek* presents an alternative church," one teacher says; "they don't have to announce [services] or go to [it], they can have it right in their own little home every Saturday night." Max Weber "anticipated the advent of new and

terrifyingly irrational gods in the minds of those who were to live in the rational cage of modern society" (Luckmann in Bourdieu, 1991: 168). The secularization, institutionalization and bureaucratization of our culture did not cause religion to fade away; religion however [has been] placed under a "variety of disguises" (Luckmann in Bourdieu, 1991: 169).

Trek is disguised within the school context as an innocent pedagogical "tool," an augment to traditional curriculum that is innovative and interesting for the students. The classroom in Trek is the church, the teacher the preacher, and the students a flock to be shepherded. Clearly "religion" is present in the schools, to assume that there is a separation of church and state is to assume that teachers leave "themselves" at the entrance each morning at 8:15 A.M. and reclaim "themselves" at 3:30 P.M.

The Pragmatic of Trek

In the episode "Who mourns for Adonis," Kirk tells Apollo that "We have outgrown you ... You have asked for what we can no longer give." He admits "the time of the gods is gone" (Jewett, 1977: 11). The episode attempts to give a clear message that the era of myths is over and "science" could explain everything (including the presence of gods). As one teacher explains,

Humans have this thing that as soon as we find something new, we have to explain it! Why, why, why? Now! Usually, it's wrong! Look at dinosaurs! We used to think that they drug their tails and they were slow clumsy things and stupid. And now we have a whole different perspective. Ten-twenty years we'll find out new things because we have this habit of saying why?

And we limit ourselves. By not waiting for science to really understand the phenomena! I think our human race gets caught up in these things. We should get more in touch with our spirit and our brain! Then we can accomplish more!

In Trek, philosophical constructs of "science" (including the quasi-holy Trinity with Rodenberry or Spock at the head of the triangle) take on the role of the deity. The truth/proof relationship in the Trek world elevates science to a new religious order by castigating archaic gods and elevating an Aristotelian notion of "truth" as supreme. Several of the teachers explain this in their narratives.

One teacher says

I'm not sure about religion, but philosophy seems to have lots of questions. Religion seems to me [to say] that you had lots of questions and took that leap of faith to the answers. I think that leap of faith is that, when you had the questions, you have decided what the answer is. That is what religion is. I see that as something very different than science. In science there is truth! You must prove things in science!

Another speaker elaborates:

They make you think "Q" is God. They make you question your own religion. I think anything that makes you question your life is good! Anything that makes you search for truth is good! Especially in the South! They go through life, "This is what I believe, this is what my parents taught me, there's nothing else!" They don't [i.e. didn't] question one word! But, parents are only human too and they can only teach you so much! I think I would have failed my daughter if she doesn't question things I've taught. At least I know she is exploring alternatives and that's what *Star Trek* tells you to do! I think that people never find the answers if they go through life thinking, "This is correct!" "This is correct!" "This is correct!" Nothing is correct!

Yet the culturally salient need for a "truth," a "scientifically" provable truth, remains constant. The idealistic paradigm, does not present a differing structure but rather builds on the pre-existing Christian structure. Therefore there exists a firm grounding in dominant cultural themes discernible to the disciples.

The Way, the Truth and the Light

Between 1966-1968, seventy-nine original episodes of the program *Star Trek* were produced. My sense surrounding the subsequent phenomena is that had the show not gone off the air so abruptly, we would not see *Trek* manifested in the same type of format, or providing the same sentiments that it currently provides to its "membership." Yet, the program did go off the air after three seasons. It was the fans who kept *Trek* alive by scripting their own stories, and, through the fan clubs, developing an interpretive tradition.

The authors of *Star Trek Lives!* ask why so many thousands of hours have been devoted to writing, editing, and publishing this fan literature. They ascribe it to ... the sheer love of *Star Trek*. People have become so entranced with that world that they simply cannot bear to let it die and will re-create it themselves if they have to ...

... By writing stories, they produce the feeling that they are in effect knowing the gods. There is a ritualistic, confessional, quality to this writing. The writers' expression of personal experience is largely subordinated by mythic conventions. In a ritual fashion, the fictional characters are kept alive. They enter into personal relationships with the devotees. They live on in faith. It all sounds very much like the practice of dogmatic theology in a traditional religion (Jewett, 1977: 31).

Syndication and reruns gave Trekkers further impetus to view the program as a scriptural, religious text. By the time the movies and the two new Trek shows were produced, *Star Trek* had become not only a way of life, and a philosophical premise, but a dogmatic and codified religion as well.

'Whither man?' and 'Why?' and 'What's it all about?' and 'What is the proper relationship of man to himself, to his group, to the universe?' Here, within the premises of faith provided by the *Star Trek* format and characters, a new theology is developing. Its scripture is embodied in the seventy-nine original episodes; its task is to unfold the meaning of that revelation for basic human questions ... *Kraith* claims that *Star Trek* is '... a staggeringly effective model for dealing with deep human questions' (Jewett, 1988: 31).

Schools spread the religion and converts are inducted into the realm of the faithful. *Star Trek* presents a scientific reformulation of fundamentalism under the guise of a pop culture artifact that has been translated into a perceived "reality" on the part of the Trekker "collective subjective."

Discerning the pop religion of *Star Trek* presents a dilemma. An anti-religious bias is present in *Star Trek* materials, and in several instances one finds explicit attempts at smashing idols. It is strange that iconoclastic episodes like "The Apple" should have the power to evoke the kind of religious response ... we have cited ... This instructive episode inverts the Garden of Eden premise and justifies a technologically motivated "Fall" after eating a mythical apple, as an advance from religious superstition to human freedom. In fact, "The Apple," features Captain Kirk actually destroying the religion of a paradisaal planet for the sake of a progressive secular outlook (Jewett, 1988: 24).

A progressive secular outlook can be as multi-faceted as fundamentalism itself. For example, one teacher addresses notion of God from his quasi-

denominational interpretation of the program content

See, those are all alien characters who were god-like, to humans, but, not God! And, remember in *Star Trek Five* at the end when they think they have found God and it turns out that he is not. Kirk says, "God is always in here; it's in the human heart. I think that's where you can separate god and god-like.

The biblical parable remains present, as we trade the old mythos for the new. Trek dissolves the distinction between the "real" and the "hyper-real." In an *Baudrillardian implosion of signs*, the form of (hyper)reality evidenced in Trek creates and perpetuates a reality "more real than real" (Kellner, 1989: 68). It then becomes quite easy to envision at which points the television show is translated to the teachers as biblical material. There is an intertextual conflation at the point where the real and the sign intersect, where history becomes the juncture of past, present and future, coextensive and coexisting.

The Father, the Sons and the Holy Ghosts: Second Coming and Resurrection in Trek Time Constructions

The last interview that "he" [Roddenberry] did on the 25th Anniversary tape of the show, is considered gospel by hard core Trekkers. It *is* the *word* from "The Mount." Of course, he died several months after he made it. Captain Kirk or Leonard Nimoy, all the original characters are considered prophets. Then you have the disciples on the *Next Generation*. That is the way the hard-core Trekkers see it. And you don't want to get into a conversation with them unless you really know what you are talking about 'cause they'll shoot you down in a minute (From a Trekker teacher's narrative).

"I perceive everything through Gene Roddenberry's eyes; his vision is mine!"
(From a Trekker teacher's narrative).

To completely comprehend the religion of Trek, it is necessary to look at its creator, Gene Rodenberry. Rodenberry (regardless of how he has been interpreted) considered himself to be a humanist (Of course traditional fundamentalists have always labelled humanism as a religion, and claim it is taught in the schools). Several Trekker teachers use the word "humanist" to convey Rodenberry's wishes and word. In the words of one of the narrators;

It is really a humanist view! The inherent goodness of man. Given the opportunity that goodness will come out! It is really a very positive, very upbeat kind of philosophy!

Rodenberry's rebellion against Christianity demonstrates the validity of the old axiom that says that there is a fine line between love and hate. Indifference is the true opposite of either emotion. Rodenberry's relationship to the fundamentalist discourse is the flip side of the same coin, not a different form of tender. Therefore Rodenberry's (anti-) religious sentiments clearly demonstrate a quasi-Christian ethos. In an interview conducted for The Humanist magazine in April 1991, he says:

Every Sunday we went to church -- Baptist church ... I listened to the sermon, and I remember complete astonishment because what they were talking about were things that were just crazy. It was communion time, where you eat this wafer and are supposed to be eating the body of Christ and drinking his blood. My first impression was, 'This is a bunch of cannibals they've put me down among!' For some time I puzzled over why they were saying these things, because the connection between what they were saying and reality was very tenuous.

How the hell did Jesus become something to be eaten? I guess from that time, it was clear to me that religion was largely non-sense -- largely magical, superstitious things (Alexander, 1991: 6).

Rodenberry did not lambast the Christian religious because of its ethos; rather, he did not, or could not, envision the metaphorical connection in the ritual of communion, among other mythological precepts. However, his quasi-anti-mythic response is tinged with an aura of melancholy.

Santa Claus doesn't exist. Yes, I think back on it now that there were all sorts of reasons he could not exist and maybe have a little sadness that he is gone, but I think the same thing about Jesus and the Church (Alexander, 1991: 6).

Further, Rodenberry explains in the same interview,

I was born into a supernatural world in which all my people -- my family usually said, "That is because God willed it," or gave other supernatural explanations for whatever happened. When you confront those statements on their own, they clearly don't make sense. They are clearly wrong. You need a certain amount of proof to accept anything, and that proof was not forthcoming (Alexander, 1991: 8).

Rodenberry's conception of proof becomes a textual commandment of "the word" when reinterpreted in the eyes of the faithful, in the same sense that Jesus reinterpreted the laws of the Jews. For Rodenberry, truth always needed to be equated with proof. The speakers in the following narratives are quite sure that they have proof that

Gene Rodenberry was not an Earth man. He only looked like an Earth man. He was really an alien sent here to introduce earth to space travel, as it would exist in the future. *He is not dead.* He simply returned to his own planet and *we are to await a coming of space beings.*

Actually I think my theory is that there are certain people who are born and they are special in ways that everybody else isn't. God or whatever it is puts a special person in our midst and it could be somebody as simple or as complex as Ghandi or Mother Teresa. Somebody who has done special work that is recognized worldwide. Like Gene Rodenberry. I even consider someone like John Lennon who through his songs could enrich our lives and make us think about things that are different than what other people are saying.

Gene Rodenberry was put into our midst to make us sit and think. Jesus and Mohammed and all the others that we have claimed as prophets give us the same word. Gene Rodenberry was one of those special people put here. Because he said he didn't even really like science fiction. So it was all a medium to get his word across to the people. That is the same as any other prophet. He had to get done what he had to say.

This is a very crucial construct. For the Trekkers, the magical makes no sense. So the faith of the religious is placed in what they perceive to be the ideal Vulcan construct of logic. As one of the narrators explains, "If you look at Vulcan philosophy and *Star Trek* philosophy, they are really one in the same! The whole business of the idic and infinite diversity in infinite combinations is essentially Gene Rodenberry." Yet, in the realm of the "techno-scientific-religious," the probability of other life form(s) in the universe and Einsteinian laws of physics encourage them to wait for a "return." A Trekker teacher elucidates her construction of time:

They present it on *Star Trek* and how I believe it! We set distances and we make up time and we measure them! But in reality that is not the way it is.

There is no measurement because it exists in a complex way! Time and space and thought are all one³... You can make it happen! He made it happen, really believe! When Beverly was caught in that bubble, he said "It isn't me it is you!" Totally clear your mind and believe you can do it and she'll come back. You can use your thought; you can bend time and space and place, and see things. Time and space aren't there. I really believe right now the Civil War is going on. Right now cave men are doing something. Time is a circular thing and we can get to it any time we want to!

There is an omnipresent theme of scientifically-grounded resurrection contained in the Trek program and movie content. In *Star Trek III*, Spock "dies." He is both resurrected and saved by "science"; the "genesis" experiment creates new life out of nothing, replicating the "big bang" theory of the universe. Spock's being (essence, soul) was held by the ship's physician, Dr. McCoy, until his body was re-created. One of the Trekker teachers recalls,

It was in the engineering room. He knew, he knew, that he was transferring his "karma," for lack of better word, to Leonard. It was probably a good thing. Spock probably had an inside chuckle about that! Putting himself inside McCoy. But, I like the way Spock died. *The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one.*

The biblical parallel, using the name "Genesis," lends credence to the idea that what was once labelled "magical" can now be proven through technology. The physician-as-host is distinctly related to Christian postulates of "communion" between man and messiah.

Themes of the *Next Generation* focus on the notion that nobody really dies as long as there is progeny, genetic material, time warps, and the technological ability to maintain essence. Through DNA coding, Picard has "died" and has

been resurrected. The Klingons have had their "spiritual" leader returned to them (after a period of a thousand years), and have thus restored the Klingon crown, via cloning. A symbiotic slug-like creature called a "Trill" lives in the bodies of others who are called hosts (as in communion), taking and "embodying" not only his life (as experience/memory) but the lives (memories/experiences) of each of the hosts' lives. Picard has embodied the life of another, because a long-dead race of people who were not able to save their planet did have the technological ability to place their essence in a computerized spacecraft which sought out an empathetic being into which transmitted their selves and their history. Picard plays the flute left to him by the computer who gives him the memories and consciousness of this other life. A narrator describes her feelings surrounding the episode "Time's Arrow,"

"Time's Arrow" -- It was at the end of last year. It was when he was captured by a probe from a civilization that had ceased to exist. And he wasn't actually there, 'cause the society had been blown up by their sun like a thousand years before. But the society wanted to be remembered, for if they were, they would never have really died.

It took over Picard for about an hour, I guess. In his mind he lived as a citizen of this planet and grew from a middle aged man to an old man and he had children and he had a wife and all these things that he did not have in his real life. He had this probe-generated life in his mind. At the end, they find him playing this flute. He had learned to play during the time that the probe controlled him.

In *Deep Space Nine*, the spiritual leader of the brave "freedom-fighting" Bejorans comes aboard the space craft seeking a trip through the stationary

"wormhole" (a rip in time/space enabling ships to travel great distances in a short period of time), only to land on a prison planet where the punishment is immortality together with constant fighting between factions. She can only remain alive while she is on that particular planet. She said that she had prophesied this, and the planet is where her work must now continue.

Trek's notions of time are supported by Einsteinian physics; so *no one* (of consequence to the plot) ever *really dies*. There is an eternity surrounding time; there is parallel time, and one can go backwards and forwards in time. One teacher articulates his feelings about time:

I got the feeling that if we all live to a ripe old age and then we die in our sleep as all of us do, that we just don't die! There are so many different branches in time that the branch that you are in may be different than the branch that I am in. (Well, I can't speak for the branch you're in). But, in my branch, I have died several different times during my life. I've taken the wrong turn on my motorcycle and got hit by a car or when I mess with the electricity in the house; it really did electrocute me and I died.

But, the one that I remember is the one, the branch that I'm in. The one that's gonna last the longest. Other people's longest might be in one of the ones that I died early. So, they don't know what's going on here. I probably make some decisions on different branches of the tree. I'll go off and die for someone else.

The one thing that I'm going to remember is the one that I'm going to be in, is the one that I live forever. I have no reason to believe that, except that I know I'm gonna live forever. I've done some really stupid things and I've managed to still be alive. I can't explain that I'm still alive except the chances are that I died. I made the wrong turn; I drank out of the wrong bottle. Isn't that "City On The Edge of Forever?" Drank out of the wrong bottle. Marvelous show! It relieves me of the worrying about dying. I guess, I don't worry about dying, 'cause I know I'm not!

On *The Next Generation*, the ship's original security officer, "Tasha Yar," dies a senseless death at the hands of a creature that vaguely resembles an oil spill. Yet, somehow due to a time-warp she never died, at least not in that universe. In a complicated plot twist that has to do with female sacrifice and giving up her life for the one she loves, she is sent back in time to help defeat the Romulans. She is taken prisoner, raped and eventually dies a different kind death, at least in that one time line, and one universe. One of the peace-loving "Enterprise's" formidable enemies is Tasha's daughter; who recapitulates Judas' betrayal. The crew does not kill her in battle; she remains the daughter of their beloved Tasha.

One of the teachers explains the notion of time by citing a passage from one of the hundreds of *Star Trek* books. (She claims that she has read every single one):

For instance, did you know that Spock had a son? Oh, you don't. Oh, you poor thing ... Oh now let's see, Spock, and McCoy and Kirk are visiting a planet. Everybody is off the planet except for the three "Star Fleet" officers and one museum curator. Kirk hears a scream out what he thinks is a window and he runs and winds up warping into another time; he goes into a medieval time.

McCoy and Spock follow him and they wind up in an ice age. Now while in the ice age McCoy of course, gets very sick, and Spock. Of course, this is thousands of years before Vulcan was even inhabited, and this is before *pon farr*. Because this is when they're in their barbaric stage. So Spock falls in love and has relationships with this woman.

She has a son by Spock. Spock doesn't know this until they are visiting another planet and he sees paintings on a cave wall and recognizes the starship symbol that his son has drawn. He goes back through time and meets his son. Anyway, they have a time together, then Spock returns to the ship. In the next book his son has to come out of that time into modern time

and help his father and then go back. It doesn't interfere with the prime directive because it has to do with a rift in time.

The message, a Christian enduring and messianic resurrection and second coming, is cited throughout the narratives of Trekker teachers.

The death of Gene Rodenberry, the program's "Creator," has had important ramifications in the structure of *the community*. He has been deified via re-interpretation of the scriptural messages of Christian texts, in combination with the highly post-modern terrain of Trek. One teacher says

Gene Rodenberry died, but I use the word "died" loosely here. Gene Rodenberry died with a group of people present. He had written beyond his time. They, well, everybody thinks he wasn't of this world, of the sixties; he was not just beyond his time. Gene was from another world. He was put here to prepare us for other worlds.

She then very forcefully insists, "I think that Gene Rodenberry was used as an instrument. I don't think all that he did was his own ..."

At the end of a six hour interview (which took place in a truck circling around her town), another teacher stated, in the same emphatic manner,

I do firmly believe that God gave us *Star Trek* and Gene Rodenberry and all of Trekkdom because I have never seen anything that would serve us better than *Star Trek* has.

When Jesus spoke on the Sermon on the Mount and when he dealt with the Pharisees and the Saducees or the religious leaders of his day, it is exactly what you face today with religious leaders and their prejudices against one another. The Pharisees wouldn't talk to the Saducees and neither would talk to the Essenes and none of them had anything to do with Jesus because he was so different from their lifestyles.

Now in *Star Trek* we have the fulfillment of all what Jesus said on [in] the Sermon on the Mount. Because we believe in the brotherhood of mankind. And doing good to our neighbors developing our relationships with each other, and this is not Gene Rodenberry's philosophy. It was 2,000 years before him!

I am as convinced as anybody can be that 2,000 years ago the Lord foresaw *Star Trek* and Gene Rodenberry. And that there would be those of us who would follow this belief even though it did not coincide with the beliefs of those around us in the religious world.

I think our religious world ... What do you call them ... Pharisees or Baptists, whatever ... We still have this little cubbyhole that we have to fit everything in. And *Star Trek* doesn't. *Star Trek* says, you're my brother whether you're black or white or red or yellow. Whether you believe in my lifestyle or a different lifestyle. And that comes from a Bible Scholar!

Again, the pragmatic scientific constructs of truth and proof are of paramount importance. For many of the faithful, Gene Rodenberry can not possibly be dead. As one teacher put it,

First of all I read avidly and there's not enough of Gene Rodenberry's writings available by any means. It's funny but do you remember when you first learned that Gene Rodenberry was ill? No. You remember only his death.

Nobody, even the fan magazines didn't publish that he was ill? So, isn't it strange that a man who is as popular as he is, you never knew that he was sick, never knew that he was ill, and all of a sudden he was dead and gone? Unrealistic ... unscientific ... Probably he is not dead! He will come back; he wasn't human you know.

Prophecy Realized

To the Trekker teachers the religion of Trek is not merely canonical. It reveals the truth and shows the prophetic truth of the future. Prophecy,

according to one teacher,

comes right up and hits you! You can't ignore it! But, I think some of the subtle stuff will become evident later. You can not know it until there is a proper passage of time to really see the prophecy!

According to another teacher,

Just to go through and remember some of the social things that *Star Trek* attacked ... or addressed. I think attacked is good. We were facing the same problems at the same time in our society. In "Let This Be Your Last Battlefield," the guys were half black and half white. When I saw it I didn't think about the racial incidents here on Earth. But, then in paying closer attention to it, I understood what going on. When I saw it the first time, I didn't think about that. But, after seeing it several times, I understood.

I can imagine after *The Next Generation* goes off the air, and people start seeing that over and over and over again. They might see some of the same things.

I think in *Star Trek* is *how to live*, and *the way to live properly*. I believe there is a way that would help make sure that we have a future. I think that the two are closely tied together. That we treat each other with respect, that we don't interfere with other people's wishes, how to run their own business, that we try to be logical, but, we also recognize the importance of intuition and action.

It might have just been a handle that Rodenberry had that was accessible to a lot of people. Maybe that was it, I don't know what Rodenberry was ... How do you define genius? I guess you have to be prophetic and lucky for your prophecies to be apparent.

The prophetic is evidenced in every one of the narratives, articulating what they perceive as substantive social change that Rodenberry foresaw in everything from race relations, through feminism, to world peace. The Trekkers further reveal the prophetic in the literature from the Star Fleet Academy of

History by positing a time line for the next 500 years; interestingly, television, the terrain of the text, disappears in 75 years. Consider the following narrative from a high school teacher.

The part with the Soviet Union In "The Undiscovered Country" was so remarkable! You know, I don't know when they started that movie, but, it had to be before Gorbechev started dismantling the Soviet Union; he was prophetic! I hope we learn how to live long enough "to go where no man has gone before."

Although the implications of a prescribed future will be addressed in the conclusion of this dissertation, passing reference ought to be made to the prophecies contained within the technological/scientific at this juncture. The Trekkers cite evidence for the (religious) prophetic in the technological inventions that have materialized after being displayed on the program. The teachers describe their "technological-religious" revelations,

Deep Space Nine is nothing but what Elijah saw in the sky so many thousands of years ago. It is a wheel with a center in it and spokes. Which is nothing except what *Deep Space Nine* is. Which is what the space station that was proposed would be like, because that's how we could establish gravity; it must move!

Another narrator states,

You see, the thing is: What was it? Something the other day on television, some new modern technique that we've just developed. Guess where it came from it was foreseen in *Star Trek Classic*! Twenty-five years ago!

Certainly, space travel is conceived in Rodenberrian, albeit prophetic, terms.

I got to thinking, you know, it's funny. The concepts of space travel we had in '66 and the concepts that Gene Rodenberry introduced us to in '66 were so far apart, you couldn't even conceive of both of them existing on the same planet! Because our concept of space travel was rocket ships. Now, getting from here to space the only way to go was a rocket ship. You can't do it any other way. But once in space the rocket ship is the most inconvenient means of travel!

Now Gene Rodenberry never got us from here to space. He assumed we were already there! He introduced us to space travel. He introduced us to a means of getting us from here to this saucer that we have never conceived of before. Gene Rodenberry made the transport a way of life. He introduced us to space travel in a logical, functional way. Where did he get these ideas? If all he was was an ordinary man?

Once again, there is an overlap with the technological and the religious that is evidenced from these narratives. What is germane, however, is the consistency with which the religious remains embedded within the discourse of the technological in a semi-scriptural manner. Another teacher interviewed recapitulates this story; it was not a story given in isolation, but rather, part of a community discourse.

Gene recognized some of the people wouldn't show up for all of it. You see these children who have multiple sclerosis and different things like that, that are handicapped and will be all their lives. There's no way!

To see these kids ... They have a dream that one day there will be a world in which multiple sclerosis or any of the others will be gone. They will walk! They will talk! They will read! They will move on their own! And they believe this because of *Star Trek*. *Star Trek* has given them a hope that there will be no handicaps. That there is a way to regenerate a recalcitrant limb that doesn't work now but will work in the future by regeneration.

Alienation -- Rearticulation: The Trade Off

Alienation⁴ occurs at some deeply personal level between the Trekkers and their experiences in the rural southern Christian churches from which they hail:

Well, you know, when I went to a Christian school a very straight laced Southern, Christian school, space travel was out of the question. The Earth was the only populated planet in the universe. "God intended us to be the only people in the universe." I have always had a very active imagination and enjoyed reading science, and science fiction. When Isaac Asminov was talking about all the multiple universes, my professors in college were saying, "It was just his imagination," you know. "We were the only creation," you know, "We were it." Period.

She continues to explain her alienation by evoking the image of Rodenberry as father:

And I thought I had an omnipotent God, who knows everything. Everything! Sees everything! And *all* he creates is one inhabited planet with a few million people on it for eternity? This just doesn't make sense!

I violently disagreed with my professors. I felt that if God created our universe, if just ours alone existed, with all of the planets ... Now we have nine planets in this galaxy, but, look at the Milky Way! Look at what surrounds us! Even if we discount the other stuff that we were the only inhabited planet, that we were the only sentient beings ... You know. Hey. There had to be something else. And so in '66 when I was graduating, *Star Trek* started. Then I discovered; *it was revealed to me.*

Another teacher explains his alienation from the church by referring to a discussion with his (ex)minister:

The pastor was giving a part-sermon on how unique we were, that we were unique in the galaxy, the only living things in the galaxy. After the sermon was over, I said, "I just want to point out that your statement was terribly

arrogant!" He said, "Why do you say that?" I said, "Think for a minute: all of science now knows planets are the rule rather than the exception! If you look at all the literally trillions on stars around our own galaxy that are of solar type, just G-type stars that might have planets, and even if you assume that only two percent, even one percent of those can support life, and even if one percent of that has life, that's still several million civilizations. How arrogant to assume that we are the center of the universe!"

I said "This sounds terribly medieval to me." The whole business about ... Lord, this is medieval! I'm going to give up my thought process? I'm going to turn everything over to this hypothetical creature over there? And I'm going to give up going about my life? Excuse me! What happened to personal responsibility? Well, we got into this big harangue, and then I made the mistake of mentioning *Star Trek*! I felt crucified!

By invoking biblical allegories, it becomes quite simple for the Trekkers to trade belief systems for the adopted belief system that makes more sense in their historical and cultural context. One teacher told me that

I was raised in rural West Virginia. Since adopting the philosophy of Trek, I have become very intolerant of my religious background because I have discovered since I have broken with my traditional background that there was an entire world of people I was never allowed to meet. Star Trek shows me what it all really should be about!

The Christian allegories are present throughout the texts of the series; movies, novels and fanzines all become texts for living one's life under the Trek philosophical tenets, which, ultimately, are parallel to those of Christianity.

This kind of willingness to "lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13), to offer his "life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28), is the mark of divine and semi-divine redeemer figures. But it is also characteristic that they are somehow able to inspire others with the same goals. Captain Kirk seems to be in view when fans write that "*Star Trek* is about one man's love for his goal ... about that man's ability to communicate that goal to his co-workers

and to evoke in their hearts a similar love, a burning passion of total devotion to this image of how Man could and should be (Jewett, 1988: 28).

As one of the teachers explained to me:

Well, it was just the fact that we have such limited views, especially from the religious standpoint. Our religions are so narrow. We go from the totally narrow, "you can't believe it," to [the] Nostradamus, everything. We have no happy medium at all and I think the one thing that bothered me more than anything else was that *Star Trek* did for the '60's and '70's what nothing else could do! And that was it: it opened our minds to tolerance. Tolerance of a green-skin, pointed-ear alien. Helping strangers. Really loving our neighbors!

Through *Trek* and the plethora of *Trek* organizations (such as Star Fleet and Star Fleet Command), the teachers find order, acceptance, and the same sense of affiliation they would experience within the more "traditional churches." A *Trekker* teacher states in her narrative

I believe everybody has their own will and everything but at the same time you could be guided in a certain direction by something. *Star Trek* shows the possibility, the future; space travel is possible. I believe your life has been planned; I am a fatalist. *Star Trek* has hits on it all the time, that time space and thought are all one. And I really know that because of how they present it on *Star Trek*.

Christian Love/*Trekker* Love; Oh, What a Joy to be Human!

A special kind of discipleship arises from those who confess the pop religion of *Star Trek*. "Love" radiates from the redeemer figures and is transmitted in real life, primarily to other fans within the movement. The fans write, "Spock and Kirk and the whole realm of *Star Trek* speak to us eloquently of knowledge and efficacy and hope, of striving and prevailing, of seeing each other. And the sum of the message is love. Love of life ... Here is the

supreme optimism of a primary kind of love which is not sexual and yet may find its expression in sexual terms ... To experience the concrete sense of that love and that hope, people watch *Star Trek*. In content, mood, and motifs, this is indistinguishable from what is commonly called religion (Jewett, 1988: 28).

A Star Fleet Officer, giving a speech to a recent convention said,

Star Fleet is a love club ... and theory. Star Fleet is an international organization run by fans for 14 years. There are members and chapters all over the world who enjoy the *Star Trek* world ... We have groups for Klingons, Romulans and *Star Trek* Engineers.... We continue to follow the wonderful themes in the first generation. Through love. Gene Rodenberry put love into his theory ... The beliefs of Trek have grown into a cultural phenomena. I quote from "The City on the Edge of Forever" when I say ... "In the world where I come from, ... let me help!" This is the backbone of the club. This is the backbone of Trek.

We build ships, look at technical drawings, do community service work. We donate hundreds of hours of time. We have a grove of trees in Texas. We go to the children's hospital. We improve our world ... we believe there is a future. If we get through the bickering and fighting, ... we can go to the twenty-third century.

Love and safety⁵ has been cited time and time again as one of the reasons for Trek fandom and the sense of affiliation derived from the program. Love and safety are part of the Trekker teachers' mission in the schools. They want to "heal the world," "to create a safe space for children," so that they can reach the twenty third and the twenty fourth century, and the Trekker "kingdom on the hill."

In an alienated social culture, in which the individual experiences a sense of anomie so overwhelming s/he interacts with the television and identifies with the characters presented on the screen, *Star Trek's* love premise embraces those

who feel alien by embracing the alien. As one Trekker puts it, "When one truly falls in love with the philosophy of *Star Trek* there are no strangers in life; there are no prejudices in life. Because there are none! Every sentient being has a right in *Star Trek* that is not found in any other culture!"

Blair points out that: "Spock must be half-human for us to appreciate his Vulcanness" (1979: 309), but even more significantly, Data, a perfect android, fully functional on every level, desperately seeks to be human; it is only through being human that he ultimately can be fulfilled. Even the *Next Generation's* peculiar nemesis, the omniscient, omnipotent "Q," toys with being human; in one episode it is revealed that a member of the "Q," while disguised as a human, mated with a human, and their progeny was on the ship.

Strange aliens can be reached only through humanity, notes one teacher

I mean, everybody is an alien. Now sometime they may be Romulans or they may be Klingons or any number of others. But people are there and they realize that they are sentient beings and they have a reason and a place in the universe. I am much more tolerant because of *Star Trek!* You become tolerant of people of different planetary involvement!

Humanity and humanism and love are thus elevated; the alien and alienated are brothers, within the parameters of the omniscient brother (the Federation), and the brother who has yet to learn (the somewhat barbaric Klingons).

Exclaims one teacher fervently, "I hate the Cardasians, but that episode did prove one thing, that there is some promise for the Romulans! I think with Spock going there to teach them and everything, someday we may be able to reach out

to the Romulans and they may, who knows, become part of the Federation."

One particularly striking episode of *The Next Generation* ends when it is discovered that a superior race spread its "seed" (DNA content) throughout the universe, giving life to all known humanoid races (Kilngon, Vulcan, Romulan, Ferengi, Bejoran, Cardassian, and Terran). In Trek terms we are all related; we are all brothers; only some of us, *homo-sapiens*, have developed our human(e)ness more fully than other more barbaric species of brothers.

Joan Winston, one of the organizers of the first *Star Trek* convention, describes the mood pervading the bedlam of unexpected throngs. "With all these people crushed into this too-small area, there were no incidents, no fights, just love. Miles and miles and tons and tons of love" (Jewett, 1977: 24).

Love is translated into terms of safety and sanctuary from the violence and mayhem of the outside world; the omniscient brethren recognize the need for peace. Sanctuary as invoked by the Trekkers is highly reminiscent of the sanctuary provided by the religious experience. A woman at a *Star Trek* convention told me

This is the most exciting thing ... it's all right to leave your son here and walk around ... This is a *Star Trek* convention, kids are valued here, it's okay to walk around . We love children, Trek is all about love!

A male Trekker teacher remembers the notions of sanctuary and awe from his first viewing of *Star Trek*; his narrative also contains another crucial Christian motif, that of revelation:

When I first saw Trek ... I remember the first time. I walked into the student lounge ... and there it was on television. The room was so crowded you could hardly breathe. But you could hear a pin drop. Everybody there was enraptured by what was presented on the screen. There it was before us. It was all there. Nobody could speak. It was so quiet. And a whole room full of people sat there; under other circumstances, it would be different; there would be noise. But there was no noise, because Trek had bonded us all together. All was silent. It was crowded but we were safe. Sixty-six was a rough time but we could all go into that room together ... and nothing would happen. Each week the crowds kept getting larger and larger. People were spilling out into the hallways. They all knew; we all knew.

The Trekkers "knowing" is faith predicated on optimism. For the Trekkers humanity can and will cure the problems of the world with a peculiar mixture of technology, ecology, and military hierarchy; humanity can and will reach out into the stars where "our" way of life, "our" way of being will persevere. Primotopian longings for the frontier are rearticulated with missionary zeal and righteousness.

The "Optimism Effect" referred to in *Star Trek Lives!* confirms the hope that despite the present malaise, mankind "...can overcome the problems of today." The television stories cultivate this hope by bringing into our living rooms imaginary cultures of the future, even on this planet Earth, that have transcended problems that look lethal today (Jewett, 1977: 32).

One of the Trekker teachers notes that

I have always been a *Star Trek* fan ever since I was really young. One of the things that I really like about it is that Earth is no longer poverty-stricken, that they have eliminated all the poverty and that people work together no matter what race, or you know, where they come from.

One needs to believe there will be a future before speculating on the brightness of the future:

The origin of this pop optimism is typically American, as betrayed by a peculiar competitive terminology. But the deepest conviction of the creators of *Star Trek* was, and is, that triumph is possible, that we can *win*. This reminds one of the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale's power of positive thinking and his book, *You Can Win*. *Star Trek's* innocent optimism conceals the unexpected premise that the "American Way of Life" will somehow prevail in the universe. Here is a package designed to appeal to the innocent, a theology oblivious to its essentially religious premise, a philosophy sure that the fantasy values of a particular culture will appeal to galactic inhabitants everywhere. The lack of critical principles, so essential to either theology or philosophy in the classical tradition, helps protect such convictions and values from the incursions of reality (Jewett, 1977: 32).

A narrator explains, "*Star Trek* is more than a TV show; *Star Trek* represents the future which is always hope! It is something you can make for yourself."

Another speaker illustrates this point as well by saying "*Star Trek* gives you the opportunity to dare to be more than what that which surrounds you allows you. I love every minute of it; it's so wonderful. It's ultimately optimistic." Other teachers describe the optimism inherent in *Trek*; consider the following narrative describing the history of the planet Vulcan in relation to our own future. In this view, past, future, reality and hyper-reality are all woven together to produce a positive future for humanity.

I can't help but believe in a bright future! Vulcan was on the edge of extinction because the concept of mutually-assured destruction. The Vulcans took it to the nth degree and they were, from close accounts, at each others throats, and they were at the risk of blowing each other away. That's when Sirak and other Vulcan philosophers stepped in. Plus there are some

conflicting fan histories and what not. But supposedly a mysterious race of beings called the Preservers came in and effectively neutralized all the weapons, so the Vulcans had no choice but to sue for peace. These are the same Preservers!

Another teacher uses optimism as a lesson in comparative religions for his son.

It really is no different than any of the other religious philosophy. It is all based on the same precepts but it is couched in the future! It is couched in a way that is attractive and exciting where conventional religious philosophy is not! Conventional religious philosophy is couched in fear and dread. Which I think is the big difference!

He describes his project in the following terms

I'm going to do something with my son that I think Gene would have approved of! I am going to take him out to a synagogue and to a whole host of different religious denominations to give him a broader view, and then sit down and ask what's common and then ask how does that compare with *Star Trek*? How does that compare with a positive view of the future, and open some channels of discussion. I see *Star Trek* as a very incredibly positive view of the future! For me, *Star Trek* is more advanced! Society in the future has advanced beyond the need for sexual conquest, for demonstrations of macho prowess, and all that! That is the positive view for me! Society will evolve beyond the need for all that!

Another narrative coalesces themes of alienation with optimism:

There is a Trek worldview. There are so many possibilities! It is not just mere possibility. *Star Trek* is unlimited; anything can happen! You name it; it can happen! I think that's probably what draws people in. What I am saying ... With kids they have a problem, like they are neglected by their parents, and they are outcasts at school; they do not feel at home with the group, they gain weight which makes them more outcast ... By the time they hit their teen years, they need something to turn to something that will give them that comradery, that hope! They feel they can be a part of *Star Trek* since it is in the future! They can be part of that. In reality someday I can go on a shuttle;

I can meet aliens or whatever. It gives hope to them, and it gives them that sense of comradery.

This religion then believes not only in a future, but a bright and unlimited future, a Manifest Destiny of the Future. We will see in the subsequent chapters the ways in which that particular vision can be put into practice.

Trek optimism enables the faithful to "feel good" about Mom, apple pies and Chevrolets. It produces a recapitulation of traditional orders and values because the future looks like a much better form of the present. *Star Trek* then can be seen as

(p)rojecting traditional American values and repressions onto imaginary planets where their workability can be fantasized apparently enhances believability. What has failed in American experience is nevertheless affirmed to be "true" because it is depicted operating successfully in outer space. Clearly this is uncritical religious faith rather than rational thought (Jewett, 1977: 32).

Redemption: Personal Salvation

Many fans actually report personal redemptive experiences resulting from their encounters with programs. A woman who is vice president of a fan club writes '*Star Trek* has changed my life ... opened my world to new thoughts and drained my pocketbook trying to keep up with everyone ... It's made me a much more real person and a lot easier to live with. I don't try to explain myself too much to outsiders' (Jewett, 1977: 29).

All the Trekkers interviewed attribute their own personal redemptive experiences to, (in their own words) receiving the "Word of Rodenberry." There is a sense of chosen-ness as if they really believe they understand the true

nature of the universe. It is the Trekkers who have received the word; the school is an institution through which the word can be spread.

One of the more compelling redemptive stories in the Trek narratives came from a kindergarten teacher who discussed a friend's impending death. The "apostle" (in the guise of George Takei, the actor who played Sulu)⁶ arrived in her hometown, humbly healed her and prepared her for "the time warp" into the "next dimension."

Well, I have this friend who is dying of cancer. Her greatest wish in the world was that she meet George Takei. So he came here, he went to see her, and they talked privately. Nobody was allowed in, just the two of them for about an hour. When he left, he was crying and she had the most beautiful smile on her face! I said: "Sally what did he say?" She said, "Oh, he said a lot of important things. But, to my mind, the most important one was that I'm not going to die. I am just going to be transported to another lifestyle."

She said that's all it took! Because she said: "I'm not worried anymore, because, I know when I go, I'll just be transported into another lifestyle. I'll warp in space and there I'll be! She says, "George promised to see me on the other side..."

Now she's young; she's like thirty-two; she has two children. If she sees the end of the year she'll be lucky. They give her no hope at all, but the idea that death isn't a dread. It's just being transported into another universe, another lifestyle. That's what Gene Rodenberry has given us, as far as our time, as it is spent here on this Earth.

Another woman reports that after being hospitalized for depression she "started again to believe in the future of mankind," her "mental outlook vastly improved." A man from Ohio writes, "*Star Trek* has been, and always will be, the biggest influence in my life" (Jewett, 1977: 29). "The theological message of

Star Trek ... relates to world redemption in general and redemption of individual audience members in particular" (Jewett, 1977: 32).

The following story exemplifies the Trekkers' personal salvation through being introduced to *Trek* as a religious redemptive experience:

But I promised to tell you what got me involved in *Star Trek*. I kind of just wandered into *Star Trek*. When somebody tells me that I can't do something, that's the first thing I do. I was told that I couldn't watch *Star Trek*, so I made arrangements to go see *Star Trek* and of course it fitted into what I felt was important in science fiction. At 22, 23, 24 years old, it was not something that you were gonna base your life on, but it was interesting. I never missed an opportunity to see the reruns. *Star Trek* was there but it wasn't critical until I went through a bad marriage and then I went through trouble with my son. I began to look for help. When you got a psychology minor, what can a psychologist tell you?

I went to this little tiny out-of-the-way rehabilitation center, it was a fishing lodge and this guy took it over and made it a place for people who just needed to get away and put things in order. I went up there and the guy who ran the place was a *Star Trek* fan. Up there he couldn't get *Star Trek*, so he ordered the films directly from Paramount. (This was before it was popular to go into a store and buy a video.) He had all these *Star Trek* films, and every Saturday night he was sitting there watching his *Star Trek* show. I thought, "What has *Star Trek* got to do with all of this?" He said, "You need to find something to hold on to."

Her therapist was also a Trekker. He applied an unusual prescription as a solution for her problems; he urged her to look at *Star Trek* for positive role models and relationships. So she began to keep a *Star Trek* log, mapping out the "positive relationships" contained in the program.

I watched three movies a day, everyday. Now, if you say *Star Trek* gets old, it didn't! Not once! I watched and I watched and I watched! I needed more, so somebody sent me a flyer on the *Trek-O-Rama* with George Takei. I went

and I saw professionals, not old fogies, but professionals sitting there! And, I saw teenagers there, and I saw children there, and I saw people of every walk of life there: handicapped, mentally, physically, every way that were finding something in *Star Trek*.

I sat down and I decided that I had to find out more about this. So, I started looking in to the fan club and I started collecting the classic TV series. Then, I started with the books, and I read every one of the books. I spent 200 dollars on books.

I found peace in Star Trek: a reason for going on. I find that *Star Trek* has given me a way to look at life that is far more satisfying than all the of the money, jobs, education, and security that you can buy. I look at people out of *Star-Trek-colored glasses!*

Her story is not an isolated, situationally specific tale; other narratives confirm personal salvation through the Trek religion.

I felt that I was the only person in the world that ever needed *Star Trek* for psychological balance until I went to _____ this last time. I had gone not feeling well. Things weren't exactly all that they could have been. But, I ran into a friend of mine. I had no idea she was interested in *Star Trek*. In fact, I didn't meet her at the convention; I met her at the mall. And I mentioned that I was down on at a *Star Trek* convention and she said: "Oh, I'm there too."

So we got to talking and she related a very similar story to my own about how what *Star Trek* had meant to her. I said, I told her, "I had the same experience."

We got to talking in the "con" area, and another person butted in. We went up to my room and there were 19 of us in there. All of us with the exact same basic concept of what *Star Trek* had done for us as far as providing a stability that we did not find otherwise.

I think if I never go to another "con," if I never get another book, if I never see another movie *Star Trek* has done enough for me so far to last for the rest for my life!

These "redemptive experiences" articulated in every narrative collected "seem to be closely related to the 'Goal Effect' of *Star Trek*, challenging a tired mankind to strive once again for goals that seem unreachable at the current moment" (Jewett, 1977: 29).

The series "... gives us the energy and the fuel to make the effort. By its mere existence -- by the kinds of things it is saying and the kind of effort it took to say them, it gives us the sense that great efforts are possible and can succeed. It gives us the courage to tackle goals of our own ..." A form of inspiration is clearly evoking discipleship here (A *Star Trek* fan description cited in Jewett, 1977: 29).

In recapitulating both redemption and optimism, the teachers' narratives also point to the elimination of critique by deriding those who criticize the show and its prophets. The narrator in the following passage condemns any derision of her saviours by others.

I hear a lot of negativism sometimes at the cons because of the enormous fees that are charged for some of them. I don't care. They still meet the needs. The strength that lies in knowing that there is something that lies beyond this life is more important than anything that will go on in this life. I thought I was the only person in the world; I guess everybody feels that way.

In explaining their faith, the authors of *Star Trek Lives!* summon Ayn Rand's Theory of Art. Art as defined by Lichenburg, Marshak, and Winston answers the questions "why."

The function of art, to me, is to give answers ... to give reason to have courage. The creation of this type of hopeful courage was evident in a letter Rodenberry received from a University of Wisconsin science student who

'For him it rekindled an interest in the future and in machinery' (*Star Trek* Fan cited in Jewett, 1977: 30).

One afternoon I was with a friend at Circuit City. Our salesman was an engineering student who told us that *Star Trek* influenced his life; watching the machinery on the program prompted him to become an engineer. Zealously, he demonstrated to us a video of *Trek* on a super television screen with quadriphonic sound so we could hear the full aural effect the *Trek* soundtrack could have. The direction that *Trek* gives its discipleship, it would seem, also comes in terms of career change and direction. A teacher in the midst of a career change explains

When I was just getting fully involved in *Star Trek*, I wrote to Dr. McCoy. His laid-back southern philosophical attitude toward life and work has meant everything to me. In fact it was the reason I have chosen my new profession. I know it is precisely what Dr. McCoy would have wanted me to do!

To the Trekkers, Rodenberry and *Trek* provides "all you will ever need." "It fills the void in my life," says one woman who went on to explain that "Every answer for every human question can be found by looking at the episodes, the movies and reading the books."

The books, the movies, and the program provide the basis for an explicit theology. They are the "text" of the religion.

A popular religious movement usually produces an explicit theology over the course of time ... It is not surprising, then, that a *pop theology* has emerged which elaborates and explains the assumptions and experience of *Star Trek*

faith. Much of this material is in the form of fantasy literature, spinning out *Star Trek* episodes to see what happened beyond the revelational scope of the original television series (Jewett, 1977: 30).

As one Trekker put it; "When you finally understand what Trek is really about then you will not just have the answers, but you can and you need to transcend the mundane!"⁷

The Rituals and Sacraments in Trek:

"My communicator makes thirty *Star Trek* sounds!" (From a Trekker teacher).

I am overboard! I think when you like something to the point that it controls your life your obsessing over it. So I'm obsessing over *Star Trek*. But, it is a positive thing I am obsessing about. So it can't be bad. I don't see it as a bad thing. As long as you obsess over something that is positive. I mean we could obsess about religion to the point that it becomes bad (From a Trekker teacher).

As I entered into the community I entered into a world where television and pop culture had become not merely the medium of entertainment but where the program and program text became the *raison d'être* for the disciples. I entered into a secret society where with the ability to articulate the discourse one earned access to the community. When I first entered the community I was asked if I "knew my Trek." The membership was suspicious. I was able to articulate the discourse well enough, having watched the show regularly during its twenty-seven year history; I could recall enough of the episodes to speak the language of Trek. Yet I was told that in order to understand Trek, I had to listen to the

episodes for the "scriptural." One young man told me that if I studied the first movie carefully in conjunction with the "concordance," I would be able upon the "seventh level, to gain omniscience." I was also told that the Trek community uses the shows, books, movies, and fanzines as Christian fundamentalists use scripture. Pages and pages of my transcriptions contain cross-Trek references; in order to comprehend one aspect of Trek you must refer to another. An elementary school teacher gave me a homework assignment because "If you haven't read *Star Trek* you need to, because it will open your eyes to an entire culture that you would never see otherwise."

It seems to me that cross-referentiality serves several significant functions. At each of the conventions the sale of *Star Trek* paraphernalia was the highlight of the show.⁸ Each teacher interviewed showed me a myriad of Trek merchandise. One teacher showed me his key chain which emitted different *Star Trek* sounds; another teacher wrote me notes on *Star Trek* stationary; one woman showed me what she labelled as her "shrine room," decorated from floor to ceiling with Trek paraphernalia. A fourth teacher, after the interview concluded, asked me if I would like to get something to eat. We went to his car; he had a veritable library of *Star Trek* books inside; his *Star Trek* tie was strewn along the floorboard. He placed a tape in the player, which in quadriphonic sound blasted music from the canons of Star Fleet. When I arrived back home in Greensboro that evening I was so tired that, I turned on the television, only to see a program on QVC based entirely on *Star Trek* merchandise. One of the

teachers told me: "We keep QVC in business when they have the *Star Trek* sales and stuff." The *Trek* merchandise doesn't merely fulfill a *Trekker*-iconography, or keep the executives of Paramount well-heeled, but also fulfills a central cultural aspect of late capitalism.

The hegemonic metamessage of our time is that the commodity form is natural and inescapable. Our lives can only be well lived (or lived at all) through the purchase of particular commodities. Thus our major existential interest consists of maneuvering for eligibility to buy such commodities in the market. Further, we have been taught that it is right and just -- ordained by history, human nature and God -- that the means of life in all its forms be available *only* as commodities.

As the commodity form becomes a central part of culture, so culture becomes available for use in the interest of commodification as particular cultural items, as a source of commercial arguments, and as symbolic legitimation for the entire system. Culture and the commodity form become dialectically intertwined. Americans live in an overcommodified world, with needs that are generated in the interests of the market and that can be met only through the market (Fjellman, 1992: 10).

At the community college where I teach, one of the administration officials told me the following story:

There was this guy who came in to register for a woodworking class. He didn't seem like the woodworking type. I don't know why; he just didn't seem like the woodworking type. I asked him, "Why do you want to register for this class?" He told me "To build a vault for all my *Star Trek* things. I am afraid that somebody might break into my apartment and steal my *Star Trek* things. I want to build a vault so big, and so safe, that nobody could ever break in to it." He proceeded to describe in detail the size and shape of his vault, which seemed so large and cumbersome, I asked him, "Well, how will you fit this in your apartment?" I promise you ... I was waiting for an answer ... Which was, I knew almost telepathically, that he was going to answer, "I'll beam it. "

The primary function of cross-referentiality is part of the consumer culture and the commodification of life in a late capitalist economy. Certainly Paramount and its licensees benefit. Yet, both secondary and tertiary functions are served as well; ownership creates discipleship, and gives evidence of the piety of the "owners." In addition, the merchandise is used as a badge of identification pointing toward affiliation. Much of the ritual and sacrament in Trek is tied to commodification. The merchandising of materials and paraphernalia once again are exceptionally reminiscent of syncretic religious combinations.

The "technological zeal" also translates itself into the sacrament of commodification by obtaining ritualistic items through the collection of memorabilia.

A man in Los Angeles is busy constructing an *Enterprise* shuttlecraft, the small spacecraft used for short voyages. He has reproduced *Star Trek* equipment and uniforms and works at building the complicated *Enterprise* bridge seen on the television series. Two men from Poughkeepsie, New York, had constructed their own bridge set and transporter room in order to make their own amateur movies. Such examples can be multiplied many times (Jewett, 1977: 33).

The teachers describe their own collections. One teacher provides herself with both a question and an answer in her narrative

The most important thing I own? Well, I remember driving by my grandma's house and I had found a *Star Trek* model of the "Enterprise" and I immediately bought it and put it together. It has hung in my room for years! I have both the A and T models of the communicator, and the old tricorder, and the hand-held phaser. The most expensive trading character right now is the "Q." There were only 200 made and they are going for around 500

dollars each! I have him, and the green skinned Data. Not green, but, I guess it's bluish-white skin, not the gold that they have him in now.

Another teacher jokingly referred to her daughter's pet

My pet is a Trek pet. It's a guinea pig, but it's really a tribble. She's my tribble. She looks just like one a big fat tribble. You see all my Trek stuff: These are my Vulcan ears. I won my ears. This is my certificate of commission. I got that when I completed the *kobyashi muru* scenario. I got this one when...

A third teacher describes the paraphernalia in his room

I got this one at QVC. My mugs, I got these from Seven-Eleven. This is my daughter's creation. I have tons of stuff! This is my display, it is just a little of what I have. I have billions of things that are shoved in closets. I have a big cardboard "Enterprise" that used to hang here, but, the cells kept going "naaa." This is half my husband and half me, but all Trek! I have a bunch of posters in the basement. It is everything! All my books. I have two levels of stuff!

One male high school history teacher describes his consternation and pride when getting gifts for his nieces.

I wrote them a letter and said I had been to Star Fleet regional headquarters and that I had been promoted to Commander and I had talked to them about the kids and they had thought they would be good officers but I had to get someone to sponsor them. I got my friend Captain Picard, to do it. And now (I told them that) I made them officers in Star Fleet. They wear their uniforms all the time. And I send them all sorts of *Star Trek* things. It just so happened one Christmas I picked up little guns in a toy store. They are called phasers; you pull the trigger and they make noise and light up. They said, "Could you get us some phasers?" I said, "Well I can't get you the regular phasers, I can get you the practice phasers." So I got out of it that way. But I am afraid because of the phaser that I put up on my wall, it is the new one. I have to say, "You can't touch that now."

The Ritual of Watching Trek

Another significant part of the ritualistic in Trek is that all the episodes must be recorded on a VCR enabling the Trekkers not to merely view the show at a later time but to continually view the show, over and over looking for the messages contained in the content and context! Each time the program is watched, there are a variety of prescribed practices. One (which I admit to having done myself) is taking the phone off the hook, turning off the lights, and demanding complete silence while the episode is airing. All the Trekkers I have interviewed have collections of every show and every movie. These two narrative segments echo specifically the meticulous attention to detail that is paid when recording the shows.

I have the originals on tape, as well as *Next Gen*. Remember when beta was big? We still have two beta machines in working order, to record the programs, just in case one breaks. We still have a lot of beta tapes. All of our original *Star Treks* are on beta, and all of our *Next Generations* are on beta! It was just two three months ago that we finally bought our first VHS. We did not want to do that but we could finally see the writing on the wall. VHS was going to be it!

I have all seventy nine original episodes on tape, that I have been recording over the years. I have all the *Next Generation* on tape. I have all six movies and I have the anniversary edition. I have been trying to find a decent copy of "The Cage" which is the original pilot with Christopher Hunter.

The shows are watched alone, but, interestingly, they are also viewed in community. All of this too is highly evocative of fundamentalism where the Bible is read and memorized. In Church community, scripture is read again for literal

interpretations. When the Trekkers "get together" in Starship groups, and even in the larger conventions, they watch Trek for hours on end, and then discuss the episodes at great length. One Trekker told me that they get together twice monthly and watch Trek then discuss Trek for six to eight hours. They move from one house to the next house, starting with lunch and going on through dinner watching the shows. Even their jokes remain within the purview of the (religious) community.⁹

Costumes in the Carnival of Conventions: Transformations

Concurrently there is a carnivalesque¹⁰ ritual/sacrament contained in the costumes and make-up that the faithful use when going to meetings, and conventions. One teacher boasted,

You know, my uniform is really quite special! My uniform was made by a person who makes costumes for movies. She made this! Her niece is on my ship.

She then opened her closet and proceeded to show me a child's uniform; she said:

This is my original uniform! It's inside out. I got this when I was twelve years old! When I first became a "Trekkie." That's what we called ourselves then.

A teacher who identified himself as a soft-core Trekker described the following incident that took place at a *Trek-O-Ramas*.

I remember when Counselor Troi came... They had guards, I mean, Star Fleet uniformed guards on each side of the podium, and I thought aren't we carrying this to the extreme a bit? But the point is they were really serious Star Fleet guards.

He then articulated his own sentiments on having to dress for "conventions":

Well, I will admit to having a *Next Generation* shirt. But I don't wear it around in public. The only time I have worn it in public was at a convention about a month ago. Everybody else had one on. So finally, I had enough courage to put it on myself. Everybody! The hotel was crawling with these Trekkers! So, if everybody was going to look stupid, I'll put it on. If we have a meeting or if they go to a convention some people will put on their uniform. I don't usually. But I did on this one occasion since everybody else in the place had a uniform on.

Another male Trekker teacher described the carnivalesque ritual of full dress in the marriage ceremony!

The whole place, they were in dressed "old and new" from the first movie on to the sixth. One of the people who got married was there getting married under Star Fleet regulations to marry! ¹¹

Other teachers describe carnivalesque within the carnivalesque:

I am also an officer aboard a Klingon ship. There are things you can do disguised as a Klingon that you wouldn't dare do as part of Star Fleet!

Furthermore, a different Trekker (who labels himself as and dresses like a Vulcan) confirms the disguise of the Klingon, as opposed to the rigidity of Star Fleet.

There are fads in *Star Trek*. Currently it's Klingons. Primarily because the make-up is easy to do and you can get so many combos of Klingons and the Klingons being kind of rowdy. People get behind that Klingon make-up and become really rowdy and it's okay! They can let their baser [instincts] come out a little bit and revel in that. And it's okay 'cause I'm a Klingon. The thing that's a big fad that's coming out now is Bejoran.

This same teacher then describes the difficulty in dressing "Trek" in the non-Trek world:

I attempted to wear my little Vulcan idic pin to work and was chastised for it! And was told that was not appropriate! That it was not professional. In other companies and schools I have seen people wear those things!

As one teacher put it: "No, I'm not ashamed of wearing it at school. But, like I said, I don't think I'd go to a job interview wearing my uniform." Trekkers feel persecuted by others while dressed in uniform. Their sense of "fashion persecution" takes on significance in several narratives. One teacher explained: "People who don't like *Star Trek*; it kind of scares them. Somehow, I guess, in the same kind of way if you find someone who is religious fanatic or something like that. People think that of us." I was told by the wife of a Captain in the U.S. Army about a Trekker becoming confused about which uniform to wear.

He showed up at a bar in Star Fleet uniform, rather than U.S. military uniform. He was severely reprimanded and is no longer serving in the U.S. Armed Services.

Sarcastically she said, "Maybe he is serving with Star Fleet now!" One of the Trekker teachers recalls a similar incident:

We have a shuttle that is now a starship. I think it's in Ft. Bragg. Well, they showed up one day in a Star Fleet uniform, a *Next Generation* uniform. I guess, as long as they are off duty, I don't see why it would hurt anyone, I don't understand why they would get in trouble.

This ritualistic behavior both leads to and then further reaffirms the need for community. With reaffirmation, "transformation" can occur quite easily. It is through Trek that the teachers derive their only real sense of connectedness and affiliation. They feel that the outside identifies Trek as

something for the nerds it has because it deals with science and technology. Non-Trekkers consider Trek a kind of nerdy "enterprise." Ha, ha! Get the pun?

An elementary art teacher laments,

When I meet people like the ones that live in their parents' basement and have no life! I mean, really. Really, no life. They can't hold a job; they never finish school. It gives us all a bad name.

Transformations create a further sense of alienation from the non-Trek community; it becomes a continual process rather than a static entity.

Transformations of the individual often are manifested in the form of

(v)oluntary behavior alterations. Some fans model their actions after those of the stars, just as disciples of Christianity imitate their Lord. A sixteen-year-old youth resembling Leonard Nimoy has had his hair cut and his eyebrows slanted Vulcan-style. He almost always wears a blue velour shirt and has taken on so many of Spock's mannerisms that he seems to be a second Spock.

Another young man studying physics at the graduate level," ... went to court and legally had his name changed to 'Spock', no last name, just 'Spock' (A Trek Fan quoted in Jewett, 1977: 33).

The Trekker teachers I interviewed all described incidents of voluntary behavioral alterations.

There is this girl I know, and everybody has a "name" in our group but she wanted us all to call her Sarek. And we had to give her the Vulcan sign every time we saw her. When Sarek died she was devastated beyond devastation! She really thought she was Sarek! Eventually, this girl couldn't hold a job. She lived in a low-income housing; she couldn't pay her phone bills. She was so devastated. They don't see it in the right light. It is a hope for the future.

Another teacher who is Captain of her Starship explained, "Now I have a man on our ship. His wife isn't on our starship, but she is still a Trekker. They named their son Scott so they could call him Scotty! Now, he's 12 or 13, and he understands what his name stands for and is a Trekker!"

By both altering one's behavior and adopting both the philosophy and rituals that are the framework of the Trek order, one evokes notions of an archaic form of Christianity.

The motivations for these actions are probably as complex as those associated with the Christian imitation ethic. The desire to be like one's redeemer, to achieve union with him, or to gain self-identity by copying his appearance or actions, often seem to coalesce in such imitation (Jewett, 1977: 33).

The final component of the ritual/sacrament revolves around apocryphal biblical literature which spawned the literary Trek tradition. The Bible was supposedly written by men based on the "word" of God. The Trek literature presents "the word" (of Rodenberry) which is re-written and re-worded, postulates and answers questions that are both epistemological and ontological.

This "fanzine" literature includes series like *Eridaini Triad*, *Star Trek Showcase*, *T-Negative*, *Grup*, *Impulse*, *Babel*, *Spockanalysis*, *Alternative Universe*, *Tricorder Reading*, and *Tholian Web*. There are hundreds of different issues of these magazines, in a development strikingly similar to the growth of apocryphal literature in the biblical tradition. This kind of writing answers essentially theological questions, amplifying and illustrating a faith (Jewett, 1977: 31).

How the faith is translated into curricular terms will be the one of the subjects of the curriculum chapter.

END NOTES

1. QVC, which advertises four-hour-long *Star Trek* commodity programs, has marketed a *Star Trek* Bible. Apparently, a Bible for Television is the original "scripting" of the characters, and plot of action. Naturally, the "Bible" was signed by the producers.
2. To me this is highly reminiscent of saint statues, caracoles, etc., on the part of santeros (Santeria which is the combination of Catholic beliefs with those of the Yoruba and Ibo tribes of Africa is prevalent throughout the Caribbean. The word Santeria is used on the island of Cuba and in the city of Miami. On the island of Haiti it is referred to as Voodoo, and in Puerto Rico it is referred to as espiritismo). Syncretic substitution indicates that there is a dominant discourse that will only accept one religious ethos. Therefore, the name of one God is substituted for another, and one ceremony is re-named, nevertheless, the memory of the "original" god or ceremony lives on. For example: St. Barbara is really Baba-Lo.
3. This idea owes much to Charles Williams (1896-1945) a poet-novelist and theologian. Who was in the circle of T.S. Elliot. According to the Cambridge Guide of English Literature Williams wrote "supernatural thrillers."
4. The Trekkers' are marginalized because of their "religious affiliation." It was very sad to talk with the Trekkers and attempt to comprehend their "angst" and lack of affiliation and "connected-ness" to anyone in their towns. The Trekkers do not by any means fit any stereotypical Western conceptualization of "beauty."

In a culture where there is such a high priority placed on physical beauty, Trekkers can be labelled as "grotesque."

The saddest story of marginalization occurred in a small southern town. For months I had been trying to make a date to interview this young man. He called me one day to tell me he had been to a convention and he got the name of a young woman for me to interview, wistfully commenting on her grace, her intelligence, and her beauty. I asked him: "Well, why don't you just ask her out?" Having learned how shy Trekkers tend to be. I told him I would play "Cyrano" and ask her out for him. He told me, "No, you don't understand." When I finally got to interview him I did understand. The young man weighed approximately 600 pounds, and could barely walk. For him, Trek was the only place that he "could fly." He was the person who brought the physical marginality of the Trekkers to my attention. Yet, every Trekker interviewed has alluded to it: "Well, everybody in my ship except for two people are obese." It was not only a haven for the obese, but for the "deformed" as well. One bright, gregarious, female Trekker I interviewed looked as if she suffered from a skin fibrosis.

5. I have never been treated as kindly, with such care and concern, as I was while traveling through the Southeast interviewing Trekkers. Each Trekker/teacher graciously gave their time to me; for the most part, each interview lasted approximately three to six hours. Additionally, they each gave me a tour of their town, took me out to eat, and gave me a gift, something from Trek naturally!

6. One of the "apostles" (television personalities) of the religion attributes the "sense of optimism" to Rodenberry himself, further recapitulating and giving credence to the mythos.

George Takei (Sulu) attributes this redemptive effect in the television series to Gene Rodenberry. "I think he's the one who felt, very seriously and deeply believed, that we can overcome the problems of today." Fans extol with fervor "the optimism of *Star Trek* -- its vision of a brighter future of man and a world characterized by hope achievement and understanding" (Jewett, 1977: 32).

William Shatner however, in the book *Star Trek Lives!* expresses a sense of perplexed confusion and chagrin when describing and commenting on the fanaticism of the fans:

I really don't understand it ... I recently attended two of the *Star Trek* conventions in New York--they have them all over the country, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Frankly, it was an experience that was perhaps unique, I was asked to appear in an auditorium of some 8,000 to 10,000 people, there just because of "*Star Trek*." They were crazed. I don't know why the fanaticism has attached itself to the show. You wouldn't believe what they have at these conventions ... Why this is happening defies rational explanation.

The fans, however, reserve special places for iconography given to them by the "apostles." One woman told me she has an autographed picture of Dr. McCoy which is placed in a very special frame above her dresser. A young man told me of a gift that was given to him by Troi, he looks at it and keeps it in order to maintain good fortune.

You are not permitted to insult the "apostles." One teacher explained how she had gotten "some guys kicked off" the list-serve of "Prodigy" for obscenities. She then explained that the obscenities were blasphemous in nature, for they were impugning the integrity of the apostles. She threatened to sue them for slander.

To leave the series is to "fall from grace." One teacher cited the demise of Denise Crosby's (the actress who portrayed Tasha Yar, the first security officer on the *Next Generation*) career because of her decision to leave the cast of *Star Trek*. The fans feel that to be part of the program is to be part of a larger order, and they must be responsible to Trek and Trekkdom. Nothing ought to disrupt the creation of the mythos. That is why the *Saturday Night Live* parody of William Shatner telling the Trekkers to "get a life," and then saying that it was only the "Evil Kirk," resonates and is referred to so often.

7. Another portion of the religious is the concept of transcendence.

Transcendence was present in all the narratives of the Trekkers. However, it should be noted that one of the manifestations of transcendence embedded in the fundamentalist ethos is that of the ecstatic. Which is continually present and constantly discussed in Trekkdom.

Perhaps the ultimate proof of the religious nature of *Star Trek* fandom is in its outbursts of ecstasy. The authors of *Star Trek Lives!* state, for example, that "the depth of William Shatner's Kirk leaves us speechless. But only figuratively, for throughout this book we have tried *heroically* to restrain the outpourings of boundless admiration that Mr. Shatner's achievement has aroused in us."

When Joan Winston received a phone call from Leonard Nimoy, she gave way to this kind of ecstasy: "Oh bliss, oh frabjous joy." It was beyond normal human joy, calling forth words and expressions like "frabjous" from Lewis Carroll's *The Jabberwock* [The Jabberwocky], evidently an effort to express the unexpressable.

This kind of ecstatic feeling is reflected in the title and the mood of *Star Trek Lives!* To say that a program "lives" out of its own accord seems patently absurd, especially one [a program] that has been out of production for years. But here the fans' convictions are decisive. Their yearning for a "resurrection" has produced a religious sleight of hand (Jewett, 1977: 29).

8. At each convention there are *Star Trek* merchants; buying is one of the highlights of the convention experience. The merchants also run a healthy mail-order business marketing everything that one can possibly imagine from the "Trek" world. One of the inventors of a Trek linguistic system informed me on the phone that he realizes that "sometimes the merchants take advantage of the Trekkers."

With an end note on commodity I also wanted to refer to the lack of distinction between what is labelled as "authentic" or "real," as opposed to "fake." A recent television commercial from Hallmark for the annual "Trek ornament" pronounces that their ornament is "authentic." It "illuminates" and "maneuvers" in a realistic manner, just like a Federation Starship. Joshua Anijar has also pointed out to me that it is sold by a crew member of the *Next Generation* program, who questions "how to tell the difference between a real ship and a replication?" The voice (from above) answers a replication is a facsimile, never the real thing.

9. Even the humor used by the group membership is understood only in terms of Trek. The following examples are quoted from the narratives:

It was a Klingon questionnaire. It was "What treatment do you give to a wounded Star Fleet officer?" First aid, best facilities on ship, or disrupter? Obviously, a disrupter. When do you feed Romulan children? When they're hungry? When you feel like it? Or when your White Fang is hungry?

At a dinner we had, I told everybody right when we had the coffee, I said; "We have secretly replaced our Folger's crystals with new dilithium crystals."

10. Bakhtin's notion of carnival is of particular significance when looking at the costume and disguise rituals of Trek, particularly in the celebration of the convention. The carnival as liberation (both from mythical time and the tyrannical) is "indestructible, and continues to celebrate invention, human creativity, and the liberation of human consciousness from the dictates of an official truth in a manner that encourages a completely new order of things" (Gardiner, 1992: 58). It can be envisioned that

(c)arnival is not time wasted but time filled with profound and rich experience ... "The body of the people on a market square during carnival is first of all aware of its unity in time." The festive crowd is not merely experiencing a mindless plunge into unconscious license, a kind of nothing. On the contrary, it is a highly aware, extremely conscious of something unique to it: "It is a consciousness of uninterrupted continuity in time, of its relative historic immortality ... The people do not perceive a static image of their unity ... but instead the uninterrupted continuity of their becoming and the ceaseless metamorphosis of death and renewal (Bakhtin, in Gardiner, 1992: 58-60).

"The body" is the site on which this exceptional quasi-transcendent, rather distinctive timeless time is inscribed. This representation of the body is synonymous with carnival time, which is free and "becoming." There could be no carnival time without the body and consequently there could be no carnival body (which is a material bodily principle) without time. The *self* as isolated anomistic entity disappears in carnival.

11. Yes, there is a Star Fleet Marriage Manual (available at conventions), as well as a Romulan Marriage Manual, a Vulcan Marriage Manual, and a Klingon Mating Manual. What is more important, and reminds me of a "closed religion," is the way that Trekkers visualize relationships and marriage and children. All the Trekkers who are married have met their spouses through Trek, and credit Trek for their marriages. The following narrative is typical of many.

I met my husband because of Trek. All the married couples I know have met through *Star Trek*! Now once in a blue moon, I find one person married to another person who doesn't like *Star Trek*, but obviously that relationship would be a very difficult one, and in most cases, it probably doesn't work. My mom loves *Star Trek*; my dad says he doesn't but he has seen every episode a million times and everything. He used to say, "Captain Kirk and the jerks are on." But that was all a front, because he even went to all the movies and everything. But you couldn't ask him a trivia question and have him get it. But he has watched all the shows and enjoyed them although he won't admit it. But my aunt, on the other hand, my mom's sister, she loves *Star Trek* and her husband does not even like it one ounce! But, they have one of these marriages that you would really call one of convenience. He goes his way and she goes her way. She is one of the original "Trekkies" and she is in love with Spock. So you have that type of marriage if you marry someone that doesn't like *Star Trek*. You don't have what I would consider a marriage; it's just existing. You live together in the same house. You're not really a married couple like you should be, and that has to do a lot with the theologies.

Family life projects the same sort of "Donna Reed in the Stars ideal." I have been to conventions where parents have dressed their children up in costume including one where a two-year-old was dressed as a Borg. It seems that according to the faithful "the family that Treks together stays together." One father and son are developing a linguistic artistic code together. He began taking his son to Trek when he was woefully disappointed with Boy Scouts.

What is really fascinating about the closed religious ethos is the question of intermarriage with non-Trekkers. One teacher who is the mother of a seven year old girl says,

Now I still keep saying to my husband that one of these days she's going to rebel. Because all kids go against what their parents are about. There is going to be a time. I think he dreads that day. He's hoping that day will never come. The question keeps popping up: "What if she marries someone that is not a Trekker? Could we, or better yet, should we allow it?"

CHAPTER V

TRUTH, JUSTICE AND THE FEDERATION WAY

The United Federation of Planets is "a large and powerful socio-political system linking many worlds into a pluralist democracy" (Worland, 1988: 110). Within the Federation hierarchy, all the worlds linked "peacefully" together create a quasi-harmonious universe, connected in an alliance resembling NATO, rather, than the United Nations for it is treaty-and protection-based. Symbolically speaking, the "history" of the Federation recapitulates the great American push westward, the consolidation of the fifty states under the United States flag, and the on-going expansion of techno-capitalist imperialism.

The complete Federation ethos expresses a very particularistic version of American "manifest destiny," in this case, not from sea to shining sea, but throughout the infinite universe.

In this fantasy, the emergent faith in American technological genius wedded the older faith in America's manifest destiny, engendering escatic visions ... that would enable American to defeat all evil empires, wage war to end all wars and make the world eternally safe for democracy (Franklin in Davies, 1990: 151-152).

In the Trekker teachers' narratives, this symbolism defines the American ideal in terms of a "universally" equitable and legitimate ideology to be pursued by all people at all times. One teacher says

It is also a highly democratic; it reflects the best of democratic ideals. So, if you want to take American ideals to their nth degree, I think that's where you'll find it.

Another teacher agrees:

Well, it's American to the extent that it's democratic, it's our ideals of equality and tolerance. And everybody taking part. Yes, it's not just American in terms of who it would like to include and who it would like to appeal to, but it's, I think, if you take American ideals and take them to their end, that's it.

What is the nth degree of Americanism? Critics do not find it wholly admirable:

The moral vision of *Star Trek* thus partakes of the spirit and rhetoric of Pax Americana. Its basic moral principle is zeal for its mission. This is in effect what authors Lichtenberg, Marshak and Winston celebrate in their comprehensive fan book *Star Trek Lives!* They affirm and admirable ... "equality of moral stature" on the parts of Spock and Kirk. Each of them is that rarest of all things among men; a man of unbroken integrity ... each remains dedicated to the striving, extravagantly willing to pay the price. But when one measures this moral quality against standards forbidding deceit, adultery, and violence, the lack of restraint is striking. What we have here is moral zeal attached solely to the mission and to their own vision of what amounts to the "American Way." It is a zeal transcending both due process and the moral code of the Federations non-interference directive, which Kirk has sworn on pain of death to uphold. This directive is consistently broken in *Star Trek* episodes when "necessary" for the fulfillment of the mission (Jewett, 1976: 6).

Yet Trek Americanism is not wholly monolithic. Somehow the Trek world view speaks a language that is so polysemic it resonates with people from all segments of the political spectrum. One contemporary, after listening to me discuss the narratives, declared with anguish "We must recapture Trek for the

left!" Indeed, much of Trek does continuously and ostensibly profess a Kennedy-esque liberalism.

Star Trek probably went to the outer limits of what was possible for network television in the 1960's. The program might be interpreted as the starship of Kennedy liberalism, given its theme of exploring new frontiers and going where no man has gone before. Produced by Kennedy liberal Gene Roddenberry, the series exhibited the cold war liberalist ideology associated with the Kennedy administration ... However, its vision of world hegemony featured a white male leader, Captain Kirk, benevolently ruling over other races and worlds under the reign of the U.S.S. Enterprise, a barely disguised code for American capitalism (Kellner, 1990: 169).

One of the Trekkers says, "Trek provides whatever you need." Certainly it does!

One of the Trekker teachers mentioned the "KKK types" who were in her local club; another teacher in comparing his "Klingon" group to other Klingon groups remarked on the proliferation of "Biker types" in most Klingon assemblages.

Television as a media of indoctrination is an active medium; messages can be contested and transformed by the viewers to serve their own interests; at the same time, however, a subtle consent to the dominant ideology is produced. So, for example, elitist elements of military hierarchy are rearticulated under Trek's gloss of a "universal embrace."

It would be foolish to underestimate the hegemonic power of a television series as popular as *Star Trek*.

Hegemonic ideology attempts to legitimate the existing society, its institutions, and its ways of life ... The process of hegemony describes the social construction of reality through certain dominant ideological institutions, practices and discourses ... produced in a complex series of practices.

Through ideological mediation, hegemonic ideology is translated into everyday consciousness and serves as a means of indirect rule that is a powerful force for social cohesion and stability ... According to the hegemony model, television thus attempts to engineer consent to the established order; it induces people to conform to established ways of life and patterns of beliefs and behavior (Kellner, 1990: 18).

One of the ways that this is accomplished in *Star Trek* is through the (re)construction of time and history

To be situated in history and as history, television requires the conflation of past and present, a conflation which involves (re)historization of the present as well as (re)presentation of the past. History in its otherness masquerades as something new, while the present simulates itself as history. Thus in turn has the *effect* of producing an unstable, dispersed subject of historical consciousness. Such instability has ramifications for the process of reception and popular memory (Schwoch, White and Reilly, 1992: 13).

Thus, the viewer is implicated in the hegemonic transformation of popular memory, as the future is presented in *Trek* as the past. The transformation of popular memory allows the viewer unequivocally to believe that American goals and values can be put into practice and can work. It enables the faithful to feel good about Mom, apple pies, and Chevrolets. It produces a comfortable, easily recognizable, recapitulation of traditional orders and values because the future will be bright, although the present is not.

The *Trek* teachers seem to be ideologically conservative and paradigmatically idealistic, in a utopian/nostalgic sense. One speaker argues:

Patriotism is a very strong belief; it is my very strong belief, that it is the job of every American to make to fix America. What's wrong is we're trying to fix

these peripheral problems. The problem is you have got to fix America before you fix Americans, and I don't think that social programs are the answer.

Another teacher announces:

I am a staunch patriot! And I speak about my love for America often. Uh, my students, they call them my "Uncle Sam speeches" and they love to get me off talking on patriotism and family and everything else! I'll tell them about the old family reunions where the woman cooked for days and my grandfather had barrels of lemonade and he picked one grandkid who got to taste the lemonade.

Trekkers maintain a stalwart belief that, through both Trek and teaching, they can encourage the "best" in America (and therefore the world, the galaxy and the universe). Through repetition of the familiar, the Trekkers are able to envision that "what has failed in American experience is nevertheless affirmed to be 'true' because it is depicted operating successfully in outer space" (Jewett, 1977: 32). One teacher exclaims:

The ideas behind *Star Trek* which are the technological ideas are there primarily as a motivator for young people! Even those young people who are not *Star Trek* fans still get excited about *Star Trek* because its something different. It's something new. It's exciting even though they may not be fans per se. *Star Trek* is the impetus behind the future. A good future, a just future, a future without opinion and speculation, a future with truth, justice and beauty!

Science: The Ideological Frontier, the Revenge of the Nerds

The basic principle of the ideology of natural science is that the pursuit of knowledge is the most worthy of human activities. A scientist is perceived as

duty-bound to explore the universe to its utmost limits ... Scientists lean heavily on a mystique of personal devotion to research in order to maintain high standards of performance, just as good soldiers lean heavily on the mystiques of obedience to orders and personal devotion to duty. But such mystiques are essentially myths that ignore the social significance of whatever is done in their name. Scientists as well as soldiers often excuse their own behavior by claiming that they are not responsible: that they are just doing their duty to science ...

Samuel Cohen, the so-called father of the neutron bomb... in an interview in which Cohen was asked about the development of weapons for mass killings and mass destruction ... responded that he looked at this work only as an intellectually stimulating activity, as a great challenge and as a very fascinating job (Brock-Utne in Westing, 1988: 87).

The narratives of the Trekker teachers reveal an ethos grounded in devotion to duty, deification of the techno-scientific, and justification of the mission, all under the rubric of a value-neutral (but humane) quantifiability. The teachers continually speak in singularly dichotomous postulates of right and wrong, and truth and falsehood. A teacher explains

Sometimes I think to myself, we are so medieval. I mean here science is telling us the way things ought to be and we are so caught up in selfish causes. We can serve a greater good. Through science we can feed the hungry, cure the sick, and reach out to other worlds.

Another speaker asserts

I think Americans, at least in my lifetime, and I'm 33, American values have gone from home and saving and family and church and education, to get rich quick throw it away if it doesn't work, and really just care about yourself. Instead of we, we, we, it's now me, me, me! That's what I think. Most American values can now only be found among the scientific community and, of course, the military.

The military is all "we!" That's why if you were to go into the Army they would dress you all the same. They take away all personalizing items. You know, no necklaces, no earrings, no chains. And it becomes "the we" who are all dependent on each other. Which is basically what *Star Trek* is! You are dependent on someone else, and that is also traditional American values! Traditional, but I think you'll find those in places now and I think we need to get moving back toward them. Duty and honor are the most important things and values we have.

I really think, if you look at it, the command structure in *Star Trek* is our military naval military structure, and in that structure you will find the values of exploration, discovery and the "we!" For me, that's the beauty of *Star Trek*.

A third Trekker teacher exclaims

That is what is so wonderful about science; it is neutral. It isn't black or white, or anything it is just the mission, the quest for truth! *Star Trek* is a scientific vision. It is not a, you know, artsy one or a political one. What I mean is that science isn't like politicians arguing about what is good for society. Scientist know, by finding out, what they care about is the truth, and ultimately that is the only thing that counts. We as a civilization can not advance without the leaps that science has made for us.

"*Star Trek* assured us that the universe was knowable," writes Foote (1992: 22); it "could be explored, it could be handled, and through our energetic and unambiguously benevolent intervention it could be *improved*." According to the Trek teachers' narratives, the manner by which the universe can be rectified, enhanced, and refined is through adopting a framework generated by a benevolent military-industrial complex. The universe is to be made safe for democracy through scientific progress. People are not the engine of the revolution; *the engine is the revolution*. "*Star Trek, Star Trek: The Next*

Generation and *Deep Space Nine* ... offer hope for a humane, techno-friendly future (*TNG* script guidelines expressly forbid technophobic themes)" (Larsen, 1993: 42).

If, as Bakhtin argues, every word has its homecoming, the vocabularies of the military, the industrial, the technological and the scientific are certainly celebrated in the scripts articulated by *Trek* programs and translated by the teachers. States one of the teachers quite matter-of-factly

Sure, *Trek* is military, but it isn't like we picture the military today; it is the best of the military, with the best minds, with the highest IQs, who maintain a keen knowledge in a variety of disciplines running the Federation.

Another teacher cites the textual of the program to make a clear-cut point

Remember the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. Whatever is pursued is pursued for the good of the Federation, each discovery benefits everyone. Science is different than just saying "I think." The science of *Star Trek* is not only possible; it shows the truth, and then the truth is used for everyone's betterment.

A third teacher asserts

To really pursue science you must commit yourself to somewhat of a higher order. You can't let your opinions stand in the way.

If geography helps define us, then in the space where the scientific, the technological, the industrial and the military are articulated, with a distinctive "patriotic" inflection, and definitive Southern accent, *Trek* will be encountered.

Perhaps that is why one of the teachers explicitly states in her interview:

Wherever you find a military base, a top secret instillation, think-tanks and factories associated with the military and NASA, or scientists themselves, you're going to find a hotbed of Trekkdom. Here in this area we have one of the largest bomb plants in the country ... with lots of engineers and scientists, all Trekkers. _____ University here, all Trekkers; Trekkers are not stupid! The best minds in this country are Trekkers!

"The best minds" one teacher said, "we are looking for the best scientific minds in the country" is defined under traditional, quantifiable terms. Another teacher claims that in

Mensa. Now in Mensa you'll find that most of the members like *Star Trek*. There are a lot of people in Mensa who are hard core Trekkers. Maybe it's the technology, the future, and the science. Maybe it's knowing that they are appreciated. Besides, people who are very intelligent tend to be open minded. So that'll go along with the less education you have, the more closeminded you are. Most of the people on my ship are professionals.

A third speaker makes a very important assertion, stating

On my ship, we are all professional people, you know. Scientists, doctors, lawyers, teachers, professors, computer technicians, systems analysts and designers and linguists. Everyone is highly educated, and everyone is highly intelligent. I don't know if people who are not that bright would be interested in Trek. A lot of what we discuss is highly technological and highly scientific.

Nevertheless, it appears that a high IQ is not the sole determinant in defining the constitution of the best minds. Sunny Bains, author of *Star Trek: The Nerd's Charter* (1991: 46) eloquently put it this way:

When I was a little girl, I watched *Star Trek* regularly and Mr. Spock was my hero. He was brainy, rational an alien and more than anything else, a nerd. Nerds are people not *au fait* with the social niceties of chitchat, clothes, sports and mainstream humor, because they dedicate so much of their time to academic learning ...

When I got to high school and started missing out on social life because I was doing my physics and math homework, Spock's example¹ was a powerful incentive to keep at it. Nerds could be cool, and right, and win out in the end ... maybe even girl nerds. Only later did I discover that other scholars felt the same.

In 1991, Charles Vest, President of MIT² and professor of mechanical engineering told the freshman class, "It's okay to be a nerd" (Bains, 1991: 46). Recall Lemert's assertion "the politics of social science are inextricably tied to its epistemology" (Seidman, 1992: 7). There is a link between science and power, the construction of knowledge is implicated in political struggles insofar as particular groups and their specific agendas are privileged. Which highlights the technological, the scientific, the industrial and the military constructs a social reality that privileges those whose expertise is in these fields.³

Thus, the celebration of the discourse of the Nerd legitimates several factors of paramount significance to the Trekker collective subjective: a meritocracy of intelligence based on techno-scientific skill; a disregard for conventions surrounding material appearances; a marginalization of the physical body and a disdain for social interaction. In the Trek world, athletes and artists are of little consequence, for they are avocations, hobbies to be pursued in the leisure time provided by the techno-capitalists enterprise. The lone scientist on a quest is

the valorized norm. The fewer social skills that an individual possesses, the less attention paid to physical surroundings, the more technical knowledge acquired, and the greater the commitment to the "gift" of technical ability, the more easily the fledgling novice can ascend into an elevated realm within the Trekker universe. The desire to win is firmly rooted in the American ethos of the agentic, where competition reigns supreme. What the Trekker desires to prove is the supremacy of a meritocracy grounded in the discourse of the space scientist.

Bain's passionate plea for 1991 to be the time for the technical community to begin celebrating *Star Trek* insofar as Spock provided the "worlds greatest role model for budding nerds" (Bains, 1991: 46), gives credence to the Trekker desire for acceptance, and legitimation (and domination placed firmly on top of a hierarchy grounded in meritocracy that values the particular Trekker merits).

The ideal type of image promulgated by the Trekker's is one as evidenced in the following narrative:

He plays with computers, when they had the earthquake in Russia, he was one of ten people in the world that was called to Russia to redo their computers because that's what he does, he's a genius, he cleans up when a computer that has a hard drive is shaken and loses its memory. ____ goes in and restores that memory he has that capability! He did it in California, at the California earthquake.

God, if you ever meet him, he looks like a tramp! He's short, stubby, with dark hair and his hair is never combed. He looks like something you wouldn't even pick up along the highway. And, yet, he is so accomplished and so brilliant he probably has more money than I'll ever have in my lifetime. I mean, when he went to Russia he was paid \$100,000 for two weeks worth of work, and on top of that brought back a computer program that they were playing in Russia that we didn't even have in the United States. It was a

game and he brought it back ... now its on Nintendo and all that: Tetris but it was I saw the original Russian game cartridge. You wouldn't know it to look at him, he is oblivious to his surroundings.

To put it quite plainly the Trekkers see the "coming of Trek," and the realization of the Trek world, as a space not only in which *they* will prevail, but as a place where "The Revenge of the Nerds" will ultimately occur as they place themselves at the forefront of a universe that they will finally conquer. A teacher claims

Like a lot of Trekkers, I had a hard time as a teenager. I was really very smart. I loved science! I always did well in school, and I graduated number one in my class. But, I never had a date. I always felt like an outcast. I mean here I was the smartest person in the school. I got perfect SAT scores, perfect! Nobody ever asked me out! They couldn't get past the physical shell. Well to hell with them. On my Starship I am valued for what I can do, and what I can construct.

A second teacher echoes the comments of the first speaker

I see a lot of that when I go to conventions. You see a lot of the stereotypical convention attendee, the kid who, you would suspect, hides himself during the day. You know, the super intelligent type. You know, the kid who is overweight, or pimply faced, or just really a physical mess. Who has lost himself in this world. That's the stereotypical convention attendee. But you also see the professional types who as adults, I think, still loose themselves in the Trek world perhaps for different reasons. Those are the fans that irritate the hell out of me; they are the holier-than-thou crowd, the smarter-than-everyone-else crowd.

For the techno-scientific elite, Trek provides a legitimation, arena, celebration of self:

It is not surprising then, that MIT students, NASA engineers and other technical people find the program compelling. *Star Trek* is confirmation that what they are doing is worthwhile, that science is not an unnatural sinister art that will lead to our destruction, but something that will allow us to become richer fuller human beings. Given the stick that scientists usually get ... mad scientist or laboratory rat -- this is no small step (Bains, 1991: 47).

Trek is perceived and recreated as a training ground for a techno-scientific elite corps. Specifically at this confluence the Trek-tech is translated from the textual to the pedagogical. Spock is not merely a role model but so also are the actor who plays Spock (Leonard Nimoy) and all the actors, directors, writers, producers, and technical personnel who have been even remotely been associated with the program. They are endowed with the responsibility to insure that young talent and intelligence is protected and nurtured. One teacher asserts:

I think all of the characters, all the actors ... they recognize that they have responsibilities to the fans! The most moving comments I have ever heard took place when I had a chance to listen to James Doohan (Scotty) speak. And he told me that he has literally tens of thousands of letters from young people who have shared with him that because of his example, they have gone into engineering and become highly successful as engineers. Because of his character on *Star Trek*. He has ignited in them an interest in, and a desire to be an engineer. What a fantastic legacy for anybody! The same thing with DeForest Kelly. He has literally thousands of letters from people who have shared with him that they have gone into medicine because of his inspiration.

The instrumentation, the pedagogical practice of nurturance is entrusted to the various "Starships" within the Star Fleet organizations. The program of preparation for a future within the techno-scientific elite corps is provided by

surrounding recruits and members with a grand array of group activities, all stratified by rank. The community thus encloses itself and the membership from outside influences which might detract the serious and the committed from achieving their goals. The expressed purpose of closing ranks was explained to me by a third grade teacher who is also a Starship Captain:

Erma Bombeck said it best, you see, the problem with our world is that we have too many choices. You used to be able to go into a store and buy a hot dog but now you get, "Do you want bun length?"

One teacher says,

By eliminating other corrupting influences, people can focus on science, people can focus on Trek.

Trekker discourse makes an unusual play on the notion of the counter-cultural; in Trek, the inverted "norms" actually are an acceptance of the dominant discourse).

If hesitant participants are drawn into activities utterly in opposition to established ways and drastically different from some of their own tendencies, they are more likely to become dedicated, even fanatical supporters of the inverted norms (Yinger, 1982: 199).

The more one becomes involved in Trek, the more the sense of group affiliation⁴ will be derived from Trek, the more complete involvement in the Trek community becomes. Trek is a "total institution" (Goffman, 1961).

Love as Military Hierarchy

A Trekker teacher related an anecdote to me about his nephew who he absolutely adores.

He said to me. "You're not a lieutenant!" I said, "Yes I am. I am a lieutenant. Ask your dad." His dad said, "Yes he is, your uncle is a lieutenant."

What was *not mentioned* in the conversation was that *he's a lieutenant in Star Fleet!* Another teacher jokingly comments

Well, I am a department head on Klingon ship. We really need to recruit a dentist. The crew needs to see an orthodontist badly.

I still resolutely state, I always really loved *Star Trek*. It was fun; it was innocent; it was fantasy. With that in mind, I admit to attending Trek Cons in Miami. I never recall seeing Star Fleet, Star Fleet Command, Star Fleet International or any of the academies. Regionalism is an important factor in the particular translation of Trek evidenced here. Perhaps I wasn't looking for hard-core Trekkers in Miami, but I do believe if I would have seen it, I would have remembered "something" as avant-garde as what confronted me when I went to my first Trek-Con in Greensboro.

I was walking around the "sales" area asking merchants if they knew of any teachers who were also Trekkers. One of the merchants helpfully suggested that I talk to the Admiral. "What Admiral?" I inquired. "The Admiral of Star

Fleet," he responded, "she should be sitting at the recruiting station."

Majestically she marched into the room and sat down ramrod straight it was amazing to behold all of her glory, her *Next Generation* uniform, bedecked and bejeweled with medals of accomplishment from intergallactic battles, no doubt. I wasn't quite sure how to speak to her, or approach her, but I do remember addressing her with the proper "Sir." She opened up her briefcase, and took out her "official duty roster" and gave me names, ranks, addresses, phone numbers, and a business card which proudly displayed her rank and her ship!

Recall once more the statement by the Trekker teacher to the effect that Star Fleet is not trying to recruit the dummies; they are looking for the best scientific minds. Perhaps this statement is so reminiscent of the Marine's advertising slogan "We are looking for just a few good men," because Star Fleet and various other "Trek" groups do in fact recruit in the same fashion as the military. The structure of the clubs are modeled on, to quote one of the teachers, "the best the military has to offer."

Trek recruitment practices reflect a command/subordinate/specialist structure parallel to that of the military; so does the structure of the entire organization. A "Starship Captain" explains:

After I find out that someone is assigned to my ship, what I do as soon as I receive their paperwork, is to call them and rank them. I tell them that if you are interested in intense competition and these things, you don't belong on our ship. I tell them I will try to reassign them or ask them to resign and join either Star Fleet or the Klingon Assault group or whatever. There are many organizations that are in this area. I cannot pronounce the Romulan one, the

"ra tas shah" or something like that. But, I say, if you're interested in those type of things, you can go to another ship because that is not the way my ship is run. To me some people get into it because they want to be an admiral and go way up through the ranks, and you say to yourself "Why they have some sort of need to feel important or something and that's what they do." But that isn't the way this organization is run, it is team work. **And not everyone can be in charge** (emphasis added).

Another of the Trekker teachers who is also a captain, delineated her perception in uncompromising terms:

It's a very complex military structure. **I am the captain!** I have worked extremely hard to make rank. I don't apologize or make excuses. If somebody wants to move through the ranks, they had better dedicate themselves, and really work hard at it! (emphasis added).

Several of the Trekker teachers elucidated just how one moves up in the ranks of the various organizations:

To make rank ... Well, you come in as an ensign. And if you're content just to attend meetings and an occasional convention you'll probably rise to an ensign first class. To really make rank they want you to be involved in the group. You have to submit an article to the newsletter. You have to attend at least one convention. You have to be part of one ship fundraiser. You have to participate in an external event like MDA or Habitat for Humanity, plus some other volunteer activities. Then if you complete all of those, then the review board meets. They meet about twice a year and go look at your record. You rise to the next level: ensign, ensign first, ensign second, then lieutenant, lieutenant first, lieutenant second, and then lieutenant commander, commander, captain. It is the same structure that you would find on a starship. Everyone is allowed to pick the area they are interested in! It is not just window dressing! For example I am the chief engineer. I am responsible for setting up tables, building props, displays, those kind of things. The security chief handles security. And so, we have functions which go along with what we are actually doing with the ship.

Another speaker explains:

When we went to our first shipboard meeting. I personally was terribly impressed that the captain is a lady, the second officer is lady. These were professional woman and they had their act together. They were involved and still are involved in neat activities all kind of volunteer activities with the community. So, I felt this would be the right organization for us! To move up in rank, you had to work, and work hard, as the organization was filled with dedicated professionals, living out the philosophy of *Star Trek*!

Perhaps the most illuminating manner of attaining rank within the organization is by matriculating at one of the Star Fleet Academies;⁵ there are several including, but not limited to The Vulcan Science Academy, The Star Fleet Academy of Engineering, and The Star Fleet Academy of History. Many of the Trekker teachers have attended the "academies," which, as in any military college, are crucial caveats for moving from a non-commissioned status to a commissioned status. Further, when completing all required coursework, one may get a B.A., a B.S., an M.A., an M.S. and ultimately a Ph.D. from the academies. The coursework parallels course work at any university. One member gave me⁶ a history outline from a Galactic History overview course, that was quite reminiscent of an Introduction to Western Civilization class. As one Trekker put it:

They all want to take courses and become officers, but not everyone can be a leader. Still, everyone ought to have an education, or at least the opportunity for an education.

Participants recruit new members, place them in their various positions depending on interest and aptitude ("I don't know why that man wanted to join the medical corps, he knew nothing about medicine, I thought it would be better if he were in security"); new members then do a variety of public service works, all in the name of the Federation. In a remarkable self-contradiction, the explicit purpose of the club is said to be grounded in a morality of "love" and "appreciation for all sentient beings"; it is however framed in a bureaucratic hierarchical order of scientific meritocracy. Even decisions that are presumably based on individual interest are decided upon by the elite officership which determines "aptitude" and "interest."

In order to create a hierarchy, there needs to be some form of stratification and criteria for stratification. It is not reducible to mere sexual preference or physical attributes, although one member said that "All the dykes are command, and all the fat people are the membership." Trekkers take their organization and their leadership with the utmost seriousness, for them it is not a game; "Trek is a way of life."

What constitutes a leader is primarily predicated on the text of Trek. This serves as a constant point of contention and discussion among the Trekkers. A speaker remarks,

I think Picard is a better leader than Kirk. He is more of a philosopher. I think Yar said it best. After she had died, she said, "He had the heart of an explorer and the soul of a poet." Which he does. I think that's what a leader is. Leaders don't just give orders they understand why people can do what they can do.

Another teacher notes,

I think Kirk is a stronger leader than Picard. Kirk dominated the whole, and that's the way it was intended to be. A leader does not have discussions! He leads!

A third narrator comments,

Rikker disappoints me. He's extraneous. He keeps on losing the ship! I mean one time last year the Ferengis all but walked on when Picard became a kid. He did nothing, he did nothing! And they took over the ship. Also, he was about to throw his entire Star Fleet career away when he fell in love with that character from that androgynous planet. I am disappointed in him I can't see him ever becoming a Starship captain. He just messes up too often.

While a fourth teacher states,

Wharf, I think Wharf has command potential! Wharf would have to keep some of his Klingon instincts in check. If they didn't allow Wharf to be captain, they would be violating the idic idea. Are you familiar with idic? And if they have already trusted him as a Star Fleet officer thus far. I don't know why they wouldn't let him become the captain. Data might be able to do it. But, I think I would pick Wharf before I would pick Data.

The textual theory of Trek leadership is not merely discussed but it is then translated into practice within the organizational framework and hierarchy.

Three narrators comment. The first speaker proclaims,

Everybody I have ever met in Trek are really shy, but, they are also extremely dedicated to something. Which is something that I find in all Trekkers! I find a place for every person on my ship! O.K. sometimes you really have outspoken people but that's their personality. You have ten recruits and only one would be outspoken and a leader like a Picard. And then you have all your subordinates, all those who will follow. They have their opinions and

stuff, but, they can't readily express it. Others something has to trigger them to express it!

A second elucidates,

Everyone wants to be part of something. And you know that 95% of the world is followers anyway. That's why we have so much trouble in the world today. We have too many followers and not enough strong minded leaders. So, I like to look at Picard as the type of leadership to aspire to. In terms of role models. I think Picard especially and his crew, the *Next Generation* crew, generally is a fine role model for how to behave how you would like people to behave. How you would like them to think.

While another teacher explains,

In Trek you can't expect everybody to be a Kirk, or a Picard, or a Cisco. There have got to be leaders, strong leaders, with tremendous insight. It doesn't have to do with just vision. All Trekkers are visionaries. It doesn't have to do with leadership by itself, it is a combination of qualities. You see the qualities displayed on the ship weekly. A leader is a very rare person. But, that doesn't mean that subordinates are devalued. Everyone has a place, and that is the place they ought to be. That is how our ships are run.

With a membership that relishes citing the "professional" demographics of people involved, and their optimistic belief in America and in scientific technocapitalism, it is not surprising then that some Trekkers hold office, or want to seek office! There is precedent in United States history where the military does seek political office, for example Eisenhower. Devotion to duty as patriotism can be evidenced in the fantasy military too.

Because, much of Trek is conducted "in the closet," when Trekkers contemplate running for office, they translate the metaphorical of Trek into the

guise of the word "patriotic," yet, the "Trek philosophy" is the guiding force behind a desire to lead the nation into the future.

I am patriotic enough to believe that at least we're trying to get towards the right direction, certainly Trek points us in that direction. I think that there needs to be a tremendous house-cleaning in Washington. A bill to put term limits on congressman I think would be excellent! Federation leadership rotates, it is more Jeffersonian in vision. He didn't envision congress as a wise career move! I think our president should serve six years and only one term. Then he could really get something done. Of course that's touching the sacred cow of the constitution, which you don't do. So, really being a patriot to me is, I guess, I just love this country and I want to see it fixed, so we can move toward the future. I don't know who can fix it. Gene is no longer with us. I am looking for the door right now and if I ever could find it, I guess I'll get elected to something. I'm not political, but there doesn't seem to be much of a choice. It is probably my duty to serve.

Just as there are branches in the military that are competitive with one another (Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force), and segments within each branch of service (i.e. Rangers, Airborne, Special Forces etc.) that view themselves as the elite military corps, the various *Star Trek* clubs reflect that same competition, with one another. One of the Trekker teachers comments on the inter-organizational competition:

When I joined Star Fleet Command, I had no idea about Star Fleet. Star Fleet and Star Fleet Command sound so much alike but ever since I've joined, I realize what comprises the differences, and frankly I am proud to be a member of Star Fleet Command!

I am going to a convention and Star Fleets going to be there. We have to do this and that for recruitment. We have our own ship! We don't condemn them at all. And I didn't think they did either. I thought they were just a separate group and everything. But, I went to a convention at one point and there was some animosity there. They were actually competing, trying to come up to our table, trying to take people away from us.

Still another says:

At Dixie Trek, we had two ships from Star Fleet, a ship from Star Fleet Command, and the Roger Young. Well, Roger Young has a reputation for doing things right! We are all mostly adults and we pull all the stops out at conventions! But, we have noticed in the last year or so, some of the other ships have begun to do the same in an unspoken kind of way, in a non-adversarial way. Everyone wants more members because we could do more things, and it becomes, "Well, what does your ship do?" Now, a lot of the ships are party organizations. They hold meetings and at the meetings they talk about *Star Trek* and then party. ____ (son) and I were looking for something more.

While another speaker expresses her angst at the competition for membership.

At the convention we actually saw them being really aggressive and stuff. Then, I came across somebody who was Star Fleet and I was talking to them and when I mentioned I was Star Fleet Command, they got a whole change of attitude, and I was like, what is wrong? I mean, it's not like we are Klingons and Romulans and we got to have this attitude towards each other. I mean we are all for the same idea.

A fourth narrator summarized,

I realize that we all stand for the same ideals. However, and this I think is important, we are professionals; we are not a bunch of kids just playing *Star Trek*! On my ship we actively live the ideals of *Star Trek* in so many ways. I don't think that any other ship is of the same caliber!

Yet, the membership does realize that the various sundry Trek-related organizations essentially are similar with similar purposes and a similar hierarchy. One of the Starship Captains who is also a fifth grade teacher elucidates:

Basically the people I have met have the same thoughts that we do. They run their ship us the same way. Both our organizations are formed for one purpose to unite people to get together and do *Star-Trek* related activity.

A second narrator recapitulates the first narrator's comments.

We all have ships, and write down areas as star bases! Nationally they have more people, well over 5,000 more. People hear more about Star Fleet than about Star Fleet Command. The way everything is run is just about the same. You know on Prodigy they talk all the time from Star Fleet. Their organization sounds exactly like ours except that we have a ship, and in different towns and we break it down into "away teams," they break it down into "shuttle crafts," or "shuttles." We thought we were going to shuttles too, and we tried to think of a new thing. We tried to think of one that was progressive towards *Next Generation*, so, we thought of away teams.

A third speaker reverberates the explanations given by the other narrators.

They just started differently. I have hear that somebody who was in Star Fleet had problems, and broke off, and said I'll start off by my own. There are more Star Fleet ships right here 'cause my ship takes the whole area. They have one in _____ (town), one in _____ (town), one is _____ (town). But we have more in the coast and one in the mountains. We run on the same principles. Oh there is a guy here in _____ (town) where Star Fleet has a ship. He did a whole newspaper article. He talked about his views on *Star Trek* and what Star Fleet does. And if I was interviewed I couldn't say anything different than what he said.

Dissatisfaction among the ranks has created a "mercenary" Trek force; members identity is vaguely reminiscent of the "independent soldier" who is dedicated to ideals rather than "the organization," so recapitulating the myth of the Western cowboy hero, and emulating the great patriot, Rambo. One teacher remarks proudly:

We don't belong to either Star Fleet Command, or Star Fleet, or The International Federation or anything like that, we are an independent ship!

The conundrum that is presented surrounding the "fan clubs" can be seen in the confusion or infusion of military parallels within the organization. Remember the commercial "Is it real or is it Memorex?" Are these truly merely fan clubs or para-military organizations?

Political philosophy as personal narrative is imbued with the military and with Trek in the following narrative segments. One teacher explains:

Political philosophers of the day tell us we haven't had a devastating war in over thirty years! History will tell us that about every 20-30 years there will be a devastating war that will wipe out 50-100,000 of the population! We tend to put in our military, this is why our military has so much trouble getting started, we put in our military a lot of times the individuals who are not the most desirable in society. They are people who are naturally violent. So, we put them into war and let them let that violence out and then eventually they become disciplined! Ultimately they realize what they are doing. That also takes the worst elements of your society out. They are no longer there. Of course, the last war was Vietnam; 58,000 casualties. That was a very ethnocentric war, with the idea that a lot of the troops that were fighting were Black or Hispanic. I heard a sociologist once say: "Opie, didn't go to war"....

Another teacher echoes the same sentiments citing pragmatic social scientific knowledge while conflating that with the personal as political:

We have two teachers here that fought in Nam and they won't talk about it. They look at the issue of veterans in *Star Trek*, and I am terrible at remembering the name of the episodes, but it was a planet where they had ingrained in these men how to fight how to be defensive and they brought these violent tendencies back with them and then they locked them up on a planet they didn't take care of them which is nothing but the veterans issue all over again. I guess the veterans issue of the 24th century. And I thought

if you know history and you know sociology you can recognize a lot of the things in *Star Trek*! It reflects good old fashioned American values!

The most interesting theoretical connection that the narratives present is the interplay between *Trek* and the military. All of the (self-identified) hard-core *Trekker* teachers interviewed had complex, complete and satisfactory relationships with the military. Quite proudly, three of the male *Trekker* teachers discuss their relationship with the military, in which they served, or their parents served. One male *Trekker's* father was an officer; another teacher descended from both a father (a career medical officer) and a mother (a nurse during World War II) who were officers. A third teacher, is the child of a father who was non-commissioned career military.

Nostalgia for childhood and utopian visions of order create an the idealization of the military in the narratives of *Trekker* men. One teacher says:

Being a Navy Man (and proud of it!) I look at the *Enterprise* on both *Classic Trek* and *The Next Generation*, and *Deep Space Nine*, and I see the U.S. Navy. I don't see the Army or the Marines or the Air Force, I see the Navy and I see the best of the U.S. Navy.

What I see is a society, a military organization, that has transcended being just military, which is something that the U.S. Navy is attempting to do now. I remember when I was in the navy, we were told that "You folks as sailors are ambassadors." That was drummed into our heads constantly! The attempt was made to inculcate that idea. That you are more than just military.

I think what you see in *Star Trek* is a positive view of that evolution, where the military has gone beyond being just military. Yes, there is still a chain of command and you notice that nobody salutes and you notice that whole business of saluting that *Star Trek* espouses is an anachronism, a throwback to a much much earlier time. Where now, in the future, there is

acknowledged ritual respect, there is no need to salute, no need for outward signs of respect.

There is mention in *Star Trek* and there are some references in the literature to something called the Space Marines and you see them, some of the security people, dressed in this particular uniform. That's the marines, the army, the more militaristic area. As far as the NASA people, well, they exemplify this as well!

A history teacher explains autobiographically:

I was involved in the military club there, and I became the colonel of that! It was all kids from the private schools in the area. Very snobby. In fact, some of the things they did rather turned me off and I don't know how I got to be the colonel. 'Cause I was never in the social register on anything like that. But, I stayed on there as assistant commandant for ten years and really started teaching that!

Once you get to be a corporal, you're teaching, how to do the manual arms, to the privates. And as you go further up in the ranks you're doing more of that. And so it was excellent teacher training!

I joined the guard in the same armory because it was an extension of my cadet corps. For instance, for being colonel, I had a pretty good opportunity for going to West Point. I wanted to get a history degree and West Point only offered science-engineering type of degrees. You could get a history minor but not a major. And I didn't want to be a full time soldier. I wanted to do it when I wanted to. My dad was a military physician. So, I went in the Guard and became an officer there.

A third male narrator explains with great fervor,

I understand the military, and respect the military! Unfortunately, I was too young for Vietnam and too old for the Persian Gulf. Those are the two conflicts of my generation. Now, my father, was an officer, and my father-in-law also was a staff sergeant. He was a tactile military specialist during the Cuban Missile Crisis ... The military is, well, it's a unique opportunity. For example, to study what'll be the theory of warp drive! Which is a current physical science theory. Whether we can ever come up with the type of

engine that will do what warp drive and everything I've read about creating warp field around a ship, well, that's another question. But we will, and I know the military will. The best scientists know this look at how an emergency allowed Werner Von Braun to create the rocket.

The female teachers also idealized the military. However, none of them served or desired to serve in the military. Nevertheless all expressed a sincere desire to travel in space, on a starship. They asked, "Would you go up in space?" and I said "In a heartbeat."⁷

For the female teachers the military also represented the nostalgia associated with childhood. Another theme of the utopian is presented in the "romantic." The military is associated with pageantry and proper behavior; but more significantly it is also connected to parental and spousal affection. In the following narrative, the teacher, who is both Southern and a former Christian fundamentalist romanticizes those involved in right-wing military dictatorships coming from Latin America to Florida in the late 50s and early 60s:

Well, you see, I grew up near my home town, which was a military base. We did a lot of running around. My daddy was retired military and he did a lot of sign painting and it meant going to these cities because in those days billboards were painted. With Cape Canaveral becoming the Space Center and everything, I got a chance to go from city and city with him, because they knew him from the army. I remember wishing he wouldn't have retired!

Now there is a place in Florida called Intercession City. There was really Mexicans and Colombians and Peruvians and South Americans, an odd lot. I always thought that these strangers from elsewhere were the best of the breed!

And then the Cuban Crisis came along, and Intercession City became logged with Cubans. They were military people. They were not the Cubans, well,

like you would have grown up with. They were not refugees, like you think of Cuban refugees today! They were military people who were escaping Castro and so, when they settled in, it was a very lovely formal type of thing. There was no rag-tag about it! Today, you got the Cuban refugees who are the rag-tag. They're not the upper crust! And it's different. I don't enjoy it as much! But as I look back on my childhood, it was the formal structure that I found so lovely and so romantic!

Another Trekker teacher who maintains the same of "wonderful military recollections" about her father, also wistfully recalls her husband's involvement in the military. Because of Trek's military qualities, her husband's involvement serves as a kind of salvation from profane civilian life.

He loves the military part so much! I mean, I know he misses the order of the military life! He loves the fact that Trek is set up in an organized military way! With the Captain, and all that. They all have their specific jobs and stuff! I like the fact that because of their set-up, their hierarchy. With the Captain. They have certain relationships. I think it is because I don't get into the hardware; he likes mechanical things. He doesn't see as much spirituality! Maybe because he's a man, he likes Trek more because its mechanical. There is certainly more to the military than the mechanical.

Still another woman envies the military. "I used to love when I would see my daddy in uniform," she says. But, in her matter-of-fact way of expressing herself, she doesn't quite comprehend why Trek is couched in terms of all of that "peace stuff." After all,

They're all military! I don't care what they say. *Star Trek* is. It is basically a military organization. They may say their primary objective is exploration, but why do you carry the weaponry the ship carries if you're just exploring?

Apparently Gene Rodenberry enjoyed a satisfactory relationship with the military. He

(s)tudied aeronautical engineering in college, and volunteered for service in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He flew 89 combat missions and sorties and was decorated with both the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal. It was during his time in the South Pacific that Rodenberry began his free-lance writing career. After the war, he worked as a pilot for Pan American World Airways ... and later as a policeman in Los Angeles (Alexander, 1991: 5).

Certainly the military is "idealized" in the program content. The adventure in space is, in Trek terms, part of the military. Since the space program originated in the military and remains deeply implicated in national security concerns, there is no way in which the Trekker teachers, or the Trek program, can divorce the military from the program's context and content.

Kirk's service, Star Fleet Command, was understood to be the military arm of its government rather than the space force of the united Earth government ... the Enterprise's dual role as exploration vessel and warship came more and more to emphasize the latter function as Kirk and company were repeatedly locked in Cold War struggle, with yes, and evil empire the Klingons (Worland, 1988: 100).

The Race in Space: The Cold War, Vietnam, Old and New Enemies, What the Future Holds -- "Everything Old Is New Again."

Star Trek originally appeared during the 60s, at the height of the Cold War, and the Vietnam conflict.

The invention of the Federation, with its progressive implication that different alien races could cooperate peacefully coincided with a virtual declaration of

Cold War in outer space (Worland, 1988: 110).

Although the Vietnam conflict is mentioned by the Trekker narrators, they cited Sputnik as a pivotal point in American history, and as a key rationale for their own career choices, interests and trajectories. One teacher says for example, "I became an engineer because of Trek, but also decided it was important to teach, so I teach computers and technology. I have an investment in the future."

The Cold War as depicted on the television in Rodenberry's text is an elaborated theme in the narratives of the Trek teachers. One teacher explains,

If you go back and you look at 1957, the Soviets had just launched Sputnik. Caught the United States with its pants down, big time! There was a collective realization at that point, on the part of society, in general, that there is a larger world out there. Unfortunately!

While another teacher describes his autobiographical experiences in relation to both Trek and Vietnam.

Star Trek came out about 1966. I really missed the first year of *Star Trek* because I was overseas with the Vietnam War. I was still in the Navy so I didn't even know it existed because I was totally removed from civilized society, serving on a ship off Vietnam. But, as soon as we got married in 1968, I remember this vividly, we moved into our apartment that night we turned the television on in the apartment and there was this program called *Star Trek* and I thought, "All right. This is far out." Been a *Star Trek* fan ever since.

I got a job offer to teach for 3M Corporation. *Star Trek* had gone off the air. It had only lasted for three seasons and I remember when it went off the air I thought this was like someone had removed a part of my body! I remember

reading incensed letters from fans from all over the world. "Why did you do this?" Anyhow, there was a void period.

The other interesting thing I noticed about *Star Trek* it wasn't like *Lost in Space* or *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*. It wasn't just fluff, but it talked about real issues! It was able to take a mirror and hold it up to society and say, "Here are your warts." I think that was one of Rodenberry's greatest contributions was that philosophical construct to use an entertainment program not just to entertain but to enlighten. As a Navy man, I thought that was great!

In the narrative of another speaker these sentiments reverberate with resounding clarity. He says,

There really wasn't a heck of a lot to get a young person interested in science and technology until about 1956-57, when Sputnik was launched, and I became totally committed to space exploration. Because of science fiction. I joined the Action Research Society which was a professional rocketry group. And we'd go out and launch rockets. Now these were before model rocketry. These were rockets, serious kinds of hardware. My dad, bless his heart, never really fully understood. I kind of think he understood that this was something that was going to be useful to me later on, so he encouraged me to stick with it.

For those who grew up with a particular understanding of patriotism, *Star Trek* provides an impetus to engage in personal competition with the Soviets. One teachers talks about the felt need to

preserve our way of life, and help others. After all Americans believe in possibility for everyone. Not the Soviets, they didn't! I don't know if you remember, but if we hadn't won the space race, they could have taken over the whole world. And then where would we be, on a polluted mess of a planet with everyone enslaved.

So the skies are seen as the arena where a galactic Americanization of the future will occur.

In the sixties a significant number of *Star Trek* plot lines revolved completely around the Cold War, "with the ideological competition between the two superpowers" (Worland, 1988: 110) symbolically represented by cultural differences between the Klingon empire and the Federation.

It became clear that the federation controlled a definite sphere of influence and vital interest, continually challenged and threatened by the Klingons, the Romulans, and other lesser powers such as Orion in "Journey to Babel" (17 November 1967). The Federation was not, therefore an outer space United Nations -- after all, the Soviet Union, Cuba, Libya and other American adversaries are UN members -- but more akin to the Cold War conception of the "Free World", with Starfleet as its NATO. Increasingly ... Captain Kirk and the *Enterprise* crew were diverted from their scientific explorations -- in order to protect the weak and peaceful planets of the galaxy from the creeping menace of "Klingonism" (Worland, 1988: 110).

Unquestionably, the Trekkers realize this. One teacher asserts, "The Klingons, well, I think Klingons are Soviet. They are very militaristic! Of course, so are the Romulans and the Cardasians." Another one declares

In the Classic Trek we were at a stalemate with both the Klingons and the Romulans it wasn't until after Kittimer that the Klingons realized that they would have to join with the Federation in order to survive the Empire was collapsing, crumbling under its feet, they wouldn't have had energy for more than fifty years, so they had to strike up some kind of real detente with us.

A third teacher remarks,

What could we do? I mean here we are trying to explore, and all they wanted to do was fight, I mean now we know it is for honor, but we really had no

choice, we were forced into the conflict.

The themes of the television show provide "patriotic" justification for recent history. In a show entitled "A Private Little War," Captain Kirk ultimately resolves a conflict on Neural, predicated on "Rapacious Klingonism ... still the cause of Neural's troubles to be sure" (Worland, 1988: 115), by manufacturing rifles, creating a stalemate between the two groups.

With Nona dead and Tyree demanding guns, Kirk calls the ship and asks Scotty to begin manufacturing a hundred flintlock rifles. Puzzled, Scotty asks him to repeat his message, and Kirk replies bitterly, 'A hundred -- serpents for the garden of Eden; beam us up home, we're very tired' (Worland, 1988: 115).

Certainly, the myth of the Machine in the Garden (Marx, 1964) is presented as inevitable here. Kirk is not pleased with his command to Scotty; he does not think that he is aiding in the development of Neural situation, but he is compelled to make the galaxy safe for democracy. So Cold War mentality is enacted:

"Pay any price, bear any burden" defense of a far-flung empire aboard, especially in the Third World (all those underdeveloped planets) in the face of constant opposition from ideologically implacable foes (the Klingons and the Romulans). The Enterprise and its crew represent a perfect combination of vast technology, a smoothly functioning bureaucracy staffed by eager experts of every type and an absolutely iron clad faith in the superiority of our social and political values and institutions that promised to make victory ... inevitable.

On NBC from 1966-69, Captain James T. Kirk and his officers were highly successful nation builders week after week, regularly accomplishing on a planetary scale what Kennedy, Johnson, MacNamara, Rostow, Bundy, Westmoreland, et al. could never manage in one half of a small country (Worland, 1988: 117).

The inevitability of "progress" despite the conditions of competition is presented in the narrative of one of the teachers. Echoing Captain Kirk's sentiments on Neural, this Trekker says:

Our present society, (even with *Star Trek*), society itself is attempting to turn inward and trying to make that whole thing go away. I find that incredibly puzzling! It's done; it can't go away! I wrote a letter to our president and I essentially told him, "We need to generate jobs for our people." I have the perfect answer. We have four frontiers space exploration, the social frontier, the oceans and world peace. Frontiers that we can explore concurrently.

I don't see, I haven't seen for the past ten years a willingness on the part of the American people to go forward. There is almost this desire to go backward. This enamoration of things from the 50's, all pre-Sputnik. There is this desire on the part of great areas of the population to somehow turn the clock back to a time before all this happened and even with *Star Trek* there. I see that happening. It's incredibly sad. It doesn't bode well for our society. You can't go back, but you can't lie down.

Viet Nam presents an important example of the relation between Trek and the Military, in both historical and contemporary contexts. Even in the polarized 60s and 70s, Trek was understood as a liberal humanist philosophical construct. John Ferre writes in Channels of Belief (1990: xvi), "Television's religious slant reflects the beliefs of the subculture of the writers and producers." Referring to Alley's interpretation, Ferre continues,

Those who create the narratives we watch adopt ... democratic humanism, a position that lies between anything goes relativism on one hand and narrow-minded religious dogmatism on the other.

Worland (1988: 17) also comments on this theme:

Star Trek as an icon of the 1960's idealism perhaps became a salve and a search for lost innocence. Gene Rodenberry has always asserted that the key to *Star Trek's* appeal lay in its optimism, with its vision of how mankind both overcame and survived the many problems of the troubling twentieth century. But it is precisely at this juncture that *Star Trek's* appeal becomes contradictory: Does the series stir a progressive desire to look ahead and unite disparate people to solve our problems for a brighter, more peaceful future, or is it simply reactionary nostalgia for the continuing desire to mold or force the world into patterns suitable only for Americans? Whether it is considered as merely sugar-coated imperialism or as a naive vision of American technology, capitalism, bureaucracy, and morality moving out to save the world for itself, *Star Trek* presents a fascinating document of the post-war American empire at its height.

How does *Trek* deal with these contradictions in relationship to Vietnam? In the Neural episode cited above, Spock is unable to act as comment conscience because he is shot at the beginning of the episode and is unconscious in sick bay for the remainder of the episode. Thus there could be no ("logical") dissent. Narratives of the "older," "classic" Trekkers communicate the same ethos. "I know America has made mistakes," says one teacher, "But on the whole we have done so much good, and so much good in the world." This speaker continues, "I hate, I really hate when people criticize the United States. We ought not criticize what has given us so much freedom." Another narrative announces, "*Star Trek* is America, the America that will prevail in the future, where everyone, will join together with us, and then with other planets." Here, the perversion of a utopian impulse is of great significance.

In attempting to take all unto itself, capitalism destroys the utopian impulse by claiming all utopia to itself; there is no need for ideologies to compete or for utopias to be imagined if we are in utopia once on for all. But this process by which people and cultural forms are made into commodities has destroyed the ability of humanity to distinguish the real from the unreal, the rational from the irrational. The affirming culture of capitalism lulls and deadens people and tends to make them into obedient automatons ... All aspects of life are administered for the sake of profit and power to be generated from then and not for the sake of human fulfillment (Moylan, 1882: 163).

The process by which techno-capitalist "double-speak" lulls people comfortably into acquiescence is clearly evident in the episode's conversations and their analysis. Military actions are not to be questioned, for they are ultimately, good. Worland (1988: 115) elaborates on this theme:

At the height of American commitment in Vietnam, then, the following argument between Captain Kirk and Dr. McCoy over the morality of Federation intervention in a planetary war constitutes a relatively open debate about the Vietnam War, especially when telecast in the midst of the Tet Offensive. This dialogue, the core of a somewhat longer exchange, follows two important scenes that complicate the intrigue of the story. First, Kirk and McCoy obtain irrefutable proof that the Klingons are secretly supplying the Villagers with guns altered to pass for weapons of native origin. Second, McCoy is shocked to find Kirk violating the Prime Directive, which forbids interference in alien cultures, acting for all the world like a Green Beret officer in the Central Highlands, instructing Tyree's Hill-Men ("the Montagnards" of Neural) in how to load, aim, and shoot a flintlock rifle captured from the Villagers:

McCoy: I don't have a solution -- but furnishing them with firearms is certainly *not* the answer!

Kirk: Bones, do you remember the twentieth century brush wars on the Asian continent? Two giant powers involved, much like the Klingons and ourselves -- neither side felt they could pull out?

McCoy: Yes, I remember it -- it went on bloody year after bloody year!

Kirk: But what would you have suggested? That one side ar, its friends with an overpowering weapon? Mankind would have never lived to travel in space if they had. No -- the only solution to what happened, back then, balance of power.

McCoy: And if the Klingons give their side even more?

Kirk: Then we arm our side with exactly that much more. A balance of power, the trickiest, most difficult, dirtiest game of them all -- but the only one that preserves both sides.

Taken as support for the Vietnam War, Kirk and McCoy's debate might have been written by Lyndon Johnson himself. Both Kirk and Johnson resorted to Doublethink -- war is peace; gradual but steady escalation of the war in the face of Soviet and Chinese supply of Hanoi's troops actually preserves the peace. This concept added to the abject necessity of limiting the war so as to avoid a larger superpower clash encompasses Kirk's solution as well (Worland, 1988: 115).

Additional themes grounded in the 60s play themselves out in the dialogue.

Barry Goldwater's 1964 allusion to the use of limited nuclear weapons particularly relates to Kirk's remarks about overpowering weaponry. The primary importance given space travel corresponds to Lyndon Baines Johnson's space initiatives; Johnson was "an early and persistent champion of NASA" (Worland, 1988: 115).⁸

Many "Classic Trek" episodes both explicitly and implicitly refer to such Cold War and Vietnam configurations as Soviet-Chinese alliances, under the guise of Romulan-Klingon cooperation. The episode entitled "The Enterprise Incident" reworks the events of the Pueblo incident into a more satisfactory solution for the United States. When the Romulans receive more sophisticated "Klingon"

technology.⁹ The Enterprise steals both the cloaking device and a Romulan admiral as well. Venturing into and violating Romulan territory is definitely not straightforward military action, particularly when the Federation and the Romulans had a treaty providing a buffer zone, i.e. a "39th parallel." Because, the two most formidable enemies of the Federation were working together, there could be no ethical discussion about violating territorial boundaries. The balance of power was at stake; therefore, covert action was defensible. Most importantly "the story turns the ignoble *Pueblo* into a smashing Federation (American) victory" (Worland, 1988: 113).

The Trekkers who mentioned Vietnam in their interviews, supported U.S. military intervention. They discuss the "balance of power" with the same overriding "concern for humanity and civilization" that was evidenced on the TV show at the time. One narrator remarks:

It did not matter if we were right or wrong, what mattered was that there was no choice involved. Democracy was at stake. History has proven this, and if we hadn't involved ourselves in Vietnam perhaps the Soviet Union would still exist, and maybe be even more powerful than it was.

Further, the narratives of the Trekkers who did not mention Vietnam (because of age or selective memory), still place these issues in the same metaphorical realm of Trek political-moral valuing.

The original Trek presented that Earth would be united as all equal and we treat people from other planets with respect. Unless they do something against us and then we fight them, like the Klingons or Romulans. I think the

new Trek does that again; it's more like, we'll accept the Klingons, we'll accept the Ferengis, well, we'll stomach them, but here's the Cardasians, heres the Borg. They're still bipeds, they're still humanoids. That why I like the Romulans coming around, and seeing the light. The whole Spock thing, trying to get them back with Vulcan.

You still have another group of people out there and we still are saying they're bad. I want it that no one is bad! But, you can't have that in the real world. Someone will always want something; someone will always have to be the aggressor; so we will always have to respond. The episode where Picard is tortured, that was pure 60s! I wasn't grown up and rationale during the 60s. It was the exact same thing! You know its still going on, still exists!

Another teacher remarks,

I remember seeing the Cardasians for the first time when a rogue starship captain started blasting the ships out of the sky. Picard had to go get him and take him back to the Federation because this rogue captain knew that the Cardasians were preparing for an attack on the Federation. So, without any hard evidence this captain decided to take matters in his own hands. That's the first I remember of them. They might have been there earlier.

But there are strange questions. Why didn't we know? Why didn't we believe the rogue captain? Why did we let it get so far? Didn't we know what was going on Bejor?

A different teacher comments,

No matter what we are always going to have an enemy! That is human nature. We can attempt to control enemies by peaceful solutions, but when all else fails, you set your photon torpedos up and blow them out of the sky!

In the world (or universe) of the 90s, however, it would seem that a different, older more "nefarious enemy" is reasserting itself. Fascism has returned to the Trek world in the semblance of the Cardasians. The new enemy, it seems, is the

old enemy, for "he who controls the technology controls the world."¹⁰

Perceptions of controlling the high tech., military-industrial complex are equated with universal dominance. The perception of Japan and Germany's economic and technological rise terrifies the Trekkers. So the events of World War II are recreated to show the true enemy of democracy; particular "races" and "cultures" are also designated as enduringly fascist. So one Trek teacher says, "They were just waiting and rebuilding, waiting for the right time to come back and try to inherit the Earth. But it won't happen; we will be prepared."

The duplicitous Cardasians represent the Third Reich; their symbols include black, red, and white designs emblazoned with bold angular lines. Cardasians diplomatically (re)word and (re)work an "accommodation policy" such as that initially between other Europeans and Nazi Germany. While, at the same time, they militarily threaten the Federation. The Federation is reluctant to realize the extent and ambitions of the malevolent empire of the Cardasians. To drive historical memory further into covert parallels and condensations which collapse all fascists into one basket, the Cardasians use torture techniques reminiscent of the Japanese in World War II. Their uniforms and large membranes protruding from the sides of their necks create an allusion of Japanese Samurai armor. They are known for their mistreatment of prisoners of war. The Cardasians maintain extermination camps akin to German concentration camps of World War II. On *Deep Space Nine*, "Nuremberg" type trials take place; yet the proud, and arrogant Cardasians refuse to acknowledge their war crimes. As

one character put it, "We didn't know what was going on. I was just doing my job."

One particular program focuses on purposefully mistaken identity, presenting a faintly disguised version Demanjuck's trial in Israel, naturally, with a Trek twist. A Cardasian file clerk has his appearance surgically altered to resemble one of the architects of the extermination camps. The program graphically describes the horrors of the camps, showing the Bejoran "survivors" whose heads and bodies were covered by quasi-orthodox, pseudo-Hasidic black robes. The Bejorans are a spiritual race of people, who can be distinguished from other Humanoids by their *nose* bridges. According to the plot, they are forced into terrorist activity (as in the Warsaw ghetto uprising) and ultimately achieve military prowess (signalling the creation of the "democratic" state of Israel). The ghettoized Bejorans of the Cardasian military occupation ultimately rise up to defeat the Cardasians, and reclaim with a vengeance is rightfully "their" territory (the Israel metaphor/paradox). Survivors, of course will never be the same.¹¹

The Trekker teachers' narratives resonate with historical symbolism. One speaker remarks:

We have a legitimate grievance with the Cardasians, they are not civilized at all! Yet, they seem so eminently civilized, but they are the real brutes! Sometimes it makes you wonder what the Federation was doing at the time. Where were we? The Prime Directive, is overriding, but still ... At least now we have an alliance with the Bejorans and we will help them rebuild. Someday I hope they will become completely part of the Federation. Our presence on the station shows our commitment to their survival. Even Cisco,

he did go with their spiritual leader and follow her wishes; we are gaining their trust and respect.

Another narrator explains:

Now maybe we have misunderstood the Klingons in the past, but we appreciate them now! The Cardasians are animals! I hated that Cardasian captain, and especially how he tortured Picard. And the Borg! Oh my! To be assimilated in that fashion, to lose your individuality, no thank you! Never! I appreciate Picard's strength of character having survived both the Cardasians and especially the Borg.

Just the dominant discourse mistrusts civilizations whose world view is entirely different than our own, just as "we" confront and challenge peoples whose purpose is to change "our" own "way of being and knowing," so too does the textual Trek. The Borg destroy individuality to create an automaton collectivity.

Until recently, the Borg were of a menacing a singular mind. One Trekker teacher comments:

It was all right to violate the Prime Directive in the case of the Borg all they do is assimilate, but by assimilating they destroy. With them what is so awful is that resistance is futile. Look what happened to Whoppie's race. I mean Guinan's.

Since the stalwart crew of the Enterprise placed the notion of individuality into a Borg, the entire species has descended into chaos, purposelessness, and catharsis. As the Borg show themselves unable to cope with their "new found" freedom, individuality, initiative and presumably capitalism, a demagogue

emerges who misdirects the Borg until the "Enterprise" once again intervenes. The assumption that we are left with is that they have found their "correct leader" in the only Borg to have significant, extended and meaningful contact with the Federation.

God is on our side. All Federation interests are presented as ultimately "right" (in more ways than one). In "Encounter at Farpoint," the human race is placed on trial by the omnipotent "Q"; but "we" are ultimately exonerated. In the discourse of Trek, the Cold War is justified; Vietnam is justified, anything America has done is ultimately justified.

There is no fear of utter annihilation. The Optimism effect of Trek renders the unthinkable and the unspeakable non-existent. One Trekker teacher asserts:

Trek proves beyond a shadow of a doubt, it shows us, it teaches us that we will not perish in a nuclear fireball, and that we will turn the Earth into a habitable planet again.

Trek shows these teachers the "world" operating successfully in the twenty-fourth century. As an additional (re)assurance, Trek gives "us" the Organians to protect the galaxy from itself. The Organians possess superior power, knowledge, skill; they are able to create the ultimate balance of power by specifying that any large scale war between the Federation and Klingons (and presumably anyone else) will result in universal annihilation of those races. "*Pax Organia* would seem to substitute for *pax atomica*" (Worland, 1988: 113). In the words of an award-winning history teacher, "The Organians looming

outside on the universal horizon would prevent full scale war with anyone. After all, now that we are outside of our limited horizons on Earth, we are confronting races much older, and knowledgeable than ourselves." Because of "our" techno-military superiority, however, we are able to come in peace, for (presumably innocent) scientific exploration. Playing with his key-chain toy (which produces a variety of Trek noises including that of the photon torpedo), this teacher continues, "Well, things like that, you can shoot around and be more effective."

Franklin (in Davis, 1990: 157) summarizes the consequences of such war-is-peace planning.

Americans have lead the world in fantasizing about some ultimate weapon that would make war obsolete. Usually appearing first as science fiction, these fantasies reveal crucial aspects of American culture. Most important, they have helped to determine the history of both the United States and the world. Indeed, the conditions of human existence on this planet have been transformed -- and threaten to transform once more -- because of superweapons conceived in American science fiction and delivered by what has come to be known as the American military-industrial complex .

The Techno-Religious Redux

**Once the rockets are up,
who cares where they come down?
That's not by department,
says Werner von Braun
--Tom Lehrer**

One of the hard-core Trekker teachers explained the nature of what she perceived as Rodenberry's "true" relationship with the military prior to *Star Trek*:

But, Gene Rodenberry and Issac Asminov and Warner Von Braun all did some think-tank work back in the early 50s, late 50s and early 60s. There was another man, who was the other man? The kidnapped baby. Lindburgh was in on it all too.

We know it had to do with some of the rocket work some stuff. It's a matter of fact. They were all part of a think-tank. Now, none of that material has been made public. It never probably will, it is both very advanced and top secret!

For instance, Asminov's material on the Foundation had to clear the government before it was ever published, and this was the 60s. Because they were afraid he was going to write about it in the Foundation. I'm sure he did, but it was not enough to warrant any great attention.

But Gene Rodenberry's mind has never been released in written form. The philosophy the underlying material that produced *Star Trek* isn't there. Well you see what's not known is what makes it so very interesting. You know it's there, it's not known really. If he were as human as we would like him to be, then there would be written material available. He would fight the government, because the government knows. What they know is, like we know, he wasn't human. I like that idea!

The story of the government creating a think-tank for some of the most un-likely combination of minds in this century is both provocative and evocative.

Certainly, it brings to mind several conspiratorial theories, particularly surrounding the military's involvement with UFOs. The same teacher continues:

Right now there's a possibility there's a Vulcan someplace running around who is going to show up here with a friend and crash land in the lake and somebody's going to say that he'll come back in 40-50 years with a ship full of them. Now that's a possibility and that possibility can make the difference between death and life in some people ... But the government has hid so much on UFOs from us. We don't know what they were working on, but it

was top secret. Maybe we will never know, but we can speculate, and it must have something to do with UFOs and space travel!

It is really inconsequential to know if Rodenberry possessed "insider knowledge" and presumably could engage in "insider trading," capitalizing on the presence of extra-terrestrials. What is "known" about him that is crucial remains that

He took great care to have the show's technology checked out by real engineers. In the 1960s this was done by links with NASA, among others, links that still exist today (Bains, 1991: 46).

Rodenberry said in an interview: "I've always tried to keep things scientifically accurate" (Conway, 1991: 48). The certitude that Rodenberry prudently consulted with technical advisors did not merely aid the "believability factor," it did not simply assist in ideologically converting the Trekkers; it also created specific political ties to NASA and the military, and the military-industrial complex. The Village Voice once labelled the intertwining of technology and the religion in the Trek empire as "Rand Corporation Humanism" (Foote, 1992: 21). Certainly, Rodenberry (quoted in Conway, 1991: 48) reveled in this.

I was at Cal Tech. a couple of those evenings. One of the great pleasures of doing *Star Trek* is, whether I'm worthy of it or not, I'm welcomed in these places. I am a member of the board of governors of the National Space Society and the Planetary Society. So, I'm welcomed in these places and, wow, where can you buy that? The fact that I know some of the astronauts is exciting as well.

What is wonderful is that when I go to places like Cal Tech, everyone knows me, and many say, "If it wasn't for *Star Trek* I wouldn't have been interested in the space program." *Star Trek* has inspired many, and that's a feeling that's incomparable.

The fans know about this; they also celebrate their "deity's" connection (and therefore their own connections and quasi-connections) to the higher echelons of the elusive military industrial order. They "explain" this connectedness with great pride! As one teacher comments in a very cavalier fashion,

I think you'd be hard pressed to find a NASA employee who wasn't a *Star Trek* fan. I really do! I personally would be curious if our president; Bill Clinton, is a *Star Trek* fan. I have serious doubts that he is. I don't think he respects either America or science!

A second teacher superciliously says,

There is a huge following in the military. We have a ship the USS down in _____. But it is so hard to keep a ship stationed in the military! They always get transferred, and so we constantly have to change our ships personnel because of that! Now there's one at Ft. _____. The military people really love Trek. When my husband was in the army, I worked at a comic store. Every Thursday the new Trek stuff would come in. People would have accounts. We'd have to pull and fill their accounts and we couldn't keep the Trek stuff in stock! There were millions of *Star Trek* fans on the post!

One day we had to go to the military ball. It was the opening night of *Star Trek III*. I was so angry. But I went to the military ball. It was it seemed like every one at the table, everyone mentioned it, was angry about missing the premiere, and spoke about it all night.

A third teacher elucidates with great delight,

Our chief engineer works for NASA, or something associated with NASA. He is constantly working; he is very devoted. Right now he is building a model of our ship from scrap. He's constantly working. So he is really up on NASA. He knows everything they are doing; he is our link to NASA. He contacts us on everything they do and when it comes to that, he's really excited. If you could call anything he shows real excitement!

When it comes to anything else, like meetings and stuff, he is very quiet, he doesn't say much, unless you get started talking on NASA or some point on *Star Trek* which he really loves! He's so very quiet and reserved even to the point that when he shows up at meetings you don't even know he's there, until ... !

A fourth teacher haughtily remarks,

Well, *Trek* is the ultimate vision of NASA. Most of the people in my ship are very interested in space! As a matter of fact one of the girls on my ship right now, is in school getting a degree in astrophysics. One of my roommates in college was also a *Trekker* and majored in Astrophysics and is working for NASA right now!

A fifth teacher with a huge smile on her face; elucidates,

My uncle who is in strategic air command is a *Trekker*. My brother who is military lives for *Star Trek*; my brother-in-law loves *Star Trek* and they are all military. It presents such a positive view of technology and the military! It shows us as good guys!

So the techno-industrial complex gains insight or inspiration from the gadgetry displayed on the program; so entire career choices are explained citing the program for inspiration; so entire military code is (re)presented as the epitome correct of behavior. In a functionalist balance, or a perverse dialogism,

Trek lent credence to the military-industrial complex, and was repaid by the military-industrial complex paying homage to, believing in, and honoring Trek. Consider the number of persons cited by Conway (1991: 44-48) in this connection:

Charles Walker, who flew three missions on the shuttle, and is president of the National Space Society says, "I've probably seen every episode more times than I can count." He says he is not alone in finding inspiration. "The space movement owes its energy ... to what Gene Rodenberry started."

Astronaut Budd Aldrin ... says, "*Star Trek* keeps the outer frontiers fresh in your mind, and promotes thinking of space as being a place to be lived in rather than a foreign exposure. It brings space into the realm of possibility."

John Spencer, a space architect believes "A popular program about exploration was needed by a country founded by explorers. *Star Trek* kept interest in space exploration going after the Apollo program. *Star Trek* survived as a safety valve. It was the only thing cruising in space."

Thomas Paine who headed NASA during the Apollo landings admits "I've been watching *Star Trek* ever since Mr. Spock put on his ears. The people I work with are encouraged by the series. It demonstrates ... the potential of space. In a sense it's a vote every time the show goes on. *Star Trek* ... that's where our dreams ought to be."

David Webb, who along with Paine, was a member of President Ronald Regan's National Commission on Space agrees "It's done a tremendous education job."

Brenda Forman, a Lockheed vice-president amplifies, "When I was a child, a friend of mine was banished from the table because he insisted people would get to the moon in 20 years. *Star Trek* made the notion respectable."

Peter Diamandis, president of Microstat Launch Systems and co-founder of the International Space University¹²... says "I watched *Star Trek* as a kid and I'm sure I'll watch it as an old man. It has fueled my interest in space by painting what is in my mind the ultimate adventure. It envisions what the future might be like." Diamandis took the step from interest to application in founding the first space university. "Star Fleet Academy is not far off from

what ISU will become ... ISU is ground based today, but the goal has always been in our mind to lead as we go into other star systems."

It is not surprising then to realize that as one Trek teacher points out,

The space shuttle was named the Enterprise because really hard-core Trekkers wanted the first space shuttle to be named the Enterprise and perhaps it was a public relations ploy on the part of NASA to feed into the whole idea of space exploration and *Star Trek* plays that up.

Another teacher concurs,

You know, for instance Gene Rodenberry sat on the governing board of all the Aeronautical and Space stuff for the government. After all it was his vision that guided everything. You see, NASA and the rest of the military and governmental higher ups are all Trekkers too. So when it came to naming the first shuttle the Enterprise, it was the way it had to. It just had to be. It wouldn't be acceptable at any level any other way!

It is true that the first space shuttle was named the Enterprise, after the Enterprise that never flew, that never existed, but nevertheless remains proudly hanging in the National Air and Space Museum next to the Spirit of Saint Louis. The astronaut (and president of the National Space Society) Charles Walker

was among the million people who signed petitions to keep *Star Trek* alive. Fans became so powerful that in the 1970's their massive campaign convinced President Gerald Ford to name the first shuttle the Enterprise (Conway, 1991: 45).

By the simulation becoming the "real," not merely aspiration toward the real, an interconnection of purpose is revealed.

According to Jean Baudriallard, the discord of contemporary culture infects the "certainties of rational discourse, meaningful history and coherent reality" ... In this case, the territory of the real is no longer mapped onto a representation, but the map precedes the territory -- events are already inscribed by the media in advance as television is diffracted into reality and the real is diffracted into TV (Joyrich in Speigal, 1992: 235).

Although the phrase "military industrial complex" got lost somewhere in the seventies, "the potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power ... exists and will persist," (Daniel, 1989: 860) despite Eisenhower's warning about the possibility of public policy becoming "the captive of a scientific-technological elite" (Daniel, 1989: 860). It is critical to realize that *Star Trek* is not just a TV show; it is the projected project of the scientific, technological, military elite of this country. Further it is essential to recognize that, while all these elite Trekkers are not the ones who shoot, or are shot at, they are the ones who design the weapons of destruction.

The French sociologist Touraine envisioned a (post-industrial) world "programmed by its technologies and dominated by technocratic power" (Rose, 1991: 28).

Touraine writes of the 'technocrats' that they support a 'self-devouring technical development,' which transforms itself into the non-rational accumulation of power and that the technocratic society will also inhibit new forms of building as well as social interaction (Rose, 1991: 29).

The new technocratic configuration of capitalism that Trek imparts, *techno-capitalism*, "is thus characterized by a new synthesis of technology and capitalist

social relations and by production of new techno-commodities and technoculture" (Kellner, 1989: 179). The Trekkoid "patriotic" vision looks forward to a world in which the military-industrial complex reigns with efficiency and with impunity; in the Trek order, the universe is redeemed.

End Notes

1. According to Elizabeth Larsen (1993: 40) "Confessed Trekkies Margie Ingall and Mary Kaye Schilling" who write for the teen magazine Sassy (February 1993) "were surprised to see how, at an age when being uncool is a primal fear, the young women at the convention were inspirational in their lack of science fear and unconcern about being labelled dweebs."
2. MIT is a "hot bed" of "elite" Trekkers. Michale Halle, a research associate at the MIT Media Lab's spatial imaging group, ... is not "*Star Trek's* only vociferous fan at MIT. The student television channel started a phone-in-show that broadcasts directly after *The Next Generation* to discuss the programme's technology, characters and plots. Called STAY-TUNED (*Star Trek* and You--Telephone Us for Nonstop Entertainment and Discussion), the live talk show has been hugely popular" (Bains, 1991: 47).
3. "The link between science and power goes beyond ideological politics. As Nicholson says, their practical character is fully exhibited only when we realize that science is often implicated in the institutional power of hospitals, psychiatric clinics, mental asylums, prisons and in bureaucratic-administrative strategies that regulate our behavior, and shape our body images, identities, and daily conventions ... Science stands alongside the economy, state, family or church as a major social and political force" (Seidman and Wagner, 1992: 7).
4. It is at this juncture that the concept of Interpretive Community (Fish, 1980) is of tremendous significance. "Fish's emphasis on the power of interpretive

communities to determine the meaning of texts (and, indeed, the power to establish what a text is) should serve as one more reminder that all reading activity, including 'reading' television, occurs within larger contexts" (Allen, 1989: 101). Certainly, the power of interpretive community in *Star Trek* can be realized in the Asheboro Courier Tribune article (1993: 2) which says that "members of the local chapter of Star Fleet will be out for blood Saturday at the ... Randolph Mall. Star Fleet officers in full uniform will be looking for at least 65 volunteers to sign up this Saturday to donate blood ... Members of the local ship the U.S.S. *Aristarchus*, will be competing for volunteers with a contingent of Klingons ... from a Greensboro *Star Trek* organization ... Show your support for Star Fleet in this sign up contest the two clubs have dubbed a blood feud."

5. Klingon provides a "prime example." According to the Greensboro News and Record (1993)

The Klingon Language Institute" a Philadelphia group that includes a number of linguists ... is offering a free 11 lesson correspondence course ... *Star Trek* Conversational Klingon (Simon and Shuster Audioworks \$11) a new audiocassete featuring Michael Dorn (who plays resident Klingon Lt. Wharf on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*) and Marc Okrand is aimed at Terrans planning a visit to the Klingon Empire, home to learn many colorful customs. You'll learn to recognize common Klingon phrases including checkout time is at five a.m. (frequently heard when checking into a Klingon hotel) and 'Buy or die!' (uttered by Klingon shopkeepers). Several colleges ... offer or have offered ... courses in Klingon including Chicago's Northeastern Illinois University ... Lawrence M. Schoen founder of the Klingon Language Institute and a ... teacher at Chesnut Hill College in Philadelphia initially started studying Klingon ... using computer electronic bulletin boards ... he began publishing a quarterly academic journal (1993: D8).

This article is confirmed by a similar one in the Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel (March 14, 1993). Another Klingon article appearing the same day in the Greensboro News and Record says Klingon is "one of the hottest languages in the universe, with more Terrans signing up for courses in conversational Klingon everyday" (1993: D1). The Miami Herald (1993: 41) reiterates: "In warrior garb ... Klingon Captain Krankor -- also known as Rich Yampell ... bellows out the Klingon national anthem during opening ceremonies of the first ever Klingon Language Camp in Red Lake Minnesota ... This is reconfirmed by the front page of the Greensboro News and Record (1993: 41)

... fervent fans of *Star Trek* may truly have reached the final frontier of Trekkiedom: A two week language camp devoted to the study of "tlhIngan" the Klingon language ... Those in other orbits might be tempted to ask how to say in Klingon: "Get a life." "That's not fair. We have a life" said camp organizer Glen Proechel. "These are people who are highly trained professionals ... " The result was a language with its own alphabet syntax and sounds. It also captures the essence of the cruel Klingon race ... As inventor of Klingon Marc Okrand put it on the audio cassette *Conversational Klingon* "spitting is quite appropriate."

I should also note that one can purchase a computer program which automatically can translate English fonts directly into Klingon.

6. One of the most poignant gifts I was given by the Trekkers I interviewed was a parchment of the Vulcan language made by a man and his son who were studying to be Vulcan scribes. The painstaking skill in creating the work was evident in the explanation of the sounds and letters as well as in the artisanship of the work.

7. All the Trekkers expressed a desire and a need to fly (to the stars). One teacher said "Trek is the only place I will ever get to fly to the stars." Another said, "I wish, I wish I lived in *Star Trek* times so I could really fly."
8. Regressive voting practices in the South, have given certain Southern senators voting seniority, thus creating a situation where high tech. military industrial complexes prevail in particular states. NASA is almost wholly in the South; in Alabama, Florida, and Texas.
9. Even though the Romulans did have the "cloaking device" shielding them from visual perception and technical scans which on an intrinsic level relates to the American perception of the un-revealed nature of Chinese knowledge and society: for example "the Forbidden City."
10. The future threat does not have to do with ecology or natural resources. In the Trek world the optimistic future does not conceive limited world resources as an inhibitor, but, rather, as a challenge, that will be overcome. One must also remember in the technological world of Trek, organic matter such as food can be (re)produced in the "replication" machines. Indeed, even human beings can be (re)created for fun and fantasy in the holodecks (but they may only survive within the walls of the holodeck or holosuite). In addition the Federation is not dependent on fossil fuel. Therefore, Middle Eastern problems are perceived as only temporal. Ideology, however, is a constant threat for, in choosing the incorrect ideology, the future is compromised.

11. The premiere episode of the second season of *Deep Space Nine* began with a "raid on Entebbe" designed to liberate a "Bejoran labor camp" where the Cardasians continued to hold Bejorans hostage.

12. I received a slickly packaged brochure from the International Space University in one of my son's computer games. At the University which only accepts graduate and post-doctoral students (and claims to have an international student body from twelve countries), one can study in order to prepare to live in a world which reaches out to the galaxy.

CHAPTER VI

THE CURRICULUM OF TREK

There are so many dimensions to *Star Trek* it would take a person a lifetime just to thoroughly investigate it and ensuing all the combinations and permutations. --Trekker teacher

(D)o not think of curriculum as a "thing," as a syllabus or a course of study. Instead think of it as symbolic, material and human environment that is ungoingly reconstructed. This process of design involves not only the technical, but the aesthetic, ethical and political if it is to be fully responsive at both the social and personal levels (Apple, 1993: 213).

No singular theory or body of theory explains everything. This is true of social theory and of curriculum theorizing. There is no singular system of classification, category or categories or categorical models that can explain all phenomena. Further, over time, each given theory, each given insight gives way to new theorizing. "A given theory may fail to address an aspect of a particular ... phenomenon that once included, compels the reconstruction of theory" (Burawoy, 1988: 10). There are always gaps and silences, and these are contradictions. Apple (1993: 7) writes "(p)eople may simultaneously hold progressive and retrogressive positions." So, it is with the Trek discourse. Displayed in the teachers curriculum theorizing are exceptionally particularistic protuberances and penetrations, a jigsaw puzzle pastiche uniquely their own. In Trek discourse the postmodern combines with the pragmatic, the scientific, and

technological, with the existential, and ethical, the religious with the political, and the aesthetic with the rational. No simple, monolithic analysis can comprehend this discourse. If we are going to understand Trek teachers, we must "think of them in other words as occupying specific locations in a social space rather than free-floating individuals who are beyond ideology" (Hall, 1980: 160-161), ... "think of them as participants on "several fronts in struggles (over) cultural hegemony" (Hall, 1980: 161).

What is at stake in understanding this particularistic version of American education? "The issues involve profoundly different definitions of the common good, about our society and where it should be heading, about cultural visions, and about our children's future" (Apple, 1993: 52). However implicit or covert their agenda Trek teachers do aim "to transform the power relations embedded in ... school knowledge" (Apple, 1993: 66). Yet their project is regularly seen by others as benign, creative pedagogy. The Trekker project and the teachers' curriculum theorizing must be seen not only in the explicit text, and the text of Trek, but in the gaps and silences of intention and intonation, the polysemic multiaccentuity of language and author-ity.

The Design of the Classroom as Theory

I walk into the classroom not knowing what to expect. The teacher greets me with both a warm embrace and a resounding declaration: "I have several Trek things on the wall!" There were *Star Trek* posters and a full model of the

Starship Enterprise. What I find most astonishing are the Trek quotations placed upon the blackboard, each with episode name and number. The teacher explains:

One of the things I do in class is I put a quotation on the board every week from *Star Trek* episodes. I think there is a lot of philosophy ... on the green board: 'In every revolution there is one man with a vision.' That was in 'Mirror Mirror.'

This teacher was not alone in the design of his classroom. Other Trekker teachers told me and showed me much the same thing. As I went from room to room and from state, to state the design of the classroom was informed by the sense of Trek that permeated the teachers' consciousness. The design of the room is not something that merely displays interest in Trek; rather it is a way of physically expressing "their ideological disposition (their habitus)" (Casey, 1993: 61). The rooms express who the teachers perceive themselves as, they express a collective subjective; they manifest and celebrate group identity. "Physical features only appear on the ideological map when the habituee perceives a particular set of social relationships in that space" (Casey, 1993: 61). The room as the teacher's terrain displays in artifact form the ideological social self in symbolic form. "The human built landscape is consistently used" (Casey, 1993: 61) to embody the teachers' absolute unwavering commitment to Trek, insuring that that message does not go unnoticed by anyone who enters.

I have a few Trek articles, well, actually, a lot of Trek articles on the walls. I have my room set up different than the classrooms in this school ... I like my students to talk to each other, officially, about the subject and so I try to make it so. This is the best model I can think of. I want this person over here to be able to talk to that person over there and everyone to be able to slightly turn their heads and look towards everyone else. The straight rows and columns of chairs in traditional classrooms, I don't find it conducive to learning ... My room set up looks like the bridge of the starship ... I do a lot of sitting while teaching. It's probably against someone's idea of what a good teacher is, but I like to be able to get eye contact with kids on an even level. Not this lording over them and looking down and having them to have to look up and say: 'Please, Mr. Teacher.'

Another teacher describes her room:

I have *Star Trek* posters on the wall, and I use a *Star Trek* calendar class, because of my interest and I believe in making the room as decorated as possible ... Also, well this is a little negative. One trick that we have is if someone asks a very odd question, what I do is I say: "Space the final frontier." And then I put his name up on the board as the U.S.S. Scotty or whatever. Actually this was intended as a joke and the kids took it that way and then they would repeat odd questions and work their way up from a Starship to a Star Base to a planet to a solar system, to a galaxy ... I think very often they would try to say something spacy just to get their names up on the board. It made the class lighter, I think it made it a bit more fun ... And, then the younger ones, the seventh graders join Star Fleet.

Although there have been numerous debates about the Postmodern, certainly the design of the classrooms clearly depict fragments of the postmodern in action. "(R)ejoicing in consumption and celebrating obsessions ... (F)avoring illusions and pleasure" (Oloaguiga, 1991: xiii) were all evident. I entered into public school classrooms where the simulacra did indeed collapse into the hyperreal, a kitsch pastiche informing the basis of the school experience. These postmodern practitioners take commodity fetish to the

extreme:

Postmodernism sponsors consumption as an autonomous practice. The act of consuming is redeemed as an open ended possibility of satisfaction, and the interchangeability of commodities is increased to the maximum, as their value is established by circulatory speed and pervasiveness. Constant and unmeditated consumption displaces purpose to the point that commodity fetishism becomes an icon, continually replaying its own fragmentation, alienation and deterritorialization. As a result, postmodernism successfully empties all present and former referential meanings (those that allude to a permanent and unequivocal signification), fracturing the coherence of the discourses contained them (history, religion, science etc.) ... The challenge lies in how to take advantage of this suspension of belief in order to elicit an entirely new set of meaningful formations ... Postmodernism does in fact enable the articulation of novel and often contradictory experiences (Oloaguiga, 1992: xxvii).

As I roamed from Trekker teacher to teacher, room to room, and home to home throughout the rural Southeastern United States, I was awestruck in realizing just how the postmodern challenge has been met. The icons produced by Paramount permeated the classrooms, and casually intermingled and became part of the lived experience of the teachers, their students, and their own children.

Jameson's (1984: 61) "waning of affect" in which "feelings, emotions, and sensations are more effectively called upon by media imagery or high-tech. simulacra than through direct exposure" (Oloaguiga, 1992: xix) was evident throughout the interviews, and throughout the rooms. There was no sensation that an ideological revolution was present in the design of the classrooms, a revolution in which there seemed to be "a permanent state of existential

displacement supported by a technology that has become second nature to us" (Ologuiga, 1992: xiv). The Trekkers' comprehension and internalization of technology, created a further "leap of faith" in which the technology of the "not-yet-present" was as easily assimilated as the technology of the past. This assimilation seems to create a further confusion "between spatial and temporal boundaries, collapsing the conventions that formerly distinguished fantasy from reality, creating a third quite polemical space: that of simulation" (Ologuiga, 1992: xiv). The juxtaposition of the referential and the simulative inform each other, collapse into each other, and in some cases, particularly for three high school history teachers, two literature teachers, and one humanities teacher create a surrealist pastiche. Grounded in a different discourse, I had the overwhelming sensation that all categorical distinctions had been discarded. In one room classroom the teacher had a Star Fleet time line placed next to a time line of the Greeks and Romans. Looking up on the wall I saw two commemorative calendars one from the Civil War and the other from *Star Trek*. Some characteristic of postmodern is demonstrated.

In simulation, perception is formulated through the media... leaving signs to look at each other for intertextually for signification. Simulation enables us to understand, for instance, how contemporary collective memory is made up of television programs instead of a shared notion of history (Ologuiga, 1992: xix).

Yet, Trek mythology does not collapse into post-modern cynicism; rather it (re)constructs even greater theoretical complexities. If the postmodern condition

is paradoxical, then Trek places conundrum on top of the paradox.

"Modernization strove to create a better world, but a belief in a better world is now exhausted," writes Oloquiga (1992: xx) only its formal mechanisms remain ... leaving only dusty dreams behind." Trek mythology certainly is situated within the swirling, shifting dust of postmodernism and yet it persists, in Bakhtinian terms, as both/and rather than either/or.

It is true that the design of the classrooms seem to display the referential nothing-ness of high technology "and its replenishment with iconographies that belong to other times and other people" (Oloquiga, 1992: xx). It is true that there seems to be "the replacement of time by a space saturated by temporal allusions" (Oloquiga, 1992: xx). It is apparent that many of postmodernism's most characteristic qualities are evident in the design and decoration of these classrooms: the "transformation of time into space, emptiness into saturation, body into electronics, and absence into presence" (Oloquiga, 1992: xx). Within the postmodern allegory, the return to myth, utopic, and nostalgic proves to be barren and empty; yet in Trek the myth (re)invents history, creating not a sense of ruin, but one of utopian celebration.

The postmodern technological is present clearly and continuously throughout the narratives, but has been (re)formulated and (re)created through the teachers' perceptions. In favoring symbolic and cybernetic images, the Trekkers see hope, not merely pleasure. In the Trek version of postmodernism, "technological images have become the mirrors in which to look for an identity" (Oloquiga,

1992: 4), but for Trekkers, such ready-made images are not easily interchangeable. There remains the modernist longing for the better world. The design of the classrooms indicate postmodern sensibilities, but within their (de)construction is (re)construction; it is within the intertextual space *between* modernism and postmodernism that the Trekker teachers' curriculum is theorized.

The Curriculum of Regional Place

It's all here now. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago. -- William Faulkner

Southern literature has portrayed the belief that the present is continually constructed by a living past. To deny the past is to spiritually cripple oneself; it is to destroy the future (Kincheloe and Pinar, 1991: 3). With particular reference to the South, Kincheloe and Pinar (1991: 9) write, "place was co-opted as a tool of the mythmaker, as he defined and preserved the tradition. Here no distance existed between mythology and mind." So there is an inexorable relationship between a sense of place and curriculum theorizing. The Trekker teachers' narratives; these stories (re)present a particular way of being Southern.¹

Analysis of the Trekker narratives necessitates an understanding of the intersection of the rural southern fundamentalist ethos (within which the teachers are rooted) with the scientific technological discourse (to which they aspire). What may initially appear to be a paradox in the life histories of these teachers,

the inclusion of two apparently antithetical interpretative traditions, can finally be seen as a complex conversation between discourses "do not exclude, but rather intersect with another" (Bakhtin, 1981: 291). The Trekker project (re)shapes the Southern sense of place as the collective subjective re-imagines "what sociologist Robert Bellah calls a community of memory" (Harrison, 1991: 12).

In such communities, instead of an emphasis of self-reliance, a positive sense of tradition and history enables community members to retell the community's story, its constitutive narrative and offer examples of men and women who have embodied and exemplified the meaning of community. Unlike the southern agrarians' rural vision of the 1930's which envisioned a society of Jeffersonian yeomen, in communities of memory the past enables a coherent vision of the future (Harrison, 1991: 12).

A (re)creation of the Southern pastoral informs the teachers' life histories and their concurrent curriculum theorizing. Perhaps this myth should be called, "post-pastoral" because the teachers tied and rooted to the land envision the land as secondary to the mission and the new community envisioned (Harrison, 1991: 129). So, the teachers are able to condemn those whom they perceive as clinging to the status quo, as they envision a new-world order that remains grounded in the Southern pastoral sensibility.

Characteristic of this sensibility,

(a) true believer, who was raised in a fundamentalist tradition, with its denial of the role of social theory in the process of understanding an individual's destiny, has learned more than a theological position. This particularistic socially training influences the believer to view texts in general as literal documents ... The simply need to be rote-learned, that is committed to memory (Kincheloe and Pinar, 1991: 16).

The Trekkers may have adopted and adapted a different text, but the sense of pastoral place, the rootedness and connectedness to tradition, rote learning and cultural memory received from fundamentalism are syncretized with the consciousness of Trek. From active consumption and interpretation of the Trek texts, men and women create and are created by the domain of popular culture in connection with their various pre-existing interpretive traditions. But not only commercially produced texts are appropriated and consumed; commodified Trek products also "are rearticulated to produce oppositional meaning" (Storey, 1993: 6).

To make the analysis even more complex, we need to recognize that it is not just the text, but the story in the text, which is memorized, and from which meaning is derived. Of course, "(m)eaning is always in process" (Storey, 1993: 37). The text never can remain merely authorial intent; the reader is also an author (Bakhtin, 1981; Barthes, 1977). The text is a "multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writing, none of them original, blend and clash" (Barthes, 1977: 126).

The paradox of southern epistemology of particularity reflects the larger enigma of the South ... The southern storyteller as cultural figure transcends classification as mere entertainer for the storytelling becomes a means of comprehending reality, a method of reasoning (Kincheloe and Pinar, 1991: 17).

So Rodenberry as story-teller creates the sense of reality that is easily absorbed by the Southern tradition. Because rote memorization creates

dogmatic belief, there remains an absolute unwavering conviction between absolutes, right and wrong and good and evil. (In the eyes of the teachers) there can be no polysemic meaning embedded in the texts. The explanation of each teacher is the "only correct explanation." Nevertheless there remains a constant negotiation with the ideology of the text to bring it under the control of their own original, transforming and recreated ideology.

"Presentism accompanies public school curriculum in the South," argue Kincheloe and Pinar (1991: 174)

There seems to be even more mistaking of busy work for learning, more mistaking bureaucratic authority for intellectual authority ... The curriculum tends to function in the South not unlike a secular version of biblical fundamentalism, in which the letter of the text is mistaken for its spirit. In both versions of what we may loosely term positivism, the South's distance from the centers of knowledge production recall its defeated and victimized status, its position of "recipient" of the Word. Patriarchal loyalty to the Other requires a strict, literal rendering of the text.

Even so the overlap of religious fundamentalism and Trek is not unproblematic. One Trek teacher, a "post-industrial man" who has moved around the country his whole life explains what he perceives as the mis-apprehension of the word of Trek in the South on both the parts of the Trekkers and non-Trekkers.

For the Trekkers who make it a religion, well, maybe in an overall philosophical context, that's an attempt to try and make *Star Trek* palatable to a very, very, ultra conservative close minded population. When ____ (son) and I were volunteering at Sci. Trek dressed as Vulcans we heard numerous comments from people going through the exhibit with this tight lipped uptight kind of look, and comments: "If you believe?" "Believe what?" This business about "Are you a Christian?" And you stay in character and say,

"Well I'm a Vulcan!" We've been called demonic and satanic because of the pointed ears, not because of any philosophy or anything else, but simply because of an appearance. My oldest daughter has told me that she cannot dress up; she cannot openly espouse *Star Trek* in the school where she teaches because of a perception in that area that the whole *Star Trek* philosophy is humanist, and as such, is Satanic. That permeates the South. The more rural South you go, the more that becomes apparent and the deeper the conviction.

Further he explains:

This is an attempt on the part of people, particularly people who have been brought up in this very rigid black and white type of universe to come to grips with a humanist philosophy and put a religious spin on it so that it becomes palatable to them in the rural South.

Another teacher returning to the rural South describes the conundrum of needing to disguise Trek in her school district.

I have lived in the upper Midwest; there is a conservatism in the upper Midwest that is almost hidden. Not so in the South. The South is very, very conservative and they make no bones about it. They are conservative period. You know where they stand. In the upper Midwest, Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, that whole area that is not really apparent until you live there for a while. And then you discover just how conservative that area really is! There's a lot of people in the upper Midwest who are *Star Trek* fans who won't admit they are *Star Trek* fans because it's not politically correct for them to do so. In the South it's even more politically incorrect to identify yourself as a *Star Trek* fan, particularly if you are in a rural area.

But, there are ways to get Trek into the schools in the South, and to ultimately stand up without shame and show yourself as a Trekker. I think we are trying so hard to technologically compete with other areas, that they feel that Trek maybe can help students learn the technology that they need to know to survive in the world. I think the organizations have helped a lot. But, if you put it in terms of learning skills, because skills are important here, you'll have no trouble at all!

Still another Trekker teacher recounts her daughter's move from an urban enclave in what is commonly identified as the New South to a more rural area, which is the cause of both great pride and great concern.

For example, my oldest daughter teaches high school in _____ which is about as rural as you can get! She is the only person in her school who is willing to stand up and say, "I am a *Star Trek* fan!" She has asked her students, "Have you seen *Star Trek*?" And they say, "Oh, yeah, we watch it every week!" "Are you *Star Trek* fan? "No!" Because of the humanist philosophy, there's an undercurrent of very conservative religious thought that permeates the South and the behind-the-scenes power in the South is *that* religious. And will do anything to stop a positive view of the future. There are certain elements in the South that aren't at all enamored with Trek.

Betty Caprio in her religious curriculum based on *Star Trek* entitled: *Star Trek: Good News in Modern Images*, (1978) criticizes the dichotomy between fundamentalist Christianity and Trek, explains that her curriculum is merely the companion volume to The *Star Trek Scriptures*. In her rectification (Caprio, 1978: ix-xvi) she writes quite passionately that,

Questions ... and the way Christianity -- The Good News answers the questions ... draw inspiration from the visionary world of *Star Trek* ... As a Christian, I could best write about religious matters from the vantage point of the "good news"; both on the Planet Earth and ... in some remote corner of the universe ...

And from what we know of the Vulcan code, we would have to say that the peaceful rational ordered Vulcan society is more Christlike than the cultures of many nominally Christian nations ... *Star Trek* is the message of good news of all faiths ...

Conservative Christians may be offended with the likening of their faith to a "space opera" ... I hope ... [they] will reconsider ...

My own view of God's worlds includes all things -- monsters, torn shirts, the works, and insists that the "good news" is found in just such mundane things. The Christian churches, especially have a long tradition of plugging into the secular loves of people and showing how they reflect God's glory ... To tell the message of Jesus ...the popular art (of a finely crafted TV show) ... reflects the same teaching and should offend no one; certainly no offense is meant ...

Both Christianity and Star Fleet Command are concerned with bringing about a better world. I've tried to bridge the gap between the first century and the twenty-third -- drawing on the common beliefs ... The message from Israel has changed history for two thousand years ... it's still very much the good news.

In naming themselves as "Southern intelligensia," the Trekker teachers symbolically liberate themselves from the what they perceive as the myths of the past, by incorporating those myths into the technological curriculum. The teachers' assimilation of the "good news" of Trek liberates them from the agrarian past of the South; they bestow upon themselves the mission of disseminating information towards and of the future. "Individuals are never at the mercy of events so long as they retain the power to reconceive them" (Morson, 1990: 230).

The Curriculum of Anomie

Combatting, "the curriculum of anomie" (Anijar and Casey, 1993) plays an important part of the Trekker story, anomie is present as a powerful negative force throughout the teachers curriculum theorizing, and narrative motivations in both teaching and Trek. I use the term "anomie" in this discussion to refer "to a property of the social structure" (Coser, 1977: 133). Anomie occurs in enclosed

communities when, for whatever reason, individuals' conceptualizations are not longer guided by common norms, and values. Rapid technological and social change, during the transition from the old "oppressed, and defeated south" to the new "sun belt" region, for example, creates an overarching sense of anomie, "as moral certainty and customary expectations are no longer sustained" (Coser 1977: 133). The angst of the postmodern can also be seen in terms of anomie, for "technocratic society will also inhibit ... social interaction" (Touraine, 1974: 3). There are dangers particular to the Trekkers themselves in the post-modern world. Whereas in the modern world of the pragmatic scientists are "high priests; when they speak, they are listened to" (Penty, 1917: 3), the post modern world has no specifically exalted space for the scientific elite (Rose, 1991; Ologuiga, 1992; Storey, 1993).

Anomie is embodied in the "outsider-within" metaphor that the teachers use throughout take their theorizing. "People come to Trek because they feel outside and it embraces them," says one speaker. Trek teachers feel "outside" for a multiplicity of reasons. The knowledge that they reside outside the stereotypical norms of western beauty is one. In a true Cartesian dichotomy the teachers are all tremendously bright and curious; and want intelligence to be the criteria for acceptance. The celebration of mind is placed in another conflictual configuration because they teach, in a region where rote memorization is the expectation (Kincheloe and Pinar, 1991).

And yet these teachers are also insiders to the community because of their historical relationship to it. In anomic social systems non-conforming behavior is equally, perhaps more important, than conformist behavior. The southern tradition in particular displays this sensibility in the person of the "eccentric" character who is embraced, but set apart from the community. Trek teachers find themselves in situations where they are a part of, yet separate from their homes, their lives, and their families.

The way in which *Star Trek* values the alien is important, certain differences in this sense are celebrated rather than denigrated. Of course, by their own definitions, the distinction of intelligence places the Trekkers firmly in a dominant position, in the social formation. Clearly, the character of Spock is quite important here. Spock is an "outsider-within" the Federation, and as an "insider-outside" the dominant "Earth" culture; his mother human; his father Vulcan. Spock is the "man/Vulcan" who commands the most respect in the universe. Yet like the Trek teachers, Spock exists in dialectical tension. A double consciousness

slumbers in the head of contemporary humans waiting for a Spock. Through such consciousness the human enterprise becomes the quasi-religious activity of relating opposites to each other, of becoming human beings able to function in the world of the present and the future (Blair, 1979: 182-183).

In their own recuperation from the anomie Trek teachers feel empowered as educators, and maintain their sense of mission through symbolic identification

with Spock. As Blair (1979: 62) explains Trek symbolism "McCoy attends to the body, Spock deals with the mind. McCoy is emotional, Spock intellectual ... (S)econd only to the captain... it is Spock who opens our way to the future." One teacher explains this influence on this curriculum theorizing:

I try to be logical. Sometimes it's hard because of me; I'm not a totally logical sometimes. It's hard because of these kids. It's hard because they are far from logical. It's a challenge but it's fun. I'm not trying to get them to lock themselves into acting like computers or anything like that but just to realize that they have a problem, and a self and others they can draw on to know themselves, and, to know why they enjoy things. Instead of just pleasure for pleasures sake.

In these teachers' dreams,

Spock becomes a model for the imaginative encounter with the buried self and encourages the process of critical imagining that can lead to psychic integrity. Because he is suited to our culture and a product of it (Blair, 1979: 182).

For students, Trek is a beacon in a tempestuous sea of change, and of isolation. One teacher explains,

Especially today with the fall of the Mayberry family, Mom and Dad living together, keeping up with what you're doing, that really doesn't exist anymore! My number one rule in my class is do what's right! I don't care what anyone else does, if I call you down for doing something, they know not to say: "Well, so and so was doing that." They know not to say it. I'm not talking to them. I'm talking to you! And kids really like that. They really like having someone to put a sense of order and discipline in their lives, because a lot of them don't have that.

You know, we are in the what is called "the big butane society." Maybe it was Paul Newman who said it. This is the throwaway society. That's one

reason I like *Star Trek*! You can't throw it away. It keeps coming back. And it's really hardest on our young people. They don't really have anything solid to hang on to. And if my fifty minute class is the one solid thing they can hang on to, fine let 'em hang on to it. They know I'm gonna be here everyday.

Another teacher agrees:

We live in a society today that says, "Oh you have to have this" or "you have to have that," and "you have to be beautiful" and "you have to be young," or you're worthless. I'm here and I show them that that is just false; that is utter nonsense. Look at me! I show them money isn't everything. Looks aren't everything. What is important is what you do with your life. What is important is that you know and that you learn and that you are smart. Intelligence is what will guide us to the next century and beyond, not aerobics. Beauty fades and then what? I prove to them everyday that I sit here, it is what you think that counts!

Teaching provides the medium par excellance to spread the word to the *next generation*. Although they joke about money, that too is part of the "outsider-within" metaphor of the teachers, and part of the Trek universe as well. In the Trek world (with the exception of the Ferengi's love for pressed latinum), money no longer exists! Everyone works at what they do best, for the love of work itself.² One teacher announces:

I find that *Star Trek* has given me a way to look at life that is far more satisfying than all the of the money, jobs, education and security that you can find! Everyone works at what they are best at and all people, all aliens, are valued.

Another reiterates:

In *Star Trek* every person has his value on an even level with everybody else. In other words there are no big I 's and little me's or anything like that. You have the same. Your ability is unique. It's different from everybody else's, but its just as important as everybody else's. In other words, Geordi La Forge is just as important as Captain Picard.

This speaker concurs:

In *Star Trek* each person's job is important to him. And in our life sometimes we put all of our eggs in one basket and then somebody throws the basket away! In *Star Trek* Kirk didn't always agree with Spock. He didn't always agree with a lot of people. Kirk and his chief engineer were always arguing about things. But, yet, he respected the chief engineer and his ability, and that is the way *Star Trek* is; you are respected for what you can do, not for what somebody else can do. That you might be trying to do something just for money that's not necessary. And I find that *Star Trek* has really been motivating in that way.

For the Trekker teachers, money would *only* give them financial rewards, which is not what they seek! What the Trekkers seek is acceptance, not only for themselves but for the children whom they serve. They are teachers for a lifetime; none want to ever do anything else. In teaching they are not only liberating themselves from anomie; they are able to spread the "good news of Trek" and reach out for the better world that they imagine. One teacher says:

Teaching is a calling. You must be called! I literally believe that. That you have to be called to teach! Because you're about putting yourself in for a life of poverty. Not what you call the higher socio-economic ladder. Social opinions of teachers have dropped over the past fifteen years. Where they used to be in the top five now they are in the bottom twenty. So its just a matter of loving what I do, and I do like kids! I have a lot of good memories

for teaching so far ... I have been teaching 11 years.

Another teacher explains:

I have a vast collection of garbage. That's why I'm a school teacher. That's the only job that fits. When you collect garbage only a schoolteacher can use it; nobody else can use it. So, I guess I am called to teaching. My life wasn't particularly happy until I found Trek, but I did have vast collections of garbage. Having both garbage and a calling is an unbeatable combination, and I love it! I would never want to do anything else!

Consider the words of a completely dedicated young man, whose father was the town physician. Not once during our day together did he mention anomie, or alienation. Yet he spoke as outsider. On a tour of his town, he sounded as if he were citing a AAA manual. His corpulent size did not permit him to climb the stairs, and at dinner, the stares we received were jarring and uncomfortable. It was only over coffee that evening that he made an allusion to anomie in physical terms, asking me if I had noticed the size of the Trekkers, and telling me quite poignantly that Trek was the only place or time where he could fly. For him, teaching is everything that he ever wanted to be; talking about his Trek organization and his school were the only places in our conversation where his eyes lit up, where he felt a true "sense of belonging" and of "being needed" and "unconditional acceptance." He speaks of his decision to become a teacher:

I was also involved in the military club there and I became the colonel of that. And it was all kids from the private schools in the area. Very snobby. In fact the things they did rather turned me off! I don't know how I got to be the colonel; 'cause I was never in the social register on anything like that! But,

then I stayed on there as assistant commandant for ten years. Once you get to be a corporal, you're teaching. How to do the manual arms to the privates. And as you go further up, in the ranks, you're doing more of that. So, it was excellent teachers training.

Continuing this explanation, he says:

I don't expect that I am going to turn everybody into wanting to be a history teacher like me. Although, some students have told me, "I majored in history. 'Cause you did that, I want to be a teacher." And the teacher I guess that I enjoyed most when I was in ninth grade was my history teacher. But looking back on it, he was not a particularly good teacher, from the standpoint of learning styles; he only lectured. Now I can sit down and listen to a lecture and learn from it, but not everybody can. And from that point of view he was not a good teacher. He was just a good teacher because he fit me at the time. I don't expect them to love it, but I expect them to remember something of it.

Well, I've often thought that perhaps one of the reasons that I'm willing to be a teacher is that I have some assets of my own. So I can afford to be. But I have peace of mind! I have control of my class and I enjoy the teaching.

I decided in ninth grade that I wanted to become a teacher. I was already in love with history! So I went to college already knowing my major. Actually, I had three majors in college: Economics, History and Religion. I thought I could also be an economic historian in the Vatican! The thing I wanted to do was become a teacher! At a graduate level I got a Master's in Education and now I'm finishing up my graduate degree in History. It's something I always wanted to do. I wanted to teach. I wanted to be a sociologist and a psychologist and a baby-sitter and a policeman and I want to deal with ideas, not with problems! I want to have kids learn something!

The Trek text addresses the peculiarly bourgeois notion of "personal alienation" (i.e. the cult of the individual) in our culture. Symbolically, the Spock character is again quite significant because as he addresses the perceived sense of individual alienation among young people such as students of these

Trekkers Harvey Greenberg (1984: 54) an Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at the Albert Einstein Medical College, speaks of Spock and *Star Trek* as a therapeutic way of addressing the "adolescent" sense of alienation.

My theories about Spock and *Star Trek* derive from my work as an adolescent psychotherapist, as well as a passion for speculative fiction and cinema that reaches back to my own teens. For two decades adolescent clients, children of friends and two sons have told me why they found Spock compelling. Their observations lead me to conclude that he embodies the central virtues and dilemmas of the pubertal years. His noble flawed figure recapitulates in outer space many a Terran youngsters search for a viable identity. I will also show that the entire series is informed by a curious political torsion, an adolescent wrenching between conservative (even prejudicial) values and libertarian ideals.

For Greenberg (and other psychotherapists alluded to in the narratives) Spock is a valuable tool in adolescent psycho-therapy insofar as "the void created by Spock's estrangement from parents, home and self have intensified the normative anguish of adolescent alienation (p. 64). "Spock's battle to control his passions accurately reflects the consuming struggle of the early adolescent to master biological turmoil" (p. 56). "The perennial struggle across generations is ... captured in the prickly relationship between Spock ... and Bones..." (p. 58) because as "Spock plays the adolescent agent provocateur to McCoy's stodgy parent" (p. 58), as well as playing out a form of "Oedipus in Space" (p. 59).³

Greenberg (pp. 55-56) presents a case of a fifteen year old client whom he calls Joe:

Joe ... affectionately calls Spock a reformed nerd and thinks of himself as grossly unreformed. He entered therapy because of depression which began after his first "girl friend" (1.5 dates) threw him over for the class jock. Joe's teachers rate him a genius ... like his idol. He's been a rabid Trekkie since he was eleven. His parents more modestly endowed in brains and ambition, find him pretty much a mystery. His orderliness and nit-picking drive them to distraction. Behind his weissenheimer facade he is painfully shy, fearful of aggression. He provokes his peers with brash displays of intellect, them morbidly anticipates attacks or rejection.

It is easy to see why compulsive overachievers like Joe admire Spock, but less cerebral youngsters identify with the sublimatory, obsessional cast of his defenses too.

By using Spock as metaphor, Dr. Greenberg (obviously quite Freudian) is then able to effectively rehabilitate youngsters into "more normative" type of "appropriate behaviors." Karen Blair (1979) uses a more Jungian perspective. In identifying a particular type of student, and celebrating "nerd pride" with great enthusiasm, Trek teachers are able to use Trek as a therapeutic tool not only for students' recuperation, and their own recuperation and recovery from "individual isolation" in much the same manner as Greenberg does in his private practice.

Speaking about a particular students, one teacher says:

He pisses everyone off, but he is smarter than them. Because we share Trek, we can talk about it, because I understand him. And what I like most about him and identify most about with him is Trek. I have no idea at all whether or not his parents are Trekkers, but, they support him, even if they don't understand him.

Another speaker tells the story of her own therapeutic treatment with Trek:

I went to this little tiny out of the way rehabilitation center in North Carolina. I could go there and nobody knew me, nobody cared to know me. I mean, because you didn't talk to anybody else there. You just did whatever you wanted to do. The guy who ran the place was a *Star Trek* fan.

I went through a real bad time a couple of years ago and they were going to put me on medication. It was that serious! I was at the point of just throwing in the towel, you know, forget the whole nine yards, and I called him and I said: "I need to come up!" He said, "No, you don't." He said, "You need to find something to hold on to." "But," he says, "you won't find it in here." He says, "You got to find it right where you are. I want you to find it. It must be something positive. It can have nothing negative in it at all." He said, "*Star Trek*." And I said, "I don't find Jean Luc Picard that interesting." He laughed and he said, "Well, who said anything about Jean Luc Picard? What happened to Captain Kirk and Spock?" So he said, "Get the movie and look at it!" I had all five of them. I had never watched them. I had been to the theatre and had seen them when they first came out. But somebody had given me the set of five as a Christmas present for the kids. And it was like, it was there!

I had never watched them. So, I started watching them, and I watched three movies a day, everyday! If you say *Star Trek* gets old, it didn't, not once! What I looked for was were the positive personal relationships! And I watched, and I watched, and I watched, and I started writing a log. Well it gave me a more positive outlook, I finally feel completely whole!

Another narrator explains the therapeutic value of Trek this way:

I saw teenagers and I saw children there and I saw people of every walk of life there. Handicapped, mentally, physically, every way that were finding something in *Star Trek*. So, I sat down. I knew I found the answer, not just for me, but for the kids too.

I found a peace in *Star Trek* that I never found anywhere else. I found a reason for going on with things. People don't upset me now, like they used to. I used to let people just get to me no end. That's not true anymore. I look at people out of *Star-Trek*-colored glasses.

Everybody is an alien; now sometimes they may be Romulans, or they may be Klingons or any number of others. But people are valuable, and they are

sentient beings; they have a reason and a place on the planet! I am much more tolerant because of *Star Trek* and that tolerance has helped me to learn to manage my own personal life in a totally different aspect. When you become tolerant of people, of different planetary aspects your perspective changes.

Another *Star Trek* convention story demonstrates similar benefits:

I had gone to the convention not feeling well. Things weren't exactly all that they could have been, but I ran into a friend of mine. I had no idea she was interested in *Star Trek*. In fact I didn't even meet her at the convention. I met her at the mall and I mentioned that I was down on at a *Star Trek* convention. She said, "Oh, I'm there too." And so we got to talking and she related a very similar story to my own. About how what *Star Trek* had meant to her psychologically. And I said, "You know I had the same experience."

And we got to talking in the con area and another person butted in, and we finally went up to my room and there were 19 of us in there! All of us with the exact same concept of what *Star Trek* had done for us as far as providing a stability that we did not find otherwise! *Star Trek* has done enough for me so far to last for the rest of my life. Because the philosophy, the tolerance, the worth, you know, in *Trek* has given me a reason to go on! It's what I love!

In Classic *Trek* you are a part of each individual's life and you can't just sit there and watch it and not be part of it. You are a southern gentleman with a glass of gin in your hand looking at a medical chart. And you're an engineer with a spot of grease on your nose. And you're a Vulcan with total logic and no emotion! One thing I have learned with my younger children, the children identify with the individual characters very much. So, we use the *Trek* characters to work through our own problems, and it helps more than anything I have ever seen in all my years of teaching!

Star Trek shows the teachers and the students the possibility of a world where everyone is equally valued, where everyone experiences the anguish of "alienation." Not only is everyone included in *Trek*, but by virtue of the "emphasis on mind," those who are intelligent are embraced more fervently. For

those continually placed on the margins, this identification is affirmation. As one teacher said to me with great passion and conviction:

When one truly falls in love with the philosophy of *Star Trek*, there are no strangers in life; there are no prejudices in life. Because there are none! Every sentient being has a right in *Star Trek*. That is not found in any other culture.

With the same passion and commitment another teacher explained to me that

One of our big problems in school today, and it's even in the lower grades is depression. Teenagers getting depressed and taking their own lives. *Star Trek* has done a great deal to alleviate that by providing a future in which there are solutions. If you take *Star Trek* out of our society right now we don't have any answers to the future. We have nothing. We put *Star Trek* up there, there's possibility. There's a Vulcan someplace running around, who is going to show up here with a friend and crash land in the lake. Somebody's going to say that he'll come back in 40-50 years with a ship full of them. Now that's a possibility and that possibility can make the difference between death and life in some people.

Identity in Community

Each person occupies many positions in a society and it is incumbent on the person to understand each frame of reference and adjust her responses to each community that she is involved with. As we interpret and rectify the norms and expectations contained in each situation, we select from a repertoire that is faithful to the relevant group. We are constantly recreating in response to each audience (Goffman, 1959). It is important to realize that roles are not only what we do, but each role defines who we are, at least for the moment in time when we play it.

Even so,

a given sign community is constituted by contradictory and competing social interests ... Given signs are in fact subject to divergent ideological accents depending on the specific context of their usage -- what Bakhtin terms the multi accentuality of the social sign (Gardiner, 1992: 16).

With this in mind it is relatively easy to understand why the community must protect its members from outsiders. The "faithful" realize that their views may be wrongly perceived in the Bakhtinian "clash of accents." Members of the Trek community respect the privacy of the individual members, for they recognize that they might not be accepted in their respective fields if the extent of their involvement in Trek was known. Anonymity was of tremendous importance to the teachers who so generously provided their narratives to me. "I'd get into a lot of trouble if someone knew this were me," said one of the teachers. Another teacher told me, "If my school board knew how involved in Trek I was, I'm afraid they wouldn't understand and think I was crazy." The "clash of accents ... is marked by a plethora of antagonistic discursive forms" (Gardiner, 1992: 16). Realizing that the larger societal order considers Trekkers marginalized at best (i.e. the *Saturday Night Live* episode in which a Trekker is told by William Shatner a.k.a. Captain Kirk to "get a life"), Trekkers recognize the importance of anonymity.

The Trekker teachers ascribe a politically significant label to their quest for anonymity, relating it to, (indeed usurping) the voice of the gay community. The

term used by the Trekkers is "closet-ness." All the narratives speak in terms and ascribe labels such as "closet-Trekkers" and "coming out." ⁴

We have a man here named _____. He's a newspaper columnist, TV reporter. He's been in trouble recently. We get a lot of newsmen in trouble around here. But he's ... he's a Trekker. Now he hasn't made a big deal of it yet. I don't know how much the general public knows that he's a Trekker. But I know he's been through some rough times. I know that *Star Trek* has helped him through some rough times. He is supposed to be ... in June, he will get his membership in Star Fleet, in our local ship here. Which will be nice. He has had a rough time of it, but his belief in the philosophy of *Star Trek* has helped him through. I think overall people who find *Star Trek* as a way of life ... not yet, but in the future ... are the people who are going to make a better contribution to the communities in which they live. We don't just believe in *Star Trek*; we put it into practice ... Things don't make sense in our day-to-day lives unless as a group we meet the philosophical aspects of *Star Trek*.

In "meet(ing) the philosophical aspects of Trek" Trekkers create an overriding sentiment for other Trekkers as members of an extended family. The sense of a religious elite in a tightly woven supportive atmosphere creates an unshakable bond of connectedness among Trekker teachers; they feel part of the brotherhood of Trek, and, ultimately, part of a universal brotherhood. One speaker says,

Trek is a community. There is another teacher here who is a Trekker. In fact he got his tape at Universal before I got mine. That's one of the ways I learned about it! And there is a bond between the two of us even though we disagree on other things. There is a bond between us on that overshadows whatever educational philosophy disagreements we might have. Those become small when it comes to *Star Trek*.

In each of these narratives, antagonisms that develop within the purview of school become inconsequential when viewed in relation to the connections provided by Trek. The rationalization of this "tolerance" is attributed not to the community as much as to the experiences shared within the community. "After all, everyone has to be so close at conventions. They crowd four million people into an eight by twelve room," boasts one Trekker, "We have to get along."

Identity in community transcends differences not only among Trekker teachers but also allows an empathy for teachers who are not Trekkers, but are fans of the show. There is an ethos of sympathetic justification, reminiscent of liberalized Jewish laws in which each person practices the traditions as much as she can. One teacher explains:

The teachers, most of the teachers who are my age, in their thirties and forties are also very up on Trek. They can even quote episodes better than I can but they are not part of Star Fleet but you know they know everything about it. You can tell who they are.

Another speaker considers:

Well, I think they are both Trekkers! There are people who have an interest and follow Trek. They're all Trekkers. It's just that some people are members of Star Fleet and some aren't. In the upper school there's an English teacher who's interested in *Star Trek* but he didn't want to join Star Fleet, because he has other things he does. There's a Science teacher and a Math teacher who are both in the same boat! Another teacher, she's interested in *Star Trek* and would like to join the ship; however, she is moving, and will join the ship in _____. The Spanish teacher, well, we have had discussions about *Star Trek*, and there's a little bit one-up-man-ship. He usually wins because he knows the little details better than I do. There are a lot of people just in this small community, one, two three, four, five rooms, out of seven in a corridor who at least have an interest.

Underneath not only these teachers' own participation, but also their initiation of students into Trek community is a particular *class interest*. "Class" in this instance must be expressed in terms of a *meritocracy of intelligence*, it must be understood in relation to the class fraction of the techno-scientific elite, the nerds. Here class is not being defined in (nor does the answer does not reside in) an economically deterministic sense, but rather as a culturally inclusive category. Membership depends on the accumulation of an esoteric form of cultural capital.

Not only do these teachers belong to a particular class fraction, as teachers they give themselves responsibility to "determine and organise the reform of moral and intellectual life" (Gramsci, 1971: 453) of that social group.⁵ The relationship of these "organic intellectuals" to their group is that they

give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic sphere but also in the social and political fields. The capitalist entrepreneur (for example) creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy the organizers of a new culture, of a new legal system (Gramsci, 1971: 5).

By concentrating on the social as the overarching sphere of influence, the teachers draw attention to the cultural aspects which has value in their utopian vision of a new class order. "Cultural forms and practices must now be taken seriously in their own right," writes Storey (1993: 171) about the postmodern world. As Foucault points out representation is itself a form of power" Garnaham

and Williams (1980: 219) further stress the importance of social resources in class struggle:

For Bourdieu all societies are characterized by a struggle between groups and or classes and class fractions to maximize their interests in order to ensure their reproduction. The social formation is seen as a hierarchically organized series of fields within which human agents are engaged in specific struggles to maximize their control over the social resources specific to that field, the intellectual field, the educational field, the economic field etc., ...The fields are hierarchically organized in a structure overdetermined by the field of class struggle over the production and distribution of material resources and each subordinate field reproduces within its own structural logic, the logic of a field of class struggle (Garnham and Williams, 1980: 219).

Because the struggle over social resources is especially important in the postmodern world, recruiting and mentoring students is a crucial activity for these teachers.

The anomie that the teachers express in relation to their position as Trekker in various Southern locales, as well as in their own personal autobiographic stories, create the conditions for their special relationships with students who have "the potential" and "display interest" in the culture of Trek. An essential component of these teachers' vision of educational and social reform is the shared language and values of Trek.

There is an extra connection between me and the kids who are into Trek. In fact some of my seventh graders on my tests don't write their names. They write Tasha Yar, or Beverly Crusher. And there's one boy in the classroom whose handwriting is atrocious and I tell him: "I will not accept your paper if it's written in Klingon."

An implicit theory of the *political economy of Trek Curriculum* emerges from the teachers' accounts. Only some students possess the cultural capital which the teachers demand. Envisioning the classroom as a market of social exchange, the teachers do value particular assets, and dispossess students who lack the commodity of interest (Anijar and Casey, 1993) in the Trek discourse. As one teacher says "The kids involved are different than run-of-the-mill kids." She continues,

There is a strong, unbreakable connection, a bond between us as Trekkers. In fact, the ones that are more familiar with it, especially the older ones, really excite me, and stimulate the most exciting classes!

These teachers operate in a peculiar form of self and group interest, not because they work for individual profit, but rather for the profit of the ethos. Spreading the "word," and having the word acknowledged is equated with educational objectives. One teacher says,

I present it to them in many different ways, and if they have intelligence then they begin to understand, and then I begin to feel a tremendous amount of responsibility towards them.

Trek teachers engage in a form of *insider trading* (Anijar and Casey, 1993). Because their public role as teacher overlaps with their private Trek interests; the *actual transactions* in which they engage value Trek discourse above and beyond anything else.

Well, my daughter had her annual picture taken in a Star Fleet uniform. She has recruited about eight students. All of them ROTC naval students. Now we are not talking about a bunch of dumbbells. We are talking about straight A students, honor society students, have been recruited into Star Fleet. In fact we can't figure out why the dumbbells haven't figured out what's going on yet. We're not talking about below average students. We are talking about the sharpest academic science students available in Star Fleet. Because it's not fiction. It's not junk. It is something that they think they will see the beginnings of.

One teacher utilizes what might seem to be guerilla tactics; her role as teacher, her role as mother, and her role as Trekker overlap, creating a sense of zeal and righteousness. In assuming the role of moral mentor, she desperately attempts to save the children who are worthy of salvation. The role ambiguity of Teacher and Trekker allows her to be accepted by parents and administrators of the "good" teacher, who takes it upon herself to have after-school and weekend sessions focusing on "excellence." Naturally, the aegis of the supplementary sessions focuses on "problem solving" via Trek.

Well, maybe it's not fair. Life isn't fair. That's the way it is, and it's unfortunate. But, if I don't take care of the kids who are interested, and work with them, who will? We are talking about very creative, sensitive, highly intelligent minds. Somebody has to do something to address them, and their very particular, very special needs.

Scarcity of attention (Anijar and Casey, 1993) for students who do not display an interest in the Trek universe is evidenced in the narratives. "I just don't feel a sense of connection to kids who don't care, or worse make fun of, or grimace when I say the word Trek" admits this same teacher. Because the type and

amount of nurturance provided is predicated on interest in what emerges are distinctions among students; only the chosen benefit from "power used in the moral service of others" (Noblit, 1993: 35). Consider this story from the point of view of the "other" students:

I first met him at convention last year. He was getting an autograph from Denise Crosby. We snuck up behind him and took a picture of him with Denise Crosby. When he came back to school my wife gave it to him and he really appreciated that! There was a connection with her already and I knew he was going to be in my class and I was looking forward to it. Our connection is even stronger! He pisses off a lot of the other students because he has a point of view that is different and lot of them don't want to go to the trouble of figuring out what he is talking about. He can relate to me easily. That helps our whole relationship and there is a real strong bond!

He sits in the back of the class, right back there. And two people over there were really on his case yesterday. We were discussing history and predicting the future and we were getting into the whole implications of being able to predict the future of cultures and civilizations. I was letting him go, in bringing up points and the people around him thought he was full of crap. They were telling him to shut up! I tend to take his side. I tell the other students my point of view is making you mad, then deal with it.

Trek teachers regularly express a celebration of the Trekker students and the frustration with and about other students.

I do really try to nurture the Trekker students, not only because of our common interest, and passion. But also, because, well, frankly the other kids give them such a hard time, referring to them as nerds.

Another teacher concurs,

I guess I really resent that, I try hard not to show my resentment. But its just that the Trekker kids have so much more, and also need so much more.

They are much more talented, creative, and smarter than other students!
And they do suffer because of who they are and what they believe in!

As "moral" mentors, these teachers realize that they may be the child's first exposure to the Trek universe; so they do everything possible to provide opportunities for students to "turn on their engines," and embrace the philosophy and tenants of their creed. "I know, I just know, after reading five Trek books they are mine, forever! That's all it usually takes," boasts one teacher. Another teacher describes Trek students this way:

He is a typical gifted kid. He's in the school's gifted program! Another joke! He's bored with schools. The schools make no effort to challenge students, and if they do, it's in a ridiculous way. What they don't understand is students aren't stupid, particularly the bright kids. Bright kids can see right through it. "This is nonsense." "Why do we do this ridiculous exercise?" There is a way kids can get excited about the whole idea! It deals with the future. It deals with exploring the unknown. Kids find it exciting! People who are true Trekkers and live that idea, in time will look upon that kid as a peer, as a crew member, who has a contribution he can make! Why let boredom take hold?

Exposure to the discourse is achieved by the teacher as mentor in either individual situations, or by creating branches of Star Fleet clubs in their individual schools. In the larger school scenario, Trek is seen as entirely benign and a good way to expose the children to science.

I've been trying to get something together at school. Well, actually we have never been together in a meeting. Actually school is 60 miles north of here. And the Starship always meets here. Although, what they want to do is try to organize a branch of it there. They want to take the Star Fleet courses; they want to become officers. And this is a little bit of a problem in finding things

for them to do cause I don't live up there. I will next year. But I'm here every night and here on weekends and I really cant be up there all the time to do something with them ... But next year we can, and we will, and then it will be a whole lot better.

In Trek translation teacher as mentor is not very different from teacher as broker, or as talent impresario, particularly when a prodigy is discovered in her midst.

Now I have one boy who's eight years old and he loves to play chess. Of course he loves to play Nintendo and all the rest of the junk too. But, he's very good at chess and there is a book, one of the sixty *Star Trek* pocket books about a Klingon game that is very similar to chess. Now I read the book, I read it, but it is so far up here, it's like no way on Earth! But this kid has read this book four times! So he went to a *Vulcon* and saw a three dimensional chess set like Spock plays. So, he got interested in that and he is now helping to develop a Klingon gambit game. Now this is this eight year old. He has that kind of intelligence.

Trekker teachers' outrage stems from the school's failures in nurture, creativity, and standards of and for excellence. There is an emphatic ethos of nurturance contained in the narratives of the teachers. Yet in its disdain for the average student, this discourse demonstrates that even such an apparently progressive curriculum can contain reactionary elements.

The students should not be forced into some superintendent's idea of what academia should be. The students work on their levels. If they change their ideas and they want to move into a different field, the counselors are there to guide them into the field. From where they are to where they need to be. Today's students are put into categories in seventh and eighth grade and there's no way to get out of it! And they're there. That's it. Period. Nothing. I'm most opposed to that! Nobody goes into one single category all the time. Some people are good in Math, some people aren't. Some people are good

in English that aren't in Math.

When I was in school, I loved Science. Was absolutely no good at it. I loved Math. Was pretty good at it. English was atrocious! I am a dyslexic and as such I have a lot of trouble with formations and things like that. Today the system is we have to bring everybody to this academic level, and then we are going to take all of these people and we are going push them on this scale, and half the kids don't want to do it. Why should they? They aren't going to be teachers. They are going to be auto mechanics! Why not teach them auto mechanics and how to read a technical manual instead. But that's the kind of education we have everywhere now. It makes me sick.

A female teacher discussed with me her complete frustration with schools' programming, stratification and expectations. Her passionate commitment to children and to Trek are her only reason for remaining in the schools. She feels that her presence liberates children to understand a "meritocracy based on sentience and acceptance of differences." It is to be remembered that "difference" is celebrated in Trek, but that "not everyone can aspire to be anything that they want to." So, although she has adopted a radical political model in her tactics, her conceptualization of difference is predicated on a highly conservative ethos.

My daughter, right now, is thinking about college. She's not ready for it by any means, but she is working on an advanced academic level in high school. But by and large she's not doing very well at it. She would do much better if she had a more realistic academic program that would function for her. She's not going to be a mathematics teacher or anything like that. She is going to be an engineer. Now she's gonna need mathematics but, she's gonna need it on a different level than the one she's getting at the school.

My son went through high school and graduated with a straight F average. He never passed anything. He was graduated to get him out of high school. He graduated at 21 but he was never offered what he really needed. And

what he didn't get 'till he got out of high school. And that was a good technical training. He has always been adept at taking things apart. He is now being sent to school by his employer. Doing very well in school to learn small engine repair and replacement. He is doing fine. But he never got it in school; he never had the choice.

In Trekker teachers' narratives care for Trekker students combines with scorn of present day schooling to produce curriculum planning predicated on a fictitious future.

I think schools ought to be destroyed and something more Trek like will arise from the ashes. I can't wait for that day to come! But I will not leave my children. I personally admire the BEKA⁶ curriculum. The schools only teach memorization. That isn't challenging to the children; that doesn't help them prepare for the future. And then what happens when perhaps someday a Vulcan ship crash lands. Will we be prepared to meet them?

The curriculum of Trek moves from a nostalgic past towards a glorious future; the only unsolved problems are the realities of the present.

I'll tell them about the old family reunions where the woman cooked for days and my grandfather had barrels of lemonade and he picked one grandkid who got to taste the lemonade.

They never did live like that! I knew everyone who lived on my street and every year when school started how many people lived on my street. And I ask, "How many of you live in an apartment?" And I get maybe 30 percent. I then ask, "How many of you live in some other type of construction?" There's the other 40 percent. Maybe only 30 percent live in houses.

Then I pass around a survey that says "How many of you live with your biological parents?" After explaining biological. About 45 percent of them don't live with either their biological parents. That's where I get a basis of where I need to talk. In Trek there is responsibility to keeping the family unit together. There are family values, and there is morality!

They know better than to talk to me about what they did this past weekend. They know better than to say that to me. One girl called me her conscience. I guess that what I am. I am strict because I care so much. There's not a kid that I have ever taught that will tell you that I was hard on them. I was strict with them but I'm not hard on them and being strict and fair is what teaching is all about.

The Ethical Curriculum: A Curriculum of Sentience

They have vivid imaginations ... Imagination is not what is missing from our children. What is missing, I guess you would call it a moral imagination.
--Trekker teacher

All versions (be they liberal or conservative of "humanistic" discourse of Trek are explicitly religious. A key concept of the "ethical rationality" (Huebner, 1975) found in Trekker teachers' narratives is "sentience." "All sentient beings have a right!" these teachers agree. One teacher explains:

All sentient beings should be treated in fairness, no matter their appearance, no matter their preferences, that kind of thing. Too many times we're prejudiced for some of the strangest reasons against other nationalities, the color of people's skin, the color of their hair, or their choices in life. And, the philosophy of Gene Rodenberry is: This really doesn't make a difference. Nothing that is alien makes any difference. We are all the same if we are a sentient being.

Another teacher concurs:

When one truly falls in love with the philosophy of *Star Trek* there are no strangers in life. There are no prejudices in life. Because there are none. Every sentient being has a right in *Star Trek* that is not found in any other culture!

Notice the explicit reference being made to *Star Trek* as a specific and separate culture. By separating their own culture from their perception of the dominant culture, these teachers symbolically disconnect and detach themselves from what is perceived as the ethical and moral inadequacies of the world in which they reside.

At the same time these narrators castigate, they also recuperate essential elements of their own original fundamentalism. Notice the metaphor of revelation in this passage.

Star Trek does what no government can do, and it opens our minds to tolerance. Tolerance of a green skin, pointed ear, alien. To helping strangers that were not even embodied. We needed *Star Trek* very badly when we got it. It opens up doors that we would never open up! If for no other reason than it opens up these doors to young people, where they may be tolerant. The strange thing is there's lots of intolerance and intolerance to lifestyles, intolerance to likes and dislikes. And if *Star Trek* will open that door and allow us to live with one another, no matter what our choices, I think its so very important.

One young Spanish teacher, who is also the mother of a six year daughter, describes the revelational quality of *Star Trek* by telling how she discovered sentience and how she desperately tries to apply it to her own life.

All beings have sentience. They all have the exact same rights that you give yourself. They should have too! In *Star Trek 6*, when the Klingons are all sitting around eating dinner with the Enterprise's crew, Chekov says something about human rights. That's something I didn't even think about. But by them presenting it that way, hearing! Do you hear yourself saying "human rights?"

And then it hit me. I mean, we are reading it in a round about way! Just when your saying, involving everybody, but you're using that expression:

"mankind." Ick! But, of course all women resent that! Of course, when Chekov was saying that, he was meaning that, in a round about way, the rights that we apply to ourselves should be for everybody. But just because he said "human rights," the Klingons perceived that as being racist. He said: "Human rights? Don't Klingons have rights?" 'Cause they're not human you know! That was an interesting point to be brought up.

I think I really hate spiders. That's why that book gets to me -- the crystalline spider! Last night this huge thing popped through here on my Spanish book. Uuuk. So I'm prejudiced against spiders, but I like snakes. Now I felt guilty about killing him! But, when it comes down to me or him, he goes!

With guilt and anguish, she describes what she envisions as a primordial fear of spiders. Her nightmares, she informed me, consist of spiders crawling on her and on her daughter. She then rationalized that many spiders were poisonous, and therefore left her no alternative except killing them. But killing the spiders presented a dilemma to her that she still can not quite resolve.

That's the only thing that I do kill. Everything else that comes in my house, I try to put back outside 'cause I think, they might only be living for four hours. You know some insects live such a short life span. They have the right to live too. What if they were really weird and wanted to squash me, like in the 50s on TV? Killer ants, killer bees, this kind of stuff. They don't have the right to do that to me, so I don't have the right to do it to them; that's true equality. Whatever you do on yourself, you reciprocate. You don't say: "Well, what's good for the goose is good for the gander," they always say that.

But, if you think that you can do something then that person should be able to do it back to you. And if you don't like that, then there's a moral problem. Then you shouldn't be able to do it. You know I told my daughter, I tell her all the time: "If you wouldn't want anyone hitting you in the face or something you don't go hitting your friends in the face!" You think about if something done to you before you do it to somebody else: I think that's what *Star Trek* does too. You know, they try and say that everyone should be given some consideration and that's one thing different, but it is a very important moral difference.

The very explicit moral imperative in the ethical valuing of curriculum (Huebner, 1975: 224) where teacher meets student as fellow human being is extended to include non-homo-sapiens.

My definition of racism is if you consider anything less than you, even a dolphin. If you consider a dolphin has no life, it has no reason to live, because its just a dumb animal, that's racist to me. You are being racist towards dolphins or fish or something. And you have to realize that all of us as sentient beings, are related to each other.

"Moral interpretation" of nature as a fundamental precept of teaching, connects a number of themes in Trek teachers' narratives. One of these themes concerns the sense of place as experienced in the rural South. In the narrative of a kindergarten teacher, the crystalline spider, described in a *Star Trek* book is given as an exemplar:

The written word covers so much more than any director could possibly put on the screen. You meet aliens that are crystalline entities. Now, you've met one but you have not met the spider yet, the crystalline spider. You need to meet, because it's very interesting, it is Charlotte's Web in *Star Trek* fascinating, absolutely fascinating. Spiders have a short life span. She's in a space warp. And then you meet another one of the descendants of the crystalline spider, and you met a creature that is made up of four or five individuals that mold into one another and become a single sentient being. But, anyway ...

Then this storyteller recalls her own upbringing:

For someone raised the way I was, to find a philosophy where everybody is totally acceptable is a big difference because I was raised in the foothills of West Virginia where any stranger was considered abnormal. Where the color of your hair made a difference, the color of your eyes made a

difference, the color of your skin made a difference, and whether or not you spoke a different language made a difference. I was raised in a very prejudicial atmosphere.

So when *Star Trek* came along, here were aliens and strange beings. It gave me question marks to answer. I started reading, and I discovered that there wasn't any place even in the literature for it. Then as our racial culture changed we began to have choices; lifestyles choices. Do you know how prejudicial people can be about your choice, lifestyle choices? Whether to marry or not? In the South? There isn't any question. There is not lifestyle choice; there is either this or you're wrong! Now *Star Trek* has no place for that!

The ethic of individual consciousness and conscience and sentience are juxtaposed to the prejudice of place; yet this ethic is also paradoxically a part of the morality of that same place.

End Notes

1. Once again I want to emphasize there is no singular monolithic South.

2. In *Star Trek: The Next Generation* the medium of capital is not expressed in terms of money or possessions, but in terms of merit. To have merit, to be intellectually stimulating and stimulating is the measure of man. To this end it has been expressed in several ways. The First is through the Ferengi's "a group of profitmongers who are greedy and crass to the point of ludicrousness. Their lack of any culture or dignity is reflective of Emerson's remarks in self-reliance" (Selley, 1990: 32). Additionally, in *Deep Space Nine* Ferengi culture is explored in depth; their crass boorishness is further exemplified in their biblical scriptures which are called "The Laws of Acquisition." Through the characters of the Ferengi, commodification is equated with crude and lewd sexuality. They wear their sexual orifices openly (their ears), deriving pleasure each time their ears are touched. The more "macho" and more powerful Ferengis have larger ears. They engage in businesses which fundamentalist culture views as blasphemous, i.e. prostitution and gambling.

Another exemplar of the disdain for money in Trek is found in an episode entitled the "Neutral Zone."

Ralph Oppenhouse, a businessman who has been revived after being frozen in the twentieth century, says that he wants to contact his Swiss bank. Picard informs him that Swiss banks are obsolete and that material needs no longer exist. "A lot has changed in the past 300 years. People are no longer obsessed with the accumulation of things. We've eliminated hunger, want, the need for material possessions. We've grown out of our infancy."

Oppenhouse objects again that money means power and the ability to control one's destiny, but Picard tells him, "That kind of control is an illusion" (Selley, 1990: 32).

This principle is part of the narratives of all Trekker teachers interviewed. One woman told me, "It doesn't matter who you are, how much money you have, or what you do, what matters is the peace you get from Trek." Another teacher expressed her frustration with a parent who said, "I am a respected professional, I own two homes, three cars, I'm married and I own several stores." The teacher responded sarcastically with, "Who cares your still acting like a 13 year old! I mean for a guy who owns all these things, why don't you focus your energy on something important." She then said, "But, he was such a jerk, I bet he thought things were important."

3. In his article, "In Search of Spock: A Psychoanalytic Inquiry," Harvey Greenberg (1984) cites what he sees as three significant reason for the use of Spock in male adolescent psycho-therapy. The first is that Spock exemplifies the Oedipal theme because his "prolonged adolescent identity crisis stems largely from a struggle with his father and the repressive tradition Sarek incarnates" (p. 59); it is "a clinical commonplace that a charismatic father like Sarek may engender intense competition in his son, the original object of which is the woman both love" (p. 59). He cites a "latent patricidal motif" (p. 60) in the episode "Amok Time" and an obvious patricidal motif in the episode "Journey to Babel" to serve as exemplars. The second reason stems from what he calls

"Spock and the Infernal Feminine" (p. 61) "Spock's chronic isolation from his mother remains unchanged ... while her feelings towards him have warmed" (p. 61). The third reason is that Spock represents the possibility for spirituality, matching "the teenager's search for new outer horizons" (p. 63) while matching an "inner quest for meaning" (p. 61).

4. Not only was "closet" used in the definitions describing types of Trekkers. Additionally, words such as "hard core" and "soft core" (fan) were present in the narratives as a descriptor. Further, throughout the narratives there was the phrase "respect for different lifestyles."

5. Although the Trekkers recapitulate quasi-traditional hegemonic hierarchical orderings, in their radical (re)naming and (re)formulation one can not term them as traditional intellectuals. In the Prison Notebooks (1971) Gramsci elucidated the differences between the two demarcations. The traditional intellectual is resistant to change, whereas "the creation of a new intellectuality mobilizes an entire series of concepts" (Holub, 1992: 164). The Trekkers therefore must be looked upon in this light as a true organic intellectual emerging from their class fraction. It is to be recalled that every historical moment and every mode of production produces its own intellectuals. In Trek there is (re)production of intellectuality, but the Trekkers go through the same sort of "structure of feeling" and sense of autonomy produced from a historical moment or rupture as does the classical explanation of an organic intellectual.

6. BEKA is a major publisher for Christian school materials. According to Rose (1988) Beka "encourages rote learning and drills, used in a traditional classroom style" (pg. 41).

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS: THE VOYAGE HOME

The transcription of thinking in the human sciences is always a transcription of a special kind of dialogue: the complex interrelations between the text, and the framing context in which the scholar's cognizing and evaluating takes place. The meeting of two texts -- of the ready-made and reactive text being created -- is consequently, the meeting of two subjects and two authors. The text is not a thing, and therefore a second consciousness, the consciousness of the perceiver, can in no way be eliminated or neutralized (Bakhtin, 1986: 106-107).

I have kept a running "press package" on *Star Trek* for over two years now.

What may seem as innocent fun on a surface level does have tremendous implications. I have read that Klingon is the most popular new language, and that it is being taught at several different universities. I have read articles about two year olds dressing up as Borgs and parading around at conventions where they learn to speak the language of Trek. There are Star Fleet academies of history, science, and engineering ad nauseam. The breadth of the material is exhaustive and exhausting!

It is everywhere, but it is placed so as to make it all seem somewhat sporadic and innocent; it is presented in a way to make it appear to be superficial. I do not want to profess that a concerted conspiracy is in the making; that would be entirely too paranoid! Yet, I do know that everyone I have ever known is aware of Trek at some level, and that there are evidences of Trek within all segments of

the culture. Even a space shuttle has been named *Enterprise* in honor of "the ship." Many of my friends label themselves as Trekkers. True, they do not exist within the boundaries of the social dialect of Trek depicted in the narratives; nevertheless the label is self-ascribed.¹ When the pieces of this all begin to fit together, it becomes "science fiction" of the most conspiratorial sort, for it is everywhere and it is constant. It comes from so many directions that we barely pay attention to it. It is in the malls, it is in magazines and newspapers; it is even self-referential via the mass media.

Last April when I went to the American Educational Research Association meeting in Atlanta, I also saw an exhibition at Sci-Tek (the Atlanta science museum) entitled Federation Science. It is a traveling exhibition. I was in Chicago in November, and banners were hung all over Michigan Avenue celebrating the arrival of Federation Science. Members of Star Fleet and other Trek clubs have donated their time and energies to help with the show. The show is held at science museums throughout the United States as if Trek has existed or will exist. Again I need to remind myself, Trek is a television show. The exhibition was organized with actors from the shows explaining "future science"; there was a "bridge" set up, and several interactive projects. That may seem quite benign; but let us not forget that at the Smithsonian, the *Enterprise* does sit next to the spirit of Saint Louis, as if it actually had flown! If the future is being invented via a television program, with a utopian world view, and a prophetic technology, then our future becomes limited and prescribed. The

cyclical (re)creation of *Star Trek* looks forward in order to look back, on what never was or will be. The future is being invented through *Star Trek*. The science exhibition presents inventions derived from the *vision* of the television show.

Octavio Paz (1985) contemplated, "The future has no face and is sheer possibility." *Star Trek* displaces potentiality. The science exhibition demonstrated this. The teachers narratives also point this out. If the face of the future is based on *Trek*, it is not open to the realm of possibility. One *Trekker* teacher boasted,

I don't think everybody realizes how involved *Star Trek* is in everyday life, in ordinary people ... For instance the diagnostic bed that is used in Emory University to monitor heart patients came from *Star Trek*. The hand held medical scanner has been on the market for five or six years now runs down the middle of your back and it can diagnose many problems: *Star Trek!*

Bakhtin (1986: 401) writes that all utterances must enter the social purview;

What matters is rather the actual and self-interested use to which this meaning is put and the way it is expressed by the speaker, a use determined by the speaker's position (profession, social class, etc.) and by the concrete situation. Who speaks and under what conditions he speaks, this is what determines the word's actual meaning.

Ultimately the words expressed by the teacher quoted above and the inventions cited in this quotation contain ideological elements that (re)produce the prevailing order in frightening new formations.

The French sociologist Alain Gras has argued that futurology is basically a technique of political domination, and that it is intimately linked with the policy of ruling elites because its hidden agenda is the reproduction of domination (Dublin, 1992: 93).

By placing language into the esoteric paradigm of science, Trekkers is an attempt to own the realm,

we appropriate mastery of these things for ourselves alone and for the members of the group with whom we share this special language (Dublin, 1992: 93).

The claim of mastery is based on a nexus of control and consequently is a political tool for domination. Credence in the religion of science that has existed ever since the Greeks equated one particular scientific paradigm with a search for the truth. The prestige of "science," and the prestige of the scientific in Trek. "The scientism of futurology," argues Dublin (p. 97).

serves another function: it neutralizes the opposition which may exist in the mind of a public with different values by appealing to transcendent values, the values of science.

So futurology also acts as an agent of social control, and of (re)production.

Ivan Ilich ... has argued that futurology promotes cultural convergence along technocratic lines. He has observed that "most of the research now going on about the future tends to advocate further increases in the institutionalization of values. Given the technocratic consciousness which so heavily permeates futurological thinking, this would almost be inevitable ...

All too often one comes across an outright hostility to a diversity of values ... Tohru Motooka, head of the Japanese Fifth Generation Project has asserted:

(Fifth generation computers) will take the place of man in the areas of physical labor, and, through the intellectualization of these advanced computers, totally new applied fields will be developed social productivity will be increased and *distortions in values will be eliminated* (emphasis added).

Although the prophet often assumes a harsh stern face when he is issuing a warning, his mask of preference is the serene face in which ideology always prefers to appear in public, the unassailably benevolent and impenetrable face of the rhetoric of consensus (Dublin, 1992: 97).

By "eliminating distortions" possibility is limited, and certainly the number of people who can participate and who can make choices is also diminished."

This brings me full circle in my studies, for as I entered my doctoral program the questions of "Who benefits?" and "Who is served?" continually resounded in my ears. Now as I complete these final pages of my dissertation, the same questions still surface. Mastery and control of the future by a techno-scientific Trekker elite corps is another form of Social Darwinism, another eugenic manifestation. The believability factor of the scientific jargon in Trek (re)defines an elite, and (re)produces an elite based on the not yet present.

Tyrell (1971) asserts that because television works on a non-reasoning emotional level, there is no willed suspension of belief that needs to occur; it is the medium best suited to the creation of "mythos." *Star Trek* is exploitative on varying levels but it clearly exploits the power of intimate communication that occurs between the individual and the television.

Star Trek's message of revitalized mythic narratives brought directly to the emotional needs of the viewer, engendered the feeling that the shows were more than escapist entertainment. They had meaning. That meaning

transformed the 48 minute episodes into rituals and rituals being group creating, led to clubs and to the convention (Tyrell, 1977: 712).

Trekkers do not perceive of the show as simply a television show; this is evident in their confusion between the "reality" of the day-to-day and the fantasy provided by the shows. The clubs and conventions bring a sense of community together, further feeding on the sense of affiliation (and superiority) derived from involvement in the Trek world.

I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, from the point of view of the community to which I belong. A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another (Bakhtin, 1973: 86).

The ritual of the conventions and meetings facilitates integration into the interpretive community. The individual must feel like an active participants in a community in order to experience a sense of affiliation; the authority of the ceremonious as a form of social integration can not come from a detached or anomistic position. Trekkers must live the "veracity" of sanctioned rituals and myths in order to confirm their place in the larger symbolic order. This could not transpire if there was not a withdrawal from the ordinary world into the realm of portentous cosmic space in which the life experiences are intensified.

In itself this unusual symbiosis has far reaching ramifications. But when placed within the context of educational and schooling, the prevailing order is (re)inscribed. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that "ideological mechanisms do not recruit or transform" everyone "in the same way" (Casey, 1993: 159). The

Trek text is not determined; any notions of a generic Trek discourse is "dislodged by the distinctive contrasts" (Casey, 1993: 159) between this discourse of Trek and internalization of the Trek text and other interpretations of Trek.² Nevertheless, the infusion of this discourse in the schools is alarming, especially because it appears to be so innocuous.

Several months ago I bought my son a computer game; inside the game was an advertisement for a Trek-type university (graduate school only). I realized even more so how *Star Trek's* marketers attempts to capture particular segments of the population. It was only then that I fully understood how easily Trek could be seen as "educational tool" not as ideological recapitulative mechanism. If Channel One is accepted as merely presenting the news (not as creating captive consumers), how can Trek, (which speaks in a multitude of social dialects), be seen as anything but a pedagogical method for presenting the "neutral" curriculum.

In their articulation of the Trek discourse, Trekker teachers see themselves as progressive activists. Progressivism in this case is interpreted as futurology. These teachers do not seem themselves as active agents in the reformulation of a ruling elite.

Conspiracy theories continue to dance in my head. I try to sleep, feeling compelled at night "raise my shields" and place a "cloaking device" around my house, and around my child.³ "Highly illogical" indeed! Nevertheless, as the popularity of Trek continues to proliferate by addressing the angst, anomie and

alienation of the postmodern puzzle, there will undoubtedly be more Trekker teachers. I can no longer promise to maintain the "prime directive," I navigate ahead "Warp factor eight," for the "adventure has just begun." The incubus is disguised as the innocuous.

End Notes

1. Bakhtin wrote in order to challenge the presumption of any unique manner of representation as reflective of reality that:

Languages of heteroglossia, like mirrors that face each other each reflecting in its own way a piece, a tiny corner of the world, force us to guess and grasp for a world behind their mutually reflecting aspects that is broader, more multi-leveled, containing more and varied horizons that would be available to a single language or a single mirror" (1981: 414-415).

2. The words "popular culture" do not even begin to address the "popularity" of Trek, and the "ownership" people take of their "varied" interpretations of the "program." A brief example of this occurred in my dissertation seminar, where everyone in the room presented their own often conflictual versions of particular episodes. In that single small room I heard one woman discuss the Jewish version of "Yentl in Space," I heard an "Afro-American" version, a "liberal" humanistic version and so forth.
3. I want to thank my son Joshua Asher Anijar for providing me with the Trek quotations appropriate for the closing paragraphs of this dissertation.

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