Visions of Possibilities: (De)Constructing Imperial Narratives in *Star Trek: Voyager*

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I argue that contemporary cultural narratives are infused with ongoing ideologies of Euro-American imperialism that prioritizes Western bodies and ways of engaging with living and nonliving beings. This restriction severely hinders possible responses to the present environmental crisis of the era often called the 'Anthropocene' through constant creation and recreation of imperial power relations and the presumed superiority of Western approaches to living. Taking inspiration from postcolonial theorist Edward Said and theories of cultural studies and empire, I use interdisciplinary methods of narrative analysis to examine threads of imperial ideologies that are (re)told and glorified in popular American science fiction television series *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001). *Voyager* follows the *Star Trek* tradition of exploring the far reaches of space to advance human knowledge, and in doing so writes Western imperial practices of difference into an idealized future. In chapters 2 through 5, I explore how the series highlights American exceptionalism, Manifest Destiny, a belief in endless linear progress, and the creation of a safe 'home' space amidst the 'wild' spaces of the Delta Quadrant. Each of these narrative features, as presented, rely on Western difference and superiority that were fundamental to past and present Euro-American imperial encounters and endeavors. Through the recreation of these ideologies of empire, *Voyager* normalizes, legitimizes, and universalizes imperial approaches to engagement with other lifeforms. In order to move away from this intertwined thread of past/present/future imperialism, in my final chapter I propose alternatives for ecofeminist-inspired narrative approaches that offer possibilities for non-imperial futures. As my analysis will demonstrate, *Voyager* is unable to provide new worlds free of imperial ideas, but the *possibility* exists through the loss of their entire world, and their need to constantly make and remake their world(s). World making provides opportunity for endless *possibilities*, and science fiction television has the potential to aid in bringing non-imperial worlds to life. These stories push beyond individual and anthropocentric attitudes toward life on earth, and although such stories will not likely be the immediate cause of change in this era of precarity, stories can prime us for thinking in non-imperial ways.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I argue that contemporary cultural narratives feature continuing Euro-American imperialism that prioritizes Western bodies and ideas. These embedded narratives recreate centuries of Western imperial encounters and attitudes, and severely hinder possible responses to the present environmental crisis of the 'modern' era. Taking inspiration from postcolonial theorist Edward Said, I use interdisciplinary methods of narrative analysis to examine threads of imperialism written into popular American science fiction television series *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001). *Voyager* follows the *Star Trek* tradition of exploring the far reaches of space to advance human knowledge, and in doing so inscribes Western imperial practices of difference and power into an idealized future through features of exploration, modernity, and progress. In order to move away from these imperial modes of thinking, I then propose alternatives for new narrative approaches that offer *possibilities* for non-imperial futures. As my analysis will demonstrate, *Voyager* is unable to provide new worlds free of imperial ideas, but the *possibility* exists through the loss of their entire world, and their need to constantly make and remake their world(s). World making provides opportunity for endless possibility, and science fiction television has the potential to aid in bringing non-imperial worlds to life. These stories push beyond individual and human centered attitudes toward life on earth, and although such stories will not likely be the immediate cause of change in this era of environmental crisis, stories can prime us for thinking in non-imperial ways.

Dedication

To my family

Acknowledgments

I owe much to the *Star Trek* fans who contributed their knowledge of the franchise to the online encyclopedia *Memory Alpha* (memory-alpha.wikia.com). This expansive database consists of (to date) almost 50,000 articles about the *Trek* universe, and ensures that projects like mine are consistent with regard to spelling and terminology. My project is much richer for the dedication of *Trek* fans everywhere, and even though I may not share their enthusiasm for the future predicted through *Voyager* and other *Trek* media, I value their dedication—and hope my project can contribute to a better understanding of the *Trek* universe. Similarly, I owe a debt to the enthusiasm I have received from scholars—*Trek* fans and otherwise—who talked with me about my project at workshops and conferences. Your feedback and suggestions were valuable and helpful.

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Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction: Visions of Possibilities

1.1 (De)Constructing Imperial Narratives in *Star Trek: Voyager*

> "*Star Trek* is about this incredible voyage that Gene [Roddenberry] launched us all on—a voyage that has in some ways altered many things that we do today. And it has altered the way some of us perceive the world around us, and our role in that world."
>
> Stephan Edward Poe, *A Vision of the Future*

Fiction narratives shape the way we perceive the world around us. Stories—Roland Barthes labels them 'mythologies'—are pervasive forms of cultural indoctrination present in all facets of popular culture. Due to endlessly repeated motifs, stories limit ideas, opinions, and thoughts that go outside of or run counter to major cultural myths.[1] In this project, I argue that contemporary cultural narratives are infused with ongoing ideologies of Euro-American imperialism, which prevents presumed future utopian narratives from expressing and exploring new and expanded ways to engage with living beings. This restriction severely hinders possible response to the present environmental crisis of the 'Anthropocene'. Taking inspiration and direction from (post)colonial theorist Edward Said, I seek first and foremost

[1] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Richard Howard and Annette Lavers (Hill and Wang, 2012).

to study in detail threads of imperial ideologies that are (re)told and glorified in American science fiction television series *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001).[2] Said's study is centered on literature created during the height of the classic "Age of Imperialism," and I argue that these narrative threads continue in the 1990s—a time period often labeled the final 'end of empire' in the wake of America's presumed victory over the Soviet Union in the Cold War.[3] The continuation of imperial ideologies in cultural narratives hinders the possibility of moving beyond imperial modes of thinking about and living in the world. Such limitations fulfill Barthes' expectations of cultural myths, although it is possible for narratives to go beyond these constraining boundaries if the narratives overcome long-standing imperial practices. In this project, I argue that narratives *can* offer hope for survival and engender more suitable forms of response *if* they break free from all manner of restrictive thinking inscribed by centuries of imperial culture and practices. Such change is necessary to prime conditions for exploring possible futures that push beyond human-centered individualism and ways of life—a shift vital to survival for all life in and beyond the 'Anthropocene'.

My project stems from the need for new cultural narratives that move away from traditional Euro-American imperial influences and ways of thinking to facilitate better response to the impending and ongoing climate crisis of the 21st century. The science fiction genre provides a useful point of analysis with regard to cultural narratives as the genre explores *the possible* in multiple ways. Science fiction often (although not exclusively) explores problems of the present using future images and settings, and Bruce Franklin argues that science fiction "is central to how we modern humans imagine space, time, the macrohistory of our species, our future, and even our place in the cosmos".[4] Through exploring expansive *pos-*

[2]Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage Books, 1994).

[3]Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

[4]H. Bruce Franklin, "What Is Science Fiction -- and How It Grew," in *Reading Science Fiction*, ed. James Gunn, Marleen S. Barr, and Matthew Candelaria (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 23–32, 23.

sibilities of past, present, and future, science fiction stories allow creators and audiences to explore what can, has, never did, should, might, or might not happen. To explore these possibilities, science fiction narratives make use of past and present ideologies, concepts, and frameworks—including centuries of Euro-American imperial approaches to the interaction between humans, animals, the planet, and other living and non-living organisms. Until cultural narratives move beyond imperial frameworks, including those rooted in traditional adventure narratives and encounters with alien 'Others' that established hierarchies of power and superiority, future possibilities will remain centered in Western concepts of modernity that are fundamentally imperial. Given the power in science fiction to imagine "what *might be*" through a genre that functions as "a cultural force whose dynamic is shaping the present and the future of the human species" in a variety of different mediums, including television,[5] extensive interrogation of ongoing imperial frameworks is necessary.

Television is deeply intertwined with the critique of modernity common in scholarship surrounding the Anthropocene crisis. John Fiske and John Hartley observe that "television is a characteristic product of modern industrial society," and argue that television "appears to be the natural way of seeing the world".[6] As such, television narratives deserve a special place of study when discussing a topic as significant as a potential (and present) real-world environmental apocalypse. Science fiction television is prolific and popular, and as George Gonzalez notes that *Star Trek* is "perhaps the world's most renowned television franchise … [and] significantly contributes to an analysis of the contemporary world".[7] The franchise has spanned over fifty years on American television and film, including multiple series currently in progress and on the air, and shows no sign of fading into popular culture memory. Detailed analysis of how *Star Trek: Voyager* perpetuates imperial ideologies will illuminate ongoing

[5]Franklin, "What Is Science Fiction -- and How It Grew," 25 and 31, emphasis in original.
[6]Fiske and Hartley, *Reading Television*, 14 and 17.
[7]George A. Gonzalez, *The Politics of Star Trek: Justice, War, and the Future* (Springer, 2015), 1.

imperial frameworks that permeate American cultural and political narratives and limit the exploration of *possibilities* of non-imperial futures.

There is no requirement that the *possibilities* explored in science fiction be positive, hopeful, or push beyond human-centered approaches to living in the world, although *Star Trek* as a whole retains a mythical status for exploring an ideal utopian future of equality, diversity, and acceptance of all forms of life.[8] As I explore, however, these assumptions about the franchise disregard numerous features of past and present imperialism retained in the series narratives, and thus prescribe those same features of inequality into the future in unacknowledged ways. In order to move away from this intertwined thread of past/present/future imperial ideologies (ways of viewing, thinking about, and living in the world), other narrative styles are needed. Most mainstream American science fiction television continues to repeat the same familiar imperial narrative tendencies, as evident by the *Star Trek* franchise that continues to "boldly go where no one has gone before," exploring "strange new worlds" and seeking out "new life and new civilizations"—narrative practices that I will demonstrate are filled with imperial ideologies.[9]

My project examines threads of past and ongoing imperial narrative retained in *Star Trek: Voyager* to demonstrate the prevalence of these restrictive stories at the cusp of the 21st century. In doing so, I prove that threads of American cultural imperialism remain a significant feature in American stories of the present—and possible future(s). Given the constant requirement for empire to simultaneously create and maintain itself through (in part) cultural narratives, and the links between imperialism and the Anthropocene crisis, it is imperative to study these threads to better understand the challenges to new cultural

[8] More on this point in chapter two.

[9] These lines come from the opening directive of *Star Trek: The Original Series* (1966-1969) and *The Next Generation* (1987-1994). Although later *Trek* series, including *Voyager* (1995-2001), do not make direct use of this monologue, these shows—as I will explore in detail—retain many of the narrative trends of Gene Roddenberry's original series and the later voyages of the *Enterprise*.

narratives. Further, I argue that these continuing imperial modes of thinking recreated in popular culture restrict our ability to respond to the climate crisis in the era often called the 'Anthropocene'. Through this argument, I advocate for alternative narrative approaches that can avoid restrictive and destructive imperial ways to view the world (and the galaxy): a task that has assumed vital necessity in the face of the imminent mass extinction events of the 21st century.

1.2 Narrating The *Web of Life* in The Anthropocene

The term 'Anthropocene' is frequently used to denote the current era marked by the ability of humans to permanently (and rapidly) alter the earth and atmosphere. Paul Crutzen first popularized the term in 2002 and linked the era to the invention of the steam engine and the onset of the Industrial Revolution.[10] Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin pushed the start date farther back to 1610 when the first results of accelerating human driven change can be measured in a "pronounced dip in atmospheric carbon dioxide captured in an Antarctic ice-core".[11] Resulting from extensive death due to disease caused by the first wave of European exploration and colonization of the Americas, "the Anthropocene began with widespread colonization and slavery: it is a story of how people treat the environment and how people treat each other".[12] Both of these explanations connect the Anthropocene to key features of modernity, including early moments in processes of globalization through cross-continental exchanges of people, animals, and ideas rooted in imperial frameworks of power, and the acceleration of technological and societal change characteristic of modernity. As Lewis and Maslin articulate, the Anthropocene emerged at the onset of European colonization, which

[10]Paul J. Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind," *Nature* 415 (January 3, 2002): 23.
[11]Simon L. Lewis and Mark A. Maslin, *The Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene* (Penguin Books Limited, 2018), 13.
[12]Ibid, 13.

led to ideologies of power and difference that continue to dominate relations between peoples and between human and non-human organisms. These ideologies have culminated in an era of massive accelerating and unprecedented environmental disaster. A 2017 report in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of the Sciences* argues that a sixth mass extinction is already in progress.[13] In a revision of a 1992 publication entitled "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity," 15,364 scientists argue that "humanity has failed to make sufficient progress in generally solving these foreseen environmental challenges, and alarmingly, most of them are getting far worse".[14]

Ultimately, the Anthropocene is itself an imperial narrative steeped in human-centered views of engagement with other living beings. I utilize the concept of the 'Anthropocene' in this project to call direct attention to how the *human* focus of this modern era stems, in part, from Euro-American imperial actions and ideologies. Those practices and attitudes therefore hinder our ability to think and create non-imperial worlds and futures. Thus, I deploy the term 'Anthropocene' to call critical attention to the human-centered features of the modern world, unlike the frequent usage of the term to simply mark (and sometimes praise) the present modern era. Many notable ecocritical scholars, including Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing, avoid use of the term, although I utilize it to call direct attention to the 'human-centered' era as a source of the impending (and already-in-progress) environmental crisis. In pushing for new narratives 'within the Anthropocene,' and in direct response to it, I advocate for moving beyond the Anthropocene when the term itself——and the Western ways of life typical of the era——would no longer apply.

The Anthropocene is another label for the era of modernity, and the imminent environ-

[13]Gerardo Ceballos, Paul R. Ehrlich, and Rodolfo Dirzo, "Biological Annihilation via the Ongoing Sixth Mass Extinction Signaled by Vertebrate Population Losses and Declines," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 30 (July 25, 2017): E6089–96, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1704949114.

[14]William J. Ripple et al., "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice," *BioScience*, November 13, 2017, 1026–28, https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/bix125.

mental disasters of this modern era are directly tied to processes of Western domination over the past 500 years. Each typical 'starting point' of modernity (moments like the scientific revolution, the Enlightenment, the consumer revolution, and the industrial revolution) has significant links to imperial ideologies and practices.[15] Theories of modernity start from the differentiation of modern from pre (and sometimes post) modern eras—Bruno Latour observes that all definitions of 'modernity' and 'modern' point "to a passage of time … a new regime, an acceleration, a rupture, a revolution in time".[16] These ruptures are typically pinpointed as the various 'revolutions' in political and technical processes, each of which has direct ties to centuries of Western imperial ideologies and practices. These moments developed in connection with the imperial ideologies and practices—including binaries delineating modern and traditional, civilized and uncivilized—that created the present system of precarity that threatens human and non-human survival. Anna Tsing, for example, credits the American and European plantation system, and attendant imperial power structures, with the eventual success of Western capitalism and the modern world and the present era of precarity.[17] Dipesh Chakrabarty connects the concept of modernity with Euro-American imperial projects: the idea of 'modern' is "an integral part of the story of European imperialism within global history".[18] Modernity depends on aligning who "is" modern and who "is not,"[19] and anthropocentric imperial approaches have left non-humans off that list entirely in addition to privileging Western civilizations as the "primary habitus of the modern".[20]

For Latour, this divide indicated by the concept of modernity involves a differentiation between practices of "translation" and "purification". "Translation" involves creating "hy-

[15]Thomas J. Misa, Philip Brey, and Andrew Feenberg, *Modernity and Technology* (MIT Press, 2004), 6.
[16]Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Harvard University Press, 2012), 10.
[17]Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton University Press, 2015).
[18]Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 43.
[19]Misa, Brey, and Feenberg, *Modernity and Technology*, 6.
[20]Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 43.

brids of nature and culture," and "purification" is the cultivation of "two entirely distinct ontological zones: that of human beings on the one hand; that of nonhumans on the other".[21] The Anthropocene depends on the divide of purification, although as Latour cautions, this division is a paradox: purification has made translation possible, and translation in turn created the need for purification. Speaking of this 'contradiction of modernity,' historian Laura Bier highlights features of imperialism and modernity that simultaneously "ushered in not only new forms of emancipation but also new forms of social control and coercive norms".[22] This multifaceted nature of modernity speaks to the ongoing restrictive imperial ideologies of the Anthropocene, but also creates space to examine and advocate for alternatives. With care, these alternatives have the potential—the possibility—of moving beyond imperial ideologies.

Responses to the environmental crisis of the modern era call for radical forms of social and political change that move beyond imperial ideologies, including binaries of division and difference. In this project, I embrace the focus on storytelling to create space and enable possibilities for change. Scientific and policy responses, including numerous reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (established by the United Nations Environmental Programme and the World Meteorological Organization in 1988), the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, and 2016 Paris Agreement, focus on curbing emissions to decelerate rates of temperature change. These projects are necessary to halt the continued acceleration of change, although they cannot do so effectively without changes to underlying ways of engaging with the world. Cultural narrative responses focus on identifying ongoing ideologies that privilege human and Western actors and pushing for new ways of thinking about engagement with other living organisms. Arguing that "the story *must* change," Donna Haraway advocates for

[21] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 10.

[22] Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt* (Stanford University Press, 2011), 6-7.

stories and ways of thinking that embrace lived-with relationships between all living organisms.[23] This process of "making kin" depends on multispecies collaboration and possibilities of coexistence with *all* life on earth, and starts with changing the story of modernity.

Narratives of modernity—of the Anthropocene—rely on differentiation of civilizations and society, and highlight accelerating technological and social change rooted in beliefs of linear progress.[24] Altering these narrative frameworks requires first and foremost extended analysis of where and how these threads underwrite contemporary storytelling, and then crafting stories that speak of *making kin* with the vast *web of life* on the planet. Ecocritical scholars look to a variety of approaches to create narratives that avoid imperial tendencies and ideologies to create non-imperial worlds and futures. These approaches call attention to "the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force, and the tragedies and ironies" of imperial histories, as Chakrabarty urged for in studying history.[25] Narratives of the present and future also require such tactics, and will better enable a shift from glorifying the 'tree of life' (with one trunk branching off into a variety of evolutionary end-points, connected to the trunk at a single juncture with no other connection to one another) to focusing on an interconnected and vast *web of life* (complete with entangled threads that connect each point to multiple origins and continuations).[26] The *web of life* pushes beyond individual and anthropocentric attitudes toward life on earth, and although such stories will not likely be the immediate cause of change in this era of precarity, stories can prime us for thinking in non-imperial ways. I will argue in chapter three that imperial narratives legitimize and normalize ideologies and processes of empire—non-imperial narratives will have the same

[23]Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016), 40, emphasis in original.

[24]Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity* (Columbia University Press, 2013).

[25]Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 43.

[26]I borrow the phrase and concept *web of life* from numerous essays in the collection *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*, edited by Anna Tsing, Nils Bubandt, Heather Swanson, and Elaine Gan (University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

power with regard to non-imperial ways of living.

Creating non-imperial futures and worlds requires a radical shift in thinking about encounters with other living organisms, and about imperial concepts of difference. Science fiction author Ursula Le Guin explained about such "world making" that

> To make a new world you start with an old one, certainly. To find a world, maybe you have to have lost one. *Maybe you have to be lost.* The dance of renewal, the dance that made the world, was always danced here at the edge of things, on the brink, on the foggy coast.[27]

Le Guin speaks from the perspective of a fiction/fantasy writer, where the act of "world building" is fundamental to telling a story. Her position rests on the reality that one cannot wholly distance themselves from the current present reality—you have to start with the old one, the world infused with ongoing imperial ideologies of difference that permeate numerous features of daily life. In Le Guin's prescription, if you have lost your current world, or find your world is no longer sustainable, you are in the best position to build a new one—possibly one without lingering imperial tendencies and ways of engagement. World making draws on the past and present to create possible futures, and in doing so those who make worlds constantly dance on the brink between one world and the next. Edges blur and the making process continues in endless permutation, creating a mobius strip of past/present/futures that renews and destroys simultaneously. Such creation is not doomed to endlessly repeat; the possibility for new stories and new worlds exists at all points *if* new approaches are taken. World making provides opportunity for endless possibility, and science fiction television has the potential to aid in bringing non-imperial possibilities to life.

As my analysis will demonstrate, *Voyager* is unable to provide new worlds free of imperial ideas, but the possibility exists through the loss of their entire world, and their need

[27] Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction," in *Dancing at the Edge of the World* (Grove Press, 1997), 165–70, emphasis added.

to constantly make and remake their world(s). Within the *Star Trek* canon, *Voyager* is exceedingly well positioned to create new non-imperial worlds due to their castaway and 'lost in space' status, particularly along the lines of Le Guin's "carrier bag theory of fiction". Using this concept, Le Guin proposes storytelling that focuses more on stories about acts of daily life than heroic conflicts and victories. These stories create the opportunity to break from standard Western imperial scripts by focusing on the *process* of life rather than linear *progress* along typical Western lines. As Le Guin explains, "carrier bag" stories are

> full of beginnings without ends, of initiations, of losses, of transformations and translations, and far more tricks than conflicts, far fewer triumphs than snares and delusions; full of space ships that get stuck, missions that fail, and people who don't understand.[28]

In Chapter 6 I will highlight key areas where *Voyager* enables moments of possibilities along these lines, along with several other alternative narrative approaches that seek to decenter human exceptionalism, individualism, and ways of engaging that build on centuries of Western imperial ideologies.

Following (post)colonial theorists and taking inspiration from feminist ecocritical approaches to critiquing the present era of precarity, I argue that we must study the deep rooted traces of empire in popular cultural narratives in order to better frame the alternatives necessary to envision a different kind of future. As Audre Lorde notes in her famous metaphor on the legacy of racism in the United States, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house".[29] Lorde follows her oft-quoted phrase by acknowledging that these tools "may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change".[30] Stories that repeat—even creatively—imperial

[28]Le Guin, *Dancing at the Edge*, 169.

[29]Lorde quoted in Reina Lewis and Sara Mills, *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (Routledge, 2003), 27.

[30]Lewis and Mills, *Feminist Postcolonial Theory*, 27.

frameworks will never engender space for non-imperial futures and ways of engaging with the world. Instead, in order for stories to create conditions where 'genuine change' is possible, narratives must break free of imperial formations, a term Ann Stoler supplies to denote past *and ongoing* threads of empire in daily life.[31] The lived-with 'ruins of empire' surround all facets of contemporary life, denoting what people (and other living beings, including the Earth itself) are "left *with*" from centuries of Euro-American imperial domination.[32] To fully engage these ruins involves detailed understanding of the past, present, *and future* legacies of empire.[33] Empire remains, regardless of the stories we tell, but some stories may give us the opportunity to overcome the features of empire that have inhibited viewing the *web of life* our ways of life are currently destroying.

1.3 Ideologies of Difference in Euro-American Empire

Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explains the significance of storytellers—and the stories they tell—by explaining that "power is not just the ability to tell the story about a person, but the power to make it the definitive story of that person".[34] European and American empires have long exercised that power through crafting definitive narratives that cultivate and maintain the illusion of difference between colonizing/imperial powers and colonized populations. Although there is significant change and variation between the practices of Western imperialism and colonization in different regions and time periods, Euro-American domination has always depended on hierarchies of difference coded in cultural, social, and political formations. These imperial ideologies of power remain present in political

[31] Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Duke University Press, 2016).
[32] Ibid, 348, emphasis in original.
[33] Ibid, 338.
[34] Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*, TED Talk Global, 2009, https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.

and cultural narratives, and I demonstrate through this project that these ways of thinking remain present in popular cultural narratives of the late 20th century.

Empire has an incredibly long history with a multitude of permutations, and as Russian historian Dominic Lieven notes, "to write the history of empire would be close to writing the history of mankind".[35] Given that extensive history, empire and imperial processes—including colonization—evolved over time in response to local and global situations, although cultivating and maintaining ideologies of difference through various mediums, including political, military, legal, social, and cultural form a key part of those processes. As Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler observe about this fundamental imperial principle: "the most basic tension of empire [is] how a grammar of difference was continuously and vigilantly crafted as people in colonies refashioned and contested European claims of superiority".[36] Such difference is artificial: "the otherness of colonized persons was neither inherent nor stable: his or her difference had to be defined and maintained" in multiple arenas and mediums.[37] Cooper and Stoler explore this tension within 18th and 19th century empires, but acknowledge that the tendencies have not faded since the presumed 'end of empire' in the latter half of the 20th century.

Anthony Pagden argues that these practices did not originate as a 'new' policy in the classic "Age of Imperialism," but rather has origins in the initial Spanish, British, and French conquest of the Americas. Through detailed study of how European imperial agents thought about and constructed their empires, Pagden demonstrates that while change did occur between the first phase of European empire in the Americas and the second "Age of Imperialism" in the 18th and 19th centuries, the early practices and ideologies established

[35]Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (Yale University Press, 2002), xiii.
[36]Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (University of California Press, 1997, 3-4.
[37]Ibid, 7.

a "pattern of expectation" and practices.[38] The "language of empires" that developed in this earlier era of conquest and colonization established many "fundamental anthropological assumptions" that "persisted from the sixteenth into the nineteenth century, and in many cases into the twentieth".[39] Such assumptions include a presumed superiority on the part of Western imperial powers over their colonized subjects and lands, and—especially for the British colonist in North America—fed ideas of "benevolent settlers" who would "build a new, more righteous" republic.[40] The gradual shift from conquest to commerce and a 'civilizing mission' of Euro-American empire resulted in significant change between 16th century imperial practices and those of the 19th and 20th centuries, but the ideologies of power and difference were shaped in earlier narratives of domination.

Adam Dahl traces these early ideologies of power and difference to the foundation of modern democratic thought, arguing that "American democracy owes its origins to the *colonial settlement* of North America by European colonists," and the concurrent *colonial dispossession* required by the settler colonial project.[41] The 'liberal imperialism' practiced first by British colonists in North America, and then by Americans citizens and the American government, owes much to the presentation of discovery and colonization as a "natural impulse," rather than a deliberate move of exercised power.[42] Dahl acknowledges that the American settler colonial project was not unique or exceptional, but rather—in the same way it grew out of the earliest days of British colonization and practices of colonial dispossession—influenced practices by European imperial powers in the 19th and 20th centuries.[43] Roxanne Doty examines two examples of this feedback loop of imperial ideologies, and argues that

[38] Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France C. 1500-c. 1800* (Yale University Press, 1995), 5.
[39] Ibid, 6.
[40] Ibid, 88 and 128.
[41] Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought* (University Press of Kansas, 2018), 1.
[42] Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 105.
[43] Dahl, *Empire of the People*, 15.

both British imperial directives in Kenya and American practices in the Philippines depended on cultivating difference through processes of classification, naturalization, surveillance, and negation.[44] For American overseas imperialism, this process included the cultivation of American exceptionalism and the concept of "manhood" to include the "civilizing mission" of colonialism, which presumed the 'uncivilized natives' were incapable of acting independently without American oversight. Such narratives were crafted through political speeches and academic scholarship as much as military and legal imperial action, and resulted in the construction of a presumed hierarchy of civilization, technology, religion, and race.[45] Obvious differences exist in American and British policies, and in all practices of empire writ large, but the underlying ideologies at play depended on difference codified in political, legal, social, ethical, and cultural practices. These ideologies and practices continued to dominate relations on the North American continent through the practice of manifest destiny, which as Pagden observes "still determines North American attitudes, and frequently North American policies".[46]

Processes to maintain or create difference between colonizer and colonized (and imperial ruler and subject) were not natural, but rather the result of deliberate effort on the part of the imperial power, often through the creation and imposition of binary ways of thinking and engaging. Distinctions such as "civilized/uncivilized" are key to this process of differentiation, and often come about through overt and subtle means, from official government reports to travel logs and letters home 'from the frontier'. American women writers in the 19th century, for example, contributed to the concept of a civilized 'domestic sphere' as distinct and separate from the wild and uncivilized 'foreign sphere' of the untamed West

[44]Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
[45]See Ibid, chapter 2.
[46]Pagden, *Lords of all the World*, 128.

(and overseas territory) not yet colonized by American settlers.[47] Through the creation of difference, the identity of the imperial center was established *in contrast to* the identity of the colonized—and yet-to-be colonized—regions. This cultivated difference could culminate, in some situations (like the Ottoman Empire), with the imperial center "recognizing the multiplicity of peoples and their varied customs as an ordinary fact of life," although many imperial powers drew a more definitive line between their 'civilized' nature and the 'uncivilized Other'.[48] The Euro-American empires took the latter path toward a politics of difference, but in all cases these differences were managed by the imperial center *and* by imperial intermediaries—agents and other figures holding positions of varying degrees of authority and autonomy in locations throughout the empire. The number of players involved with Euro-American imperial domination speaks to the ever-evolving nature of empire, which in turn is reflected in the ongoing need for political *and cultural* narratives that reinforce difference to aid in maintaining imperial control.

Unlike many narratives crafted by European empires, American political and cultural narratives often occlude realities of their empire, including that the 'nation' was/is an empire at all. Daniel Immerwahr critiques the deflection of American territories throughout history (which he labels the "greater United States"), and observes that:

> The British weren't confused as to whether there was a British Empire. They had a holiday, Empire Day, to celebrate it. France didn't forget that Algeria was French. It is only the United States that has suffered from chronic confusion about its own borders.[49]

The deflection of active historical and contemporary American imperialism contributes to

[47] Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," *American Literature* 70, no. 3 (1998): 581–606, https://doi.org/10.2307/2902710.

[48] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 12.

[49] Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019),19.

a system where it becomes difficult to recognize ongoing features of American imperialism, both internally (against native populations, minority citizens, immigrants, etc.) and externally in American foreign policy and territory acquisition. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz urges for the illumination of the imperial traditions of United States settler colonial practices in order to "rethink the consensual national [U.S.] narrative" in ways that connect with the violent history of colonial settlement and dispossession.[50] Violence is one of the most common threads throughout imperial histories, as gaining and retaining imperial control often required various forms of violent action by imperial and colonial powers. Arundhati Roy observes that "It is not stability that underpins empire. It is violence. And I don't just mean wars in which humans fight humans. I also mean the psychotic violence against our dying planet".[51] Roy's words speak of the 'Anthropocene crisis,' linking (as did Lewis and Maslin) the current environmental crisis to the onset of European colonization in the Americas due to the devastation wrought by European violence, the spread of disease, and rapid changes in agriculture around the world due to the often-called 'Columbian Exchange'. In addition to establishing early approaches to difference through narratives of domination, the early period of 'exploration and discovery' spurred further violence against the planet in the Industrial Revolution. This process, including the origins of a United States empire built on genocidal violence against native peoples and the Earth, set the stage for the world empires known as the "Age of Imperialism" and the environmental crisis of the 21st century.

In this project, I will explore multiple features of imperial ideologies that reinforce and maintain difference between the human United Federation of Planets and numerous alien species throughout *Star Trek: Voyager*. Included in my analysis is an examination of narratives of American exceptionalism, castaway-adventure narratives, progress and development

[50]Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History*, 2. Also see Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought* (University Press of Kansas, 2018).
[51]Deborah Chasman and Joshua Cohen, *Evil Empire* (MIT Press, 2018), 50.

narratives, and narratives of imperial domesticity—all frameworks that retain inherent imperial ways of thinking about exploration, encounters, and creating a home. Through these intertwined approaches to difference, *Voyager* presents a future dominated by imperial ideologies occluded through the presumed utopian nature of the Federation.

1.4 Science Fiction—Encounters with Difference and Games of Possibilities

Science fiction is a genre with deep ties to Euro-American empire and many tenets of modernity. Like discussions of the Anthropocene, scholars trace the origins of science fiction to different dates and texts, although all occur *after* the onset of European colonization of the new world, and generally during or after the Industrial Revolution.[52] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. argues that science fiction as a literary form is rooted in empire and practices of Euro-American imperialism, in part through nation of origin: "The dominant SF nations are precisely those that attempted to expand beyond their national borders in imperialist projects: Britain, France, Germany, Soviet Russia, Japan, and the U.S.".[53] Patricia Kerslake observes that "the function and manipulation of political power, of empire" is "one of the most important and revealing foundations of SF".[54] Kerslake ultimately questions whether humanity "will ever outgrow its urge to expand and conquer, or are fictional galactic empires more important to the socio-political health of our race than we can possibly imagine,"

[52]The most commonly agreed upon origin of the science fiction genre is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, published in 1818 [Brian Wilson Aldiss, *Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction* (Avon Books, 1986)], although other scholars push back farther to texts like Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) or even Cyrano de Bergerac's *The Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon and Sun* (first translated into English in 1656) [John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Wesleyan University Press, 2012)].

[53]Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr, "Science Fiction and Empire," *Science Fiction Studies* 30, no. 2 (2003): 231–45, 231.

[54]Patricia Kerslake, *Science Fiction and Empire*, (Liverpool University Press, 2007), 1.

indicating that empire remains a central tendency in acts of relation/relating with others.[55] In an extensive examination of the historical origins of the science fiction genre, John Rieder aligns the origin and development of genre with 'lost-race' stories created during the height of the European "Age of Imperialism".[56] These stories served to perpetuate the science fiction genre—and Euro-American imperial traditions and colonial practices.

Beyond historical origins, one central point of continued connection between imperial ideologies and science fiction is the focus on *difference*. Imperial projects depend on cultivating and maintaining difference: science fiction is similarly infused with "encounters with difference," according to Adam Roberts.[57] Science fiction encounters with difference take numerous variations (including race, gender, species, religion, technologies, and civilization), and many present a limited accounting (if any) for "the implications of encountering difference" that have deep ties to imperial ideologies of difference and power.[58] Even though Roberts acknowledges that "not all science fiction is so crude or bigoted," this awareness does not absolve the lingering imperial ideologies in much Western science fiction.[59]

Technology is a key feature of modernity that serves as another link between science fiction and empire. Technology is one of the most popular, and visible, features of science fiction *and* Euro-American imperialism. Csicsery-Ronay argues that technology was an "immanent driving force" behind the imperial project of the 18th to 20th centuries, an argument supported by historians like Daniel Headrick.[60] Such technologies—including anti-malarial medication, steamships, submarine cables, and machine guns—gave imperial nations the physical ability to dominate. These technologies and advances were then written into cul-

[55]Kerslake, *Science Fiction and Empire*, 3.
[56]John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Wesleyan University Press, 2012).
[57]Adam Roberts, *Science Fiction* (Routledge, 2006), 17.
[58]Ibid, 20.
[59]Ibid, 20.
[60]Csicsery-Ronay, Jr, "Science Fiction and Empire," 233; See also Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1981).

tural narratives like H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) as imperial mindsets, frameworks, and expectations. Although Jan Johnson-Smith observes that "science fiction is 'often' but not always concerned with technological advances,"[61] technology usually *enables the genre*, whether that technology be past-tech (steampunk, for example, where high speed railroads abound), present-tech (robots and genetic engineering are edging on present concerns as we move farther into the 21st century), or future-tech (faster than light space travel and colonies amongst the stars are key examples).

In science fiction and the real world, technology is both a product for advancement and also a means of imperial domination and control. Raymond Williams observes that technology—television, in this case—has extreme power with regard to the domination of specific cultural narratives and mythologies. Williams observes that:

> A world-wide television service, with genuinely open skies, would be an enormous gain to the peoples of the world, as short-wave radio, bypassing national controls, has already clearly been. … [However] Most of the inhabitants of the 'global village' would be saying nothing, in these new terms, while a few powerful corporations and governments, and the people they could hire, would speak in ways never before known to most of the peoples of the world.[62]

Williams' critique of the limited voice in television production builds on his earlier argument about how television, along with the steam engine, the automobile, and the atomic bomb, are seen as having "*made* modern man and the modern condition".[63] Ultimately, Williams argues that any study of television must retain awareness that the technological development of television grew from modes of communication cultivated to aid the "centralization of political power" in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries—i.e.: the Euro-American imperial project.[64]

[61] Jan Johnson-Smith, *American Science Fiction Television: Star Trek, Stargate, and Beyond* (Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 16.
[62] Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (Psychology Press, 2003), 149.
[63] Ibid, 5, emphasis in original.
[64] Ibid, 14.

Television, science fiction, and empire come together through their historical origins and narrative frameworks, and as my analysis will demonstrate, the popular American franchise *Star Trek* links them all. Roberts credits the original *Star Trek* (1966-1969) with bringing "hundreds of thousands of women to the [science fiction] genre" because it represented "human interaction and the social dynamic as being at the heart of a science fiction story" and the series was "interested in representing difference".[65] This achievement is noteworthy, but it does nothing to account for *how* difference is represented and, often, maintained along imperial frameworks.

Science fiction has deep ties to imperial ideologies—but like other contradictions and paradoxes of modernity, the genre also has the potential to move beyond restrictive modes of thinking. Haraway includes science fiction in an evolving permutation of "SF" or "string figures," alternative ways of thinking about making-kin and engagement with the world around us related to "relaying connections that matter, of telling stories in hand upon hand, digit upon digit, attachment site upon attachment site, to craft conditions of finite flourishing on terra, on earth".[66] This 'game of possibilities' resonates with a genre rooted in possibilities, although detailed awareness of lingering imperial ideologies regarding difference is necessary in order to explore non-imperial encounters.

1.5 About My Project—Limitations, Language, and Organization

Awareness of the links between imperialism and contemporary cultural narratives are vital to understanding the stories we tell. My project will explore in detail specific kinds of

[65]Roberts, *Science Fiction*, 75.
[66]Haraway, *Staying With the Trouble*, 10.

imperial narrative preserved in popular American science fiction television show *Star Trek: Voyager* for the explicit purpose of identifying where these threads exist and how they contribute to ongoing imperial ways of living and being in the world. In doing so, I analyze *some* features of ongoing imperial formations in order to create space to move beyond these narrative traditions in the hopes of establishing some components for sustainable narratives that might help us better respond to the present environmental crisis caused by centuries of imperial approaches to living.

A few words about project limitations:

As Said acknowledged in *Orientalism*, the creation of the Orient was as much about "us" as "them"[67]—a thread I follow throughout my project as I explore ways *Voyager* further codifies "us" in contrast to "them" and (re)creates itself as part of an effort (unintentional though it is) to maintain imperial ways of thinking about the world. As such, this project is not a traditional discussion of (post)colonial science fiction.[68] Although I take inspiration and motivation from (post)colonial concerns and critiques of empire and the ongoing imperial world, I focus on a text that stems from the imperial center to better understand the narrative crafted by "us" about encounters between "us" and "them".

Further, this project is a narrative analysis of a televised text. This text is lengthy: *Voyager* contains 172 43-minute episodes, originally televised from 1995 to 2001 by the United Paramount Television Network, and since preserved through re-runs on numerous television channels, DVD boxed sets, and online streaming services. As Roberta Pearson rightly observes, "ideological criticism of a television production must place any episode in context among the tens or even hundreds of episodes that constitute a series".[69] In order to approach

[67]Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, 1979).

[68]Following Ann Stoler, I employ '(post)colonial' to retain awareness of the ongoing reality of empire—there is nothing "post" about it. See Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Duke University Press, 2016).

[69]Roberta Pearson, "Star Trek: Serialized Ideology," in *How To Watch Television*, ed. Ethan Thompson

television studies with a literary/ideological focus, then, I discuss both the entire series arc and numerous specific episode within the series to conduct my analysis. Undertaking Said's call to study imperial narratives in all forms of culture, I primarily follow a literary approach influenced by interdisciplinary theories of empire and modernity to analyze this text informed by the history and political theories of Euro-American imperialism. Accordingly, dialogue and plot analysis serves as my primary method, with production details included at various points to deepen the analysis of continuing imperial narrative threads. The sheer number of people involved with the production and creation of *Voyager* over seven years underscores my argument regarding the imperial narratives present throughout the show: this is not simply the work of one person who (consciously or unconsciously) bought into imperial mindsets about the world. Ultimately, when considering the number of creative minds involved with the project, *Voyager* proves how pervasive imperial thinking and storytelling is, even when attempting to do something different.

Finally, this project is not motivated through a dislike of science fiction, *Star Trek*, or *Voyager*, but rather from the motivation to improve the potential of the genre and medium. Although it may not read that way at times, I love science fiction, I genuinely like *Star Trek*, and I enjoy *Voyager* immensely. My critique arises from a desire to see *Voyager* (and American science fiction more broadly) live up to the potential so often ascribed by producers, actors, fans, critics, and scholars. By exploring in detail where imperial narratives, frameworks, and ways of thinking infuse the *Voyager* narrative, I hope to give rise to a space for non-imperial narratives that can live up to Roddenberry's vision for a future of possibilities. *Star Trek* has the potential to create non-imperial worlds, although this first requires an extensive exploration of the imperial mindsets preserved in the universe as it currently exists.

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and Jason Mittell (NYU Press, 2013), 213–22, 221.

A short note on language and style:

Euro-American imperial practices, concepts, and ideologies permeate colonialism and historical colonial practices. I deliberately frame my analysis in this project on *imperial* ways of thinking since *Star Trek* notably avoids recreating overtly *colonial* practices of violence and conquest (at least on the part of the Federation). When utilizing the term *imperial*, I include colonial ideologies, especially American settler colonialism and the attendant links to modern democratic thought and ideas of freedom, equality, and popular sovereignty.[70] I focus on imperial ideologies of power and difference that require(d) constant repetition and recreation throughout imperial encounters to explore threads that remain in our (post)colonial present. Following Ann Stoler (and through her, theorists like Michael Foucault and Edward Said), I embrace stylistic writing choices to reflect these changing-yet-consistent ideologies of empire. Words have power, and I frequently use single quotation marks to evoke (and question) common Western assumptions of words like 'progressive,' 'moral,' 'civilized,' and 'domestic'. Doing so calls attention to the long history of imperial ideologies underpinning these cultivated concepts, many of which I will explore throughout this project. Alternatively, following feminist ecocritical theorists like Donna Haraway, I emphasis words using italics, like *possibilities*, when I evoke the expansive potential for change new narratives can offer.

On organization:

To conduct my analysis, I approach the series (mostly) chronologically. Specifically, Chapter 2 tackles the series premiere, Chapter 3 studies seasons one and two, Chapter 4 looks at seasons three, four, and five, and Chapter 5 examines the concluding seasons six and seven. Chapter 6 deviates from this method of organization, looking at moments of exception within the entire series that do something different, if not entirely removed from overarching imperial

[70] Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People*.

frameworks and approaches. This approach does *not* indicate that the types of imperial narrative discussed in one chapter exist only in that portion of the series. Rather, my analysis works through interwoven types of imperial narrative retained in *Voyager* at the same time I work through the journey of the *USS Voyager* as they attempt to find their way back home. Each piece is connected even as I single out the threads at one specific moment in time. This allows me to highlight the overwhelming influence imperial ways of thinking continue to have in present day storytelling—and in the contemporary world.

In more detail, Chapter 2 introduces *Star Trek* as a media franchise to outline creator and critic responses and perceptions of the *Trek* universe. Understanding *Star Trek* is necessary to the analysis of any *Trek* series, as each series builds on previous iterations even when created by a different production team. Next I introduce *Voyager* as the specific case study for my project alongside a discussion of American foreign policy attitudes and practices in the 1990s to establish a contextual framework for my argument. This discussion highlights attitudes of American exceptionalism as an imperial practice that occludes the reality of American imperialism in political and cultural spheres. I then shift to a detailed analysis of the *Voyager* pilot episode "Caretaker" to identify how this episode establishes the identity of the Federation crew as exceptional survivors belonging to a morally superior civilization. This exploration will establish a foundational understanding of "who the Federation is" that will be necessary for my later analysis of imperial narratives, and connect *Voyager* with American political directives and policies in the 1990s. These policies perpetuated imperial ideologies despite the presumed 'end of empire' after the fall of the end of the Second World War, and the recreation of such perspectives in *Voyager* contribute to an imperial American cultural narrative that limits possibilities for exploring, embracing, and living non-imperial futures.

Chapter 3 takes a wider scope and examines the broad category of "castaway-adventure

narrative" *Voyager* assumes through the 'lost in space' story established in "Caretaker". Through analysis of episodes in seasons one and two and specific encounters with several alien races (the Kazon, the Viidians, and the Talaxian Neelix), I draw on literary and imperial histories to argue that the castaway-adventure narrative serves as a vehicle for imperial ideals. I build on Edward Said's arguments regarding culture and imperialism and make use of John Rieder's notable argument in *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* to pinpoint numerous features of imperial thinking retained in *Voyager* to normalize and legitimize imperial thinking and action. Although "colonialism" and "imperialism" speak to different specifics within the broad history of Euro-American imperial actions over the past 500 years (and counting), "imperial thinking," as I frame it throughout this project, was central to colonial practices. Further, given that I speak expansively of forms of imperial *ideologies* throughout past, present, and possible future political and cultural formations, this chapter indicates that exploration and encounters with "lost" races wherein the "known" figure "saves" the "Other" contribute to ongoing imperial mindsets.

Chapter 4 shifts from a focus on historical imperial formations and adventure narratives to present imperial frameworks idealized as narratives of progress, development, and modernization. Coupled with a deconstruction of the links between progress, modernization, and empire, I examine the middle seasons of *Voyager* (three, four, and five) and encounters with multiple alien races to argue that the idealization of linear progress along Western models continues to create and maintain imperial approaches to difference. Ultimately, the continued emphasis on progress and a belief in the concept of development by *Voyager* within the larger context of their journey back to Earth settles the Starfleet crew (and post-Cold War America itself) firmly on the side of developed imperial nation, expanding their goodwill (and their ideologies and structures of power) throughout the galaxy.

Chapter 5 makes specific study of the three central female characters in the *Voyager* cast,

and the ways these characters reinforce threads of imperial domesticity within the confines of *Voyager*. Through examination of the ways Captain Kathryn Janeway, Chief Engineer B'Elanna Torres, and recovered Borg drone Seven of Nine create, maintain, and contribute to a safe, domestic, "home" space aboard *Voyager* in contrast to the wild unexplored spaces of the Delta Quadrant—primarily in the final two seasons of *Voyager*—I argue that practices to maintain borders and boundaries with an eye toward the internal home space continue to perpetuate imperial frameworks. Although *Voyager* does provide capable and compelling female role models with these three prominent women on the screen, this chapter explores what kind of roles are being modeled and argues that imperial frameworks exist across (and in part because of) gendered lines.

Chapter 6 breaks the mold and turns to examine specific episodes throughout the *Voyager* narrative that offer hope of something different. Through an examination of narratives that break, at least in part, some of the imperial mindsets and frameworks I outlined in the previous chapters, I use this final chapter to denote where and how 'something else' can take place *if* narrative styles and approaches are altered. While these examples are not extensive, they do exist, and their very existence opens up room to discuss how and why narratives matter—why it matters that *Voyager* retains so many imperial tenets, and why it matters that these narratives create and recreate imperial ways of thinking about the world. Ultimately, it matters *because* these imperial narratives restrict alternatives in the midst of our contemporary environmental crisis, and *because* these narratives influence how we see the world around us. If we want change in this era of extreme precarity as a result of centuries of imperial ways of engaging with all living beings—including the Earth itself—then the stories we tell *must* move away from these lingering imperial tendencies.

Chapter 2

Setting the Stage

2.1 American Exceptionalism and Imperial Ideologies in "Caretaker"

> "At its best it's space opera writ large with something profound to say about the human condition."
>
> Mark Altman, *Star Trek* fan and journalist

In 1995, the fourth iteration of Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek* premiered on American television. *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001) followed the tradition of previous *Star Trek* series to "go boldly, to explore, study, and investigate" the far reaches of space to advance human knowledge.[1] In this version of space exploration in the 24th century, Captain Kathryn Janeway commands the starship *Voyager*, which got 'lost in space' in the pilot episode "Caretaker". The stranded crew spends seven years making their way back to Earth in the Alpha Quadrant of space, and through that journey, they encounter a wide variety of aliens, civilizations, and fascinating space anomalies. In the manner deliberately designed by *Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry, and a fundamental part of the science fiction genre, the series speaks directly to contemporary political, social, and cultural concerns, including an ongoing and evolving United States imperialism cultivated and practiced throughout U.S. history

[1] Rick Berman, Michael Piller, and Jeri Taylor, "*Star Trek: Voyager* Bible" 1995, 2.

and into the present.

Examination of imperial ideologies reinforced in cultural narratives are vital to coming to terms with these ongoing legacies and creating space to tell new stories. Edward Said articulated the need for such study and change, arguing that cultural imperialism served (and continues to serves) a key role in normalizing imperial ideologies and practices.[2] Further, in exploring possible non-imperial alternatives to ongoing Western empire, Said urged for approaches of relating with others focused on "not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly reiterating how 'our' culture or country is number one".[3] This last point speaks to a thread of 'exceptional' American national identity that predates the nation, rooted in the earliest moments of settler colonization. Said acknowledged that "the idea of American leadership and exceptionalism is never absent," functioning as an "imperial creed" throughout the 20th century.[4] Ideologies of American exceptionalism depend on imperial frameworks of difference that situate the American experiment, government, nation, and idealized citizen as superior to all others, ranging from native populations destroyed in the face of settler expansion, the British defeated in the Revolution, Latin American nations that 'needed' American protection, and even European nations who required 'salvation' during and after the Second World War. This attitude of American exceptionalism is a central piece of imperial ideologies of different threaded through forms of 20th century entertainment media in addition to political directives, and Said reminds us that "we must not condemn ourselves to repeat the imperial experience".[5]

In this project, I argue that *Star Trek: Voyager* recreates multiple threads of imperial ways of thinking about difference that restrict possibilities for exploring non-imperial ways

[2]Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (NY: Vintage Books, 1994).
[3]Ibid, 336.
[4]Ibid, 285-6.
[5]Ibid, 331.

of living. This chapter first introduces *Star Trek* as a franchise to outline creator and critic responses and perceptions of the *Trek* universe. Understanding *Star Trek* is necessary to the analysis of any *Trek* series, as each series builds on previous iterations even when created by a different production team. Next I introduce *Voyager* as the specific case study for my project alongside a discussion of American foreign and domestic policy attitudes and practices in the 1990s to establish a contextual framework for my argument. This discussion highlights attitudes of American exceptionalism as an imperial practice that occludes the reality of American imperialism in political and cultural spheres. I then shift to a detailed analysis of the *Voyager* pilot episode "Caretaker" to identify how this episode established the identity of the Federation crew as exceptional survivors belonging to a morally superior civilization. This exploration will establish a foundational understanding of "who the Federation is" as presented in *Voyager* that will be necessary for my analysis of imperial narratives, and connect *Voyager* with American political directives, policies, and ideologies. These policies perpetuated imperial ideologies despite the presumed 'end of empire' after the fall of the end of the Second World War, and the recreation of such perspectives in *Voyager* contributes to an imperial American cultural narrative that limits possibilities for exploring, embracing, and living non-imperial futures.

2.2 *Star Trek*: Media Franchise and Presumed Utopia

When Gene Roddenberry first pitched the idea of *Star Trek* to Vice President of Desilu Productions (later Paramount Television) Herbert Solow in April 1964, he proposed a series that would be "like *Wagon Train* to the stars".[6] In explaining "The Real Story" of *Star Trek*, Solow summarizes the *Wagon Train* series as

[6]Herbert F. Solow and Robert H. Justman, *Inside Star Trek: The Real Story* (NY: Pocket Books, 1996), 15.

> "a very successful television series about a wagon train moving from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Oregon during the nineteenth-century migration to the American West. ... *Star Trek*, according to Gene's concept, was out there in the future and was going to happen".[7]

After several years of planning and one failed pilot, the "one-hour dramatic action-adventure-science fiction television series" premiered on American television.[8] On the air from 1966-1969, *Star Trek* (now frequently called *The Original Series* to differentiate this iteration from the franchise as a whole) tells the story of a group of humans in the 22nd century undertaking a five-year mission to explore "strange new worlds" and "new civilizations" on their starship, the *USS Enterprise*. *The Original Series* was canceled after three seasons due to poor ratings, although the series was a hit in later syndication (re-runs).[9] As a result, the characters transferred to the big screen for six motion picture films. *Star Trek* returned to mainstream television in 1987 with *The Next Generation*, a production that lasted seven years and was followed by four additional films.

The 1990s saw continued renewal and popularity of the series. Televised series *Deep Space Nine* (1993-1999) and *Voyager* (1995-2001) started on the heels of *The Next Generation*, and were followed by *Enterprise* (2001-2005), ensuring that at least one version of the *Trek* universe was televised continuously for almost two decades. There was a revival of television in the 1990s, including numerous shows featuring female leads, as both "ensemble dramas" and "star-driven programs"—the *Trek* series' of the 1990s straddles those classifications and contributed to emerging diversity on screen, although that diversity was severally limited along racial lines.[10] Telly Davidson acknowledges that, despite the large number

[7] Solow and Justman, *Inside Star Trek*, 18

[8] Ibid, 16.

[9] Roberta Pearson, Maire Messenger Davies, *Star Trek and American Television History*, (University of California Press, 2014), 2.

[10] Telly Davidson, *Culture War: How the '90s Made Us Who We Are Today (Whether We Like It or Not)* (McFarland, 2016), 134.

of shows featuring female leads, for example, they were "almost all white".[11] *Deep Space Nine* Commander Ben Sisko (played by African American actor Avery Brooks) is therefore an exception, although *Voyager*'s white female lead of the flagship series of the new United Paramount Network fits solidly into the framework of shows with female stars, including *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995-2001), a series that ran concurrent to *Voyager*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003). According to Davidson, this latter series was "the ultimate 90s example of heterosexual small-screen Grrrl Power," and he acknowledges both these warrior-girl series as having an influence that last far beyond their home decade.[12] *Enterprise* arrived with less on-screen diversity with a largely white and male cast, and also signaled a change in tone within the series as it served as a 'prequel' to Roddenberry's *Original*.

The *Trek* media universe remained popular throughout the 1990s, and although the early 2000s saw a drop in the media, that was not the end of the franchise. There was a break from televised *Star Trek* after the conclusion of *Enterprise* and the *Star Trek* film series was "rebooted" in 2009 with three major motion pictures in this series, bringing the *Trek* film total to thirteen. CBS—the successor of Desilu Productions and the Paramount Television Network—introduced *Star Trek: Discovery* in 2017 as the first online streaming *Trek* series, which entered its second season in January 2019 and will air the third sometime in 2020. Fascination with this futuristic science fiction universe continues with the return of *The Next Generation* Captain Picard for his own series in 2020, and a *Discovery* spin-off and an animated comedy series in the works.[13] As Jan Johnson-Smith observes, "Nothing has dominated American SF television for as long as the various incarnations of *Star Trek*;" a trend that shows no sign of abating.[14]

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[11] Davidson, *Culture Wars*, 135.

[12] Ibid, 132.

[13] CBS All Access News; https://www.cbs.com/shows/star-trek-discovery/news/, Accessed Jan 31, 2019.

[14] Jan Johnson-Smith, *American Science Fiction Television: Star Trek, Stargate, and Beyond* (Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 77.

On the surface, *Star Trek* presents a future where current concerns are a thing of the past, including resource scarcity, wealth inequality, racism, sexism, violence, and the ecological destruction of the planet. *Star Trek* archivist Richard Arnold observed that

> Gene [Roddenberry] gave us a future where we survived our current immaturity and did so with dignity. We're not out there empire-building, we're out there exploring and learning. His vision has changed so many people's lives, and will continue to do so for a long time.[15]

Arnold's point about the presumed utopian *Star Trek* narrative is not unique. Tom Engelhardt uses the phrase "Startrekkian" to evoke just such a vision in an analysis of the 'victory culture' that spanned much American political and cultural narratives in the aftermath of the Second World War.[16] Rooted in rhetoric of "inevitable triumph" from politicians like Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, the narrative of victory culture finds new life in each *Star Trek* iteration. Each variation therefore continues to deflect, misdirect, and occlude the imperial heart of the epic triumph of the Second World War and American foreign policy aims in the second half of the 20th century. Thomas Doherty observes that

> At the core of the [*Trek*] show is something profound, which is teamwork and adventure and tolerance, and that's why it's a World War II motif in the space age. It has all those World War II values that are projected into a different era.[17]

Doherty's remarks obstructs basic historical record of the era, as the Axis powers were not the only imperial nations taking part in the war, and that conflict saw the brutal effects of total war and indiscriminate killing by *all* sides, American included. Still, this general view of *Star Trek* as highlighting 'the best' of Western values, including the presentation of

[15]Mark A. Altman and Edward Gross, *The Fifty-Year Mission: Volume One: The Complete, Uncensored, Unauthorized Oral History of Star Trek: The First 25 Years* (NY: St. Martin's, 2016), 51.

[16]Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 312.

[17]Altman and Gross, *The Fifty-Year Mission: Volume One*, 72.

teamwork, adventure, and tolerance, fuels a continuing belief that Roddenberry's vision is a 'triumphant' and desirable future.

The 'myth' of the utopian vision *Star Trek* presents has persisted with each iteration of the franchise. A stirring example of this idyllic future is outlined in one of the final *Voyager* episodes, where Captain Janeway issues an emotional speech in defense of granting rights of citizenship to her holographic ship Doctor. Janeway observes that,

> Centuries ago, in most places on earth, only landowners of a particular gender and race had any rights at all. Over time, those rights were extended to all humans, and later, as we explored the galaxy, to thousands of other sentient species.[18]

This peace-loving and idealized humanity of the future founded a large inter-species organization called the United Federation of Planets in the year 2161.[19] Throughout the fifty-plus years of *Trek* media, the Federation has engaged in extensive space exploration in three quadrants of the galaxy, alongside the occasional war against non-Federation aliens. Starfleet is the official explorative, diplomatic, and military arm of the Federation, and each *Trek* iteration revolves around recounting the adventures of a specific Starfleet crew aboard a specific spaceship. *Star Trek* oral historian Mark Altman highlights the typical view of the franchise:

> … what makes *Star Trek* so unique is that even when it goes into the heart of darkness, it still manages to come out the other side extolling the human adventure with a palpable sense of optimism and hope for the future. It's a progressive, liberal vision that is to be lauded … It doesn't mean there can't be conflict … but humanity united has always been at the very heart of *Star Trek* rather than humanity divided. At its best it's space opera writ large with something profound to say about the human condition.[20]

[18] "Author, Author," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, April 18, 2001).

[19] The formal creation of the United Federation of Planets (UFP) is highlighted in the series finale of *Star Trek: Enterprise*, "These are the Voyages…" (2005), although the Federation itself was established in *The Original Series* (1966-1969).

[20] Altman and Gross, *The Fifty-Year Mission: Volume One*, 5.

Altman paints a picture of a progressive liberal utopia that continues to dominate popular conceptions of *Star Trek*, although to do so he utilizes a phrase deeply tied with the European imperial project and the 'civilizing mission' of European colonization of Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries. In contrasting *Trek*'s progressive values with the "heart of darkness" of exploration—and the occasional Western failure to be morally superior and exceptional—Altman praises *Star Trek* for continuing to reinforce imperial ideologies through the guise of liberal humanism and progress. Janeway's remarks, quoted above, reveal one instance of imperial ideology and American exceptionalism in this idealized future framed as the "progressive, liberal vision" of the future that Altman exemplifies. In Janeway's accounting, the Federation was the exceptional origin point for extending 'human rights' throughout the galaxy. This presentation presumes that human rights are the most valuable, and that human agents would be necessary in extending those rights throughout the galaxy.

One feature of *Star Trek* often presented as directly non-imperial is the Prime Directive. The Prime Directive, also known as Starfleet General Order 1, is a directive against interference with other cultures and civilizations who are "less developed" than the Federation. It governs the actions of Starfleet personnel, rather than all Federation citizens, and serves as both a regulation and a philosophy for Starfleet. Captain Jean Luc Picard, commander of the *Enterprise-D* in *The Next Generation*, observed in the *TNG* episode "Symbiosis" that

> The Prime Directive is not simply a set of rules, it is a philosophy, and a very correct one. History has proven again and again that whenever mankind interferes with a less developed civilization, no matter how well intentioned that interference might be, the results are inevitably disastrous.[21]

Enterprise Captain Jonathan Archer frames this approach—in the days before the establishment of the Prime Directive—that "we didn't come out here to play God".[22] These

[21] "Symbiosis," dir. Win Phelps, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Paramount Television, April 18, 1988).
[22] "Dear Doctor," dir. James Contner, *Star Trek: Enterprise* (Paramount Television, January 23, 2002).

explanations, and numerous others provided throughout each *Trek* series, deflect the imperial reality of human interference with other "less developed" cultures and civilizations. Ultimately, although the Prime Directive *attempts* to avoid direct imperial action against "less developed" civilizations, as Picard obliquely references in the comment quoted above, Starfleet nonetheless makes a unilateral decision about who is "developed" and who is not in each of these encounters—giving them all the power in this determination of difference. Further, given the frequency with which the Prime Directive is bent, modified, creatively interpreted, and outright broken in each *Trek* series at the whims of Starfleet and Federation personnel, the Prime Directive stands as one place among many (as I will discuss throughout this project) where the ideal utopian vision of *Star Trek* and the reality of the imperial narrative do not align. In actuality, the Prime Directive is an example of presumed Federation superiority and exceptionalism they gave to themselves when exploring the galaxy.

Star Trek has always been concerned with issuing contemporary social, cultural, and political commentary. Paraphrasing Roddenberry, Jan Johnson-Smith explains that this intent has "always been at the heart of *Star Trek*".[23] In outlining this intent with the original series, Roddenberry explained that,

> It seemed to me that perhaps if I wanted to talk about sex, religion, politics, make some comments against Vietnam, and so on, that if I had similar situations involving these subjects happening on other planets to little green people, indeed it might get by [the network], and it did. It apparently went right over the censors' heads, but all the fourteen-year-olds in the audience knew exactly what we were talking about. The power you have is in a show like *Star Trek*, which is considered by many people to be a frothy little action-adventure; unimportant, unbelievable, and yet watched by a lot of people. You just slip ideas into it.[24]

This intent to just 'slip ideas into it' continued in *The Next Generation*. Roddenberry explained in the "Writer's Guide" for *TNG* that the goal for the show was to explore "challenges

[23] Johnson-Smith, *American Science Fiction TV*, 79.
[24] Altman and Gross, *The Fifty-Year Mission: Volume One*, 67.

facing humanity today," where "the new *Star Trek* episodes will continue the tradition of vivid imagination, intelligence and a sense of fun, while still assessing where we humans presently are, where we're going, and what our existence is all about".[25] Even after Roddenberry's death in 1991, writers, directors, and producers created additional iterations of *Star Trek* with the deliberate intent to explore the possibilities of the science fiction genre to provide contemporary social and political commentary.[26]

Star Trek serves as a hallmark text of the Anthropocene. According to Michèle Barrett and Duncan Barrett, "much of [*Trek*'s] preoccupation lies in the nexus of questions about what we might shorthand as 'modernity' and 'humanism"'.[27] They conclude that *Star Trek* "can be seen to encode the core values of 'modern' culture," including emphasis on democracy, respecting the rights of individuals, rejecting "arbitrary demands" of religion, and "favouring science and reasons as the basis of belief".[28] All in all, Barrett and Barrett label the *Trek* narrative approach "*secular humanism* that privileges the individual as the center of action and meaning".[29] Through examination of themes of modernity and the nautical legacy of the *Trek* franchise, including use of nautical language and plotlines modeled on nautical literature by authors like Joseph Conrad, Barrett and Barrett highlight some connections to Euro-American imperial practices and ideologies. Ultimately, however, their conclusion that "colonizing and patronizing tendencies it may have, but those who accuse it of racism might usefully look at this earlier literature to get a bearing on the scale of the

[25]Gene Roddenberry, "*Star Trek 'The Next Generation'* Writers Guide" (March 23, 1987), 4.

[26]For a small selection of excellent scholarly volumes exploring social and political commentary in the various *Star Trek* series, see: Daniel Bernardi, *Star Trek and History: Race-Ing Toward a White Future* (Rutgers University Press, 1998); Stephen Benedict Dyson, *Otherworldly Politics: The International Relations of Star Trek, Game of Thrones, and Battlestar Galactica* (JHU Press, 2015); Lincoln Geraghty, Donald E. Palumbo, and C. W. Sullivan III, *The Influence of Star Trek on Television, Film and Culture* (McFarland, 2007); George A. Gonzalez, *The Politics of Star Trek: Justice, War, and the Future* (Springer, 2015); J. Weldes, *To Seek Out New Worlds: Science Fiction and World Politics* (Springer, 2003).

[27]Michèle Barrett and Duncan Barrett, *Star Trek: The Human Frontier* (Psychology Press, 2001), 5.

[28]Ibid, 9

[29]Ibid, 9, emphasis in original.

crime" falls woefully short of offering a factual accounting for a series rooted in imperial ideologies.[30] It is undoubtedly true that Conrad's literature was more overtly racist than a contemporary *Star Trek* storyline, but that does not absolve *Trek* narratives for continuing to retain ideologies of difference founded in Euro-American imperial practices. Further, although Barrett and Barrett argue that the narrative of modernity in *Star Trek* shifts to one of postmodernity in later *Trek* series' *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*, their observation that each series places central importance on the 'home' space of the Alpha Quadrant keeps the human-centric component of *Trek* intact, shift to postmodernity notwithstanding.[31] No longer simply focused on *Earth* as *home* and the nexus of all things *human*, *humane*, and *humanitarian*, the *Trek* franchise nonetheless places prime importance on human—the *anthro* of the Anthropocene.

Praise for the universe Roddenberry created is extensive. *Voyager* co-producer Bryan Fuller highlighted the "early lesson in inclusivity" present from the earliest moments of *TOS*; film critic Scott Mantz positively labeled *Trek* a "morality play;" actor Chris Pratt, who plays Kirk in the 2009 film reboot, identified it as a "very progressive" series; and actor Leonard Nimoy, who played the famous character Spock, argued that the series has continued to survive in numerous incarnations because "it's a moral society that people are attracted to".[32] Seth MacFarlane has observed that "there can be no more ideal vision of the future in popular fiction than *Star Trek*," and on the surface, *Star Trek* does offer a vision of a moral future with compelling diversity.[33] While this is an extremely notable achievement for any television series, my project questions what else *Star Trek* makes possible, including continued imperial ideologies practiced under the guise of the utopian United Federation of Planets. In an era where non-human-centric narratives are necessary to engender response to

[30]Barrett and Barrett, *Star Trek: The Human Frontier*, 33.
[31]Ibid, 204.
[32]Mark A. Altman and Edward Gross, *The Fifty-Year Mission: Volume One*, 35-39.
[33]Ibid, xiv.

the widespread ecological disaster caused by anthro-centric ways of thinking about the world, and about difference between human and non-human life, the continued *Trek* emphasis on modernity and humanity limits the *possibilities* such a series can explore.

2.3 *Voyager* and the 1990s: Imperial Deflection After the 'End of History'

Star Trek: Voyager launched in 1995 as the third live-action spin-off of the original series, and was on the air for seven seasons. *Voyager* holds distinction within the *Trek* universe as the only exclusively 'lost in space' adventure story, and as the series that finally realized Roddenberry's dream of a female commanding officer.[34] *Voyager* served as the flagship series for the new United Paramount Television Network during the height of what Roberta Pearson and Maire Messenger Davies identify as the "multichannel era" of television.[35] The UPN channel debuted in January 1995—the "sixth network" following the WB from Warner Bros. earlier the same month—with *Voyager*'s premiere episode "Caretaker". The episode, and the series that followed it, is fun and entertaining, although while on the air it never rivaled predecessor *The Next Generation* in popularity (Pearson and Davies consider this likely due to inherent limits of UPN, rather than the series). Unlike *The Next Generation's* mission to "seek out new worlds and new civilizations" in the Alpha Quadrant of space (home of Earth and the Federation), the *Voyager* crew faced an unprecedented challenge in the *Trek* universe: in the pilot episode, the ship and crew were flung across the galaxy to

[34]Roddenberry originally wanted to cast Majel Barrett as second-in-command of the *Enterprise*, but this role was removed by the network, in part due to Roddenberry's personal relationship with Barrett (the two would later marry in 1969). See Herbert F. Solow and Robert H. Justman, *Inside Star Trek: The Real Story* (NY: Pocket Books, 1996).

[35]Roberta Pearson and Maire Messenger Davies, *Star Trek and American Television History* (University of California Press, 2014), 52-53.

the Delta Quadrant and spent the entire series voyaging home. Jeri Taylor, show co-creator, explained of the series concept that:

> The challenge was to find something that was fresh and original. That's the main reason that we took the very risky move of throwing our people to the opposite end of the galaxy and cutting ties with everything that's familiar. No Starfleet, no Klingons, no Ferengi—all of those things that have been very comfortable for the audience. It was a universe that they knew well and that they loved exploring, and we turned our backs on that. It was very scary, but we felt that we would force ourselves into having a fresh slant on things and fresh storytelling.[36]

Taylor and the production team felt the need to distinguish the series from *The Next Generation*, on its "continuing mission" to survey the Alpha Quadrant, and *Deep Space Nine* detailing the challenges of living on a space station and beginning forays into the Gamma Quadrant. This effort for 'fresh storytelling' led to the creation of the only true castaway-adventure story in the *Trek* media franchise to date, and ultimately resulted in the need to constantly define and redefine 'what it means' to be a member of the United Federation of Planets while effectively lost in the far reaches of space.

In speaking of the time period in which the show was created and aired, co-creator Michael Piller observed that "When we hooked on this idea we realized, in a sense, that we were talking about a journey that is very much like the journey that all of us [in the United States] are embarking on today".[37] For Piller, this 'journey' reflected the "afterglow" of Bill Clinton's 1992 Presidential election, foreign policy initiatives, and problems that were not "going to be easily solved in our lifetime". This last claim is vague, but reflects the show creators intent to explore a "very contemporary kind of message" throughout the series—including unrealized imperial ideologies threaded throughout the story. [38]

[36]Edward A. Gross and Mark A. Altman, *Captains' Logs Supplemental: The Unauthorized Guide to the New Trek Voyages* (Little, Brown, 1996), 122.
[37]Ibid, 122.
[38]Altman and Gross, *Captains' Logs Supplemental*, 122.

The 'journey' *Voyager* undertook through 'uncharted space' on the other end of the galaxy reflects that of the United States government in the way of 'victory' in the Cold War. Foreign and domestic attitudes and practices of the U.S. government during this time period were founded in ideological tenets rooted in American origin myths of exceptionalism, and compounded by the sudden vacuum of power in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the way Piller indicated (although not in the manner he presumed), these internal and external tensions made their way into the narrative of *Voyager* and—due to the ongoing reality of American imperial policies during this time period, both foreign and domestic—more often than not *Voyager* mirrored those attitudes and practices. American leaders and media producers of the 1990s was driven to definitively (and impossibly) establish a clear understanding of what it meant/means to be an "American"—a theme repeated endlessly in *Voyager* throughout their 'lost in space' journey home.

In an oft-quoted article published on the cusp of the decade, American State Official Francis Fukuyama set the stage for presumptions about America at the dawn of a new era of foreign policy. Fukuyama argued that "the end of history" had been reached, wherein:

> What we are witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.[39]

Fukuyama's presentation of American liberal democracy outlines the general ideological thrust of American foreign policy after the conclusion of the Cold War, which rests on long-standing assumptions of American exceptionalism. Such exceptionalism is present in Fukuyama's claim that American victory in the Cold War marked the *end of mankind's ideological evolution*: with the victory of Western liberal democracy, no alternatives would *ever*

[39]Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?," *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989): 3–18, 4.

be needed. In reality, as Maximillian Alvarez argues, the only 'end of history' in the age of neoliberal optimism was "the end of history by fiat" of the non-Western world, where there was "no alternative" to approaching the world than from a Western perspective and standpoint.[40] This "totalizing system of global control" by the West continues, in part through the constant recreation of imperial ideologies of difference and presumed Euro-American superiority over any other system of government or way of life.

American foreign policy in the era of the 'end of history' continued to recreate imperial ideologies of power and difference through directives rooted in beliefs of American exceptionalism. Michael Mandelbaum observes that President Clinton's administration attempted to spread American ideology throughout many former Soviet states and 'the Arab world' in the form of 'humanitarian' intervention.[41] This practice involved American interference with internal affairs of foreign nations, starting with the first Gulf War (1990-1991) under President George H.W. Bush, and extended through efforts of President Bill Clinton's administration in Bosnia, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Kosovo, and others. These military engagements functioned as a continuation of imperial directives, including the iconic (and ironic) 'civilizing mission' Europe and American assumed for themselves during the "Age of Imperialism". As Adam Dahl argues, liberal democratic ideologies, including "freedom, popular sovereignty, consent, and equality," stem from "practices and ideologies of settler colonization" as a result of dispossession of native peoples as part of the American nation building project.[42] The language of 'civilizing mission' and 'humanitarian' intervention are only a thin veneer for imperial actions.

Mandelbaum claims that "by 1991 the age of empire had ended," although his frame

[40] Deborah Chasman and Joshua Cohen, *Evil Empire* (MIT Press, 2018), 10.

[41] Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

[42] Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought* (University Press of Kansas, 2018), 7.

of ideology-inspired foreign policy settles America firmly into the practice of perpetuating ongoing and evolving imperial practices and goals.[43] In line with the American exceptionalism embraced by Fukuyama, Mandelbaum (like the government officials he studies) never questions the assumption that spreading American ideals of 'liberal democracy' was *right*, or even—recalling Fukuyama's words—the ideal evolution for mankind. Mandelbaum deliberately traces the post-Cold War American foreign policy drive to "improve the world" back to the Puritan origin myth expressed in John Winthrop's "city upon a hill" address which presumes the 'exceptional' nature of the 'American experiment' long before independence from Britain.[44] American foreign policy in the 1990s was motivated on the assumption that "building Western-style political and economic institutions seemed … eminently feasible" and that the spreading of America ideas is "part of the country's political and cultural DNA".[45] This ideological, missionary zeal was at the heart of American foreign policy in the 1990s, and expresses a clear sense of American superiority and exceptionalism through the entitlement to spread and consolidate American values abroad: Mandelbaum notes that America undertook such policies 'because it could'.

Just as ideologically-driven missions of foreign involvement to guard American interests and 'safety' dominated the world stage, ideological expectations governed political and cultural narratives in the 1990s. Ronnie D. Lipschutz explains that the problem of borders (on land and in the sky) had become a central political concern in the 90s as the main task of foreign and domestic policy became establishing a definition to the nebulous question of "what/who is an American".[46] This process occurred largely through attempts to define who *wasn't* American on both domestic and international scales. The rise of border and immi-

[43]Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure,* 5.
[44]Ibid, 9.
[45]Ibid, 8.
[46]Ronnie D. Lipschutz, *Cold War Fantasies: Film, Fiction, and Foreign Policy* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), see chapter 10, especially 192-3.

gration discussions is one key instance of such policies. Echoing the historical significance of borders to the empires that controlled them, Lipschutz observes that for America in the 1990s, borders, "define not only what is 'domestic' and what is 'foreign'; they are also integral to identity and they serve to discipline identity".[47] Borders and questions of 'American' identity became central in the vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviet Union, which, as Todd Gitlin observes, "left America with an enemy crisis".[48] Without a clear-cut Soviet enemy, it became harder to police/patrol the creation of borders around everything that is 'America' and exclude 'everything else'.

Concern over American borders also governed numerous domestic policies during the time period Samuel Huntington frames as a "clash of civilizations". Huntington's argument, first proposed in 1993, predicts that the biggest conflicts in the post-Cold War era would involve conflicts over cultures—which he labels broadly as 'civilizations'—that were not always tied directly to existing national boundaries.[49] Expounding on predicted cultural tensions, Huntington explains that "As people define their identity in ethnic and religious terms, they are likely to see an 'us' versus 'them' relation existing between themselves and people of different ethnicity and religion".[50] These ethnic and religious differences—among other sources of conflict Huntington identifies, like language—can and do occur within a nation as well as between one nation and another, and beyond the borders of 'nations' entirely. Emad El-Din Aysha acknowledges the need to study Huntington's thesis with regard to domestic policies as well as the more commonly discussed foreign policy connotations, wherein the domestic concerns "Huntington sees brewing in his own country" also fall under

[47] Lipschutz, *Cold War Fantasies*, 193.

[48] Gitlin quoted in Samuel Cohen, *After the End of History: American Fiction in the 1990s* (University of Iowa Press, 2009), 9.

[49] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22–49, https://doi.org/10.2307/20045621.

[50] Ibid, 29.

Huntington's "fault lines of civilizations".[51] Domestic concerns that exemplify the tension over borders include the immigration protests Huntington outlines at the beginning of his 1996 publication expounding on his thesis. Huntington links a 1994 protest march in Los Angeles California, conducted under a Mexican flag, alongside protests featuring upside down flags in Moscow and Sarajevo.[52] These events serve as symbols for his treatise on the power of cultures and civilizations that do not always align with the identity of a nation. In the LA example, the immigrant protest against Proposition 187, a referendum limiting benefits to illegal immigrants, ended with 59 percent of California voters approving the proposition.[53] In doing so, California voters contributed to the clarification of American boundaries within a domestic border by denying illegal immigrants the same benefits afforded legal American citizens.

The clash of civilizations, as Huntington outlined it, ties in with the 'culture wars' of the 1990s and serves as part of efforts by the United States (government, states, and individual 'citizens') to define and limit the domestic boundaries of "being an American," however it was defined in a given situation. Davidson argues that these culture wars, and corresponding media developments in the 1990s, "made us who and what we are today".[54] Davidson pinpoints continued moments wherein "immigrants and people of color and LGBT persons demand[ed] full equality and diversity against people who fear[ed] what they represent[ed]" in connection with new economic approaches led by Bill Clinton's administration and shifts to 24-hour media coverage as many of the "issues that define us today," all solidifying in

[51]Emad El-Din Aysha, "Samuel Huntington and the Geopolitics of American Identity: The Function of Foreign Policy in America's Domestic Clash of Civilizations," *International Studies Perspectives* 4, no. 2 (May 22, 2003): 113–32, https://doi.org/10.1111/1528-3577.402001, 114; Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" 22.

[52]Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon and Schuster, 2007), 19-20.

[53]Ibid, 20.

[54]Davidson, *Culture Wars*, 10.

the 1990s.[55] In discussing one defining domestic, cultural, and media moment in the 90s, Clinton's impeachment trials, Davidson observes that

> What Hillary Clinton called 'the politics of personal destruction,' and the politics of anger and rage that had started in earnest with the [Robert] Bork and [Clarence] Thomas hearings and the coded racial appeals of Willie Horton, Rodney King, and O.J. [Simpson], would now go from being the exception to becoming the rule, to becoming standard operating procedure".[56]

The intensified codification of policies, procedures, and ideologies along domestic cultural lines (exceedingly broadly defined, as Huntington uses the concept) were central issues of the decade and reflected often in media news and entertainment.

Ideologies of difference were and are central to questions of borders and who belongs—and who does not—in Western nations. Part and parcel with the culture wars of the 1990s, including tension over issues of religion, race, gender, and sexuality in domestic and foreign policies, was continued deflection of imperial mindsets, directives, and ideologies. Jeanne Morefield explores the 'politics of deflection' vital to contemporary 'liberal' imperial policies as actions and rhetoric that systematically "deflect responsibility for imperial violence away from" the Euro-American imperial powers.[57] The deflection of imperial violence in the guise of 'humanitarian' aid is a central feature in the process of 'hiding an empire' in the era of the 'end of history' (and the 'end of empire'). Daniel Immerwahr calls out the contemporary American empire with roughly four million territorial subjects and 800 military bases placed strategically around the world in the 21st century, although the reality of this empire is frequently deflected, or occluded, through the framing of military expansion and involvement as 'humanitarian' aid.[58] The rhetorical strategy of imperial deflection is

[55] Davidson, *Culture War*, 1.
[56] Ibid, 245.
[57] Jeanne Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism: Anglo-American Decline and the Politics of Deflection* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.
[58] Immerwahr, *How to Hide and Empire*, 399-400.

used by "liberal" imperial agents to narrate an empire without imperialism which allows public intellectuals and politicians to "tell stories about the Empire—its present, its past, and its future—that seem to resolve the tensions between universalism and exclusion by conveniently forgetting the Empire's own illiberalism".[59] Morefield argues that the liberal imperial narrative strategies of deflection "create contemporary truth by intervening in the past in ways that intentionally misrecognized the imperial state," crafting a version of the world where:

> The imperial state is compelled to act imperially to save the world from illiberalism, and yet is never responsible for having created the conditions that require it to save the world in the first because it was always, even when it was not, just being who it was.[60]

Central to this process is the myth of American exceptionalism: in spite of the ongoing reality of American imperialism, the "longstanding myth continually propagated by pundits, politicians, and scholars alike that the United States acquired its power over the continent and the world through 'invitation' or historical accident".[61] Narratives of exceptionalism frequently engage politics of deflection, a "slight of hand" that acknowledges accidents were made "while simultaneously constructing all-consuming, empathetic accounts of Britain and America's liberal character".[62] *Star Trek* takes part in this practice: Janeway's remarks from "Author, Author" (quoted above) acknowledged that in the past things were 'bad', but humanity evolved—and in doing so, she highlights the 'liberal character' of the Federation mission to 'spread human rights' throughout the galaxy. This exceptional mission settles the Federation as the self-professed 'ideal evolution of mankind' who impose their own expectations on the galaxy through their 'liberal humanitarian mission'.

[59] Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism,* 14.
[60] Ibid, 3.
[61] Ibid, 12.
[62] Ibid, 17.

Voyager's pilot episode "Caretaker" opens with an act of imperial deflection, which sets the stage for the entire series to conduct an ongoing deflection of imperial ideologies and practices of the United Federation of Planets. In this instance, the series was set against the backdrop of the Federation-Cardassian War. "Caretaker" was framed as a "visceral action/adventure" to appeal to fans,[63] and is the only *Star Trek* show (to date) to open with an establishing shot that contextualizes events for the audience. The opening screen reads:

> Unhappy with a new treaty, Federation Colonists along the Cardassian border have banded together. Calling themselves "The Maquis," they continue to fight the Cardassians. Some consider them heroes, but to the governments of the Federation and Cardassia, they are outlaws.[64]

These details summarize events from previous *Star Trek* series *The Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine*. War between the Federation and Cardassia spanned a twenty year period in the 24th century. The conflict involved tension over borders with the Cardassians presented as aggressors, especially during the massacre of Selik III when a Cardassian warship attacked an unarmed Federation civilian outpost (detailed in *TNG*'s "The Wounded" and *DS9*'s "Paradise"). Eventually the conflict ended with a Treaty establishing a Demilitarized Zone in the space between Federation and Cardassian territory.

The Maquis were Federation colonists who lived on planets in the demilitarized zone or in Cardassian space as a result of the Treaty. They introduced in a two-part *Deep Space Nine* episode titled "The Maqius" in order to set up their existence for *Voyager*. In this sequence, *Deep Space Nine* Commander Benjamin Sisko explains of the Maquis:

> On Earth there is no poverty, no crime, no war. You look out the window at Starfleet Headquarters and you see paradise. Well, it's easy to be a saint in paradise. The Maquis do not live in paradise. Out there, in the Demilitarized

[63] Altman and Gross, *Captains' Logs Supplemental*, 134.
[64] "Caretaker," *Star Trek: Voyager*, dir. Winrich Kolbe, (Paramount Television, January 16, 1995).

> Zone, all problems have not been solved yet. There are no saints, just people: angry, scared, determined people who are going to do whatever it takes to survive, whether it meets with Federation approval or not![65]

Sisko's comment demonstrates sympathetic awareness of the plight of the Maquis, but it also frames their experience as temporary: "all problems have not been solved *yet*". In addition to the exceptional framing of humans as "saints" living in paradise, Sisko demonstrates confidence that things will similarly be solved for the Maquis—if they wait long enough. The practice of urging populations to 'wait' for change is a tactic of imperial deflection. It acknowledges issues of inequity and implies the future will be better in time—and when the time is 'right' (often as defined by the majority or ruling population). American Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr highlighted the illogical nature of being ask to wait in his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," wherein he argued that the call by white moderates to "'wait' has almost always meant 'never"'.[66] The problems for black Americans were (and are) real, and the continued pronouncement to wait restricted that population, in the words of Dipesh Chakrabarty, to the "waiting room of history".[67] Such practices followed directly from imperial ideologies of difference, and the Maquis of *Star Trek* are inserted into that same position in *Deep Space Nine*.

Voyager takes up the Maquis storyline, and in "Caretaker," frames the Maquis as outlaws to both Cardassian and Federation governments. In doing so, the series opens with a deflection of violence conducted by *both* Cardassians and Federation agents (official and otherwise) during the long conflict. Morefield notes that, during periods of imperial uncertainty, political rhetoric from the imperial centers (notably London and Washington) is "always hinting at the presence of violence, military aggression, and occupation" associated

[65]"The Maquis, Part 1 & 2," dirs. David Livingston and Corey Allen, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (Paramount Television, May 1, 1994).

[66]Martin Luther King Jr, "The Negro Is Your Brother," *The Atlantic Monthly* 212, no. 2 (1963): 78–88.

[67]Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 8.

with imperial actions without acknowledging it directly.[68] This generally occurs through the use of passive voice and the admission that "decisions will have to be made" and other similar phrases, and the overall goal of such tactics is to "constantly draw the reader's attention away from the actual violence inherent in the state force required to maintain an empire".[69] Even though the Cardassians were framed as the aggressors throughout the *Star Trek* narrative, the Federation took active part in the conflict to ensure and maintain their borders, in much the same way traditional empires did throughout history. Building from the significance of borders to American interests (internal and external) in the 90s, the placement of *Voyager* on the periphery of this war over borders, without actually detailing the conflict and then almost immediately being removed from it, situates the narrative in line with ongoing American imperial policies—deflection included.

Continued deflection of imperial ideologies of difference and power—and the reality of empire—contribute to ongoing imperial ways of thinking about relating and living in the world. Doing so in the 1990s, and the present, restrict the possibilities of moving beyond these ways of thinking about difference at a time period when the world was (and is) praising the 'victory' of a political ideology that 'won' the ability to claim their approach to living was the ideal evolution of mankind. In reality, imperial and capitalist approaches to living have contributed significantly to the ecological crisis of the Anthropocene, and we need new narratives that can offer other possibilities than creating and recreating the same patterns.

[68] Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism*, 17.
[69] Ibid, 141.

2.4 "Caretaker" and Reinforcing American Imperial Exceptionalism in the Delta Quadrant

"Caretaker" is a fun and entertaining episode that tells the story of a Starfleet Federation crew stranded on the far edges of the galaxy over 70,000 light years away from home—in the *Star Trek* universe, that is 75 years of travel at top warp speed. In recounting the events that occur after the crew is transported to the Delta Quadrant, the episode establishes the officers and crew as exceptional survivors who belong to a morally superior civilization. Through this approach, the storyline reflects and reinforces narratives of American exceptionalism and imperial ideologies of difference into the presumed utopian 24th century future—a narrative approach that limits *possibilities* for stories of living in a non-human-centric Anthropocene no longer governed by imperial ideologies of difference.

"Caretaker" begins with a short scene that recreates images of "technowar," the method of war that evolved in the early 1990s and reflected ideals of American exceptionalism through sanitized reports and images of 'no body count wars'. In this evolution of war, as classified by American historian H. Bruce Franklin, news coverage of military conflicts consisted of talking heads far from the battlefields rather than 'on the ground' reporting that was common in the Vietnam conflict. The most popular images from technowar conflicts were analogous to video games where the target "got closer and closer, larger and larger. And everything ended with an explosion".[70] Pictures of dead and dying soldiers and civilians were never published, and the conflicts (especially the First Gulf War in 1990-1991) were praised as "no body count wars". This presentation fit into narratives of American exceptionalism through the motivation for involvement by the United States government and the appearance of technologically superior warfare and 'easy' victory. Mandelbaum identifies the Gulf War—

[70]H. Bruce Franklin, "From Realism to Virtual Reality: Images of America's Wars," *The Georgia Review* 48, no. 1 (1994): 47–64, 64.

the first major U.S. military conflict after the end of the Cold War, and the first conflict in over four decades when Moscow did not oppose U.S. action—as the conflict that shifted American foreign policy from containment to transformation. This shift from "defense of the West" to "the political and ideological expansion of the West"[71] speaks to the exceptionalism Fukuyama evoked with his claim that *mankind's ideological evolution* had been achieved with U.S. victory in the Cold War. Further, through the presentation of victory in consecutive 'battle-less' wars—leaving the United States as the only 'superpower' and victory (and no casualties) for American soldiers in an internationally supported incursion in the Middle East—American exceptionalism in warfare was reinforced.

Technowar space battles are common in *Star Trek*. Take, for example, the famous Battle of Wolf 359 in *TNG* episodes "The Best of Both Worlds," which highlights the devastating defeat of nearly 40 Federation starships with approximately 11,000 Starfleet personnel killed or assimilated by the Borg.[72] This example glorifies the technologies of war, although this battle takes the opposite approach to military reporting on the U.S./U.N. incursion into Iraq as the main victims in the *Trek* battle were Federation personnel. Still, in true technowar fashion, the on-screen battle was brief, and most screen time was taken up by images of crew preparing for battle—and wreckage of the aftermath. Battles between shielded spaceships, phasers, and photon torpedoes would have been familiar to audience members in the 1990s despite the science fiction setting based on their experiences watching ideologically-driven international conflicts play out on the television screens. Franklin notes that, despite extreme censorship, Desert Storm was the first "'real-time' televised war," in which the "magnificent triumph of technowar, America's images of its wars had seemingly reached perfection".[73] *Voyager* modeled such tactics, and before the *USS Voyager* and her Captain even graced

[71] Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 5.

[72] "The Best of Both Worlds, Parts 1 & 2," dir. Cliff Bole, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Paramount Television, September 18, 1990).

[73] Franklin, "From Realism to Virtual Reality, 64.

the screen, the narrative situated itself firmly in the expected cultural and military 'reality' of the 1990s.

This deflection of the strength, tactics, and violence required to maintain and perpetuate the empire finds a home on the screens of *Voyager*'s opening scene. After the short mention of the Federation-Cardassian War, discussed above, "Caretaker" opens with a short scene between a small, outgunned Maquis ship and a large Cardassian warship. After taking damage to the shields, fuel lines, and engine, the Maquis ship flees into the Badlands—an unexplored area of the Alpha Quadrant filled with plasma storms—to hide. The ship is then stuck by a mysterious tetryon beam, and (audiences eventually learn) transported to the Delta Quadrant. This teaser scene then gives way to the opening credits.

After the disappearance of the Maquis ship, the newly commissioned starship *Voyager* undertakes its first mission under the command of Starfleet Captain Kathryn Janeway, the first female captain to command a Federation Starship on the television screens.[74] Janeway and her crew find themselves in almost immediate trouble after pursuing the renegade Maquis ship into the Badlands. Like the Maquis ship, *Voyager* is hit with a tetryon wave and suddenly and inexplicably transported across the galaxy by an advanced technological "Array" built and maintained by an alien entity known only as the "Caretaker". Setting up the series to take place in the Delta Quadrant, 70,000 light years away from Earth—the center of the Federation and Starfleet—created the scenario Jeri Taylor noted (quoted above) of removing the *Voyager* crew from "everything" familiar to them.

André Bormanis, a science consultant on *Voyager*, equated this premise with the Aus-

[74]The recent *Star Trek: Discovery* (2017-present) does feature female Captain Philippa Georgiou (Michelle Yeoh) in the first several episodes, which chronologically comes *prior* to Janeway's tenure on *Voyager* following the *Trek* stardate calendar, since *Discovery* is one of two prequel *Trek* television shows created since 2000. Still, Janeway retains distinction as the first female Starfleet Captain on television, one of *Voyager*'s significant 'claims to fame' within the franchise and the genre. See chapter four of this project for more on Janeway and the role gender plays in developing and maintaining imperial ideologies of difference.

tralian outback in the 1870s:

> We also promised the audience that the Delta Quadrant would be the great unknown. A territory like the Australian outback in the 1870s or whatever. Who knows what you're going to find out there, but it's *really* fucking dangerous. Probably gonna die, assholes.[75]

Bormanis' comment deflects the practices of colonial dispossession and genocide of native populations practiced through the settler colonial project in Australia as it had been in the United States. Instead of acknowledging that reality, Bormanis' comment glorifies the spirit of 'dangerous adventure' facing the *white settlers* 'first discovering' the outback. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz supplies a succinct definition of settler colonialism as "a genocidal policy" rooted in a desire for land already populated by others.[76] British practices in Australia were similar to those cultivated in the United States: as Dahl notes, European colonizers "looked to the United States for examples of how to govern [and disposes] native peoples in colonial outposts".[77] Bormanis' analogy between *Voyager* and the British settler colonial project in Australia was not likely intended to call genocide to mind. Rather, this kind of statement is indicative of the historical deflection and misdirection of imperial violence common in since the "Age of Empire," to such an extent that white colonizers (and their descendants) do not see native peoples in the same context as the pioneers and settlers. In most political and cultural narratives in settler colonial nations, native populations disappear in the vista of the frontier, and the challenge of surviving the frontier *for the settlers* becomes the main focus of stories, experiences, and cultural memory. Bormanis' conception of a show about "the final frontier" echoes earlier frontier narratives where native populations were one of the many challenges facing the settlers, rather than people being systematically displaced

[75]Mark Altman and Edward Gross, *The Fifty-Year Mission: The Next 25 Years: From The Next Generation to J. J. Abrams: The Complete, Uncensored, and Unauthorized Oral History of Star Trek* (Macmillan, 2016), 559, emphasis in original.

[76]Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History* (Beacon Press, 2014), 6.

[77]Dahl, *Empire of the People*, 16.

(and often killed) in the face of white settler expansion. This exceptional spirit inherent in ideas of Manifest Destiny and other settler colonial practices find significant screen-time in *Voyager*, starting from the early ideas for the project and storytelling from the very first episode.

Once in the Delta Quadrant, the crew faces a series of new and unexpected challenges. Janeway quickly initiates repairs to the damaged starship after taking stock of their losses (including the death of *Voyager*'s First Officer, Chief Engineer, and ship Doctor). Soon, however, the entire crew is teleported onto the Array and dropped into what appears to be a stereotypical 20th mid-western or Appalachian style gathering. Audiences later learn through Chief Security Officer Tuvok's deduction that the Array likely "scanned our ship's computer to find a comfortable holographic environment" prior to immobilizing the crew in a medical research lab and conducting some manner of biometric scans. This entire holographic interlude, complete with confused *Star Trek* personnel avoiding an elderly farm matron encouraging them to drink lemonade and eat fresh corn and sugar cookies amidst banjo music and square dancing, recalls the problem of borders and identity that plague American cultural and political affairs in the 1990s. *Who is the Federation*, in this doubly foreign context? Their actions provide the answer: the confusion exhibited by the Starfleet crew implies that this scene is *not* familiar to them, although it likely is for 20th century audiences, but they nonetheless react quickly based on their own principles, practices, and Starfleet identity. The scene includes the crew moving around the space and studying their environment with tricorders, for example—hand-held devices that scan, analyze, and record data to aid the crew in their exploration. Through this familiar action, the crew proves that not only are they still members of the exploration arm of the United Federation of Planets, but they indicate their 'superior' training and readiness for *any* situation, no matter how foreign. In doing so, they retain and emphasize their identity using their technology and

approaches to studying "new life and new civilizations".

The *Voyager* crew is not the only Federation personnel in the Delta Quadrant, of course. After finding more questions than answers on the Array and being teleported back to their ship, minus crewmember Ensign Harry Kim, Janeway reaches out to the Maquis. Janeway does not hesitate to turn to them and establish an alliance, despite their status as outlaws. Janeway coms (shorthand for "communicates with via ship-to-ship communication" in *Trek* parlance) the Maquis Commander Chakotay and gets right to the point: "Commander, you and I have the same problem. I think it makes sense to try and solve it together, don't you?" The ensuing discussion is not entirely without tension, although Janeway takes charge of the situation decisively. Doing so establishes a firm chain of command and foregrounds the inclusion of the Maquis crew with the *Voyager* crew by the end of the episode. At the end of this conversation Janeway outlines the new plan: "Now, we have a lot to accomplish, and I suggest we all concentrate on finding our people, and getting ourselves back home".

Another moment of Federation exceptionalism comes when *Voyager* travels toward an M Class planet (capable of sustaining humanoid life) and discovers the wreckage of other ships. Little attention is paid to the debris floating around the Array after *Voyager* initially passes through it, but the extent of the wreckage is significant. Despite taking damage in the transition to the Delta Quadrant, neither *Voyager* nor the Maquis ship is seriously debilitated, and both crews are able to quickly mobilize and establish a plan to move forward. This appears to be an exceptional human/Federation trait, as there is no indication throughout the episode or the series narrative of any other non-Delta Quadrant species transported by the Array trying to find their way home, or searching out a nearby planet for settlement. Characters observe several times that the Caretaker has been bringing ships "for several months," yet the only survivors visible are these members of the United Federation of Planets. *Voyager* thus presents a picture where the only species capable of survival in this unexpected

circumstance are humans and other (practically token) members of the Federation, largely through good old-fashioned 'human ingenuity' in the face of an unexpected situation. The message of Starfleet as exceptional survivor will be reinforced throughout the series narrative, and becomes a central piece to the identity cultivated by *Voyager* in the first episode and beyond—and serves to contrast the Starfleet crew from numerous aliens encountered throughout their Delta Quadrant adventures.

This moment of exception also introduces *Voyager* to a new ally. Delta Quadrant native Neelix is a Talaxian scavenger looting ships brought to the area (and generally destroyed in route) by the Array. After being reassured that *Voyager* is not pursuing the same ends, Neelix is happy to provide them information and—eventually—aid. Neelix's introduction allows for Federation identity to solidify in the face of uncertainty, again underscoring the exceptionalism of the Federation to move forward and survive against all odds. Janeway introduces herself to Neelix by explaining "I am Captain Kathryn Janeway of the Federation Starship *Voyager*". Neelix promptly replies, "That's a very impressive title. I have no idea what it means, but it sounds very impressive". This is one of several instances where Neelix's comments underscore how far removed *Voyager* is from the Alpha Quadrant of space and anything familiar. Further, it highlights how important it will be for the Starfleet crew to clearly establish an identity *in contrast to* their surroundings. No longer will they get immediate attention by declaring their allegiance with the Federation—a common moment in all previous versions of *Star Trek*, even if that reaction is not always positive. For *Voyager*, this "impressive" introduction starts the process of cultivating a new identity that continues throughout the episode (and the series) as exceptional survivors of a morally superior civilization.

The Federation's moral superiority is established in "Caretaker" in direct contrast to the Kazon, an alien race inhabiting the planet closest to the Array. Neelix offers to aid Janeway

in finding her missing crewman, and the similarly missing Maquis member B'Elanna Torres, and then directs the crew to a nearby planet. Neelix instructs Janeway to bring water to the Kazon for purposes of trade, and is extremely impressed with the technology on *Voyager* that allows for instant transportation and the creation of water (seemingly) out of thin air: "Astonishing! You Federations are obviously an advanced culture!". This contrast stands out in stark relief after Janeway and her 'away team' to "beam down" (teleport) to the planet's surface. Differences between the Starfleet crew and the Kazon are immediately apparent: the Kazon are presented as a primitive tribal group living amidst the ruins of a city in the middle of a desert. Lt. Tom Paris asks in disbelief, "Why would anyone want to live in a place like this?". Neelix explains that "The rich koreline deposits are very much in demand," despite the inhospitable surface conditions. Neelix goes on to explains that the Kazon "control this quadrant. Some have food, some have ore, some have water. They all trade and they all kill each other for it". This moment establishes a clear divide between the civilized Federation and the uncivilized Kazon: the Kazon compete for resources, war amongst themselves and all others in the quadrant, and collect slaves, including the young Ocampa named Kes rescued by Neelix in this scene. The Federation, in contrast, have moved beyond those concerns: recall Janeway's admission, quoted earlier, that "centuries ago … only landowners of a particular gender and race had any rights at all," and Sisko's observation that life on Earth is "paradise". These are two small examples of the utopian status of the Federation, and "Caretaker" makes it clear that they are morally superior to the Kazon.

Drawing directly from long lasting processes of cultivating a politics of difference by European and American imperial powers in the classic "Age of Empire," the binary established between Federation and Kazon continues throughout the episode. Ultimately, this division culminates in Janeway's decision to side *against* the Kazon amidst the internal politics of

the Delta Quadrant. After encountering the Kazon and rescuing Kes, Janeway and crew discover that the missing crewmembers are *below* the surface of the planet with the Ocampa, an advanced civilization that lives under the direct protection of the Caretaker and his Array. Through conversations with the Ocampa, the Starfleet officers surmise that the Caretaker is dying and seeking out a host with comparable DNA in order to continue his self-imposed mission to protect the Ocampa as a result of his involvement in the accidental destruction of the planet's ecosystem roughly 2000 years prior. The Kazon hope to take advantage of the Array after the Caretaker dies, and prey upon the idyllic Ocampa civilization. Janeway's eventual decision to support the Ocampa against the Kazon is framed as protecting the helpless rather than an act against the uncivilized Kazon.

The contrast between the civilized Federation and the uncivilized Kazon is reinforced through a conversation between Janeway and the Kazon leader, Jabin. In this conversation conducted aboard *Voyager* and the Kazon ship through video conferencing technology, Janeway explains to Jabin that "We have no dispute with you". Jabin replies that "I have a dispute with anyone who would challenge us!". Janeway is not impressed with this comment, and she moves closer to the video screen to respond, "This is ridiculous! We have no intention of challenging you!" The Kazon leader declares that "I have no intention of letting anyone with your technical knowledge board the Array" causing Janeway to sigh and exclaim, "Jabin, can we discuss this like two civilized—". After Janeway utters the word 'civilized,' Jabin closes the communication channel, implying that he is *not* willing or able to "discuss this like two civilized species". It becomes clear to Janeway that Jabin has no interest in a peaceful, diplomatic solution to the conflict, which cements the presentation of the Kazon as uncivilized and warlike barbarians unwilling to talk out their issues like the 'civilized,' rational, and diplomatic Federation. In continuing to present the Kazon as uncivilized *in contrast to* the Federation, from their primitive living conditions to their unwillingness to

use diplomatic channels to solve problems, the Federation is placed in a supossedly morally superior position. In underwriting the presumption that the Federation (American/human organization) is superior to the Kazon, *Voyager* contributes to the presentation of imperial ideologies of difference as *fact*, rather than an ongoing imperial necessity required to maintain and reinforce difference.

It is at this point that the major crisis of "Caretaker" occurs: when faced with the opportunity to flee back to the Alpha Quadrant, and in essence abandon the peaceful Ocampa to the merciless and irrational Kazon, Janeway opts instead to violate the Prime Directive and destroy the Array. Tuvok advises her that "Captain, any action we take here to protect the Ocampa will disrupt the balance of power in this system. The Prime Directive would seem to apply". Tuvok's language is intriguing, as the Vulcan Security Officer is normally more definitive in his statements, in traditional Vulcan fashion. His use of the word "seem" gives Janeway the ability to decide when and how to apply the Prime Directive in this situation, which she does in her reply: "We never asked to be involved, Tuvok, but we are". Janeway's response applies a classic technique of deflection—Janeway indicates that action will have to be taken, a 'decision will have to be made'. This common rhetorical strategy is used often by 'liberal' imperial powers, including the United States, to explain imperial action while simultaneously deflecting the action or likely consequences that will occur after the decision.[78] The approach of declaring involvement in the current state of affairs is not an uncommon Starfleet Captain tactic, but it appears illogical here. The Federation crew is only minimally involved in the situation, at best, given their one encounter with the Ocampa and two short (albeit violent) encounters with the Kazon, neither of which requires any further action on Janeway's part. The logical and legal solution would be to take *Voyager* home and let the internal Delta Quadrant politics play out without further involvement.

[78]Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism*.

Janeway's final actions to destroy the Array and protect the Ocampa reinforce two features of American exceptionalism: the American Dream, and 'humanitarian' aid for 'less developed' nations/civilizations. First, Janeway attempts to convince the Caretaker that the Ocampa should be left to their own devices in order to grow as a civilization. This suggestion recalls a *Star Trek* tradition where Western-inspired rational thinking succeeds over the belief in supernatural beings and where each species is in charge of their own development.[79] Janeway explains to the Caretaker that "It's the challenge of surviving on their own that helps them to evolve". This speech has been equated to then-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich's anti-welfare program, one example of the myth of American exceptionalism to be an *individual* survivor.[80] The mythos of 'pulling oneself up by ones bootstraps'—often called the American Dream—is rooted in American exceptionalism, and it finds its way into "Caretaker" through this exchange. The Prime Directive has links to this philosophy as well, as it implies that the Federation's policy of non-intervention is 'best' for the 'discovered' civilization—a decision made unilaterally by the Federation, as the civilization who holds all the power in this exchange.

Second, mirroring U.S. foreign policy in the 1990s, Janeway aids the Ocampa by preventing the Kazon from taking over the Array. The governing tactic of Clinton's foreign policy initiatives (including those in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo) was framed as "military action for the purpose of rescuing distressed people".[81] This thrust of "humanitarian intervention" was undertaken for the "relief of suffering" in places that had 'little or no significance' "for global peace and American well-being," and was often conducted, in Mandelbaum's analysis, because the United States "could".[82] Such humanitarian intervention is a slight evolution of the project of 'development' practiced by America in the decades after

[79] I will explore this point in more detail in later chapters.
[80] Altman and Gross, *Captain's Log Supplemental*, 134.
[81] Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 76.
[82] Ibid, 75 & 78.

the Second World War, which, as Arturo Escobar argues, serve as a progression of European and American imperial interests when official and formal "empire" was no longer accepted by formal colonized states. This "colonialist move" to create the colonial/Third World as a subject "in/through discourse in ways that allow the exercise of power over it" relied—exactly like the European and American imperial project in the years of overt Empire—on an ongoing production of difference between the "developed" world and "underdeveloped" areas.[83]

In aiding the Ocampa, the Federation pits itself against the Kazon and signals their power in the Delta Quadrant.. This contrast was established throughout the episode in framing the Kazon as uncivilized, and through the destruction of the Array, Janeway presents herself (and the Federation) as more powerful. Janeway tells the Kazon to "move your vessels to a safe distance. I intend to destroy the Array" in a phrase that implies *she* holds the power in this situation, despite being a foreigner in the area. The Kazon leader protests, "You can't do that!" to which Janeway responds, "I can and I will. End transmission". This claim of absolute authority has similarities to declarations made by American politicians in the wake of the attacks of September 11th, 2001, although Janeway's remark predates that event by seven years. This exchange reflects direct American imperial processes, including definitive declarations by a national leader without regard to the consequences of the violence the actions will require. Janeway's action serves to solidify her authority about *Voyager* (now populated by both Starfleet and Maquis crew). Janeway orders the destruction of the Array in the face of protest from Maquis crew member Torres, explaining that "I am aware that everyone has families they want to get back to. So do I. But I'm not willing to trade the lives of the Ocampa for our convenience. We'll have to find another way home". Torres protests again, asking "Who is she to be making these decisions for us?" and—foreshadowing

[83]Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 9. I will explore this argument more thoroughly in chapter 4.

the Maquis inclusion into the *Voyager* crew—Chakotay explains solemnly that "She's the Captain". His remark infuses a Starfleet Captain with full decision making authority, even in this unexpected situation and unknown area of space, and gives Janeway full authority over both crews *and* inhabitants of the Delta Quadrant.

The final scenes of the episode show further identity-building via ideologies of difference and exceptionalism for the newly-stranded crew. Janeway and Chakotay agree to merge into a single Starfleet crew to facilitate the journey back to Federation space and solidify Federation identity, even for the members previously in rebellion against Starfleet. This action establishes *Voyager* the only Federation space in the entire quadrant, a thread that will be important throughout the series.[84] Further, Janeway gives direction to all members of the joint crew in a closing speech that highlights the mission of the Federation and outlines their status as exceptional survivors:

> We're alone, in an uncharted part of the galaxy. We've already made some friends here. And some enemies. We have no idea of the dangers we're going to face. But one thing is clear: both crews are going to have to work together if we're going to survive. That's why Commander Chakotay and I have agreed that this should be one crew: a Starfleet crew. And as the only Starfleet vessel assigned to the Delta Quadrant, we'll continue to follow our directive. To seek out new worlds and explore space. But our primary goal is clear: even at maximum speeds, it would take 75 years to reach the Federation. But I'm not willing to settle for that. There's another entity like the Caretaker out there somewhere who has the ability to get us there a lot faster. We'll be looking for her. And we'll be looking for wormholes, spacial rifts, or new technologies to help us. Somewhere along this journey, we'll find a way back. Mr. Paris, set a course. For home.

In this speech, Janeway establishes that *Voyager* will remain a Starfleet crew, following Starfleet and Federation directives, practices, and ideologies. Janeway directly refers to the Starfleet aim to "seek out new worlds and explore space," and links that practice of

[84] See chapter five of this project for a longer discussion on the binary established through a safe domestic space aboard *Voyager* and the wild 'foreign' one of the Delta Quadrant.

exploration to their new Prime Directive: find a faster way home. Ultimately this will require the creation and recreation of boundaries separating "Starfleet" from "everyone else" for the next seven years, and blend the rebel Maquis into a Federation organization they were previously at odds with.

Janeway makes no mention of the Array—or her decision to destroy it—in this speech. This point is important, since it serves to underscore the deflection of imperial violence that will continue out from this very moment: the destruction of the Array becomes the focal point throughout the series as key in missing home (Earth) and their entire previous way of life, *rather* than an act of violence against the Kazon. Nostalgia for home will haunt the first few seasons of the show, although as Ann Stoler cautions, imperial nostalgia is ineffective to fully grasp the reality of ongoing imperial formations.[85] Nostalgia for great empires and civilizations (Athens, Greece, Rome, Britain, America) serves to misdirect and deflect the reality of imperial violence, and although we will see occasion for Janeway to reflect on the destruction of the Array, there is never a return to or reflection on the violence perpetrated against the Kazon in this moment.

"Caretaker" sets up the *Voyager* series. The crew will explore the Delta Quadrant, seeking to gain new knowledge of this area for the Federation and find a faster way home. In doing so, they will spread their ideologies of power and difference through the presentation of the Federation—and the *Voyager* crew—as exceptional survivors belonging to a morally superior civilization. In this final scene, the *Voyager* crew begins to embody their own Prime Directive: retain their Federation identity, and get home, no matter what. As I work through an analysis of the entire series, I will demonstrate how this directive established in "Caretaker" evolves throughout the series in ways that reinforce and maintain ideologies of power and difference that were (and are) central to Euro-American imperial practices

[85] Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Duke University Press, 2016), 347.

and ways of living in the world. In doing so, I will also highlight and explore options for non-imperial possibilities of living and embracing difference in ways that does not prioritize one nation, civilization, race, or person over another.

Chapter 3

Voyager's Castaway Adventure

3.1 Normalizing and Legitimizing Processes of Empire in the Delta Quadrant

> "Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship *Enterprise*. It's continuing mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before."
>
> Captain Jean-Luc Picard, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*

Three months after being stranded in the Delta Quadrant, the crew of the *USS Voyager* encountered a decaying wormhole that lead to the Alpha Quadrant.[1] Excited at the prospect of sending a message home, Helmsman Tom Paris suggested that, "if this works, we petition the Federation Astronomical Committee to officially designate this the Harry Kim Wormhole". The crew was dismayed to realize the wormhole crossed space *and time*, opening in the Alpha Quadrant twenty years before *Voyager* left. Prevented from communicating with the Federation, Janeway and her crew nonetheless took hope from the discovery and reaffirmed their desire to explore the Delta Quadrant to enrich their understanding of the space while they continued to search for other paths home. This season one episode illuminates the blend

[1] "Eye of the Needle," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 20, 1995).

of castaway and adventure narrative that infused *Voyager*'s overall storyline with lingering imperial practices, including mapping and naming discovered territory and the presentation of 'lost-race' encounters with aliens that position the castaway explorers as the civilized—and morally progressive and superior—race. John Rieder explains that "lost-race fiction can be summarized on the whole as fantasies of appropriation in (and sometimes of) the 'virgin territory' of previously inaccessible foreign lands".[2] Such fantasies drew heavily on the adventure and castaway motifs inspired by rugged explorers like Robinson Crusoe, which created and recreated conditions for the normalization and legitimization of Euro-American empire. In blending threads of castaway and adventure narratives with early science fiction tales of encounters with newly discovered races, *Voyager* reinforces imperial modes of thinking about adventure, exploration, and engagement with living beings that normalize and legitimize imperial mindsets in contemporary cultural narratives. Doing so limits the possibility for these narratives to enable effective response to the impending 'Anthropocene' climate crisis, especially through continued centering of Western imperial perspectives as the standard way of seeing and thinking about the world.

The castaway-adventure framework of *Voyager* stems from—and contributes to—historical and ongoing American imperial actions and attitudes about the world. Rebecca Weaver-Hightower identifies contemporary castaways as "perpetual visitor, never owner" of the space of exile.[3] This narrative trope reflects a "*neo*-imperial island fantasy" of indirect economic and cultural US hegemony, rather than overt political and military colonization typical during the "Age of Empire".[4] Further, Weaver-Hightower explains "in the pattern of the castaway choosing *not* to express ownership of the island, while still being forced to live there, we

[2]John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2012), 40.

[3]Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, *Empire Islands: Castaways, Cannibals, And Fantasies of Conquest* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 205.

[4]Ibid, 210.

can see reflected a culture-wide fantasy of the United States as an anti-colonial world power that simultaneously engages in neo-imperial foreign policy," typically as the new 'world police'.[5] Michael Mandelbaum frames the *modus operandi* of United States foreign policy in the aftermath of the Cold War as unintentional "state building," noting that—despite the general long-term failure of such projects—"what *was* important was the American role as the chief custodian of the benign international order that had emerged from the end of the Cold War".[6] The portrayal of castaway-adventure narratives in *Voyager* reveals the same lingering imperial tendencies in the process that Mandelbaum describes as a shift from Cold War policies of containment and defense to transformation of the world through ideological means. Mandelbaum explores this policy change through the thrust toward "humanitarian intervention" under Presidents Bill Clinton (1993-2001) and George W. Bush (2001-2009), yet acknowledges the general similarity of US foreign policies and directives from the conclusion of the Second World War into the 21st century. In the previous chapter, I labeled these practices and ideologies part of the narrative of American exceptionalism. The directives of containment and transformation stem from centuries-held beliefs (including by Mandelbaum) that form "part of the country's political and cultural DNA," harkening back to the Puritan origin myth of exceptionalism expressed in John Winthrop's "city upon a hill" address.[7] This early example of what will later be labeled 'manifest destiny'—the unquestioned belief in American right to spread their footprint and ideologies throughout the continent, and later the globe—remain ongoing features of American domestic and foreign policy and cultural narratives like *Voyager*.

In this chapter, I analyze the blended castaway-adventure narrative of *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001) alongside historical and literary practices of Euro-American imperialism to

[5]Weaver-Hightower, *Empire Islands*, 212.

[6]Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 13, emphasis in original.

[7]Ibid, 8 & 9.

argue that *Voyager's* narrative framework enables the continuation of Federation (American) imperial directives and practices throughout the Delta Quadrant—and American expectations of the present and possible futures. The castaway-adventure framework underwrites the entire narrative arc, and in this chapter I focus on the first two seasons to establish how these narrative approaches infuse the series with imperial mindsets from the very beginning. *Voyager*'s focus on exploration and discovery as a means of getting home *and* laying claim to new territory in a tangible way mirrors American imperial practices of manifest destiny. These practices create space to establish hierarchies of difference between the Federation and new races encountered in the Delta Quadrant, echoing American imperial expansion and control practiced through centuries of manifest destiny—a fundamental component of American settler colonial practices. Through this analysis I demonstrate that the *Voyager* crew places prime importance on maintaining their own social and cultural structure and traditions, including those seeped in empire, and—in the manner of historical imperial explorers—map those habits onto the yet-to-be-fulfilled "empty" space of the Delta Quadrant.

Star Trek is a series based on exploration, and *Voyager* takes this original directive to the edges of the galaxy. Gene Roddenberry's *The Original Series* (1966-1969) and first *Trek* televised spin-off *The Next Generation* (1987-1994) rely on a directive to explore "space: the final frontier" and to "seek out new life and new civilizations" while going "where no one has gone before". Roddenberry penned these words a month before *The Original Series* pilot aired, and the directive has governed each *Trek* iteration.[8] *Voyager* does not make use of the opening monologue, but the show retains the focus on exploration and adventure at the heart of *Star Trek*, and pushes this 'spirit of adventure' into unknown portions of the galaxy. In the earliest adventures, the *Enterprise* remained close to home, relatively speaking, even if Kirk's crew pushed the boundaries of known Alpha Quadrant space. *Voyager*, on the

[8]Herbert F. Solow and Robert H. Justman, *Inside Star Trek: The Real Story* (NY: Pocket Books, 1996), 149.

other hand, had to face the challenges of the Delta Quadrant without a Federation safety net, much like Euro-American imperial explorers of 'wild' spaces in the Americas, the pacific islands, and the interior of the African continent. These explorers contributed to the creation of imperial frameworks of difference that situated Europeans (Westerners) as the superior race, presumptions that infused practices of cartography and numerous encounters with "new worlds and new civilizations". *Voyager* draws on these practices through a reliance on castaway, adventure, and 'lost-race' encounter narrative tropes, and in this chapter I situate *Voyager* within the canon of texts that normalize(d) and legitimize(d) imperial ways of thinking. I analyze how *Voyager* presents narrative frameworks of exploration, especially mapping and discovery, and encounters with aliens—the Kazon, the Vidiians, and the lone Talaxian Neelix—to outline how the "lost in space" *Voyager* narrative reinforced, recreated, and reinscribed classic colonial tropes. These imperial perspectives continue to normalize and legitimize ongoing practices of American empire in cultural expectations, which limits the ability for narratives to explore possibilities of non-imperial engagements with new worlds and new forms of life.

3.2 Imperial Traditions of Castaway-Adventure Narratives: Recreating Manifest Destiny

As noted in the show creators vision for *Voyager* highlighted in chapter 2, the series was designed as a "lost in space" adventure story. *Voyager*'s blend of castaway and adventure narratives—specifically adventure enabled by the crew's castaway status—closely follows patterns of literature of the same genres from the 18^{th} and 19^{th} centuries. In these stories, both historical and contemporary, the main character(s) face challenges in a distant location and must find ways to survive and, perhaps, make their way home. Such narratives have

a long and complex literary and cultural history, closely tied to the expansion of European empire in the classic "Age of Imperialism" and American imperial expansion during the era of manifest destiny to conquer the West. Martin Green traces the broad adventure narrative style back to Daniel Defoe's classic *Robinson Crusoe*, first published in 1719, as one text among many that established adventure as "the energizing myth of empire".[9] Green argues that the mercantilist/capitalist adventure narrative structure of stories like *Robinson Crusoe* strengthened the expansion of the British and United States empires through disguising the 'civilizing mission' of conquest as stories of adventure and discovery. Building on narratives that permeated much British and American imperialism, especially in North America and India, 18th and 19th century novels popularized and reinforced the sense of discovery and manifest destiny utilized by European explorers as a vital component to imperial expansion in the traditional "Age of Imperialism".

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said extends Green's critique and argues that the "imagination of empire" was deeply woven into 18th and 19th century novels across all genres.[10] Said examines how imperialism manifested in British national culture and, simultaneously, normalized Euro-American culture with imperial ways of thinking about the world. Ultimately, Said pushes for the need to study *all* themes of British novels, including imperialism, in order to fully understand the texts and the imperial culture that grew out of these foundational texts.[11] Following Said, I hold that it is imperative to study the imperial narrative retained in *Voyager*'s castaway-adventure motif in order to better understand what is deflected and subverted in the future *Star Trek* presents. My engagement with *Voyager*—an

[9] Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (Basic Books, Inc., 1980), xi.

[10] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage Books, 1994), 12.

[11] While Said's text is likely the most well-known exploration of the links between the novel and imperialism, other scholars have explored the connection as well. Notable examples are: Victor Gordon Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to Other Cultures in the Imperial Age* (Serif, 1995); John M. MacKenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester University Press, 1986); and Jonah Raskin, *The Mythology of Imperialism: Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, and Joyce Cary* (Dell, 1973).

indisputably popular American text of the late 20th and early 21st century—answers Said's call to study the theme of imperialism in all popular works, both those with clear ties to imperialism, like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), and texts without overt and obvious ties, including Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814).

Said observed that cultural texts like novels, operas, and films "do not cause people to go out and imperialize"—rather, these texts *normalize* empire and imperialistic ways of life.[12] *Mansfield Park*, in Said's analysis, does not simply take place in the historical context of the British Empire and economic profit from slave plantations in the Caribbean. Imperial culture and ways of thinking are woven throughout the novel, such that, "the novel steadily, if unobtrusively, opens up a broad expanse of domestic imperialist culture without which Britain's subsequent acquisition of territory would not have been possible".[13] *Mansfield Park* and other 18th and 19th century British novels in all genres reinforced and recreated notions of British imperial might and right in ways that merit close analysis to better understand the world at the time, and the world created through the Euro-American imperial project. Close examination of how contemporary texts like *Voyager* normalize imperial modes of thinking illuminates how these narrative approaches—fun though they may be—continue to influence how we think about adventure, exploration, and engagement with other living beings. As my analysis of the castaway-adventure narrative of *Voyager* demonstrates, the underlying imperial assumptions of adventure from the Western perspective, especially the emphasis on discoveries to be mapped and "lost races" (or "previously undiscovered") to be discovered, restricts other avenues for adventure that could present non-hierarchical forms of discovery and engagement with other life forms.

Literature with the most obvious ties to British imperialist tendencies were stories born and maintained in adventure novels. Rebecca Weaver-Hightower studies a subset of adven-

[12]Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* 81-2.
[13]Ibid, 95.

ture narratives, castaway narratives, which she observes predates *Crusoe* through famous British texts like Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610-1611) as stories that "made imperial expansion and control seem unproblematic and natural".[14] Through the castaway's attempts to lay claim to the island and the space—to live, explore, and create in the space—the texts become narratives of possession, and Weaver-Hightower argues that "the castaway (and reading public) could begin to imagine colonization as legitimate".[15] The historical project of imperial legitimization has taken a variety of forms, including militaristic conquest and legal policies, and the addition of cultural legitimization through storytelling furthers Said's claims that while imperial storytelling *normalizes* empire, such stories also *legitimize* empire and imperial ways of thinking about the world through tropes common in castaway-adventure stories. Such tropes include the emphasis on adventure and discovery, especially the mapping of newly 'discovered' areas, and encounters with "new worlds and civilizations" that favor the castaway-explore as the figure of prime importance and the purveyor of knowledge. Rieder labels these encounters tales of 'lost-races' through his exploration of *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, and *Voyager* adheres to many of the tropes regarding the adventurer-explore (and sometimes castaway) and the "discovery" of "lost" ("undiscovered") races, societies, and locations. Consistently told from a Euro-American perspective, tales of castaway-adventures with lost-race encounters contain numerous imperial frameworks that,

[14]Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, *Empire Islands: Castaways, Cannibals, And Fantasies of Conquest* (U of Minnesota Press, 2007), ix. *The Tempest* models a very standard colonial encounter through the interaction of Prospero, Ariel, and Caliban, the latter of whom undertakes the role of 'bad native,' to use a term supplied by John Rieder that I will discuss later in this chapter. One of the most notable discussions of colonialism in this play (and in the ensuing European imperial tradition) is Octave Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (University of Michigan Press, 1990), written in 1948 and detailing French colonial rule in Madagascar. In the Forward of this text, Philip Mason observes that "none of us are quite free of the Prospero complex" to tap into a presumed facet of human nature to govern (or be governed, the reader must assume)—Mason mentions Livingstone as a historical example of this trend (12). Although much scholarship in the half-century since Mannoni's publication rightly questions this overtly imperial assumption of the innate need to rule or be ruled, the centuries long tradition is worth noting, as is Mason's next comment: "And there are of course many Prospero's who never cross the sea" (12). Mason is not wrong in this observation, and as my chapter will demonstrate, we project the same kinds of encounters, ideologies, and expectations into the future as well.

[15]Ibid, xxi.

retold in literature for centuries, continue to normalize and legitimize imperial expectations and perspectives for discovery and encounters.

The seven year journey of the *Intrepid*-class starship *USS Voyager* through the Delta Quadrant is typical of castaway narratives, as "getting home" becomes the main directive for the Starfleet crew. Expanding the narrative to also encompass "adventure," co-creator Michael Piller observed that, in contrast to the third *Star Trek* series *Deep Space Nine* (1993-1999), set on a (mostly) stationary space station, *Voyager* "really concentrated on adventure".[16] The setting enabled this blend of castaway-adventure, which aligns with Green's first component for adventure stories: adventure tales are "a series of events, partly but not wholly accidental, in settings remote from the domestic and probably from the civilized (at least in the psychological sense of remote), which constitute a challenge to the central character".[17] *Voyager* presents a setting of literal remoteness that constitutes the challenges faced by the crew throughout the series duration. As noted in chapter 2 in my extended analysis of the pilot episode "Caretaker," the accidental event that results in the Starfleet presence in the Delta Quadrant—70,000 light years away from Earth—removes the crew from *everything* familiar outside of the bounds of their own ship. As Altman and Gross explain, this provided "a fresh new canvas upon which adventures could be placed".[18] *Voyager*'s presentation of a "fresh canvas" for adventure rests on the premise that the new setting is far removed from the "domestic" and "civilized" spaces of the Alpha Quadrant. In requiring this starting point, adventure stories normalize and legitimize imperial ways of thinking about the world through positioning the adventurer as the only "civilized" and "domestic" figure within the narrative. Additionally, through settling the "foreign" and "uncivilized" spaces as *the challenge* facing the central character, adventure narratives—*Voyager* included—tap into

[16]Mark A. Altman and Edward A. Gross, *Captains' Logs Supplemental: The Unauthorized Guide to the New Trek Voyages* (Little, Brown, 1996), 123.
[17]Green, *Dreams of Adventure*, 23.
[18]Altman and Gross, *Captains' Logs Supplemental*, 123.

imperial fears of the unknown as told from the perspective of the Euro-American explorer.

To meet the challenge required by distance from civilization, adventure narratives require that the main character(s) "performs a series of exploits which make him/her a hero, eminent in virtues such as courage, fortitude, cunning, strength, leadership, and persistence".[19] This list of virtues is an apt description of *Voyager* Captain Janeway, who serves as the central hero of the series in typical *Star Trek* fashion. In the *Voyager* Series Bible (echoed in the 1995 official Press Release promoting *Voyager*), the executive producers describe Janeway as embodying "all that is exemplary about Starfleet officers: intelligent, thoughtful, perspicacious, sensitive to the feelings of others, tough when she has to be, and not afraid to take chances," and ultimately as "one of the best [Officers]—male or female".[20] From the decision to destroy the Caretaker's Array in the pilot episode, to keeping her crew together throughout the seven year journey home, and finally arriving at Earth in the series finale "Endgame," Janeway embodies the challenges of life as an adventure character who faces numerous challenges enabled by her distance from "civilization".

Success in adventure stories depends on the protagonists using advanced Western technologies to further their scientific explorations into 'uncharted' territory. Euro-American empire building projects were also often dependent on advanced technologies. Included in Green's list of necessary requirements for the adventurer to "defeat the challenges he meets" are "the tools and techniques of the modern world system".[21] Specifically, Green highlights "guns or compasses, and scientific knowledge," keeping detailed accounts/records, and the rationalization for exploration.[22] *Voyager* makes use of the same kinds of technologies and scientific approaches, all of which enable and rationalize their exploration. These features

[19]Green, *Dreams of Adventure*, 23.
[20]Rick Berman, et al, "*Star Trek: Voyager* Bible," 5. Janeway's gender, and her status as an imperial agent, will be explored in chapter five of this project.
[21]Green, *Dreams of Adventure,* 23.
[22]Ibid, 23.

are all drawn from imperial histories and traditions, as were more subtle techniques glorified in adventure narratives. Green includes observation itself as a "technique" common to the modern world (the "civilized world" of the explorer/adventurer) which was utterly foreign (and presumably incomprehensible) to the recently discovered "uncharted territory" being explored, and the lost-races encountered therein.

Janeway and the *Voyager* crew are not only heroic adventurers with advanced technology who demonstrate characteristics of strength, cunning, and fortitude through their encounters with (and observations of) "new worlds and new civilizations"—they are also castaways. *Voyager* blends tropes and perspectives of adventure narratives with key features of castaway stories in ways that reinforce imperial ways of thinking about the world. Like adventure tales, castaway narratives require distance from "civilization". Unlike adventurers, however, castaways are stranded in some way, and the plot stems from that position as they are forced to 'save themselves' through their own efforts. In both genres, the explorer/castaway/adventurer undertakes numerous "rituals of possession" in the space they find themselves, whether by misfortune, chance, accident, or choice. Borrowing the concept from historian Patricia Seed, Weaver-Hightower outlines these rituals to include "mapping [the island], building structures, domesticating animals and plants, even changing the topography to better suit the castaway's needs".[23] These practices allow the castaway to survive their unintended exile until they are eventually rescued (or in the case of *Voyager*, until they make their own way home), and infuse the text with imperial practices and concepts that enabled centuries of Euro-American imperial expansion. The glorification of these rituals serves as a key way castaway-adventure stories normalize and legitimize the imperial project.

Mapping newly discovered territory was a fundamental part of survival for castaways and adventurers alike, and it played a significant role in Euro-American imperial and colonial

[23] Weaver-Hightower, *Empire Islands*, xxvi.

projects as a way to solidify difference through scientific and geographic classification. Roxanne Doty argues that in 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, Western imperial powers utilized tools of naturalization, classification, surveillance, and negation to enable their imperial projects.[24] Working together, these practices normalized, legitimized, and enabled imperial and colonial policies through process that constructed and reinforced hierarchies and divisions, like civilized/uncivilized, traditional/modern, and citizen/non-citizen. American policies of manifest destiny utilized these practices extensively, including the famous expedition launched by Lewis and Clark in 1805 to explore land newly acquired by President Thomas Jefferson's 1803 Louisiana Purchase. This extensive tract of land was already inhabited by numerous native populations, but Lewis and Clark's expedition presumed to "discover" the space and map it for the United States government. Commonly framed as an expedition to "investigate Indian culture, to collect plants and animal specimens, and to chart the geography of the West," the explorers played a key role in the classification of land as "unexplored" until discovered and mapped by *white* Americans.[25] In reality, the Lewis and Clark expedition was a military project that mapped the territory for later American expansion, as were others under the direction of Zebulon Pike, Thomas Freeman, and Peter Custis. Pike's group, for example, was made up of soldiers and Osage hostages and "had orders to illegally enter Spanish territory to gather information that would later be used for military invasion" for the purpose of drawing maps of the region that were later used to gain additional territory by the United States government.[26]

The militarily motivated scientific and mapping projects functioned as rituals of possession, and were undertaken as part of American imperial expansion resulted in maps of

[24]Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations* (U of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[25]James L. Roark et al., *Understanding The American Promise, Volume 1: To 1877: A Brief History of the United States* (Macmillan, 2011), 253-4.

[26]Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Beacon Press, 2014), 121.

"undiscovered" territory. Such actions, especially processes of classification and negation (the creation of "blank spaces waiting to be filled in by Western writing"[27]) served to better enable American territorial expansion. Anders Stephanson explores the American concept of manifest destiny, which "became a catchword for the idea of a providentially or historically sanctioned right to continental expansion," denoting an idea and practice entrenched in the United States since 'original settlement' by Europeans and continuing into the present.[28] The concept of manifest destiny and 'sea to sea' American expansion/conquest remains a driving force of American domestic and foreign policy: Stephanson observes that through centuries of westward expansion and 20th century figures like Presidents Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) and Ronald Reagan (1981-1989), "manifest destiny is of signal importance in the way the United States came to understand itself in the world and still does".[29] *Star Trek* is also built on narratives and perspectives of manifest destiny. Roddenberry sought to evoke this parallel with his original idea for *Star Trek* in the 1960s as a "wagon train to the stars," and the tradition has continued in each consecutive series. Fiona Davidson highlights this link, observing that "Roddenberry's Federation reiterates and reifies manifest destiny and the civilizing mission of western expansion for a new century"[30]—a trend carried throughout *Voyager* (although Davidson did not mention *Voyager* in her analysis) and the presentation of manifest destiny as the only method for exploration in the 23rd century.

Mapping, with historically attendant imperial connections to manifest destiny, retains a central position in castaway-adventure stories, and *Voyager* is no exception. When faced with the reality of their castaway situation at the end of "Caretaker," Janeway assumes a mission to learn more about the Delta Quadrant, and to map it for the Federation. This mapping

[27]Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 11.
[28]Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), xii.
[29]Ibid, xiv.
[30]Fiona M. Davidson, "Owning the Future: Manifest Destiny and the Vision of American Hegemony in Star Trek," *The Geographical Bulletin* 58, no. 1 (May 2017): 8–18, 11.

project undercuts the presumption that the Federation, through their proxy Janeway, sees the Delta Quadrant as equally civilized, especially in light of the contrast provided by the Kazon in the first episode (see chapter 2). In Janeway's closing speech in "Caretaker," she outlines two major directives for the crew: first and foremost, they will seek out "wormholes, spacial rifts, or new technologies to help us" find a faster route home, and second, "as the only Starfleet vessel assigned to the Delta Quadrant, we'll continue to follow our [Federation] directive to seek out new worlds and explore space".[31] The ship was never "assigned" to the Quadrant, of course, but Janeway attempts to put a positive spin on their situation to improve morale—and in doing so places central importance on *their* mission to *discover* the Quadrant. Doing so presumes it has not been previously discovered or explored, and centers the Federation as the purveyors of all knowledge worth knowing.

Even though *Voyager*'s extensive use of mapping served a practical purpose for the crew, especially as they traveled through territory unfamiliar to them, the entire process enabled the Federation to lay claim to extensive knowledge of a vast region of space and made the Delta Quadrant less "foreign" to the Federation crew. Further, Janeway's remarks not only give the crew a mission, but she stakes a claim on the territory they will explore. This implies that the Federation will make the only map of the area worth making while at the same time establishing their own position as "discoverers" of the area. Through the exploration and associated map-making project, *Voyager*'s expedition functioned much like Lewis and Clark's expedition in making the "definitive" map of the region that can then be used for a multitude of purposes by the Federation. Even though *Voyager*'s exploration of the Delta Quadrant was unplanned, unlike the deliberate explorations of Lewis and Clark, they gained vital intelligence on native peoples much like their historical counterparts. Historically this information was utilized by the imperial powers for direct conquest and colonization, and

[31] "Caretaker," *Star Trek: Voyager*, dir. Winrich Kolbe, (Paramount Television, January 16, 1995).

accounts of the imperial explorers were written into cultural narratives of adventure and discovery. Pike published his expedition notes in 1810, and the book quickly became a bestseller.[32] The glorification of discovery and the practical process of cartography served to normalize imperial projects and legitimize the need for them as efforts to "civilize" the "uncivilized" spaces: a tradition *Voyager* taps into through their emphasis on discovery and map-making.

The early season one episode "Eye of the Needle" illustrates how traditions of imperial exploration, adventure, and manifest destiny are infused throughout the *Voyager* narrative, including map-making and naming newly discovered territory. The episode, sketched briefly at the beginning of this chapter, details the discovery of a wormhole that Janeway hopes will open into the Alpha Quadrant and offer the crew a way home.[33] They eventually realize that the wormhole opens into the Alpha Quadrant twenty years before *Voyager* left, although not before Tom Paris suggests that they name the wormhole after Ensign Harry Kim—the "discoverer" of the anomaly. This comment reflects the "monarch-of-all-I-survey" feature of popular castaway narratives that itself was rooted in historical imperial exploration. Weaver-Hightower uses this concept to denote the rituals of possession of mapping and naming features of the island or other castaway space, which were also practiced by historical imperial explorers. In typical imperial explorer fashion, both literary and historical, the Federation crew presumes to name and use a "discovered" feature of their castaway/adventure/explorer space.

Beyond recreating castaway and adventure tropes through mapping and naming newly "discovered" space, this episode is noteworthy for other traditions rooted in stories and practices of American westward expansion. In his detailed look at the first two years of *Voyager* production, Stephen Edward Poe, a television producer, script-writer, and long-

[32] Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, 121.
[33] "Eye of the Needle," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 20, 1995).

time friend of Roddenberry, explained that the first draft of this episode centered on Janeway experiencing a classic Western holonovel. A version of holotechnology unique to *Voyager*, holonovels allowed the user to experience a personal narrative where they played a central character. Poe explains of this early draft that,

> When Jeri Taylor wrote the first draft of the teaser [of "Eye of the Needle"], she constructed a scenario in which Janeway was a pioneer woman in a covered wagon, headed out West. She had a husband and children. Day to day living was at a very simple level, often requiring her to do things for which she was unprepared and untrained—such as building a campfire. In short, nothing remotely like her job as a starship captain. Taylor thought it was a great metaphor for the captain's predicament in the Delta Quadrant, and would also provide a unique method of developing and enhancing Janeway's character.[34]

Even though nothing in the excerpt suggests that the script would have mirrored the historical removal of indigenous peoples that resulted from American practices of manifest destiny, this early draft speaks to the close ties between the tradition of westward expansion and show creators understanding of *Voyager* and their castaway-adventure journey. This draft never aired and is therefore not part of the *Voyager* canon, but it nonetheless illuminates the vision of the writers, based the narrative tropes of castaway-adventure stories themselves founded in historical imperial exploration, to glorify and romanticize traditions of American westward expansion and processes of settler colonialism and imperialism. In doing so, *Voyager* contributes to the normalization and legitimization of processes and concepts of empire as natural ways of seeing and engaging with the world.[35]

[34]Stephen Edward Poe, *A Vision of the Future* (Simon and Schuster, 1998), 11.

[35]A parallel to this episode can be found in the overall *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* narrative of the Federation-Dominion conflict. When the Federation discovers the stable wormhole leading to from the Alpha Quadrant to the Gamma Quadrant of space, no one questions the right or obligation of the Federation to explore. When the Dominion threat is firmly established in the season two finale ("The Jem'Hadar," which takes place on roughly five months before the premiere of *Voyager*, according to the Stardate calendar), we learn the Dominion is reacting to the continued Federation presence in the Gamma Quadrant. When warned by a Dominion soldier to halt their explorations in Dominion territory (i.e.: the Gamma Quadrant), Lt. Jadzia Dax exclaims that "you can't stop us from exploring!"—echoing much the same sentiment that

Voyager presents the galaxy as a place to be discovered and mapped by the Federation through tropes of adventure and castaway novels—and American imperial actions to colonize the continent. Exploration is presented as an unquestioned right of manifest destiny, and through rituals of possession, including mapping and naming the "discovered" space, *Voyager* casts those imperial perspectives into cultural narratives of the late 20th century. Through the continued representation of processes of classification, including map-making, castaway-adventure narratives present Western perspectives as normal and legitimate, and imperial ways of seeing the world are reinforced and strengthened.

3.3 Lost-Races: Aliens and the Cultivation of Difference as Imperial Processes

Castaway and adventure narratives founded on discovery and exploration create opportunities to encounter new worlds and new civilizations—and new people. Science fiction has deep connections to historical imperial encounters, and *Voyager* recreates many tropes of early science fiction 'lost-race' encounters through the castaway-adventure narrative. These tales are rooted in Euro-American imperial and colonial expansion through the presentation of 'lost-races' as uncivilized or otherwise disadvantaged in comparison to the Western explorers.[36] Utilizing processes of "colonial disavowal where settlers refused to acknowledge the indigenous presence by crafting land as 'empty' and uncultivated" (as *undiscovered* and *unknown*) coupled with expeditions to "discover" the lost or unknown races, settler colonial processes followed the manifest destiny of American ideology to spread structures of

Paris expresses in "Eye of the Needle". The Federation practice of exploration is fundamentally rooted in a belief that it is *their right* to explore, regardless of claims made my native inhabitants. As such, this is continued proof of the normalizing effect of adventure narratives in our continued imagination.

[36] John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*.

power throughout the continent.[37] *Voyager* presents settler colonial ideologies in the Delta Quadrant through the framework of castaway-adventurers who "discover" numerous species and territories of the Quadrant. *Voyager* encounters over 50 new races throughout their time in the Delta Quadrant, and the first two seasons highlight repeated encounters with three species: the Kazon, the Vidiians, and a lone Talaxian trader named Neelix who joins the *Voyager* crew. Through these encounters, *Voyager* features many tropes common to early science fiction, including engagement with "native" civil wars, the disastrous creation of artificial humans, and the "helpful native". Rieder explores these tropes in science fiction written during 1870-1910: "the period of the most fervid imperialist expansion in the late nineteenth century [which] is also the crucial period for the emergence of the [science fiction] genre".[38] For Rieder, the question is not *whether* lost race science fiction stories engage colonial themes and (following Said) normalize the process of 'Othering' inherent in the imperial project, but rather "*to what extent* the stories engage colonialism".[39] Processes of empire permeated the emergence of the science fiction genre, *especially* those tales engaging lost races, and *Voyager* model those practices and imperial perspectives in ways that continue to normalize and legitimize imperial ways of thinking about the world.

Rieder's acknowledges in passing the "enduring appeal of such quasi-colonial adventure" in *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*,[40] although I hold that there is nothing "quasi" (defined either as "partially" or "seemingly") about the imperial castaway-adventure presented in *Voyager*. *Voyager*'s presentation of lost-race tropes—following the Federation aim to engage with

[37]Dahl, *Empire of the People,* 13.

[38]Rieder, *Colonialism*, 3. A wealth of incredible science fiction has been created in countries outside of the Western/Soviet frameworks of early science fiction, much of which challenges many of the Euro-American notions of narrative and science fiction I explore in this analysis. That said, I follow Rieder in focusing on the scope of 'classic SF' in an attempt to better understand the ongoing and evolving legacy in well-known and popular examples of science fiction. Rieder notes that France, England, the United States, Germany, and Russia are the 'origin nations' of science fiction, at the same time "those countries also enter into more and more serious imperial competition" (3).

[39]Ibid, 3, emphasis added.

[40]Ibid, 147.

newly "discovered" life—recreates cross-cultural interaction typical of historical imperial encounters. Traditional assumptions of empire denote a clear-cut process of domination and subjugation, but more recent studies explore the significance of cross-cultural interaction (with clear power imbalance) in the creation of both empire and contemporary civilization and modernity. As historians like Lauren Benton and Lori Daggar illustrate in European and American contexts, engagement with new civilizations (whether 'lost' or not) is a requisite for imperial action,[41] and *Star Trek* is not exempt from this possibility. Empire-building is a practice of expansion, almost always into territory already otherwise occupied.

The processes of cross-cultural interaction required in the empire-building project are varied, and include military, legal, political, and cultural practices. Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper frame these processes as a "politics of difference," practiced differently by different imperial powers in different colonized locations, but in general comprised of efforts to maintain and create difference that "was not natural".[42] The creation of artificial binaries, including civilized/uncivilized and traditional/modern, codified difference and was written into colonial and imperial legal policies that presumed the Western powers were superior. These beliefs (including scientific racism) enabled and justified Euro-American imperial and colonial practices through many political and cultural mediums, including castaway, adventure, and lost-race fiction. Imperial powers depended upon policies of difference to establish and maintain control, and Burbank and Cooper note that "difference could be a fact and an opportunity, not an oppression," which significantly expands any discussion of empire

[41] Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2002) conducts a significant examination of the cross-cultural interaction between colonizers and colonial subjects, defying the typical belief of these figures and processes as simple domination and subjugation. More recently, Lori Daggar explores the combined process of "top down" alongside "bottom up" economic formation of the early American imperial republic: Lori J. Daggar. "The Mission Complex: Economic Development, "Civilization," and Empire in the Early Republic." *Journal of the Early Republic* 36, no. 3 (2016): 467-491.

[42] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 12.

beyond the broad-strokes presentation of 'evil empires' of oppression and violence.[43] That said, oppression through difference (racial, religious, ethnic, gender-based, etc.) was a central component of historical Euro-American imperial and colonial projects. Contemporary presentations of difference involve continued distinction between the "developed" Global North and the "underdeveloped" (or equally contested "developing") Global South, for example, and rely on centuries old imperial frameworks of difference that enabled and justified imperial expansion and control.[44] *Voyager* reinforces imperial policies of difference in their numerous alien encounters where the Federation is repeatedly established as *different and superior* from all alien races through the recreation of tropes of lost-race encounters that served (and continue to serve) to normalize and legitimize Euro-American imperial ideologies.

Imperial ideologies underwrote practices of Euro-American colonialism, although the connections have often gone unexplored in analysis of early science fiction narratives until Rieder's notable study. Rieder defines and applies the term *colonialism* broadly to encompass "the entire process by which European economy and culture penetrated and transformed the non-European world over the last five centuries".[45] Included in this vast endeavor are Western narratives that champion ideas of progress through exploration and encounters with exotic 'Othered' races—a hallmark of early science fiction stories similarly evoked throughout *Star Trek*.[46] Rieder's interrogation of early science fiction texts stems from the lack of analysis of imperial frameworks within this body of literature. He discusses many of the same texts as Mark Rose in *Alien Encounters*, although Rose (and others) engage the early texts through

[43]Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 12.

[44]For further discussions of development as an imperial process, see chapter 4 of this project, or refer to Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 2011); and Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (Zed Books Ltd., 1997).

[45]Rieder, *Colonialism*, 25.

[46]Roddenberry's second draft of *The Original Series* opening directive included the phrase "explores the excitement of strange new worlds, uncharted civilizations and exotic people" (Solow and Justman, *Inside Star Trek*, 145). He revised this wording out of the final version, but the intent remains.

a discussion of themes *removed* from colonial and imperial interests, ideals, and encounters. Rose observes, for example, that Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864)—a classic adventure story of exploration in a 'lost realm'—expresses a typically "Western attitude toward nature," but never pushes the analysis to explore the imperial undertones of Western scientist/adventurers exploring (and laying claim to) the center of the earth.[47] The edited collection *Alien Imaginations: Science Fiction and Tales of Transnationalism* is another example of recent science fiction analysis that similarly studies alien encounters but overlooks imperial ideologies.[48] Here, alienation is used as a method to study how "we are the alien" removed of any concurrent examination of the tradition of conquest and empire that created concepts of alienation. Examination of imperial (or *colonial*, in Rieder's extremely broad definition of the term) assumptions and ideologies present in the lost-race tropes *Voyager* employs demonstrates ongoing efforts to maintain difference between 'Western' civilizations (including the Federation) and 'Others'. Doing so perpetuates imperial mindsets and ways of viewing the world—and other worlds and possible future worlds.

3.3.1 The 'Bad Natives': The Kazon

The *Voyager* crew encountered the Kazon frequently throughout the first two seasons after their introduction in the pilot "Caretaker" (explored in detail in Chapter 2). Presented as primitive, nomadic, and warlike, the Kazon never bested the Federation despite numerous attempts to conquer the *Voyager* crew. Throughout their tenure as the main antagonists in seasons one and two, the Kazon functioned as the 'bad natives,' following the lost-race civil war motif which solidifies and maintains difference in these adventure (and sometimes castaway) texts. Rieder identifies this civil war trope as one that portrays "the society the

[47] Mark Rose, *Alien Encounters: Anatomy of Science Fiction* (Harvard University Press, 2000), 61.

[48] Ulrike Kuchler, Silja Maehl, and Graeme A. Stout, *Alien Imaginations: Science Fiction and Tales of Transnationalism* (Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2016).

explorers enter as one already riven by internal conflicts that the adventurers then play a decisive role in helping to solve" that evokes the oft-repeated 'white man's burden' of colonization used to justify much Euro-American colonization.[49] The Kazon were a once-great then-conquered people who later rebelled and eventually formed 18 different sects who constantly fought amongst themselves for advantages. As such, their society was already "riven by internal conflicts" when 'discovered' by the Federation, and Janeway eventually attempted to resolve those differences in the manner prescribed in this lost-race trope.

Civil war stories categorizes lost-race characters as either 'good' or 'bad natives'. This binary presentation contributes to ongoing politics of difference that legitimize and normalize imperial attitudes toward 'Othered' species and races. The Talaxian character Neelix assumed the role of 'good native,' aiding and joining the Starfleet crew in "Caretaker," and fulfilled the requirements for the role: "The good natives, in one way or another, are always already members of the explorers' party".[50] In contrast, 'bad natives' constantly oppose the castaway-adventurers, and are revealed as 'bad' deliberately through racial and cultural differences between this lost-race and the castaway/explorers. Racial differences are evident in any number of classic lost-race texts, including Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (1912), where the 'bad natives' are presented as "a more apelike group" than the "stone-age humans" who struggle against them.[51] Unlike Doyle's classic, the Kazon are not cast as apes (this physical appearance is evoked for a species of Xindi in *Enterprise*). Instead, they all have red or brown skin with stone-like features prominent in their spiky, dark, and messy hair. Forehead ridges, reminiscent of the Klingons, and fur covered outfits complete the physical picture of racial 'Other'.[52] While the Kazon are far from the only race in the

[49]Rieder, *Colonialism and The Emergence of Science Fiction*, 41.
[50]Ibid, 43.
[51]Ibid, 43.
[52]Klingon's are at war with the Federation in *The Original Series*, although that conflict has resolved peaceably and resulted in the Klingon Empire joining the Federation by the events of *The Next Generation*. The recent prequel *Discovery* recounts the onset of the Klingon-Federation War, and it's resolution prior to

Trek canon to appear physically primitive in contrast to the human-dominated Federation with their well-coiffed hair and crisp uniforms, the clear racial cast of the Kazon as 'Other' combines with their cultural differences to explain (and perhaps justify) the Federation's constant refusal to aid them in any way.

Cultural differences are equally visible between 'bad natives' and the explorers who 'discovered' them. Rieder identifies a number of cultural differences common to classic lost-race narratives, including "rituals of human sacrifice," a thread present in the Kazon storyline of *Voyager*.[53] "Initiations" features the return of the Kazon for the third time, and this episode highlights First Officer Chakotay and a Kazon youth named Kar, who tries to kill Chakotay to achieve his status as a warrior within his clan—failure would result in Kar's death.[54] In this variation of the human sacrifice storyline, the ritual of violence to gain status (or lose it entirely) serves as an indication of the 'bad native' status of the Kazon, continuing to put them on the 'Othered' end of the cultural and racial spectrum from the Federation. Despite Chakotay's attempts to convince Kar that a just and humane (moral, liberal, Western) society would not require this 'kill or be killed' sacrifice, Kar turns his back on Chakotay and the opportunity to 'better himself' by leaving the Kazon and his cultural traditions behind. Further demonstrating the 'bad native' status of the Kazon, Kar promises to kill Chakotay if they ever met again. On one hand it seems reasonable to applaud Chakotay's efforts to offer Kar an alternative to a life of violence—a mandate the Federation pursues often in engagement with alien races—but this attempt also belittles the Kazon's cultural traditions and ways of life, and established difference with the Federation as morally, in addition to techno-

Captain Kirk's famous "five year journey" in *TOS*. Klingon's as a *Trek* 'Other' will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5 when I examine the half human/half Klingon hybrid character B'Elanna Torres.

[53]Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, 44.

[54]"Initiations," *Star Trek: Voyager,* dir. Winrich Kolbe, (Paramount Television, September 4, 1995). Technically this episode, and the other three that kick off season 2, were written and filmed as part of season 1, but the network opted to save them to begin season 2 for financial reasons. "Initiations" was originally designed to be the first episode of season 2 (Altman and Gross, *Captains' Logs Supplemental*, 154).

logically, superior. The constant presentation of Federation as different-and-superior from the Kazon through racial and cultural markers reinforces the imperial politics of difference that enabled and justified centuries of Euro-American imperial and colonial practices.

Civil war lost-race stories present the 'bad natives' as beings who simultaneously resisted the explorers as invaders and welcomed them as possible benefactors.[55] This tension reflects the Western presentation of colonized peoples as subjects in need of saving who often did not understand how and why they needed to be saved. In *Voyager*, this trope plays out through repeated attempts by the Kazon to acquire Federation technology by force. The Kazon-Ogla and Kazon-Nistrim frequently harass *Voyager* out of a desire to acquire their food replicator and teleportation technology to gain an advantage over other Kazon tribes. Throughout these encounters, Janeway refuses to give the Kazon any technology, and this storyline consistently established the Federation as superior technologically and morally in contrast to the Kazon who sought Federation aid (or at least their technology) while at the same time resisting their presence in the Quadrant.

The season one episode "State of Flux" introduces these lost-race motifs alongside reinforcing basic tenets of *Voyager*'s castaway status. Much like a traditional literary castaway who washed up on a deserted island with limited food and supplies, the *Voyager* crew was forced to ration all manner of supplies, especially the fuel used their food replication technology. "State of Flux" featured resource rationing and foraging for food by the *Voyager* crew and the return of the Kazon seeking Federation technology.[56] Ultimately, this episode reveals that purloined Starfleet technology does not mix well with Kazon technology (it causes an explosion on the Kazon ship that killed all but one Kazon crew member) and unmaskes Maquis crew member Seska as a Cardassian and Kazon spy. Additionally this episode set the pattern of Kazon-Federation engagement, wherein the Kazon were constantly presented

[55]Rieder, *Colonialism and The Emergence of Science Fiction*, 40.
[56]"State of Flux," dir. Robert Scheerer, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, April 10, 1995).

as less competent, uncivilized, and clearly 'Other' to the advanced Federation. Not only do they resort to spying and stealing—cultural differences that settled the Kazon as 'bad natives' in contrast to the morally superior Federation explorers-castaway-adventurers—but they never succeed even when they use underhanded tactics.

Following classic lost-race civil war encounters, Janeway ultimately attempts to help the Kazon craft a peace treaty amongst the sects in "Alliance".[57] "Alliance" details two related failures by the *Voyager* crew: one attempt to form an alliance with the Kazon, and one attempt to form an alliance with another alien race, the Trabe, and broker peace between the Kazon sects. The episode starts with a Kazon attack that ended with a former Maquis crew member dead. Several senior staff urge Janeway to make an alliance with the Kazon in hopes of safer travel through the area. Tuvok equates the proposed alliance to the treaty established between the Federation and the Klingon in *Star Trek IV: The Undiscovered Country*, which recounted actions taken by the crews of the *Enterprise* and *Excelsior* to prevent sabotage of the impending alliance.[58] Unlike that groundbreaking alliance, however, Janeway's attempt to negotiate with the Kazon reveals additional cultural differences that settle the Kazon firmly as the 'bad native' in contrast to the morally advanced and civilized Federation. Maje Cullah, leader of the Kazon-Nistrim, refuses to listen to Janeway, declaring that "I won't have a woman dictate terms to me". This overt sexism emphasizes the 'uncivilized' status of the Kazon, and was contrasted throughout *Voyager*'s journey by the ease with which Janeway's crew generally obeyed her commands.[59] Nonetheless, Janeway continued her efforts to broker peace between the sects, following the formula of the civil war lost-race motif. When the

[57] "Alliances," dir. Les Landau, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 22, 1996).

[58] *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country,* dir. Nicholas Meyer, (Paramount Pictures, 1991).

[59] There were moments throughout the series when crew members (especially senior staff) took issue with Janeway's commands, but those were always procedural or ideological conflicts, rather than conflicts rooted in obeying the orders of a female captain. The thread of gender as part of the imperial project (historically, contemporarily, and in *Voyager*) will be taken up directly in chapter five of my project. Although Janeway's status as imperial agent serves to frequently underwrite the series with imperial tendencies and perspectives, she remains a notable *female* leading figure in a 1990s television show.

efforts failed through Trabe treachery and Kazon distrust, Janeway explained to her crew:

> In a part of space where there are few rules, it's more important than ever that we hold fast to our own. In a region where shifting allegiances are commonplace we have to have something stable to rely on. And we do: the principles and ideals of the Federation. As far as I'm concerned, those are the best allies we could have.

In this moment, Janeway chose allegiance to the distant Federation and refused to make alliances with aliens who were only ever presented as untrustworthy, treacherous, and uncivilized. This declaration was built on numerous Kazon encounters where the lost-race (newly discovered race) was presented as "less" than the Federation: less technologically advanced, less socially advanced, less moral, and less civilized. Robert Beltran, who played Chakotay, observed the possible Federation-Kazon alliance was "no different than the United States giving nation status to China, when we know full well what goes on over there, or any other despotic government that we recognize for our own convenience".[60] Beltran's comments in no way reflect those of the writer's, but his words do speak to the way the Kazon were consistently portrayed: as a 'bad native' group featured in direct contrast to the moral, rational, and civilized castaway-explore.

The final episode featuring the Kazon, "Basic," highlights several moments of imperial normalization and legitimization through the frame of 'bad natives' failing to defeat the superior civilized explorers. In the end, the Kazon are 'Othered' to the extent that their problems *cannot be fixed*: they are 'bad natives' who cannot be redeemed or saved. "Basic" tells the story of one final Kazon effort to capture *Voyager* after stranding the crew on a nearby planet.[61] Two main plots occur throughout the episode: on the ship, the technologically advanced holographic Doctor and a single crew member (Lou Suder) defeated the

[60] Anna L. Kaplan, "Commander Chakotay," *Cinefantastique* 28, no. 4/5 (1996): 99–100, 100.

[61] "Basic, Parts 1 and 2," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 20, 1996 and September 4, 1996).

Kazon occupation force while the crew attempted to survive on an inhospitable planet. On *Voyager*, the Doctor realizes a Kazon take-over is in progress, and (after declaring "I'm a doctor, not a counterinsurgent" in an echo of *TOS* Doctor "Bones" McCoy), turns to Suder for help. Suder had been restricted to his cabin in the earlier episode "Meld," wherein he suffered from sociopathic tendencies and killed another crew member.[62] In "Basic," the Doctor encourages Suder to 'do what needed to be done' in order to foil the Kazon plot, and this encouragement of violence reinforced *and sanctioned* the use of violence to achieve imperial objectives, including efforts to prevent hostile take-overs. In the end, Suder kills a Kazon to complete his mission and recover the ship (with a little help from Tom Paris and some Talaxian allies). Further reinforcing the moral balance of Federation officers in control of Federation technology and Federation objections, Suder—the violent outlier himself evoking 'uncivilized' tendencies—dies while achieving his goal.

The additional components of "Basic" further underwrite imperial tendencies of lost-race fiction through recreating a short 'white savior' storyline. While the Doctor and Suder defeat the Kazon insurgent force, the *Voyager* crew face cold temperatures and man-eating giant snakes as they struggle to survive their unintended exile. In a self-deprecating remark after failing to start a fire without matches, Chakotay reflects to Janeway that, "trapped on a barren planet, and you're stuck with the only Indian in the universe who can't start a fire by rubbing two sticks together." Racist implications notwithstanding (even if they were self-directed), the crew also encounters hostile and extremely primitive aliens who attack the crew—until the resident "Indian" Chakotay rescues a native child from a lava flow and earns the aid of the natives. This benevolent aid from the castaway/explorer reflects the 'white savior' narrative of much lost-race fiction. Even if Chakotay himself was a descendant of native peoples indigenous to North America before conquest and colonization by Europeans,

[62] "Meld," dir. Cliff Bole, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 5, 1996).

he exists fully a member of the Federation in this moment as he 'saves' a 'bad native' from death.[63] Further, this portion of the episode underlines why the Federation crew refuses to settle in the Delta Quadrant—time and again, the Quadrant was presented as uncivilized and primitive in contrast to Federation ways of life. Much like Janeway's comments at the end of "Alliance," the Federation proves to be the *Voyager*'s crews only allies, even when they are 70,000 light years away from Earth. In the end, "Basic" concludes with the crew rescued and charting a course toward Earth. In doing so, they vacated Kazon space for good and leave the Kazon to return to their previous status quo. This ending deviates slightly from the classic presentation of the civil war motif of lost-race fiction, wherein the explorer/adventurer would solve the problem for the native populations, but it nonetheless normalizes and legitimizes beliefs in the 'superior' and 'uncivilized' races that were central to Euro-American imperial projects. Through the continued repetition of classic lost-race tropes in the multiple Kazon encounters, *Voyager* restricts the possibility of *more* in a repeated alien encounter, and thus limits the possibility of non-imperial worldviews.

3.3.2 The Artificial Creators/Creations: The Vidiians

The second alien race encountered by the Federation crew draws on another major lost-race motif: the theme of artificially constructed life. This trope is linked to the historical construction of race as identity and difference as established through Euro-American imperial and colonial projects, including American settler colonialism. Of race in early science fiction, Rieder observes that "the concept of race does not depend on precise categorization, however,

[63]Chakotay is in fact a former Federation officer who defected to aid the Maquis in fighting off Cardassian rule. It is apparent in this episode, and many others, that he has 'returned to the fold,' so to speak, through his experiences in the Delta Quadrant. There are moments when Chakotay's character, more perhaps than any other in the *Voyager* narrative, offers subtle opportunities to break from the overarching imperial narrative reinforced through so many facets of the series story line, which I will discuss in chapter six. That said, this is not one of those moments.

but simply on division itself;" a division reinforced through all these early alien encounters in *Voyager*.[64] The Vidiians are an alien race unique to *Voyager* and the Delta Quadrant, and evoke images of Dr. Victor Frankenstein's creature and other early science fiction narratives exploring the perils involved with the artificial creation of life.[65] The Vidiians take a slightly different approach from the creation of artificial life as detailed in *Frankenstein* (1818). Instead, they harvest organs from living and dead alien species to replace their own body parts failing due to an incurable disease ravaging their civilization. This version of *Voyager*'s lost-race narrative continues to evoke "widespread racist ideologies" deeply rooted in the Euro-American imperial project that were reinforced through stories that detailed the artificial creation of life.[66] Through their continued antagonism of the *Voyager* crew, the Vidiian storyline reinforces colonial ideologies of "us vs. them" with the 'unnatural Other' manipulating values of their once-great civilization providing a contrast to the presumably consistent—and morally superior—Federation.

Voyager first encounters the Vidiians in the fourth episode of season one, "Phage," which sets the stage of the lost-race motif of the artificial creation of life as deployed in the series.[67] In this episode, a small 'away team' is ambushed by unknown aliens while they explore a small planetoid in search of fuel, and Neelix collapses. After he is transported to sickbay, the Doctor discovers that his lungs have been removed by the aliens. The *Voyager* crew gradually

[64]Rieder, *Colonialism and The Emergence of Science Fiction*, 110.

[65]Mary Shelley's notable text is considered the first science fiction novel by many scholars, including Brian W. Aldiss in his massive overview of the genre, *Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction* (originally published in the 1973 as *Billion Year Spree*). In this revised edition (Avon Books, 1986), Aldiss observes that one of his earliest beliefs remains firm: "Foremost among these beliefs is a certainty about the origins of SF. Of course, it is in a way a Stone Age truth to say that SF began with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). … bearing in mind that no genre is pure, *Frankenstein* is more than a merely convenient place at which to begin the story. …. Mary Shelley's novel betokens an inescapably new perception of mankind's capabilities …. Moreover, *Frankenstein* is marvelously good and inexhaustible in its interests" (18). Shelley's creation, which highlights the fascination and horror of science, certainly had great influence on this motif of lost-race stories.

[66]Rieder, *Colonialism and The Emergence of Science Fiction*, 97.

[67]"Phage," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 6, 1995).

learns that the alien race has suffered for centuries from a degenerative disease they call the Phage. Unable to find a cure, the Vidiians began harvesting organs from other species using advanced medical technology adapted solely for this purpose. The Vidiians would then implant the harvested organs (including Neelix's lungs) in a sick Vidiian to replace their decaying organs. When Janeway discovers this fact, she realizes that they would never recover Neelix's lungs, as she concludes that it would be inhumane to condemn an alien to death so Neelix could live. As a result of this noble sacrifice—one the Vidiians themselves did not share, as evident by their actions in stealing the organs in the first place—the Vidiians use their advanced technology to facilitate a lung transplant, which ensures Neelix's survival. The contrast between Janeway's (and the Federation's) nobility and the Vidiian's savagery—mediated only slightly by saving Neelix's life—dominates the entire Vidiian storyline and settles this lost-race tale firmly in a colonial and imperial framework of difference.

Through depicting the perils and immoral nature of artificially creating (and perpetuating) life, the Vidiians reflect long traditions in science fiction and lost-race texts that highlight and reinforce the "problem of nature versus culture."[68] This staple in the classic foundational texts of this form of lost-race fiction, notably Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), details the consequences of meddling with nature and natural ways of life. Such explorations of the tensions (and presumed natural binary) between nature and culture, alongside concepts of race and evolving racism against non-white races, played an ideological and political role in the 19$^{\text{th}}$ and 20$^{\text{th}}$ centuries as American and British imperial power expanded. The Vidiian storyline in *Voyager* demonstrates that such narratives are still present in contemporary popular culture as the 'Other' race is repeatedly constructed differently than 'us'. Additionally, through recreating this lost-race motif centered on racial and moral difference, the Vidiians extend the "racist ideo-

[68]Rieder, *Colonialism and The Emergence of Science Fiction*, 98.

logical fantasy that guides much colonial practice," ultimately leading to the "final collapse of the hierarchical differences between civilization and savagery".[69] Through the presentation that the Vidiian civilization has devolved to savagery through stealing body parts from others, both living and dead, the narrative positions the Federation (castaway/explorer) as more advanced, civilized, 'just,' and morally right. As the superior Federation 'discovers' the savage Vidiians, then, *Voyager* presents colonial and imperial tropes as normalized ways of seeing the universe, and all life in it.

The season one episode "Faces" details *Voyager*'s second encounter with the Vidiians, this one featuring Chief Engineer B'Elanna Torres.[70] In this episode, Torres (a half human, half Klingon former Maquis) is physically separated against her will into two beings: one fully human, one fully Klingon. On one hand this episode serves as an early step in Torres' long journey to reconcile her divided identity as part human and part Klingon (an obvious racial binary to be discussed in more detail in chapter five). On the other hand, it also demonstrates unethical medical experiments (by Federation standards, at least) on the part of the Vidiians. Torres is ultimately rescued by *Voyager* and returned to her 'natural' biracial state by the Doctor, but not before the Vidiians discovered properties in Torres' Klingon DNA that might offer a cure for the Phage. This episode demonstrates that the Vidiians are smart and driven to find a cure of the Phage, but illuminates the unacceptable 'savage' steps they take in order to find that cure. This contrast continues to put the Federation on the 'right' and idealized side of the 'us/them' divide, creating a situation wherein the Federation stand as superior to these artificial, less-than-human aliens.

The episode "Lifesigns" brings the Vidiians back again, and this time audiences see the holographic Doctor work with a Phage-ridden Vidiian scientist, Denara Pel, to find a

[69] Rieder, *Colonialism and The Emergence of Science Fiction,* 106 and 109.
[70] "Faces," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 8, 1995).

cure for her disease.[71] Pel is part of a small subset of Vidiians who dislike the practice of stealing body parts, instead motivated in researching a cure through more humane and moral methods, unlike the Vidiian researcher in "Faces". This episode draws on the 'white savior' framework common in lost-race stories (including the civil war motif, outlined above, where the explorers/adventurers aid the 'bad natives' in some manner), and positions the Doctor as the savior figure as he aided Pel in her research and exposes her to Federation knowledge and techniques. Following the plot of "Faces," the cure is based on Torres' Klingon DNA and therefore not a possible wide-spread cure for all Vidiians, although Pel leaves *Voyager* at the episodes end with plans to continue her research and eventually save her species. This episode demonstrates the possibility of civility among Vidiians, even if this civility was limited to Pel herself, rather than Vidiians writ-large.

The next encounter with the Vidiians furthers the contrast between the savage Vidiians and the morally progressive Federation. In "Deadlock," the Vidiians capture a duplicate *Voyager* created as the result of an unexplained spacial anomaly at the beginning of the episode.[72] This episode again highlights savagery from the Vidiians, as they harvest and kill the bulk of the duplicate *Voyager* crew. The Federation undertakes violence in this episode as well, as the duplicate Federation crew retaliates against the Vidiians attack of the original *Voyager* and uses the self-destruct feature to destroy duplicate-*Voyager* and remaining crew—and the entire Vidiian crew. This act of total destruction against the Vidiians occurs as a moment of ultimate self-sacrifice: duplicate-Janeway uses the self-destruct feature on a ship mostly empty of living crew to ensure that the original *Voyager* crew (with full living compliment) will escape and survive.[73] The Vidiians, on the other

[71] "Lifesigns," dir. Cliff Bole, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 26, 1996).

[72] "Deadlock," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, March 18, 1996).

[73] Duplicate-Janeway sends Harry Kim and the infant Naomi Wildman over to original-*Voyager* before destroying the ship, to replace the original Kim and Wildman who were killed in an accident during the original duplication event. In doing so, duplicate-Janeway, exactly like her original counterpart, demonstrates her main motivation of preserving the crew at all costs—including her own life.

hand, were simply harvesting organs and killing indiscriminately—there was nothing noble in that presentation. Like in "Basic," *Voyager* highlights the need for extreme violence practiced by the Federation on occasion (arguably more frequently and in more detail than any other *Trek* series), but the violent action is always explained as necessary for the survival of the crew.

The final Federation encounter with the Vidiians took a different tone, although the lost-race tropes remained unchanged. In "Resolutions," Janeway and Chakotay suffer from a different incurable illness, and opt to settle on an uninhabited planet rather than infect the *Voyager* crew.[74] Most of the episode recounts the story of their friendship and willingness to sacrifice their own return home for the good of the crew—another illustration of the noble character instilled in Federation officers. In an inverse of the standard 'white savior' storyline so common in these first two seasons, the Vidiian Danara Pel saves the day by providing a cure for Janeway and Chakotay. Still, the larger Vidiian frame paints a different picture: the Vidiians use the lure of a cure to set a trap for the *Voyager* crew, who still manage to outsmart the aliens forces and escape. Through these varied encounters, *Voyager* recreates typical lost-race tropes detailing the dangers, perils, and savagery of the artificial creation of life through reinforcing differences between the Vidiians and the Federation in ways that normalized and legitimize ongoing imperial ideologies of difference. In the position as the civilized castaway/adventurer/explorer, the *Voyager* crew demonstrates a penchant for self-sacrifice for the good of their collective and a scientific willingness to help the Vidiians (even Torres agrees to help Pel, despite what she previously suffered at the hands of another Vidiian scientist looking for a Phage cure). In each instance, the Federation crew exemplifies moral superiority. The Vidiians, in contrast, were self-interested to the point of murder and at the mercy of their own savagery.

[74] "Resolutions," dir. Alexander Singer, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 13, 1996).

In discussing the motivations for the Vidiians, show co-creator Jeri Taylor explained that

> The idea of a race that does really unspeakably horrible things, but does them simply because they're trying to survive, we thought was a very complex agenda. We love it when our adversaries are not one-dimensional villains but have attitudes and textures and layers to explore.[75]

Winrich Kolbe, director of "Phage" and many other early episodes, echoed the sentiment:

> The Vidiians takes aliens off that pedestal of being weird and gives them some humanity. We were dealing with a very grotesque exterior but a very human emotion. These are a people who are basically dying and are trying desperately to save their species. It's something we're very aware of given organ transplants these days.[76]

This clear interest in presenting an alien race as a "civilized people forced to do uncivilized things in order to survive" (in the words of co-creator Michael Piller)—a race with 'humanity' and 'human emotions'—allows, on the one hand, engagement with seeing ourselves in the alien race.[77] Reading the alien as a reflection of the self is a common approach to science fiction analysis, demonstrated well throughout the edited collection *Alien Imaginations*. This collection considers science fiction as a method for analyzing all texts of alien encounters, whether they are terrestrial or extraterrestrial.[78] The essays in this collection explore traditional science fiction texts (starting with H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*) alongside non-science fiction texts to demonstrate the varied applicability of using science fiction studies as a method of understanding "tales of transnationalism" with an eye toward reading alien encounters as an exploration of the self. Reading the Vidiians in this light—a significantly

[75]Mark Altman and Edward Gross, *The Fifty-Year Mission: The Next 25 Years: From The Next Generation to J. J. Abrams: The Complete, Uncensored, and Unauthorized Oral History of Star Trek* (Macmillan, 2016), 594.
[76]Ibid, 594.
[77]Ibid, 595.
[78]Kuchler, Maehl, and Stout, *Alien Imaginations*.

easier task than with the less-civilized and constantly 'Othered' Kazon—creates space to study themes related to struggles over morality, organ donation, and scientific experimentation.

The Vidiian storyline in *Voyager* does allow for such readings, but it is important—following Said's argument noted earlier in this chapter—not to disregard the colonial overtones of the narrative echoed in the lost-race trope of the perils of artificial creation of life. Through recreating details of the lost-race trope epitomizing the importance of maintaining a 'civilized' status in contrast to the lure of barbaric science, *Voyager* constructed difference between the Federation and the lost-races they encountered. As Said observes, such moments in a cultural entertainment narrative like *Voyager* do not "cause people to go out and imperialize".[79] Rather, these storylines continue to recreate conditions to see processes of difference as normalized behaviors even several centuries into a presumed utopian future, and to legitimize reactions to those differences, reinforcing distinctions between "us" and "them," through the repetition of lost-race tropes in contemporary storytelling.

3.3.3 The Helper: Neelix

The Talaxian character Neelix serves as a contrast to other alien encounters in the Delta Quadrant. Neelix aids the *Voyager* crew in "Caretaker" out of his desire to save Kes (another friendly Delta Quadrant character) from enslavement by the Kazon (another sign of their uncivilized status). Neelix and Kes join the *Voyager* crew as allies at the end of the pilot episodes, and even though Kes leaves the show/ship after three seasons, Neelix travels with *Voyager* for the bulk of the series narrative. Over time on the ship he assumed the role of chef, self-appointed 'morale officer,' and unofficial ambassador for the crew. When he eventually left *Voyager* to remain on a Talaxian colony at the end of season seven, Janeway confirmed

[79] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 81-2.

him as the official Starfleet Ambassador for the Delta Quadrant.[80] During his seven years on *Voyager*, Neelix fulfilled the fundamental lost-race role of 'good native,' who "are always already members of the explorers' party".[81] As indicated by the label of this trope, however, the 'good native' can never truly become a member of the castaway/adventurer race, and remains forever apart from the Western explorers as a result of their immutable 'native' lost-race status. The inability of Neelix to truly *belong* underwrites the imperial assumptions of manifest destiny: peoples and land encountered are always 'Other', and therefore able to be used by the imperial power.

Throughout his time on *Voyager*, and highlighted often in the first two seasons (including the repeated encounters with the Kazon and Vidiians), Neelix is constantly helpful, attentive, kind, and supportive as required by his 'good native' role. He integrates fairly seamlessly into the Starfleet crew, although at first Janeway was hesitant to add him and Kes to the crew. After Janeway remarked that *Voyager* "isn't a passenger ship" at the end of the pilot episode "Caretaker," Neelix responded by offering unlimited aid to the castaway crew:

> We'd be valuable colleagues. Whatever you need is what I have to offer. You need a guide! I'm your guide. You need supplies. I know where to procure them. I have friends among races you don't even know exist! You need a cook? Oh, you haven't lived until you've tasted my onglebask! It will be my job to anticipate your needs before you know you have them. And I anticipate your first need … will be me![82]

This comment reflects episode director Winrich Kolbe's remarks about Neelix as a character:

> Neelix is a funny character and also a hustler. In a way he's also, if you go to Joseph Campbell's mythology, the guide. He's the only one who knows that

[80] "Homestead," dir. LeVar Burton, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 9, 2001).
[81] Rieder, *Colonialism and The Emergence of Science Fiction*, 43.
[82] "Caretaker," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 16, 1995).

> particular area of space. … He's a very important part of things, because he is the sage.[83]

Campbell's notable work on myth, especially in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, offers a comparative study of much Western mythology and outlines in detail the "Hero's Journey".[84] Although Campbell's work is more commonly associated with George Lucas' science fiction/space odyssey saga *Star Wars* (originally released in 1977),[85] the forms Campbell identified have influenced centuries of Western stories, including early science fiction lost-race tales. Throughout these stories (mythological, historical, and contemporary), the guide remains apart from the hero(s), guiding but never fully joining the hero and his/her party. For Neelix and other lost-race 'good natives,' their racial and cultural differences prevent them from truly *becoming* part of the Western civilization. This limitation establishes a presumed fundamental difference on the part of 'native' populations and Western explorers and reflects and recreates imperial and colonial precepts, ideologies, and power structures that continue to govern encounters with 'different' lifeforms.

Neelix remains separate from the crew in clear ways despite his relatively coherent integration over the first few seasons. His role as chef is one example, as the position reinforces his never-quite-Federation identity throughout the series. This nontraditional Starfleet role is a product of the castaway narrative and limited resources available to *Voyager*, which led to rationing of the food replication used on a Starfleet vessel like the *Enterprise*. To fill in the gaps, and admittedly at his own request in "Caretaker," Neelix undertook the role of ship chef. Often used as a source of humor, the food Neelix prepared was noticeably foreign (and often unappealing) to the Federation crew. This plot device mirrors a castaway living off a diet of native prepared meals in a classic adventure, castaway, or lost-race story, and

[83] Altman and Gross, *The Fifty Year Mission: The Next 25 Years*), 567.
[84] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New World Library, 2008).
[85] Kenneth L. Golden, *Uses of Comparative Mythology (RLE Myth): Essays on the Work of Joseph Campbell* (Routledge, 2015), 181-2.

reinforces difference in ways of life between the castaway/adventurer and the native population. Janeway, famous amongst Starfleet Captains (and *Trek* fans) for her love of coffee, consistently used her replicator rations for coffee rather than drink Neelix's Delta Quadrant imitation—which was thick and not very appealing.[86] Despite the off-putting food and coffee, Neelix-as-chef (much like a classic conception of a bartender, a position served by Whoopie Goldberg's character Guinan in *TNG*), served as unofficial counselor aboard *Voyager*. This status allowed Neelix to continue his role as helper and "always already" member of the crew, even if his strange food remained a point of discontent (and difference) for the Alpha Quadrant crew. Ultimately, despite clear connections built with the crew—who eventually come to consider him part of the family as their voyage goes on—Neelix-as-chef remains distanced from the Federation crew with their technologically advanced positions (engineer, security officer, bridge officer, etc), Federation background, and Federation expectations on food.

The episode "Tuvix" highlights how Neelix remained apart from the Federation crew, despite their willingness to befriend him, aid him, and benefit from his experience and expertise.[87] In this episode, the Vulcan Chief Security Officer Tuvok and Neelix were merged into one being during a transporter accident, resulting in the creation of Tuvix—a fully independent and conscious being who blended Vulcan and Talaxian physical traits and the memories and experiences of Tuvok and Neelix. Welcomed into the crew (if hesitantly), Tuvix became a valuable member for his ability to serve in both Tuvok's and Neelix's previous roles: "Chief of security or head chef, take your pick!". In the end, however, Tuvix began to destabilize, and Janeway decides to separate the two into their original selves. The Doctor

[86]One of Janeway's most frequently quoted phrases comes from an early season 1 episode "The Cloud," where she observed "There's coffee in that nebula!" as she sent *Voyager* to investigate a nebula for potential resources. It turned out to be a living organism (and therefore not a potential resource), alas, but this began a long lasting joke within the show about Janeway's love for coffee. ["The Cloud," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 13, 1995).]

[87]"Tuvix," dir. Cliff Bole, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 6, 1996).

refuses to perform the procedure due to his Hippocratic Oath to harm no patient (one of many Western traditions retained in the Federation, despite the presence of numerous allied species with presumed equal state in Federation traditions and culture), since reverting Tuvix into Tuvok and Neelix would effectively kill Tuvix. In the "Afterward" of his book *The Meaning of Star Trek*, Thomas Richards explores this episode for the engagement with deep philosophical questions. He observes that,

> The final scene of the episode is truly remarkable, for it shows the only execution carried out by the Federation in all of *Star Trek*. Captain Janeway carries out what is tantamount to capital punishment … To its credit, the episode looks unflinchingly at her action and does not attempt to gloss over it with any form of justification. We see the execution; we see Janeway leaving sickbay, troubled by what she had done; then we see *Voyager* rushing through space. She has made a difficult choice between two undesirable alternatives, and now she must learn to live with the choice. Nevertheless a death has cast a shadow over the ship, and for the first time in the series the Federation has put to death one of its own.[88]

Richards' observations point to the reason this episode is one of the most popular and frequently discussed episodes of the first two *Voyager* seasons, and supplies information about how *Voyager* presents a "more ambiguous universe" that reflects the time period in which it was created.[89] For Richards (and others), *Voyager* grapples with decisions and situations not present in earlier *Trek* narratives in ways that reflect the evolving political environment of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, although few (including Richards) explore the legacy

[88]Thomas Richards, *The Meaning of Star Trek* (Doubleday, 1997), 193. As this book was published in 1997, it thus only offers a few short pages of consideration to *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*, and clearly cannot engage with later *Trek* series. This follows a very standard pattern in *Trek* scholarship to consider *The Original Series* and *The Next Generation* as the prime narratives, with everything that came after tacked on to the end (if at all). As of January 2020, no single scholarly text on *Voyager* has been published, as another example of this trend (this excludes the numerous fiction texts that continue and expand the *Voyager* storyline, of course). Finally, it is important to note that while Richards may *assume* Janeway will ponder this decision in the future, audiences see no evidence of it in future episodes. This is typical of *Trek* serial storytelling, where most episodes stand-alone by and large, although *Voyager* (as my analysis in this chapter indicates) is fairly consistent in carrying through a number of threads regarding adventure, exploration, lost-race encounters, and empire.

[89]Ibid, 192.

(past and ongoing) of empire present in both the shows and American ideology. His astute observations about "Tuvix" and the philosophical musings of the storyline nonetheless overlooks a key component supplied by reading Neelix (and other *Voyager* alien races) through the lost-race motif: Tuvix could never survive, for that would blend him permanently and irrevocably with the Federation *as part of* the Federation. It might be possible for a 'good natives' to marry into a community, for example, and the 'good native' character is "always already" part of the explorer's party, but that does not equate to fully *becoming* a member of that community. Even though Tuvix was not as overtly 'Othered' as 'bad native' aliens through a recreation of a civil war lost-race motif like the Kazon, or as a race clearly pushing the boundaries of 'self' and savagery in the manner of the Vidiians, Tuvix would further complicate the 'us/them' binary reinforced throughout the *Voyager* narrative.[90]

These lost-race tropes will be reinforced in later alien encounters, as my additional analysis will demonstrate, but these examples serve to highlight foundational pieces of the *Voyager* series narrative that normalize and legitimize empire, as does the extensive *Trek* focus on exploration and discovery utilized so heavily in this castaway-adventure narrative. This enduring popular myth—Roland Barthes' term for cultural stories that indoctrinate all facets of popular culture—romanticizes the American imperial ideology of manifest destiny. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz calls this "unconscious manifest destiny," and the practice reverberates far beyond the walls of government buildings and battlefields.[91] Western imperial ideologies of difference pervade the very fabric of American entertainment, even in presumed-utopian stories in *Star Trek: Voyager* created during the time period when America was seeking to

[90]Seven of Nine will push against this boundary in other ways, as I will explore in chapters five and six, but in that case, it is important to remember that Janeway 'saves' Seven *because she was originally human.* Neelix has not been, and cannot be, human, for to do so would eradicate the barrier between Federation (human, American) and Delta Quadrant alien (lost-race, other, alien). Tuvix is as close as Neelix comes to crossing this barrier, despite seven years spent living and working alongside the Federation. In the end, Neelix opts to remain behind in the Delta Quadrant with a new Talaxian family—confirming that species identity matters most of all.

[91]Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, 2.

re-establish its political and cultural identity in the aftermath of the Cold War. Ultimately *Voyager* takes part in an ongoing imperial castaway-adventure narrative that originated in the Victorian and Edwardian "Age of Imperialism," strengthening our belief in the advancement of humanity through discovery, classification, and empire.

Chapter 4

Ideologies of Progress

4.1 Binary Alien Encounters in *Voyager*'s Journey Home

> "I think that Captain Janeway and her crew represent the very best of what Gene Roddenberry envisioned the future has in store for us. In terms of their principles, in terms of their lack of pettiness, in terms of their sense of exploration and the betterment of the human species."
>
> Rick Berman, *Voyager* Co-Executive Producer

In the opinion of co-Executive Producer Rick Berman, *Voyager* represents "the very best" of what original show creator Gene Roddenberry envisioned for the future of humanity, including an innate sense of (presumably non-imperial) exploration and "the betterment of the human species".[1] This last claim is vague, but Berman reflects a generalized Western belief in progress and development as the overall end goal for humanity—part of the "ideal evolution of mankind" Fukuyama discussed in his "End of History" argument.[2] The episode "Blink of an Eye" demonstrates this 'betterment' and 'ideal evolution' as *Voyager* encounters a planet trapped in a temporal forcefield.[3] From outside the forcefield, the *Voyager* crew

[1] Paul Ruditis, *Star Trek Voyager Companion* (Simon and Schuster, 2003), 7.
[2] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?," *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989): 3–18, 4.
[3] "Blink of an Eye," dir. Gabrielle Beaumont, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 19, 2000).

watches as the humanoid species on the planet develops from 'primitive' hunter-gathers to a 20th century level of technology and civilization, complete with internal combustion engines and an early space program. Through repetition of narratives of linear progress and development along Western models like that presented in "Blink of an Eye," *Voyager* contributes to a belief in an anthropocentric future that perpetuates imperial frameworks of human/Western superiority and linear progress and restricts engagement with other living beings. As such practices continue in popular culture narratives, it becomes harder and harder to envision—and create—possible futures where *all* living beings (including the Earth) are treated with concern, respect, and empathy. Through a detailed study of how the concepts of progress and development are presented in *Voyager*, it becomes apparent that *Star Trek* embraces a Western understanding of these notions—and with that presentation, further solidifies an ongoing American imperial narrative of engagement with others, be they terrestrial or extraterrestrial aliens.

In this chapter I analyze alien encounters in *Voyager* seasons three, four, and five to argue that reinforcing imperial ideals of difference and Federation superiority serves an important imperial function to create and maintain difference. These concepts are reinforced throughout the *Voyager* narrative, although these three seasons cover a significant number of alien encounters and territory traversed on the journey home. Season three marks a shift in the overall *Voyager* narrative as the crew moved beyond Kazon territory and by-then-familiar antagonists, opening space for new and different alien encounters. These mid-series seasons allowed *Voyager* to expand motifs popular on *The Original Series* and The *Next Generation,* as *Voyager* encountered more space traveling races than their Alpha Quadrant counterparts. The stranded Federation crew also finally encountered a major Delta Quadrant alien race and Federation enemy, the Borg. In the presentation of alien encounters following imperial ideologies, difference—and the superiority of the Federation—is seen as

a natural phenomenon, rather than an ideology imposed by the West. The presentation of alien encounters in *Voyager* therefore continues to normalize and legitimize empire and occlude awareness of imperial ideologies and practices that remain dominant in American engagement with the world, writ large. Ultimately, the continued emphasis on progress and a belief in the concept of development by the *Voyager* crew within the larger context of their journey back to Earth settles the Starfleet crew (and post-Cold War America itself) firmly on the side of developed imperial nation, expanding their goodwill (and their ideologies and structures of power) throughout the galaxy in ways that severely limit the exploration of non-imperial possibilities toward *all* living beings.

Specifically in this chapter, I explore both sides of a common imperial binary, encounters with presumed "less developed" and "more developed" races/species, as a method to explore how *Voyager* continually establishes Western/American ideals—especially *progress* itself—as the only conceivable endpoint for all human (and alien) development for a just and humane civilization. Through a detailed analysis of Federation encounters with "less developed" civilizations I first demonstrate how *Voyager* reinforces ideas of Western progress through narrative devices that establish and maintain difference based solely on how advanced a civilization is *in comparison to* the Federation. Then, alongside a discussion of encounters with "more developed" civilizations, I explore the presentation of presumed unique features and benefits of specific Western/American ideologies, including an overall focus on humanitarian ideals and the power of critical thinking. This presentation reinforces the idea of Federation (American) superiority over all other possible forms of 'progress' and 'development' even when they are not the most technologically superior race. The constant recreation of this imperial binary perpetuates imperial power relations long after the dissolution of European empires in the decades of decolonization after the Second World War.

I have deliberately selected this imperial binary frame for my analysis to underscore how

frequently *Voyager* utilizes this narrative frame, although as my analysis will demonstrate—reflecting (post)colonial criticism of these artificially created binaries—this binary is a construct that (re)create imperial conditions. The belief in 'more' and 'less' developed societies depends on value judgements based on specific ways of living applied holistically to entire groups of peoples and civilizations rather than any inherent 'Truth'. My analysis will demonstrate how *Voyager* continues to advance the imperial process of creating and maintaining a binary of difference between the Federation and all other alien races, indicating how pervasive these forms of storytelling (and meaning making) are in this popular culture commentary on the present and future. Ultimately, I explore the narrative of progress and linear development reinforced throughout this 'progressive' television show, which reinforces the construction of ongoing imperial ideologies and offers a continuous narrative of United States imperialism that deflects and occludes the reality of late 20th and early 21st century American imperial ideologies. Through this continued representation of imperial alien encounters in a presumed future utopia, *Voyager* contributes to an ongoing—and restrictive—imperial vision of present and future *possibilities*.

4.2 Understanding Progress in *Star Trek* and 20th Century American Ideology

To outline how *Star Trek* presents 'progress' and the associated requirement for development along predictable linear patterns, I look to an episode of *The Next Generation*. In "Who Watches the Watchers," the crew of the *USS Enterprise*—under the command of Captain Jean-Luc Picard—travels to Mintaka III to provide technical assistance to an archeological

team studying the local Mintakans.[4] In the process, a native Mintakan is injured, and *Enterprise* Doctor Beverly Crusher deliberately violates the Prime Directive to bring him back to the ship for treatment, as she refuses to let a sentient being die if she can help. Also known as General Order 1, the Prime Directive forbids Starfleet interference *for any reason* with 'less developed' alien races, defined by the United Federation of Planets as races not yet capable of warp travel through space. Crafted during *The Original Series*, the directive seemingly avoids recreating historical imperial encounters, and limits (if not entirely removes) obvious colonial and imperial connotations from the *Trek* universe. Dr. Crusher's actions in "Who Watches," however, stands as one of many examples of the Directive being disregarded throughout the franchise. By taking on a Directive based on levels of development, and then breaking it at their whim—as Dr. Crusher does here in reaction to an accident *directly caused by* Federation actions—the Federation proclaims a level of superiority over all others, including historical European powers, through their self-implied 'progress' and development beyond those previous humans (and other races). The Prime Directive is one example among many of the value of linear progress and development as recreated in the *Trek* universe wherein the 'ideal endpoint of evolution' will align other alien races to Federation standards and expectations.

"Who Watches" outlines additional specific ideals of progress along Western lines. The Mintakans, described as "Proto-Vulcan humanoids at the Bronze-Age level, quite peaceful and highly rational," come to mistakenly assume Picard is a god in the aftermath of Dr. Crusher's actions. The Starfleet crew finds this troubling, as it implies the Mintakans might 'revert' to superstition rather than continue their path toward an understanding of science and rational thinking. This contrast is evident in Picard's forceful denouncement that belief in a superior being will "send them back into the dark ages of superstition, ig-

[4] "Who Watches the Watchers," dir. Robert Wiemer, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Paramount Television, October 16, 1989).

norance, and fear!". Such claims reinforce an imperial binary between a 'developed and civilized peoples' and a native population as yet unschooled in Western principles of science, education, and ways of being in the world with no room for 'irrational beliefs' in 'native supernatural traditions'. Picard presents this binary as cold hard fact through his refusal to issue commandments—imitate a god—and his ultimate white-savior role to resolve his mistaken identity by offering to let the Mintakans kill him to prove his mortality. The imperial fiction of advanced civilization and primitive "other" is reinforced throughout the episode in the evidence of 'primitive' Mintakan daily life (including dress and appearance) and traditions in contrast to advanced technological life aboard the *Enterprise*. The episode concludes with a 'positive' example of how and why critical thinking are useful personal and cultural tools for advancement—"advancement" along strictly Western terms. Even though the episode title implies the 'watchers' might need oversight in an encounter like this one, that question is never tackled in the presentation of ideal models of progress with the end goal of the Mintakan civilization eventually exploring the stars—just like the Federation. As such, the production team has given a nod to the complex issues underlying the creation and reinforcement of imperial binaries of difference, but throughout the episode this message gets lost within the standard narrative of establishing difference through the presentation of 'superior' ways of life and the ideal and hoped for conclusion of linear development and progress along Western expectations.

During an interview with Roddenberry in 1991, David Alexander praised this episode for highlighting "one of the underlying messages of both series … that human beings can, with critical thinking, solve the problems that are facing them without any outside or supernatural help".[5] This comment ignores the fact that Picard forced the Mintakans to accept his status as human-not-god, demonstrating that 'outside help' was fundamental to this resolution—a

[5]David Alexander, Interview with Gene Roddenberry, *The Humanist*, April 1991, http://web.archive.org/web/20060702000506/http:/www.philosophysphere.com/humanist.html.

resolution that was only required by the interference of a Federation archeological team in the first place. Further, Alexander observes that

> The basic message of both *Star Trek* [*The Original Series*] and *Star Trek*: *The Next Generation* is that human beings are capable of solving their own problems rationally and that, through critical thinking and cooperative effort, humanity will progress and evolve.

While critical thinking and cooperative effort are certainly valuable skills, this limited presentation of 'progress' along a Western model—where a society evolves from beliefs in superstition to an understanding in the power of science and rational thinking under the guiding hand of a benevolent white overseer—is retained throughout the *Star Trek* franchise. This perspective is reinforced often throughout *Voyager's* adventure in the Delta Quadrant, although many *Voyager* encounters shift the dynamic slightly through engagement with societies 'more advanced' than the Mintakans.

The *Voyager* episode "Blink of an Eye" recreates many of the same expressions of progress and linear development. In this episode, following the Starfleet aim to explore and discover, *Voyager* approaches a planet to study unique atmospheric readings only to become trapped in a temporal forcefield.[6] Upon closer examination of the planet, the *Voyager* crew realizes that time is passing more quickly on the surface. As a result, they watch the accelerated progress and development of entire civilizations from 'primitive' to 20th century technological society. First Officer Chakotay explains in delight that this "might be the greatest anthropological find ever," noting that "if there's an intelligent species down there, we'll be able to track their development, not just for days or weeks, but for centuries". "Blink" recreates progress and development along a specific Western model: in reaction to Chakotay's observation that "they've developed internal combustion technology since the last few scans," Chief

[6]"Blink of an Eye," dir. Gabrielle Beaumont, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 19, 2000).

Engineer B'Elanna Torres observes "That's progress alright!". Comments like these make the development recognizable to American audiences watching the show, although in doing so, *Voyager* presented a species over 60,000 light years away from Earth developing in patterns specific to Western industrial (and imperial) nations.

The step-by-step progress presented in "Blink" detracts from the link between the co-development of technology and Euro-American imperialism since the onset of the Industrial Revolution. As Daniel Headrick explains, technology, not ideology, was the "real triumph" of European civilization and was deeply "woven into the expansion of European empires".[7] Headrick's exploration of links between technology (including innovations that led to the internal combustion engine highlighted in this *Voyager* episode) and European imperialism speaks to the symbiotic relationship between the two. Still, his conclusion that Europe's "brief dominion" to "pass on to the peoples of Asia and Africa their own fascination with machinery and innovation" is an extremely short-sighted view of the ongoing consequences of Euro-American imperialism around the world.[8] *Voyager* contributes to the presentation of a positive relationship between technological development and the progress/development of civilizations (sans imperialism) through the presentation of such progress as *inevitable* with episodes like "Blink". In constantly recreating encounters between 'more' and 'less' progressive and developed civilizations, *Voyager* contributes to the universalization of imperial ideologies of difference—a storytelling practice that drastically limits the ability for cultural narratives to step outside of imperial mindsets.

Technology and modernity have deep links with Euro-American imperialism, and the science fiction genre frequently draws and builds on these connections. Adam Roberts highlights the two most well-known forms of technology in science fiction, the spaceship and the

[7]Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1981), 4.
[8]Ibid, 4.

robot, which *Star Trek* has in abundance.[9] Ships were central to the expansion of Euro-American imperial power from the 16th century to the 20th, and were also key achievements of the Industrial Revolution. Philip Brey argues that "technology made modernity possible. It has been the engine of modernity, shaping it and propelling it forward".[10] Technology similarly aided and enabled the Euro-American imperial project, especially in the European conquest of Africa: Headrick observes the numerous technologies that made such conquest possible, ranging from malaria medication to steam power and—of course—continuing advanced weaponry.[11] In combining key forms of imperial technology and imperial expansion with features of modernity, including ideas of 'humanity' and the 'ideal evolution of mankind' along Western models, science fiction taps into these traditions, and *Star Trek* is no exception.

The model of development and progress presented in "Blink"—and many other *Voyager* episodes—establishes and extends the Western standard inspired by the Industrial Revolution and Western 'progress' throughout the past three centuries. American President Harry Truman articulated this 'progress narrative' clearly in his inaugural address of 1949, which has continued to govern American foreign policy in the aftermath of the Cold War:

> [W]e must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate, they are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these peoples … What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealings … Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous

[9] Adam Roberts, *Science Fiction* (Routledge, 2006), 111.

[10] Philip Brey, "Theorizing Modernity and Technology," in Thomas J. Misa, Philip Brey, and Andrew Feenberg, *Modernity and Technology* (MIT Press, 2004), 33-71, 33.

[11] Headrick, *The Tools of Empire*.

> application of modern scientific and technical knowledge.[12]

This declaration, originally outlined in a 1947 speech before Congress on the 'situation' between Greece and Turkey in the aftermath of World War Two and eventually known as the "Truman Doctrine," presents "underdevelopment" as a problem to be solved by the West. In highlighting the view of underdeveloped areas as miserable, inadequate, and stagnant, Truman contributes to an ongoing binary between the "more prosperous areas" (the West) and "underdeveloped areas" that has deep roots in Euro-American imperial practices and ideologies. Through tracing the evolution of British imperialism in Kenya and American imperialism in the Philippines from the 18th century to the 20th, Roxanne Doty links the historical practices of 'traditional' imperialism with 20th century development projects. Humanitarian foreign aid became a specific technique of 'former' imperial powers to continue exerting power and control over 'underdeveloped' regions in order to 'bring civilization,' defined as Western standards of living, following Western scientific practices and government policies.[13]

Humanitarian aid and development projects stem from Truman's presentation of the West as the 'savior' for all others. This tactic stems from the 'white savior' narrative prevalent throughout Euro-American imperial projects, often normalized and legitimized through classic adventure tales, castaway and lost-race stories.[14] Such narrative framing creates space for an ongoing need for *salvation* from poverty through actions from a benevolent foreign power. According to this line of thinking, the only way to become democratic and economically prosperous is to embrace and utilize modern (Western) scientific and technical

[12]Harry Truman, "Inaugural Address" (January 20, 1949). https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/.

[13]Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), see especially chapter 6.

[14]See chapter three of this work for a more detailed discussion of these narrative practices in relation to *Star Trek: Voyager*.

knowledge. Truman's declaration was later enforced and acted upon by the United Nations as one of the guiding projects of the second half of the 20th century, and judges 'Other' areas of the world by Western standards without taking into account the role Western imperialism played in creating those conditions through centuries of imperial control and resource extraction.

Development projects coincided with the 'end' of traditional European empire in the decades following the Second World War, and have functioned as an updated and adapted form of ongoing Euro-American empire. Development through international aid, often framed as "humanitarian missions," became a focus of American Cold War foreign policy as one means among many to stem the influence and spread of Soviet Communism through Truman's equally significant doctrine of containment. John Ikenberry connects the Truman Doctrine with the American policy of containment during the Cold War, observing that Truman put the task of world peace directly upon the shoulders of the United States to counter "what was thought to be Soviet communism's quest for world domination".[15] Ikenberry argues that Truman's emphasis on 'liberal democratic order'—defined as institutions and relations "built around economic openness, political reciprocity, and multilateral management of an American-led liberal political system"—"remains the core of world order".[16] American foreign policies for increasing 'liberal democratic order' throughout the world remains deeply rooted in imperial approaches to maintaining difference throughout the world, whether through 'humanitarian' aid or military force.

The specific path out of such 'destitute otherness' by becoming like the Western powers continued in United States foreign policy in the 1990s.[17] Mandelbaum identifies how the policy shift from 'containment' to 'transformation' and 'defense' to 'ideology' followed

[15]G. John Ikenberry, "The Myth of Post-Cold War Chaos," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 3 (1996): 79-91, https://doi.org/10.2307/20047582., 81.
[16]Ibid, 81.
[17]Fukuyama, "The End of History?".

centuries of American exceptionalism ideologies, and American Presidents from George W. Bush to Barack Obama undertook to spread those ideologies throughout the world in the wake of the Cold War.[18] As American state officials followed Fukuyama's optimism that the 'ideal evolution of mankind' had been reached with United States victory over the Soviet Union—and presumably communism/socialism as 'unsuccessful' options—projects of humanitarian aid and development carried with them the ideological vision of American 'success'. In becoming like the West both practically and ideologically, "underdeveloped" and "developing" countries (or countries in the "Global South," to use the more contemporary terminology) would "evolve" and "succeed" along Western standards. Through policies enacted by Truman and continued by later Presidents, including Clinton in the 1990s, and American victory in the Cold War, this ideological policy became a universalized standard. *Voyager* contributes to the spread a liberal democratic order and Western ideologies through modeling American ideals of development, progress, and civilization. Much like the positions of Ikenberry and foreign policy officials like Fukuyama (and elected officials like American Presidents Harry Truman and Bill Clinton), *Voyager* offers development as the path to success with no qualms or questions about the motivations, background, and traditions such projects were built upon and continue to perpetuate.

To explore the project of development, I follow Arturo Escobar's interrogation of the discourse of development, wherein the 'Third World' was created by practices of development by 'First World' countries.[19] Reading development as a discourse, not simply a project of foreign aid, allows room to explore the domination constantly underwriting the project. Further, such an approach zeroes in on the historical processes that led to and ultimately enabled the development project to commence and be overwhelmingly accepted as the new

[18]Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

[19]Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 4.

status quo in the aftermath of the Second World War and the traditional 'end' of European Empire. In other words, studying development as a discourse (as ways of understanding how knowledge has been constructed) opens up space for analysis of how development ideals are woven into cultural practices and narratives, and how those representations of development continue to underwrite the Euro-American imperial project in significant ways, creating ongoing lived-with legacies of imperial attitudes and actions through America's involvement with the world.

Through attitudes and projects like those to 'recover' Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War, ideas of development and progress have become solidified as dominant Western beliefs acted upon as the only possible option for all of humanity. Development scholar Gilbert Rist argues that development has become the ultimate "Truth" of the 20th century, as it functions as the key myth of the era of globalization.[20] This belief has become a new and guiding religion governing Western interaction with the world in the second half of the 20th century, and into the 21st, rooted in a linear conception of progress from squalor to prosperity along Western terms. Rist traces the roots of this global system directly to the height of Euro-American colonization which "opened the way for 'development"' through establishing the conditions in colonized locations that would later 'require' Western intervention in the (post)colonial time period.[21] The creation of mindsets and patterns of behavior in which the West feels a benevolent power and authority to intervene at their whim solidifies the process as 'natural' and 'humane' and an often unquestioned policy of 'goodwill' rather than imperial ideology at play.

The Western project of development—and an overall belief in the sanctity and inevitability of 'progress' along Western models—is one of many ongoing features of empire governing

[20]Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (Zed Books Ltd., 1997), 23-24.
[21]Ibid, 47

the contemporary world. Ann Stoler uses the term *imperial formation* to register these ongoing threads of empire that brings to bear the "colonial present" of the modern world.[22] Rather than leftovers of a long-gone imperial past, these present and ongoing formations further occlude existence of empire, past and present (and perhaps future). As Dipesh Chakrabarty observes in his notable critique of narratives of modernity and history, it is a very specific Europe that serves "as the primary habitus of the modern".[23] Specifically, accounts of the world like those offered by Truman point to the colonizing and imperializing Euro-American system that *created* the modern world as the signpost for "modern" (i.e.: progressive and developed), thus requiring all other 'less modern' nations to aspire toward Western standards to be judged successful. *Star Trek* offers a similar vision wherein Federation standards are upheld as ideal, and other races, species, and civilizations are found wanting in comparison—and as examples like "Who Watches the Watchers" and "Blink of an Eye" highlight, the 'less' developed societies aspire to match the Federation's progress and development.

Development discourses depend on imperial binary thinking. These beliefs are the continuation of views fostered by imperial powers to create and maintain difference (and in the process retain their empire), including the binary established between presumed civilized/uncivilized, developed/un(der)developed, and modern/traditional habits, societies, and civilizations. Through the creation of a binary wherein "underdeveloped" peoples are miserable, impoverish, unhealthy, and *stagnant*, and Western 'developed' peoples are happy, wealthy, healthy, and progressive, as Truman noted in his Doctrine, imperial power relations remain intact long after the European empires were formally dissolved in the decades of decolonization following the second world war. Such binaries, as Roxanne Doty argues, simultaneously

[22] Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Duke University Press, 2016).

[23] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 43.

construct the 'self' and 'other' and employ a *logic of differences* wherein "Identities are presumed to be based upon foundational essences and are portrayed as being merely different from other identities" that were used to strengthen, validate, and support the Euro-American imperial project.[24] These imperial moves continue through entertainment television in the case of *Star Trek: Voyager* in ways that restrict *possibilities* for encounters that value equal exchange and engagement rather than retaining an imperial balance of power.

4.3 "Less Developed" Civilizations: Creating a Hierarchy of Difference

In season three, *Voyager* moves beyond Kazon occupied space and encounters a new series of challenges in their castaway-adventure. Season episodes include time travel 'back' to Earth in 1996 ("Future's End"), a thirtieth *Star Trek* anniversary episode featuring General Sulu of *The Original Series* ("Flashback"), the opportunity for Janeway to strap on a giant machine gun and save the day much like the main character of the *Alien* movie franchise ("Macrocosm"), and First Contact with recovered Borg drones who are no longer part of the Collective ("Unity"). Amidst these unique *Trek* plotlines, *Voyager* continues to follow the mandates of the Federation and reinforce traditional imperial binaries through encounters with numerous civilizations presented at 'lower' levels of 'development' than the Federation. As such, *Voyager* underwrites the significant and presumed 'Truth' espoused in development discourse throughout the second half of the 20th century, built on centuries of Euro-American imperial policy and practice. This world view determined the direction of Cold War and post-Cold War foreign policy, including Clinton's "humanitarian" aims in the 1990s, and encapsulated the belief that the world (or galaxy, as the case may be) can easily split into

[24]Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 11.

'progressive, developed' races, and those who are not. In reality, these presumptions are value judgements based on the ways of life of different groups of people, and presenting such judgements as unquestioned 'facts' or '*Truth*' about 'how the world works' is part and parcel of the ongoing Euro-American imperial project.

"False Profits," an episode early in season three, highlights just such a 'Truth' using a familiar Alpha Quadrant species, the Ferengi. Well-known to *Trek* franchise fans by the time "False Profits" aired, the Ferengi are presented as greedy capitalists who live by a series of complex "Rules of Acquisition," motivated exclusively by the desire to amass great personal wealth with no regard for the well-being of others. The Ferengi highlight the worst capitalism has to offer, and when combined with issues like their overt sexism (Ferengi females are not allowed to wear clothes since they exist solely to please Ferengi males, for example) issue commentary on inequalities still rife in the late 20th century. Concurrent to this critique of self-centered capitalism and inequalities, however, is the presentation of Ferengi as "Other" in contrast to the Federation since the Ferengi value system does not align with that preached by the Federation. The binary of 'us/them' is reinforced through encounters with the Ferengi, including "False Profits" when the *Voyager* crew steps in to 'rescue' aliens from abuses by two Ferengi. This plot positions the Federation in the role of white imperial savior and situate both the Ferengi and alien population as "less developed".

"False Profits" picks up the narrative thread of *The Next Generation* episode "The Price" and details a *Voyager* encounter with two Ferengi on an 'underdeveloped' planet (in contrast to Alpha Quadrant Federation standards) near an unstable wormhole.[25] Short reconnais-

[25] "False Profits," dir. Cliff Bole, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, October 2, 1996). "The Price," which originally aired in November 1989, is the first direct reference to the Delta Quadrant in the *Trek* universe when the *Enterprise-D* hosted a Federation-led negotiation over a wormhole. The negotiations break down as the Federation eventually discovers the wormhole is only stable in the Alpha Quadrant, making it 'worthless' as a trading and/or travel route through space. At the end of the episode, two Ferengi travel through the wormhole –and are eventually encountered seven years later by *Voyager* in "False Profit". "The Price," dir. Robert Scheerer, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Paramount Television, November 13, 1989).

sance reveals that two Ferengi named Kol and Arridor are posing as the living incarnation of local deities and exploiting the population in typical Ferengi fashion. This initial setup recalls stories of early European explorers (read: conquerors) in the Americas mistakenly taken as gods by local populations, and the Ferengi deliberately cultivate this comparison and exploit it for their own economic gain to the serious detriment of the local population. Janeway steps in to remove the Alpha Quadrant interlopers, which appears to situate her crew on the opposite side of the imperial practice of direct colonization through exploitation of the local population.

In "False Profits," the *Voyager* crew achieves 'salvation' for the native inhabitants through deliberate manipulation of their traditional religion. In doing so, the storyline maintains a clear line of difference between the 'more' and 'less' developed races (the Federation in contrast to the Ferengi and local populations), underwriting the imperial binary as a 'real' and 'actual' way to see the world. This recreation extends the binary to the status of universal 'Truth' since the imperial binary continues to dictate actions throughout the galaxy. In a move to "out-Ferengi the Ferengi," as Janeway phrases it, the *Voyager* crew utilizes local religious doctrine, "The Song of the Sages" to enact their salvation. To deliberately evoke religious prophecy where in the prophets would leave the planet "riding on the wings of fire" as "three new stars appeared in the night," *Voyager* fires their advanced photon torpedoes in the sky above the city and use transporter technology to remove the Ferengi from the surface. Doing so adheres to the Prime Directive against *direct* and *overt* involvement with 'less advanced' populations, although Janeway and crew undertook liberal creative license in this interpretation against interference. *Voyager* and the Ferengi then leave the planet behind, and Kol and Arridor flee the Delta Quadrant through the wormhole that originally brought them in the *TNG* episode "The Price". *Voyager* is unable to follow as the wormhole rapidly destabilized, and resumes their course home.

By reinforcing the 'primitive' status of the planet inhabitants, who were first tricked effortlessly by two Ferengi and then skillfully manipulated by *Voyager* 'for their own good,' "False Profits" contributes to the imperial binary of less developed civilizations who need to be rescued by an advanced outsider. Recreation of this narrative in contemporary popular culture reinforces the 'white savior' narrative of classic imperial texts that served to normalize and legitimize imperial practices in the classic "Age of Imperialism," and contributes to ongoing Western imperial practices through maintaining the 'Truth' of difference between levels of development, progress, and ideas of civilization. In "False Profit," there was no possible way for the local inhabitants to remove the Ferengi overlords—although unhappy with the status quo, the local peoples were presented as utterly incapable of the 'advanced' thinking and actions required to remove the alien threat. This episode presents a native population in need of salvation if they are to 'develop' beyond their 'backward,' superstitious, and overly religious civilization, undervalued by Western ideals, much like that presented in "Who Watches the Watchers" on *The Next Generation*. By recreating these imperial encounters, and casting the Federation as the non-violent, non-conquering savior, *Trek* narratives present a future that remains deeply imperial as difference via superiority is codified in American cultural narratives. Such narratives restrict the potential for thinking non-imperial futures through the guise of presenting a 'non-imperial' future organization. Through that contradiction, imperial ideologies remain universalized and unquestioned 'Truth', and other forms of engagement and acts of relating with living organisms become less and less likely.

Season three of *Voyager* pushes beyond these traditional presentations of 'less developed' civilizations, although the narrative framework continues to place value on the 'more advanced' and 'developed' Federation ideals and way of life and presents these ideals as the logical evolution of humanity (and everyone else in the galaxy). The two part episode sequence "Future's End" serves to highlight this point nicely, as it directly positions America

in the 1990s as the 'less developed' civilization in contrast to the 24th century United Federation of Planets.[26] These episodes reinforce the presumed universal 'Truth' behind progress and development, a common thread throughout the *Trek* franchise, if infrequently highlighted so literally in direct contrast to the 20th century world that created the series. The episode sequence also introduces the plotline of time travel, including the first introduction to a Federation Captain from the 29th century (presumably an era of regular time travel, at least for the always-advanced Federation), a thread that reappeared in *Voyager* and later in the post-9/11 *Trek* series *Enterprise*.[27] Time travel is a common science fiction trope, and serves as another method of recreating difference between the explorers/adventures and the races and species they encounter.[28] "Future's End" plays with this set-up by positioning 20th century America as the 'Othered' and 'less developed' civilization, and presenting corporate greed as a feature of humanity that needs to be removed—and argues that it will be, by the time the 24th century rolls around, predicting a utopian path of linear human development and progress.[29]

[26]"Future's End, Parts 1 and 2," dir. David Livingston and Cliff Bole, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, November 6, 1996).

[27]As of August 2019, the predicted third season of the in-progress *Trek* series *Discovery* (CBS) will explore the adventures of the *USS Discovery* after traversing several centuries into the future in the season two finale "Such Sweet Sorrow". Time travel has become more central to the franchise as it becomes further removed from the original series Roddenberry created in the 1960s, although as my analysis demonstrates for *Voyager* and the 1990s, at least, the principles interwoven into the earlier narratives remain consistent, including those that recreation conditions for ongoing empire that ultimately deflect the reality of said empire. "Such Sweet Sorrow, Parts 1 & 2" dir. Olatunde Osunsanmi, *Star Trek: Discovery* (CBS Television Studios, April 11 and 18, 2019).

[28]See John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Wesleyan University Press, 2012).

[29]The presentation of how the 24th century Federation is *more* advanced than the 20th/21st century present often comes through episodes revolving around the advanced *humanity* of specific non-human characters. In addition to the pilot episode of *The Next Generation* when Captain Picard was placed on trial for the historical 'crimes of humanity' and made a stirring plea for how humanity had progressed/changed/evolved in the last several centuries, the most well-known episode of this type is likely *The Next Generation's* "The Measure of a Man" (1989). In "Measure," Captain Picard defends the android Data to ensure he receives legal protection as a fully sentient being capable of self-determination (and not to be utilized as Starfleet property). In one of several impassioned speeches, Picard recalls the then-historical concept of "disposable creatures," evoking the practice of slavery in all forms, as one of his arguments against limiting Data's legal rights. The implication in these comments is that the Federation (and humanity writ large) has moved beyond such practices in their progressive development toward a more just and humane way of life, fully in line with Roddenberry's intent behind the original series. *Voyager* followed in this tradition with the

"Future's End" positions the *Voyager* crew as the most 'advanced' civilization in contrast to 'less developed' 20th century America. In the episode, *Voyager* discovers a small Federation vessel—the *Aeon*—under command of Captain Braxton, a Federation officer from the 29th century. Braxton claims that *Voyager* will eventually be involved in a temporal explosion that will destroy the solar system in the 29th century, and attempts to destroy *Voyager* as a means to prevent the future event. Janeway does not accept Braxton's request to sit calmly and be destroyed, and in the ensuring conflict, both ships are hurled back in time and across the galaxy: Braxton's ship crashes in California in 1967, and *Voyager* emerges above Earth in 1996. Alongside attempts to remain undetected (the 24th century Federation Prime Directive), find a way back home in the 24th century (the overall *Voyager* Prime Directive), and prevent history from being altered (the 29th century Temporal Prime Directive), *Voyager* discovers technology too advanced for 1996 Earth. After covertly investigating, the crew learns that a man named Henry Sterling discovered and stole Braxton's ship in 1967 and reverse engineered much of the technology to create a technology corporation and accelerate technology development beyond where it 'should have been' historically. Advanced (and non-advanced) technology of the 20th, 24th, and 29th centuries are central to the episode, as is the underwritten message that *we will advance* morally and technologically. Janeway, for example, attempts to type on a 20th century keyboard and observes that the technology is "like stone knives and bearskins". Janeway's comment calls to mind vague notions of

episode "Author, Author" when Janeway argues for the protection of her holographic doctor's legal rights (in this case, to creative expression). Janeway recalls the idea that "centuries ago, in most places on earth, only landowners of a particular gender and race had any rights at all," although she then highlights how much humanity had 'progressed' since then. The direct implication in episodes like these reflects how the entire franchise has been built around this premise, in addition to Roddenberry's intent to offer clear social and political commentary on the present—and thus presumably gives hope and possibilities for the future when 'we are better than this'. The tendency to continue to compare and contrast levels of progress and development ultimately reinforces the belief/expectation/presumed 'Truth' that there will always be a hierarchy of power, which is extremely problematic when set directly beside hope for a fully equitable future. "Author, Author," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, April 18, 2001). "The Measure of a Man," dir. Robert Scheerer, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Paramount Television, February 13, 1989).

'primitive' societies, and stands in stark contrast to the 29th century technology scattered throughout the episode, including the "mobile emitter" that will eventually enable *Voyager*'s holographic Doctor to leave sickbay and become a more central character. The episode highlights moral developments as well: 20th century Sterling refuses to listen to 24th century Janeway's rational, logical, and 'more developed' explanation about why his plans to pilot the *Aeon* to the 29th century and steal more technology will be the catalyst for the accident Braxton was attempting to prevent. Sterling is the villain in this episode, and the political and social commentary against corporate greed is not subtle. That said, concurrent to this social commentary, "Future's End" also underwrites the presentation of 'progress' along a Wester model as both inevitable and desirable: humanity will get more advanced, and as we do so, we will develop beyond petty greed and other such 20th century motivations.

"Future's End" thus contributes to ongoing imperial hierarchies and divisions. As Said explains, it is imperative to study *all* facets of a narrative to fully diagnose the often contradictory messages at play in both the form and story of a narrative, regardless of the potentially useful political and social commentary present in the narrative.[30] Said's study of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* demonstrates the importance of these conflicting and simultaneous threads. Said observes that while there is significant criticism against the practices of violent European imperialism present in the novel, he also highlights troubling elements of Conrad's narrative that presumes European engagement with 'backward,' 'less developed,' and 'uncivilized' native African peoples was necessary for the Africans to 'develop'. Conrad's limitation in issuing a full critique of European imperialism was that

> even though he could see clearly that on one level imperialism was essentially pure dominance and land-grabbing, he could not then conclude that imperialism had to end so that 'natives' could lead lives free from European domination. As

[30]Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (NY: Vintage Books, 1994).

> a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom...[31]

In highlighting these tensions, Said calls attention to the long-lasting legacy and ongoing features of imperial ideology in the way difference is constructed—ideas that have largely remained the same in Western eyes since the "Age of Empire". Conrad could not see beyond the idea that Africans needed to be 'saved' by the West, and *Voyager* demonstrates that numerous Delta Quadrant (and even Alpha Quadrant) species and civilizations need to be 'saved' by the Federation. Narratives can and do issue striking commentary against the violence of imperialism, in the case of *Heart of Darkness*, and the negative consequences of corporate greed, as these past few examples of *Voyager* have demonstrated, while simultaneously continuing to reinforce the status quo of imperial action, practices, and ways of seeing the world. In doing so, "Future's End" reveals that there will always be hierarchies of power and levels of difference, in this case between Americans in the 20th century, humans in the 24th, and humans in the 29th century. Braxton might seem to be the most ideal and progressive since he is from the 29th century, but he is presented as a less desirable foil to Janeway. Braxton is brash, rude, and the one who actually causes the entire series of events in the first place (ignoring the confusing paradoxes of time travel, as none of these events would have taken place if Braxton had not taken it upon himself to attempt and fix a future has-not-yet-happened catastrophe). Instances like this pit *Voyager* against 'more' advanced species, and the Federation's 'humanity' will give them an edge over others, and a position at the top of the imperial binary and hierarchy established and maintained throughout the *Voyager* narrative.

Most alien encounters in *Voyager* take place between the Federation and other space faring races, thus removing a clear demarcation of development between 'warp' and 'non-warp' capable aliens. Episodes that involve encounters with other warp capable races depend on

[31] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 30.

other markers to situate these aliens as 'underdeveloped' in contrast to *Voyager* and the Federation. "Distant Origins" shows the advantages and successes of science over superstition and presents a space-faring civilization that has not divorced itself from "ignorant" superstitious beliefs. The episode features an encounter with a reptilian race, the Voth, who share an ancestor with humans.[32] The episode adopts a unique storytelling perspective: it is presented from the Voth's point of view, offering a narrative spin on the *Trek* staple of First Contact with alien species. That said, the episode continues to present *Voyager* and the Federation on the 'correct' side of the 'less/more developed' imperial binary through the presentation of an extremely religious Voth society.

In the episode, a Voth scientist named Forra Gegen searches for *Voyager* to attempt and prove his claim that the Voth originated on a distant planet in the Alpha Quadrant (Earth). In doing so, he hopes to demonstrate that the current political and religious "myth and doctrine" stating otherwise is outdated and dangerous. In defending his decision to violate a mandate from Voth leadership in his search for *Voyager*, Gegen explains to his daughter, "And what will happen if I don't [prove and explore this theory]? Science and progress held back by ancient myth! But truth must be known!" This emphasis on 'Truth' echoes numerous Western scientists who pushed the boundaries of 'Truth' in the name of science, including Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, and Einstein, and presumes that all other ways of thinking (notably non-modern Western ways of seeing the world) are wrong. Executive producer Rick Berman suggested Galileo as the focal point of this episode as it evolved beyond concepts of "dinos with automatic weapons". Berman pushed the writing team to ponder "where's the humanity" amidst the original premise of "a bunch of lizards with AK-47s," and the episode took shape around the 16th century challenge to religion in favor of 'Enlightenment' thinking.[33]

[32]"Distant Origins," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, April 30, 1997).
[33]Amy Kaplan, "Voyager Episode Guide," *Cinefantastique*, 29, no. 6/7 (November 1997): 86

Gegen discovers *Voyager* and proves his theory, but in the end the Voth leader, Minister Odala, refuses to support the scientific evidence. Odala claims that "We are not immigrants" to their planet, although audiences and the *Voyager* crew now know the truth. Obviously the Voth descended from a hadrosaur who fled Earth 20 million years ago, and therefore shares a common ancestor with humanity: the science proves it. The unsettling resolution to the episode—wherein Gegen must recount his claims or see the *Voyager* crew destroyed for their aid of his 'heretic' studies—creates the space for audiences to hope that one day the Voth will overcome their doctrine of myth and superstition and come to believe in science as the ultimate truth. In taking this narrative approach, "Distant Origins" contributes to the belief in progress and development of science and scientific thinking along Western models as universal 'Truth'. Rist observes that this universalization—now globalized through Western policies and practices—occludes lasting ties to traditions and beliefs of 'pre-modern' societies:

> To consider modern society as different from others, on the pretext that it is secular and rational, is actually a result of Western arrogance. As there is no society which is not based upon traditions and beliefs, nothing indicates that Western society is lacking them either—even if they are different from those of other societies. *It is necessary to reject the 'great divide' between 'tradition' and 'modernity', for modernity itself lies within a certain tradition.*[34]

Western societies may believe we have left features of 'tradition' behind as we have become (through the imperial project) 'modern' and technologically advanced, but the unquestioned belief in progress denotes otherwise as it depends on the continued 'development' of traditional imperial binaries to create and maintain hierarchies of difference.

Voyager encounters another reptilian race in season four, a race of dedicated and violent hunters called Hirogens who do not live up to Federation standards of progress and development due to their unique lifestyle. The Hirogens are first introduced in the episode

[34]Rist, *History of Development*, 21, emphasis in original

"Hunters" when *Voyager* discovers and uses a large array of satellites to communicate with Starfleet for the first time since their arrival in the Delta Quadrant.[35] Hirogen society is built around hunting prey throughout the quadrant—prey composed of other sentient space faring races. After a follow-up appearance in "Prey," when the Hirogens track a survivor of Species 8472, the Hirogen return again for a two part episode sequence called "The Killing Game" that features the full *Voyager* crew immersed in a holodeck recreation of the Second World War.[36] In "The Killing Game," which starts in the middle of the action (an occasional *Voyager* narrative technique), the Hirogens have captured *Voyager* and created a series of holographic simulations from accessing Federation history in the *Voyager* databanks.[37] In one simulation, the *Voyager* crew believe themselves to be citizens in a small occupied French village during WWII and the Hirogen—as Nazi officers—command the town. Eventually the crew discovers their manipulation at the hands of the Hirogen Nazis and write over the holo-narrative with their own, playing out the liberation of the village by American military troops (including a few *Voyager* crew members), and ultimately a force of holographic Klingon warriors defeat the Hirogens.

This episode makes use of well-known 20$^{\text{th}}$ century history to present the 'advanced' development of the *Voyager* crew, once again coming from their rational critical thinking in contrast to the 'less' development mindset and approaches to life of their antagonists. Further, in ways that do not happen in "Future's End" and "Distant Origins" as Sterling and the Voth refuse to see reason, the episode presents Hirogen development along Western ideals. During the war games, one hunter named Karr begins to ponder what will become of the Hirogens when they 'over hunt' and destroy their populations of prey. Karr begins to see the need for another way of hunting—a more 'humane' way of hunting that does not

[35]"Hunters," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 11, 1998).
[36]"Prey," dir. Allan Eastman, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 18, 1998).
[37]"The Killing Game, Parts 1 and 2," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, March 4, 1998).

directly kill the prey—in order to save his species. He does so while wearing a Nazi uniform and walking around the decks of the captured *Voyager*, a piece of visual symbolism that adds gravitas to his transformation: it is not every day that an alien Nazi has a change of heart and realizes a better and more humane way of life. Karr's realization that holodeck technology can offer the Hirogens a new path for hunting serves as step in Hirogen social evolution toward a less violent way of life, at least where sentient alien species are concerned. This 'development' of thinking presents 'progress' along the Western/Federation model of development in direct response to exposure to Federation practices, history, and ways of life. Scriptwriter Joe Menosky explained that this character development established the episode as more than just "bad guys mucking around".[38] Rather, in Menosky's perspective, the episode highlighted Karr's realizations as a "humanistic message of change". This story, with its "Trekkian notions" about 'progress' and 'development', resonates with the idealized human values the Federation often presents as superior to those 'less developed' and evolved values of Delta Quadrant aliens.

"The Killing Game" concludes with Janeway giving the Hirogens holographic technology so, as Janeway suggests, they can "create a new future for their people. At the very least, you can hang this [trophy] on your bulkhead". The Hirogens do the former, and their next (and final) appearance in the season seven episode sequence "Flesh and Blood" shows the consequences of this development.[39] In these episodes, the Federation learns that the Hirogens subverted the holographic technology so the holographic 'prey' can experience continuous pain and death, which horrifies *Voyager*'s holographic Doctor and the rest of the crew. It appears that Karr's realization has done less to influence the Hirogens to 'more advanced' kinds of critical thinking and humane values than Janeway hoped in "The

[38] Anna Kaplan, "The Killing Game," *Cinefantastique* 30, no. 9/10 (November 1998): 87–89.

[39] "Flesh and Blood, Parts 1 and 2," dir. Mike Vejar and David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, November 29, 2000).

Killing Game," leaving the unsettling realization that some species will never develop to reach Federation standards. This repetition perpetuates the imperial mindset of hierarchies based on perceived difference—a classic practice that continues the Euro-American imperial tradition of creating and maintaining difference wherein the imperial power is seen as superior to all others.

The episodes discussed here include important social and political commentary against greed, violence, and dictatorial governments. In issuing this commentary through contrast with the 'more developed' Federation, these episodes perpetuate imperial ideologies of difference and power that situates the Federation as the morally superior civilization. This tension between productive commentary and imperial ideologies demonstrates how deeply rooted this binary is in contemporary cultural narratives. In telling stories that glorify one society as morally superior through their more 'progressive' and 'developed' status, *Voyager* proposes in a Western vision of the future that presents, echoing Fukuyama's presumption, Western values of progress and development as the ideal evolution of mankind.[40] The *Voyager* narratives proposes that Western values *are* the ideal evolution of mankind—and the Federation spreads that message throughout the Delta Quadrant as they pass through, 'saving' 'less developed' civilizations (and failing to save those who are not capable of salvation). In perpetuating this myth of progress and development in a series designed to offer future *possibilities*, *Voyager* limits true exploration of non-imperial futures.

[40]Fukuyama, "The End of History?"

4.4 "More" Developed Civilizations: The Federation Remains Superior

On occasion, *Voyager* encounters civilizations more technologically advanced than the Federation, or at least equally as advanced with less immediate signs separating the two. These encounters shift the presentation of 'progress' from that related to linear technological and social development (and some critical thinking) toward more 'humane' and 'humanitarian' ways of life. Through this shift, these encounters continue to position the Federation as the morally superior civilization. The *Voyager* crew always manages to come out on top of confrontations with equally or 'more' developed civilizations through a combination of 'morally superior' ideals, creative thinking, and plucky human ingenuity.[41] Ultimately, these encounters reinforce the *progressive* nature of Western humanity, as it paints itself, even if the technology is not as developed. As a result, these encounters highlight the presumed superiority of Western humanitarian ideals and critical thinking as key in separating 'us' and 'them'—specifically, an 'us' and 'them' determined through centuries of imperial modes of thinking about the world and (re)creating difference. Such processes ensure Euro-American nations and ideologies remain central to determining 'how the world works' in the aftermath of the Second World War and the conclusion of the Cold War, and *Voyager* contributes to the continued presentation of these beliefs in popular culture.

The season four episode "Living Witness" highlights humanitarian ideals, especially equality and equity within a society, while simultaneously recreating imperial ideologies

[41] The latter is a *Trek* staple, going all the way back to *The Original Series* when the Vulcan race, in particular, was constantly baffled by humanity's ability to succeed despite the odds against them. This thread was highlighted often in the prequel series *Enterprise* and in the newest *Trek* series *Discovery*. *Discovery*, in contrast to the earliest *NX-01 Enterprise* and thanks to that very human ingenuity so often showcased in *Trek* narratives, is extremely technologically advanced with the 'spore drive' system that can transport it not only throughout the galaxy and into alternate realities. Overall, one of the main underlying messages of *Star Trek* is that humanity will find a way, regardless of the situation.

of difference via superiority. This episode offers the only *Voyager* equivalent of the famous *Trek* 'mirror universe,' first introduced in *TOS* episode "Mirror, Mirror" when Kirk and crew were transported into an alternate *Trek* universe ruled by the evil Terran Empire, rather than governed by the benevolent Federation.[42] With the exception of *Voyager*, each *Trek* series has presented its own take on the mirror universe, most recently the entire second half of the first season of *Discovery*. The common thread of these episodes is that every person in the regular *Trek* universe has an evil alter ego in the mirror universe, typically demonstrating extremely violent and self-motivated behavior rather than the violence-as-a-last-resort working-toward-collective-goodwill nature of the regular universe characters.

"Living Witness" puts a spin on this concept through depicting an alien society 700 years in the future that has misunderstood *Voyager*, the Federation, and their own history for the entirely of those seven centuries.[43] The episode opens with clear indications that something is amiss—the *Voyager* crew displays no rank insignia and has altered physical features: Chakotay, whose name is being mispronounced, has a much larger tattoo and Janeway's hair is extremely short. There is a Kazon crewmember on the Bridge, and—most startling of all—Janeway opens fire on another ship explaining that it is the "Starfleet way" to use extreme violence as a *first* resort, because "defeat, genocide? Why quibble with semantics?". The scene is then revealed as a holographic simulation on display in an alien museum showing the supposed historical encounter between *Voyager* and the Kyrians and Vaskans, two races with long-lasting historical animosity. A Kyrian museum employee named Quarren eventually enables a backup copy of *Voyager*'s holographic Doctor, who is able to revise the narrative and offer the 'Truth' of the original encounter. In revealing details of the original encounter and the *Voyager* crew, the Doctor revises the historical

[42]"Mirror, Mirror," dir. Marc Daniels, *Star Trek: The Original Series* (Desilu Productions/Paramount Television, October 6, 1967).

[43]"Living Witness," dir. Tim Russ, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, April 29, 1998).

narrative, which did *not* end with an act of genocide on Janeway's orders. In the end, the Doctor brings about lasting peace between the Kyrians and Vaskans by finding 'proof' to support his version of events, ultimately overcoming centuries of racial division, mistrust, and violence.

The Kyrian and Vaskan societies are presented as technologically similar to (if not superior to) the Federation, although the alien society lacks advancement in 'progressive' humanitarian ideals and critical thinking. In this case, such difference is demonstrated through their clear misunderstanding of historical events and the racism that continues in their society. Daniel Bernardi argues that *Trek's* attempts at a classless and raceless society falls short due to contemporary casting and writing choices, along with network demands and audience expectations, but the *presentation* of a classless, raceless, and genderless society is central to Roddenberry's utopian vision of the future.[44] As such, the continued existence—over 700

[44]Daniel Bernardi, *Star Trek and History: Race-Ing Toward a White Future* (Rutgers University Press, 1998). In contrast, George Gonzalaz (*The Politics of Star Trek,* 2015) discounts Bernardi's critiques as themselves racist aims to undermine the vision Roddenberry offered. These two views highlight a common tension present in *Trek* scholarship: one the one hand, the series is inherently political, and as such demands to be read in such ways, but it also pushes (even if it often fails to actually meet this goal) for the exploration of a hoped-for utopian and egalitarian future for humanity. In reality, of course, the present-day political and social tensions of the series are impossible to avoid, even in light of these vaulted goals, but it is important to acknowledge the significance the franchise has played (and continues to play) in bringing underrepresented actors into key roles, even if those roles were not as equal as they ideally could have been. For *Voyager*, significant representation comes from the first female Captain of a *Trek* series (discussed in more detail in chapter 5). The most well known example in the *Trek* universe, however, is *TOS* role of Lt. Uhuru, played by African American actress Nichelle Nichols. Filming in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement when African Americans were pushing for legal and social racial equality, Nichols credits Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. with encouraging her to stay on the show despite her reservations after filming season one. Nichols recounts the story in an interview with the Archive of American Television: during the weekend in which Nichols was considering leaving *TOS* for a Broadway production, she was introduced to King at a fundraiser. King declared himself her "best fan," and highlighted the dignity and importance of her role. In convincing her not to leave the show, King explained its significance to the African American—and larger American—community. Nichols recalls King explaining that, "For the first time on television, we will be seen as we should be seen every day, as intelligent, quality, beautiful people who can sing, dance, go into space, be lawyers, be teachers—who *are* these, and yet you don't see it on television until now". These comments changed Nichols' mind about leaving the show, and she continued in the role for the remaining two seasons on television, and in the later films. While this story does not in any way excuse the skimpy sexualized outfits women characters wore in those early episodes, or even discount Bernadri's criticisms of the series, it does speak to the vision Roddenberry had for the series and the reason he made his casting decisions. As King noted, recounted in the same interview with Nichols, the role was not an

years into the future (1000 years into *our* future)—of racially motivated policies of oppression and inequality set this alien society as 'less developed' and substantially 'less progressive,' technology notwithstanding, than the presumably post-class/race/gender society of Earth in the 24th century. In violating the humanitarian ideals of equity and equality in part through their 'incorrect' use and understanding of historical documents, the Kyrians and Vaskans *need* the Doctor to set them straight. The character is a hologram, although physically, the hologram (played by actor Robert Picardo) is a middle-aged white male, a classic 'white savior,' and he plays that role effectively in this episode. The society presented on the surface of the *Trek* universe is a laudable one, as is the Doctor's corrected account of *Voyager* and their journey, but the presentation of this story wherein a white male must step in and save another society from itself—including centuries of racism and racially motivated violence that seems too easily overcome with a few revisions to historical narratives—continues to reinforce imperial hierarchies of difference. This hierarchy places 'progressive' ideals, and especially American and Western values of surface level equality, beliefs in linear historical narrative, and the correct 'Truth' of history, at the top of a continued imbalance of equality.

In contrast to the stand-alone episodes like "Living Witness," *Voyager's* repeated encounters with the Borg offer a longer running commentary on technology, development, and progress. In these encounters the Federation is at a distinct technological disadvantage, although the humanity, humane values, and ideals of the *Voyager* crew always win in the end. Cyborgs are a popular science fiction device, as they allow for exploration of the limits of humanity and technology, and the benefits, or horrors (or both), of blending those features. *Star Trek* takes the 'horror' approach to cyborgs, telling a story of forced

African American role, nor was it a female role: Nichols could easily be replaced by anyone, from a white man to an alien. This casting decision, therefore (as does that of Janeway in command of *Voyager*) was and is a powerful one with regard to the social and political commentary Roddenberry intended with the series. See: Interview with Nichelle Nichols, n.d., https://interviews.televisionacademy.com/interviews/nichelle-nichols?clip=55758#highlight-clips (48:00 - 59:56).

assimilation of numerous species and civilizations with the deliberate intent of creating a unified and perfect "master race". The Borg were originally introduced to the *Trek* universe in the second season of *The Next Generation*, when the powerful alien known only as "Q" transported the *Enterprise* into uncharted territory where they encountered a Borg cube (a massive square spaceship).[45] The Borg are a cybernetic race possessing advanced technology who are driven to assimilate other races and technologies into their Collective—thus the use of the oft-repeated popular refrain, "You will be assimilated, resistance is futile" whenever a spaceship encounters the Borg.

The Borg are a chilling race that is entirely different from the Federation in every possible way. Adam Roberts calls the Borg the "most extreme foe the Federation has yet encountered".[46] In his estimation, the Borg represent 'radical otherness' because their way of 'life' is literally incompatible with that of the Federation, and all other living organisms. In discussing the well-known scene in *TNG*'s "The Best of Both Worlds" before Picard is (temporarily) assimilated by the Borg, Roberts explains:

> When the captured Picard is taken aboard the Borg ship and argues with the disembodied voice of the Borg, he seems, literally, to be speaking to the whole ship. Picard states the key values of the Federation, the key values, arguably, of any 'life form', and in each case the Borg simply negate them, ultimately negating life itself. They do this not in the sense that they 'value' destroying life or killing, as a warrior race might, but rather in the utterly other sense that neither life nor death is of any importance. … [T]hey do not even value life, the being that is most basic to any humanist conception of existence. It is impossible for us to enter imaginatively into the world of the Borg because certain key values we hold, values like individuality, life/death and so on, are too centrally part of us, whereas for the Borg they are neither good nor bad but simply irrelevant.[47]

The Borg assign species a number rather than a name (humans are referred to as Species 5618,

[45] "Q Who," dir. Rob Bowman, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Paramount Television, May 8, 1989).
[46] Adam Roberts, *Science Fiction* (Routledge, 2006), 120.
[47] Ibid, 122-123.

as revealed in "Dark Frontier"[48]) and actively work to assimilate every species they encounter. Species 116, for example, was almost entirely assimilated by the Borg, as described by a survivor named Arturis in "Hope and Fear".[49] Through this assimilation, all Borg acquired advanced biological abilities and technologies belonging to Species 116, including the ability to learn languages after hearing only a few phrases and quantum slipstream drives that allow for faster-than-warp speed space travel. The assimilation process allows the Borg to accelerate biologically and technologically at very advanced rates, making them a very challenging enemy on top of their chilling disregard for the value of life (and everything else). That superiority notwithstanding, however, the Borg are never able to subjugate the Federation due to the latter's progressive humanity and creative out-of-the-box thinking.

Voyager first encounters the Borg directly in the two part episode "Scorpion," which demonstrates the morally superiority of the Federation despite the Borg's technological superiority.[50] In this sequence, Janeway wants to pass unchallenged through a portion of Borg space. To do so, she forges an alliance with the Borg in their fight against another species, known only through their Borg designation as Species 8472. The main antagonist of this sequence is Species 8472, but the focus remains on the Borg and the Federation. The Federation crew often equates the overt conquest practiced by both Species 8472 and the Borg with the human concept of 'evil,' made evident by the extreme violence with which both alien races pursue their ends. The Borg remove all notions of individuality in their assimilated drones, and place *no value* in the concept of individual life. Janeway accesses Federation files on the Borg to learn more about her enemy, including comments from Picard after his experience in Borg hands: "In their collective state, the Borg are utterly without

[48]"Dark Frontier, Parts 1 & 2," dir. Cliff Bole and Terry Windell, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 17, 1999).

[49]"Hope and Fear," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 20, 1998).

[50]"Scorpion, Parts 1 & 2," dir. By Winrich Kolbe and David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 21 and September 3, 1997).

mercy, driven by one will alone: the will to conquer. They are beyond redemption, beyond reason". Janeway additionally listens to reports from a Captain Amasov after the Battle of Wolf 359 that "It is my opinion that the Borg are as close to pure evil as any race we've ever encountered". In contrast to this well-documented antagonist, Species 8472 is a new enemy, but Janeway soon learns that their goal is to first destroy the Borg—and then all life in the Quadrant.

This presentation of overt conquest as inherently evil (and imperial) deflects the more subtle and ongoing imperialism on the part of the Federation at play through the entire *Voyager* narrative. This contrast establishes the Federation crew as the 'good guys' due to their 'progressive morality' and their 'humanity'. That said, the reality is murkier: Janeway makes a "deal with the Devil," in her own words, forming an alliance with the Borg and joining the war against Species 8472 in exchange for the ability to continue their journey home by the quickest path directly through Borg space. As part of the alliance, Janeway agrees to construct a biological weapon to be used against Species 8472, a lifeform from "fluidic space" that is impervious to other forms of technology, including Borg assimilation. To build the weapon, Janeway applies her 'human ingenuity' to adapt a medical procedure into a biological weapon that can kill Species 8472. After *Voyager* is captured and taken into fluidic space, the crew discovers that the Borg were the initial aggressors against Species 8472, but Janeway continues the construction of the weapon and uses it against Species 8472 as a way to escape back to the Delta Quadrant. In doing so, Janeway links use of the weapon with self-defense rather than aggression, positioning her in opposition to the aggression-for-aggressions-sake of the Borg and Species 8472. Janeway's weapon is successful, and she deploys it a second time against additional Species 8472 ships after *Voyager* reemerges in regular space. As a result of this effective weapon, Species 8472 abandons their war, resulting in a Borg victory by default. Janeway and Chakotay then prevent an attempt at a double-

cross by the Borg, and *Voyager* continues their journey home.

Through cooperation in the face of immeasurable odds and out-of-the-box thinking to save the galaxy from an enemy potentially worse than the Borg, Janeway and her crew succeed in defeating *two* great technological imperial powers. "Scorpion" positions the Federation as progressive and morally superior: they might have finished the war, but they did not start it, and Janeway upheld her end of the bargain with the Borg even though the Borg attempted to assimilate the *Voyager* crew despite their agreement. The presentation of salvation of the galaxy by these Starfleet officers in connection with a story that positions the Federation as morally superior *even when* they construct and use biological weapons of mass destruction, *Voyager* contributes to cultural narratives that prioritize one civilization at the expense of all others: an ideologically imperial approach to thinking about living and relating. As the human-centered climate crisis looms, such narratives are dangerous: they limit the exploration of non-imperial possibilities for engagement with other living things by perpetuating centuries old imperial ideologies of difference and superiority.

Voyager continues this focus on moral superiority in the face of other advanced civilizations when the ship and crew encounter the *USS Equinox*, another Federation starship stranded in the Delta Quadrant by the Caretaker's Array five years earlier. *Voyager* discovers the ship and crew in the two-part episode sequence "Equinox".[51] These episodes position the morally superior Federation (in the form of *Voyager*) against members who have 'crossed the line' of acceptable moral behavior. Other *Trek* series have approached this contrast through the 'mirror universe' trope, an alternative *Trek* universe where the Federation characters act in morally reprehensible ways as part of the Terran Empire. In *Voyager*, however, this contrast takes place in the *real* universe, calling attention to the expectation for the Federation (humans most notably) to always live up to high morally progressive and superior

[51] "Equinox, Parts 1 and 2," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, September 26, 1999).

standards. This contrast situates the Federation (and humanity) apart from—and superior too—everyone else.

The "Equinox" episode sequence is darker than normal *Trek* storylines, although in the end, Federation values triumph over 'less moral' practices. *Voyager* is roughly 40,000 light years away from the Caretaker's Array when they encounter the *Equinox* under the command of Captain Rudy Ransom. Given that *Voyager* has a faster warp drive, Janeway questions how the *Equinox* made it that far in five years. Janeway is dubious of Ransom's claim that they simply modified their warp engines and used wormholes to travel the distance. Eventually the *Voyager* crew learns the truth: the *Equinox* officers have been conducting horrific experiments on alien races, harnessing their life forces to power the ship engines and travel through space at higher warp speeds than *Voyager* can achieve. The alien species most recently under attack from the *Equinox* experiments, classified as "a nucleogenic species," has begun fighting back. This unnamed species is portrayed as extremely violent. In a blog post on "25 Creepy *Star Trek* Scenes," columnist Guy Desmarais categorizes the aliens (who rank at #15 on the list, one of seven *Voyager* alien encounters included) as "lethal, vengeful, and more importantly, they never give up. The way they hunt is creepy enough, but the sense of hopelessness permeating the first part is unlike anything else on *Voyager*".[52] Desmarais acknowledges that "the crew of the Equinox is actually responsible for the entire debacle," although this point fade in contrast to the violent hunting behavior of the aliens, where one touch causes the victim to shrivel up and die almost immediately. Similar to the extreme violence of the Borg and Species 8472, this species is categorized only through its violent behavior, even if once again that behavior came as a response to actions of another race.

"Equinox" concludes with a positive message reinforcing the morally superior and progress

[52]Guy Desmarais, "25 Creepy Star Trek Scenes That Set Phasers To Stun," TheGamer, April 16, 2018, https://www.thegamer.com/star-trek-scenes-set-phasers-trivia/.

values of the Federation, despite the darker overtones. In the end, Ransom realizes the inhumanity of his actions and sacrifices himself for the good of his remaining crew, and the crew of *Voyager*. Janeway, who also exhibits questionable behavior—including almost torturing an *Equinox* officer for information—as a result of her anger at Ransom, comes to her senses and uses 'superior' rational thinking to convince Ransom to change his practices and save the day. Ransom's actions against other life forms for the good of his own crew, which Janeway frames as "mass murder," are deflected as the episode draws to a close. Chakotay—prefacing a critique of Janeway's increasingly erratic behavior—acknowledges that "This man betrayed Starfleet. He broke the Prime Directive, dishonored everything you believed in, and threw *Voyager* to the wolves". Janeway responds by listing numerous *Voyager* antagonists: "Borg, Hirogen, Malon. We've run into our share of bad guys. Ransom's no different." "Yes he is," Chakotay replies, "You said it yourself: he's human".

Through this presentation of a (white male) *human* Federation Captain upholding (or not) the morally progressive ideals of the Federation, *Voyager* crafts a narrative that sets those very same officers as 'superior' to all other races they have encountered. Ultimately, Ransom recovers his dignity and his Starfleet purpose in the end, sacrificing himself after soliciting a promise for Janeway to get her crew home, presumably in a better manner than he tried to do. Through the emphasis on Ransom's humanity, this episode, like "Scorpion" before it, reaffirms that some characteristics and traits are built into the very nature of a species. In "Scorpion," the Borg could not overcome their nature to assimilate, much like the parable of the Scorpion and the Fox that Chakotay uses to warn Janeway of the possible consequences of her alliance:

> There's a story I heard as a child, a parable, and I never forgot it. A scorpion was walking along the bank of a river, wondering how to get to the other side. Suddenly, he saw a fox. He asked the fox to take him on his back across the river. The fox said 'No. If I do that, you'll sting me and I'll drown.' The

> scorpion assured him, 'If I did that, we'd both drown.' So, the fox thought about it, and finally agreed. So, the scorpion climbed up on his back, and the fox began to swim, but halfway across the river, the scorpion stung him. As the poison filled his veins, the fox turned to the scorpion and said, 'Why did you do that? Now you'll drown too.' 'I couldn't help it,' said the scorpion, 'it's my nature'.

This parable, applied to the Borg, indicates that their nature will always run to violence and assimilation, even in connection with the group who won their war and saved their species (and their ability to continue to assimilate the galaxy). "Equinox" repeats the same message, albeit in a more positive way: Ransom was unable to fully overcome his innate human morality, and thus sacrificed himself to destroy his ship, halt the alien attacks, and preserve his fellow Federation personnel. In the end, as Chakotay articulated, *Ransom is human*, and his humanity wins out. The "Equinox" storyline takes humanity to the very edge of their moral superiority, but in the end, Ransom redeems himself. Ransom is *not* like the Borg, and never could be, since his humanity reasserts itself in the end. This message is meant to be reassuring—no matter how dark it gets, human morality will emerge victorious. When applied to the crisis of the Anthropocene, however, that message takes a darker turn: if humanity will win out against any odds, it will similarly continue to dominate over *all* other forms of engagement with living organisms. Human-centered modes of engagement must change in order for realistic change to take place for the environment and all living lifeforms.

Voyager constantly recreates an imperial binary of encounters between 'less' and 'more' advanced and progressive civilizations, and in doing so serves as a serial homage to progress and development. This narrative has been championed by the United States in the latter half of the 20th century, which continues into the 21st. These processes extend imperial ideologies of power and difference that normalized and legitimized the spread of empire, and hide under the discourse of development to 'save' and 'aid' 'underdeveloped' nations. In perpetuating

these narratives, *Voyager* contributes to an ongoing cultural imperialism that establishes and maintains a hierarchy of difference based on value judgments made by Western imperial powers against all other aliens, terrestrial or extraterrestrial. This binary establishes Western ideals and values of progress and development as a universal 'Truth,' and disregards all other way of seeing, being, and living within the 'modern' world created and perpetuated through practices, policies, and mindsets of Euro-American imperialism. The recreation of imperial ideologies does not, as Said observes, prevent those same narratives from offering useful and compelling political and social commentary on that same world, but the realization of the imperial ways of thinking presented and reinforced through narratives of progress and development contributes a more nuanced understanding of the continued presence of imperial actions and mandates governing numerous forms of cultural, social, and political interactions. As such, the progress and development narratives reinforced throughout *Voyager* give a presumed 'Truth' to the idea that "resistance is futile; you will be assimilated"—Western progress is presented as inevitable for a moral society, and everyone else is left behind and categorized as forever 'lesser' in the mind of the presumed 'superior' ideology of power. In recreating this 'Truth', *Voyager* limits awareness of other kinds of engagement with the vast *web of life* on Earth (and throughout the galaxy), leaving humanity (and the Earth and all her creatures) at a loss. Human-centered approaches are not the only viable form of relating, even if narratives like *Voyager* presume otherwise.

Chapter 5

Creating a Home

5.1 Narratives of Imperial Domesticity on the Edge of the Galaxy

> "The most pressing concern about a female captain, of course, is will people buy that she's a captain? … I have always said during this whole process that surely by the twenty-fourth century women can assume roles of leadership without acting like men. We have created and will continue to explore the softer, nurturing side of [Janeway]. She can be a caring and compassionate person. We are going to see that she interacts much more easily on a social level with the crew in a way that Picard never did."
>
> Jeri Taylor, *Voyager* Co-Executive Producer

Voyager stands out among *Trek* media for the presence of Captain Kathryn Janeway on the Bridge: Janeway was the first female Captain to take center stage in the franchise. Early in 1995, show co-creator Jeri Taylor explained the production team's main concern about casting a female captain: "Will [viewers] accept that a whole crew would follow her, report to her, trust her in battle?".[1] The *Voyager* production team was constantly aware of the

[1]Mark A. Altman and Edward A. Gross, *Captains' Logs Supplemental: The Unauthorized Guide to the New Trek Voyages* (Little, Brown, 1996), 133.

need to convince 20th century audiences of this fact, although Taylor expressed a belief that "surely by the twenty-fourth century" women leaders would be accepted without question and without having to "act like men". Janeway's narrative arc, therefore, cultivates a balance between firm and decisive leadership and 'caring and compassionate' actions toward her crew and aliens they encounter in the Delta Quadrant, actions that Taylor implies are unique to Janeway due to her gender. In addition to the female commanding officer, *Voyager* includes two other women in command positions in the central cast: Chief Engineer B'Elanna Torres and recovered Borg drone (and eventual Science Officer) Seven of Nine. These female roles push beyond—yet simultaneously always retain—the typical 'caregiver' role of main female cast members in previous series, most notably Dr. Beverly Crusher and Counselor Deanna Troi in *The Next Generation*.

Central female roles in television increased dramatically during the 1990s. Claire Menard and Anne-Caroline Sieffert attribute this rise, in part, to the groundwork laid by previous film and television productions. When discussing the success of *Wonder Woman* (2017) and *Captain Marvel* (2019)—two female-led Blockbuster films—Menard and Sieffert rhetorically ponder whether those films would have happened "without Leia's triumphant takedown of Jabba the Hutt" in *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* (1983).[2] *Voyager* played a role in the success of later female heroes as well, as Janeway actress Kate Mulgrew herself noted in a Tweet on the release day for *Captain Marvel*:

> To #captainmarvel from #captainjaneway – we know a thing or two about saving the galaxy, don't we? My best to @brielarson on her trailblazing role. Enjoy going Higher, Further, Faster. Great to see a female-led superhero movie today of all days. Warp speed ahead![3]

[2]Lisa V. Mazey, *Cinematic Women, From Objecthood to Heroism: Essays on Female Gender Representation on Western Screens and in TV Productions* (Vernon Press, 2020), vii.

[3]Kate Mulgrew (TheKateMulgrew), Twitter, March 8 2019, https://twitter.com/TheKateMulgrew/status/1104147339596435456.

A study of American television programs during the 1992-93 season revealed few shows that featured female led characters,[4] although by the late 90s, multiple series—and three entire networks, including Lifetime which debuted in 1994—featured main female characters and "female-centered dramas".[5] Amanda Lotz does not consider *Voyager* a part of this shift, instead classifying Janeway as an "individual character placed in a male-dominated dramatic setting".[6] That said, *Voyager* fits her explanation that "female characters first achieved central roles in dramatic narratives that included an emphasis on adventure" and has the added advantage of not pairing Janeway with "a man" as was typical of the dramas Lotz lists, including *The Avengers* (1966-1969).[7] *Voyager* may not align with the 'female dramas' featuring female "situations" and "experiences" of popular American 1990s female-centered shows like *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002) or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2001), but—more like *Xena: Warrior Princess* that shared *Voyager*'s 1995 debut, although *Xena* counts in Lotz' criteria of a "female drama" from the 90s—*Voyager* undoubtedly features three strong female leads navigating a traditionally male dominated environment. Within this unique space in the middle of the 1990s, *Voyager* sought to balance a female lead in less stereotypical feminine settings and situations, although as I will argue in this chapter, it is the very nature of the central characters gender that creates space to cultivate difference between the 'home' space and the 'wild' spaces of the Delta Quadrant.

The presence of female *Voyager* characters in significant command roles, especially Janeway, is a positive step forward in the progressive representation so central to Roddenberry's vision with *The Original Series*. That said, the central female leadership on *Voyager*

[4]Michael Elasmar, Kazumi Hasegawa, and Mary Brain, "The Portrayal of Women in U.S. Prime Time Television," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 43, no. 1 (January 1, 1999): 20–34, https://doi.org/10.1080/08838159909364472.

[5]Amanda D. Lotz, *Redesigning Women: Television after the Network Era*(University of Illinois Press, 2010), 6-7.

[6]Ibid, 2

[7]Ibid, 2-3.

also contributes to the ongoing imperial narratives maintained and reinforced throughout the narrative. As these narratives limit our ability to envision a world beyond Western imperial power structures and restrictions, studying these lingering imperial narrative approaches creates space to approach engagement with living organisms in a non-imperial way. Non-imperial acts of relating within the large *web of life* on Earth is vital to responding to the environmental crisis of the Anthropocene, caused and extended by human-centered involvement with the planet. The first step in moving forward is understanding the extent of the problem through detailed interrogation of imperial ideologies in contemporary narratives, including those that utilize features of gender and presumed gender expectations to 'care for' a family *to the exclusion* of everyone else.

In this chapter, I assert that the post-Cold War *Voyager* narrative reinforces American imperial modes of thinking and engaging with the world (or the galaxy, in this case) through an examination of the three major female characters in *Voyager*. Specifically, I examine the way each character contributes to creating and reinforcing features of imperial domesticity amongst the crew on their long journey home. Examination of the 'home space' cultivated in the *Voyager* narrative by the female commanding officers reveals how such narratives contribute to an ongoing American imperialism that establishes America as 'safe, civilized, and secure' *against* the foreign 'Other'. These narrative traces back to the writings of American women in the 19th century who were, as Amy Kaplan argues, central to the creation of the concept of American 'nation' and 'empire' during that time period.[8] American foreign policy in the 'post-empire' era after the conclusion of the Second World War and post-Cold War engagement in 'humanitarian' efforts, retain the same modes of difference as those cultivated within the imperial center during the era of American 'manifest destiny'. In this chapter, I explore how the *Voyager* effort to explore 'progressive' female narratives of leadership on

[8]Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," *American Literature* 70, no. 3 (1998): 581–606, https://doi.org/10.2307/2902710.

television through Janeway, Torres, and Seven of Nine continues to solidify significant *difference* between safe 'home' spaces and foreign 'other' spaces in the future 24th century setting of the series. In doing so, the narrative contributes to an ongoing tradition of cultural imperialism that reinforces the status of America as separate and apart from the rest of the world, even when delineated Cold War era boundaries like "First" and "Second" world countries were blurring.

Women were and are as capable of empire building as their male counterparts. Anne McClintock argues that the social category of "women," especially women in and from the imperial center, was central to the European imperial project as a means to draw boundaries between "us" and "them".[9] Amy Kaplan explores the idea of domesticity—historically seen as a woman's space—as part of the "imperial project of civilizing" that created an artificial binary between *domestic* and *foreign* spaces during the 19th century.[10] Kaplan is clear that such a binary *is* artificial, although several centuries of use of this binary has occluded this reality in many cultural and political narratives. Narratives that reinforce imperial domesticity were largely constructed by American women to keep the 'home front' safe, secure, and civilized in the face of expansion into 'wild' spaces. In contrast to the 'salvation' of "Othered" aliens highlighted in chapters two through four of my project, I utilize Kaplan's concept of imperial domesticity as a lens through which to explore the salvation narrative of *Voyager* in direct relation *to the crew* as an internal 'domestic' sphere that must be kept separate, safe, secure, and civilized in the 'wild' spaces of the Delta Quadrant through the main female characters of Janeway, Torres, and Seven of Nine.[11] Obviously these threads

[9] Anne Mcclintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Routledge, 1995).

[10] Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," 582.

[11] A reader familiar with *Voyager* will notice I make no mention of Kes, the rescued Ocampa character who joins *Voyager* in the pilot episode and travels with the crew for the first three seasons. Kes was eventually replaced by Seven of Nine due to network, show creator, and audience concerns, as Kes was not a very popular character. I bypass a discussion of Kes in this chapter for several reasons: as a non-human/non-Federation/non-Alpha Quadrant character, she does not contribute to creating a safe and secure 'home space'

of analysis are deeply connected, but a shift to a crew-centric focus for this chapter reveals additional components of the ongoing imperial narrative crafted by this example of American popular culture on the cusp of the 21st century—and in the idealized and hoped for 24th century.

Much like the other devices of imperial narrative I have studied in this project, narratives that reinforce imperial domesticity are present throughout the series, and I will occasionally backtrack to foundational moments for each of these three characters. That said, the bulk of my analysis in this chapter will explore episodes and stories in the final two seasons of *Voyager* that are especially entrenched in the ongoing motivation and *need* to get the crew home and reinforce the safety of the home they already possess aboard *Voyager*. I begin my analysis with an exploration of B'Elanna Torres in relation to her personal character development throughout seasons six and seven as she continues to wrestle with her half human/half Klingon identity and at the same time create a family (a home) with the crew, and Tom Paris in particular. Torres serves as an excellent example of the individual and direct family focus of imperial domesticity, and highlighting the struggles to become a part of a nuclear family in the midst of a 'lost in space' adventure under the direction of Janeway reveals how struggles over personal identity and starting a family serve as touchstones and models for a fully *imperial* understanding of domesticity and a presumed space for women, even in the 24th century.

Widening the scope, I then shift into a detailed study of Captain Kathryn Janeway.

for the *Voyager* Federation crew beyond her limited interactions with Neelix, Tuvok, and Paris. Further, her character development and narrative arc is mirrored in many ways in the storylines of Torres and Seven: all three struggle with their identity (Kes, an Ocampa, will only live for nine years and wants to develop her latent telepathic abilities despite cultural restrictions—the other two will be discussed in turn in this chapter), Kes and Torres wrestle with concerns over procreation (Kes ultimately does not procreate, whereas B'Elanna will), and all three experience difficulties relating to the mostly human crew members of the ship at various times. Additionally, Kes never assumes a command position aboard the ship, and unlike both Torres and Seven, Kes has no "humanity" to preserve, although she none-the-less models a very 'humane' kindness, even serving as the Doctor's assistant for much of her time on *Voyager*.

Janeway serves as the prime imperial agent throughout *Voyager's* journey, beginning with the establishment of her authority and actions with regard to the Kazon in the pilot episode "Caretaker," discussed in chapter two. Further discussion of her actions in seasons six and seven—including her mentor relationship with Seven of Nine and defeat of the Borg Queen in the series finale "Endgame," which both solidify the importance of human intelligence over that of machine intelligence and *humanity* over all other forms of thinking and expression—will demonstrate how the *Voyager* narrative continues to reinforce and maintain difference through establishing clear 'home' and 'foreign' spaces that *cannot* be crossed or erased, even if the boundaries blur from time to time.

Following this discussion, I then focus more specifically on Seven of Nine—a character colonized both by the Borg and the Federation—to demonstrate the narrative ultimately reinforced through these three female characters in an American science fiction show in the 1990s: the concept of 'humanity' serves as the ultimate barrier between safe 'domestic' spaces and dangerous 'foreign' ones, underwriting an already insidious narrative of ongoing imperialism into this example of American popular culture. Unlike the Borg, the Federation (a futuristic ideal of the Western world, and especially America itself) will never assimilate the 'Other,' and instead always (re)create structures that establish its own values as 'superior'. Narratives reinforcing the centrality of humanity and Western concepts of individuality *must* change if non-imperial ways of engaging and relating with other living organisms will ever be seen as viable alternatives to centuries of imperial ways of living.

5.2 Imperial Domesticity: How To Create a Home When You're Lost in Space

Voyager season six opened with a series of dark episodes, beginning with the culmination of the two-part sequence "Equinox," discussed in the previous chapter. The first three episodes of this season feature the three main female characters, making it an auspicious place to begin this analysis of imperial domesticity as a narrative technique. Janeway saves the day (with a little help from redeemed Captain Ransom) in "Equinox Part 2," Seven of Nine encounters three Borg seeking freedom from the Collective in "Survival Instincts" and has to face the reality of death as an individual or re-assimilation, and Torres encounters death (and family) head on with a series of dream-like encounters with her Klingon mother in "Barge of the Dead". These episodes continue the overall *Trek* directive in favor of *humanity*, defined as moral humane actions that preserve the lives of the crew and the individual and serves as a key space where the "home" domain of *Voyager* is cultivated.

As I have discussed, *Voyager* often reinforces artificial imperial binaries as presumed 'Truth' in addition to deflecting and subverting actions of Federation imperialism through the guise of the 'white savior' narrative so common in the history of the Euro-American imperial project. In creating a binary that establishes all species (and space itself) outside of *Voyager* as 'foreign,' 'unexplored,' and therefore unknown and presumably uncivilized (as chapters two and three of my project explore), the *Trek* narrative also creates the need for a safe 'domestic' space within the ship itself. These processes—involving numerous ways of normalizing the colonial encounter and always seeking to create and maintain difference and thus create, reinforce, solidify, and maintain the empire itself—work concurrently, and *Voyager* offers the best *Trek* example to delve into the process of securing the 'home front' through the lost-in-space narrative *and* the key position of female commanders as main

characters. Every *Trek* series tells the story of building a family and community in the face of unknown dangers and challenges, and *Voyager* tackles this project in the far reaches of space, cut off from all possible Federation aid and the near-impossibility of their quest to return home. Much like the United States in the 1990s, navigating a world without the looming 'threat' of the Soviet Union and (presumed) victory over of democracy and capitalism over communism, *Voyager* was adrift from familiar touchstones and frames of reference. As such, *Voyager* provides an example of the idealized method for navigating these differences: specifically, the crew turns inward and focuses on creating their own safe Federation 'home' space to the exclusion of all Delta (and some lingering Alpha) Quadrant influences. This process cultivates 'domestic' and 'foreign' boundaries to entrench their idea of 'home' as necessary to their very survival. As a popular cultural narrative in the Anthropocene, this message that a *safe home space* must be separate from 'dangerous foreign spaces' in order to survive perpetuates imperial binaries and mindsets as universalized 'Truth'.

The creation of binaries remains a key piece of the imperial project, past and present. *Voyager* presents an artificial distinction between *domestic* and *foreign* spheres. Historically, this distinction often lead to analyses of imperial practices that exclude women—who inhabit and govern *domestic* spaces—from the discussion of empire building. In reality, that domestic spaces were central to the success of Euro-American empire through processes of domesticity established by women writers and homemakers as "the conditions of domesticity often become markers that distinguish civilization from savagery".[12] Amy Kaplan observes that while domesticity appears to remain focused on the home space and the women who created and maintained such spaces, it served to justify the domesticating myth of imperialism through the salvation of 'Othered' populations from non-Western (and thus presumably non-civilized) ways of living.[13] Through analysis of texts written by American women dur-

[12]Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," 582.
[13]Ibid, 588.

ing the height of classic American imperialism and the realization of 'Manifest Destiny,' Kaplan demonstrates that women, often through 'caring,' 'compassionate,' and presumably 'feminine' actions *at home* as homemakers and caretakers, contributed to the practices necessary to 'create' the empire. Narratives of domesticity become "inseparable from narratives of empire and nation building," as in fact these 'domestic' narratives were vital to nation and empire building projects through the creation of clear boundaries of 'safe' and 'unsafe' spaces.[14]

Kaplan links imperial domesticity with concepts of the "cult of domesticity" crafted by white men and women in 19th century America. Contradicting other scholarship, however, Kaplan argues that this was not the creation of a "separate sphere" wherein women established their own spaces to rule in the home where they could have some measure of authority, since they were restricted from exercising any influence in public spheres. Rather, through this project of creating a safe home space *in direct contrast to* 'foreign' (wild, uncivilized, barbaric) spaces, these women, including notable writers like Catherine Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Sara Josepha Hale, were at the same time creating the identity and heart of the American nation as 'civilized'. Instead of viewing domesticity (the act of 'homemaking') as an exclusively female act and thus a trait reserved exclusively to internal family affairs, "a feminine counterpart to the male activity of territorial conquest," domesticity instead comes to create and define the boundaries of the nation itself.[15] In pushing Christian behaviors, actions, and attitudes toward the 'civilizing' of children *and* society, these texts of imperial domesticity were underwritten by the same reality Said identifies with regard to all literature written in in Euro-American empires during this same time period. Empire was the basis for all forms of interaction between 'the West' and 'the rest' of the world during this time period, and such attitudes and expectations underwrote all forms of interaction,

[14]Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," 584.
[15]Ibid, 583.

and even critique, of the project.[16] These attitudes and actions have continued in the 'post-empire' period since the Second World War, as discussed in my previous chapter through the projects and concepts of progress and development, and narratives of imperial domesticity form yet another.

Chief Engineer B'Elanna Torres, played by Roxann Dawson, is a *Voyager* character who highlights the personal nature of the domestic space created and maintained through the process of imperial domesticity, albeit updated for the 20th (and 24th) century context. Rather than presenting her attempts to create a home space in the manner of Queen Victoria (Beecher uses Victoria as a foil for the American mother in *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*[17]), Torres instead continually struggles with her biracial heritage as key to 'belonging' within the *Voyager* crew, first established and explored early in the *Voyager* series in the season one episode "Faces".[18] This encounter with the Vidiians, discussed in chapter three, results in Torres being split into two halves against her will by Vidiian scientists looking for a cure for the Phage. Unable to survive as separate human and Klingon beings, and saved by *Voyager*'s holographic Doctor, Torres begins to realize her identity is made up of both halves.[19] This early realization does not end her journey, however: she continues to

[16]For more, see Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage Books, 1994).

[17]Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," 586.

[18]"Faces," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 8, 1995).

[19]Klingons were first introduced in *The Original Series*, and have played a major role in many *Trek* storylines. The Klingon-Federation War ended in 2293, roughly 80 years before *Voyager* entered the Delta Quadrant and began their journey home, but relations with the Klingons have often been difficult due in large part to their (by Federation standards) obscure and outdated modes of honor and a tendency toward warfare and violence. In an analysis of the creation of the Federation in the second season of *TOS*, Rick Worland explains that "Although roughly equal to the Federation in political and military power, the Klingons represent its every antithesis—military dictatorship and glorification of war, conquest of weaker planets, and murder of civilians. Klingons are cunning, amoral schemers who use spies, sabotage, proxies, propaganda, or, as a last resort, direct military force to bedevil the peaceful Federation. In short, the Klingons and the Federation were firmly established as two ideologically opposed superpower blocs that compete for the hearts and minds of Third World planets" (Rick Worland, "Captain Kirk: Cold Warrior," *Journal of Popular Film and Television;* 16, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 109–117, 110). Later series created a more nuanced portrayal of the Klingons and their warlike society, but the species continues to be portrayed as 'less human' and even 'less developed and progressive' than their human counterpart. Physically, the Klingons are portrayed as darker skinned humanoid aliens with prominent forehead ridges, and their complex social

struggle with this imposed binary (human or Klingon) throughout the series, especially with regard to interpersonal relationships among the crew. Torres story is complicated further by her personal background. She was enrolled in Starfleet Academy but dropped out due to difficulties managing her Klingon temperament in an environment governed by human expectations for non-violence, and eventually joined the Maquis rebellion only to be lost in the Delta Quadrant with a small group of Maquis in "Caretaker". In season one Chakotay convinced Janeway to 'give her a chance' and promote Torres to Chief Engineer, and she eventually embarks on a personal romantic relationship with a human crewmember, Tom Paris. Overall, Torres' identity on *Voyager* is a series of binaries that reinforce the artificial difference created and maintained in imperial narratives. Through ongoing threads of imperial domesticity retained in the *Voyager* narratives as part of the 'homemaking' process, Torres represents a 'savage Other' who is domesticated into the 'civilized home' space and eventually finds 'belonging'—first as daughter and then as mother—in the domestic framework cultivated aboard the ship.

Throughout most of her time on *Voyager*, Torres is 'Other,' either as a half Klingon, or as a Maquis—and in some instances both—which contributes to difficulties in building personal relationships with the non-Maquis crew members of *Voyager*. Unlike Maquis commander Chakotay, who quickly adapts to his new role as Janeway's First Officer—serving as both friend and advisor to Janeway within a few episodes—Torres remains an outsider for much of the series, only slowly forming closer 'family' ties with the *Voyager* crew. The tension over identity and 'belonging' within the Federation that Torres' storyline details is a *Trek* staple, including characters like the half human/half Vulcan Spock from *The Original Series* and *Discovery*, and the Klingon officer Worf from *The Next Generation*. *Voyager* frames these slightly differently due to the 'lost in space' adventure narrative motif—Spock could return to

and political hierarchies often confuse Federation and Starfleet Officers. Despite joining the Federation, few Klingons have served in Starfleet, and reproduction between humans and Klingons is difficult and rare.

Vulcan if he really wanted to, and Worf to Kronos (Qo'noS), but no *Voyager* character from the Alpha Quadrant has that choice. Torres is also female, unlike the previous assortment of characters who did not quite fit the Federation mold, and therefore cultivates a different kind of relationship than her male counterparts in previous series'. In this case, Torres ultimately establishes a more 'domestic' family oriented relationship—she creates a literal "home" for herself through key interpersonal relationships, ultimately including motherhood. Despite the reality of the artificial distinction between male and female 'spheres,' as Kaplan deconstructions through her argument on the central role played by women in cultivating and creating a sense of the American nation/empire during the height of traditional American imperialism, *Voyager* demonstrates a more 'traditional' narrative for the female characters who seek 'home' and 'security' amongst the uncertain Delta Quadrant.

Torres is infrequently the prime focus of *Voyager* episodes, despite her position within the central cast, although audiences are always aware of the tension she feels between being human (and a member of the largely human *Voyager* crew) and her Klingon heritage and characteristics. It takes extended time for Torres to cultivate a civil relationship with Janeway, due in large part to Janeway's continuing belief in Torres' 'irrational' Klingon nature, despite Janeway's eventual (and largely grudging) acceptance of Torres' brilliance with regard to engineering. Torres spurns Janeway initially as well, over her dislike of Janeway's tight grasp on authority (it was Torres who spoke up right before Janeway destroyed the Array in "Caretaker," demanding to know who gave Janeway that authority). In the first few seasons, Torres' tension with Janeway was largely portrayed as a result of the former's stereotypical Klingon temper and associated dislike of authority. Over time, however, their relationship loses the rough edges and eventually Torres regards Janeway as a mother figure, indicating a relationship not unlike that of a 'savage' child adopted into the 'domestic' home space. The "missionary" focus of much original writing on imperial domesticity calls

all women—whether married, mother, or not—to cultivate a willingness to 'minister', and possibly 'mother', the 'uncivilized savages'.[20] As Kaplan articulates, the need to "regulate the traces of the savage within us" was of central concern amongst women writers and home-makers establishing the tradition of imperial domesticity,[21] and Torres offers a compelling example of such a narrative in action in the late 20th century.

The early season six episode "Barge of the Dead" gives proof to the changing relationship between Janeway and Torres, along with clear signs that Torres is making progress 'resolving' the constant tension of her biracial identity.[22] In the beginning of the episode, Torres experiences a series of strange dream-like encounters that foreshadow what is to come: Janeway calls Torres "Lanna," a nickname only used by Torres' mother, and other characters highlight Torres' Klingon heritage in various ways. Later, while in a coma after an accident, Torres experiences a series of dreams in which she aids her Klingon mother Miral on a journey to Sto-vo-kor, the Klingon 'heaven'. Eventually, Torres offers to take her mother's place in Gre-thor (Klingon 'Hell') and becomes trapped in an alternate version of *Voyager*. A spirit guide, in the form of the Doctor, implies that Torres has never been truly *happy* aboard *Voyager*, and a sequence of Gre-thor/*Voyager* characters observe how Torres has always "kept everyone at arm's length" (Kim), has led a dull life (Janeway), is stubborn (Seven), and the like.

In the end, Torres makes the choice to 'toss' her Klingon identity and embrace her human nature. When faced with her mother Miral dressed as Janeway to emphasize mother/daughter connections, Torres realizes that she has spent so long trying to live up to everyone else's expectations ("to be a good Starfleet Officer," she demands of Janeway, "Maquis" to Chakotay, "lover" to Paris) that she does not know herself. With a claim that "I am so

[20]Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," 590-591.
[21]Ibid, 582.
[22]"Barge of the Dead," dir. Mike Vejar, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, October 6, 1999).

tired of fighting" (a typical Klingon pass time, and key part of Klingon heritage and identity), she tosses her Bat'leth (traditional Klingon battle weapon) over the side of the ship (now a wooden seafaring vessel, rather than *Voyager*). The dream ends with an embrace from her mother, and upon waking from the coma, softly calling for her mother, Torres makes eye contact with Janeway and realizes that her journey of self-identity, linked with her quest for belonging within the *Voyager* crew, is rooted in 'being true to herself'. In these moments, Torres realizes that the only way to overcome the binaries imposed by her experiences within a Federation structure that was never willing to see Klingon's and their traditions as equal to human-inspired Federation standards is to fully embrace those very Federation standards. Through the reconceptualization of Torres' relationship with Janeway as that of a formerly 'savage' daughter and her civilized/civilizing mother, and a push to search for the 'inner truth' of her identity, the *Voyager* narrative cultivates a message of acceptance along Federation standards. In directly combining Torres' acceptance of herself (notably *without a Klingon's desire to fight*) with a maternal connection with Janeway, the narrative underwrites the creation of a safe 'home' space for Torres—one she never had when growing up with an absent human father and a demanding Klingon mother. Now that Torres has accepted her place in the *Voyager* family as a daughter to Janeway—a daughter who embraces her human characteristics over Klingon ones, as indicated by the act of tossing the bat'leth into the sea—and is on the path to let go of lingering pressure she felt to express her Klingon side through constant fighting and posturing, she can *belong* to the safe 'domestic' home space she never truly felt comfortable in before. Exile in the Delta Quadrant aboard *Voyager* is no longer her own personal 'Hell,' but rather a space of security, comfort, and family, complete with a mother figure, as a result of her decision to embrace her more human (humane) characteristics.

It is only after Torres comes to this realization about setting her own path to cultivate

her own "honor" by living 'true to herself' aboard *Voyager*—one without significant Klingon characteristics—that her relationship with Tom Paris develops further along traditional 'domestic' lines. Torres and Paris dance around one another for several seasons, and eventually began a romantic relationship in season four, although one that experienced ebbs and flows as the narrative progressed. By the early season seven episode "Drive," Torres considers breaking off the relationship permanently.[23] This episode centers around Paris entering a race with the newly constructed *Delta Flyer II*, a shuttle pod of his own design and construction. It also includes Paris and Torres discussing their feelings and their relationship, and Paris ultimately proposes marriage. The episode concludes with a shot of the *Delta Flyer II* with "Just Married" scrawled along the stern, and is one of the few 'on screen' marriages in the *Trek* franchise. The marriage eventually leads to procreation: by the episode "Lineage," Torres is pregnant.[24]

The pregnancy leads to one final identity crisis for Torres as she struggles with passing on (or not) Klingon DNA to her child. This struggle serves the last step Torres takes during the *Voyager* journey to resolve her conflicted identity pinpointed in "Barge of the Dead". Through her pregnancy, Torres is fully part of a safe domestic space aboard *Voyager*, and creates a home for herself in the form of a traditional nuclear family. Coming to terms with her biracial identity was always the goal for Torres' character, as evident in notes by show co-creator Jeri Taylor from the early brainstorming days in 1993. Originally conceptualized as the Conn (Communications) officer, Taylor observes that this "hybrid" character "would be a metaphor for those who are trying to suppress or ignore some aspect of themselves

[23] "Drive," dir. Winrich Kolbe, Star Trek: Voyager (Paramount Television, October 18, 2000).

[24] Even though Paris and Torres discuss last names in the final scene of "Drive," with Torres observing that "B'Elanna Paris" has "a nice ring to it" and Paris countering by saying "I kind of like the sound of 'Tom Torres,"' audiences are never given a clear indication if either Torres or Paris change their name. Paris' acknowledgement that "Hey, it's the 24th century!" is refreshing and implies he might take Torres' last name, although their daughter will be named Miral Paris. Later episodes in season seven indicate that Torres retains her name at least in a working environment aboard *Voyager*, and as such, for the sake of simplicity and consistency, I will continue calling B'Elanna Torres by "Torres" in this chapter.

(anger, hatred, lack of control, etc.) that actually can't be ignored. She wants to eschew her Klingon nature, finding it primitive, violent, savage, unattractive".[25] Taylor also observes that "rather than trying to reject part of herself," the character will learn "to accept herself as a whole person,"[26] although in the end Torres does so in actuality by tossing her bat'leth (and Klingon identity) out to sea in "Barge of the Dead."[27]

"Lineage" highlights Torres' final struggle with her biracial identity and need to belong in the safe space aboard *Voyager* and within the Federation and Starfleet. A series of flashbacks reveal that Torres' human father expressed difficulty living with "two Klingons" (Torres and her mother Miral), and shortly after he was confronted by a young Torres about this, he left and never returned. In the present, Torres contemplates having the Doctor remove the baby's Klingon DNA, going so far as to overwrite the Doctor's holographic programming to force him to complete the procedure. Paris talks Torres out of this drastic course of action, which has dangerous potential side effects for the baby, by reassuring her that he is *not* her father and will never leave her and their child, and that he hopes to live with "three or four" Klingons one day. "I mean it," he says, "I hope every one of them is just like you". Torres accepts his words, rewrites the Doctor's program, and forgoes the dangerous procedure. Paris' actions and words here are one of the redeeming moments in the series narrative for the character, who was originally introduced with 'womanizer' tendencies, and they reinforce Taylor's original intent that Torres come to terms with her biracial identity. That said, Taylor hoped the character would do so without rejecting some

[25]Taylor quoted in Stephen Edward Poe, *A Vision of the Future* (Simon and Schuster, 1998), 182.
[26]Ibid, 184.
[27]Of additional note here is the fact that Taylor left *Voyager* production in 1998 after the conclusion of the fourth season, and was therefore not directly involved in seasons five through seven. As such, other writers, directors, creators, etc., played a key role in Torres' final character evolution. Perhaps if Taylor had continued with the series the narrative may have taken a different path, but as with all television production, so many individuals are involved with a single episode, not to mention an entire series, that it is challenging to speculate. Regardless, Torres *did* reject a key portion of her identity in this final scene in "Barge of the Dead," even if through the birth of Miral she will be marginally more accepting of her Klingon heritage—at least in the form of base DNA.

portion of it in favor of 'being human'. By this ending of "Lineage," Torres has already 'come to terms' with her identity by sacrificing her innate Klingon desire to fight against outside expectations. Additionally, although seeing Torres and Paris accept their biracial child does reflect the idea of acceptance for all racial identities Roddenberry envisioned as 'normal' in his utopian future, this narrative thread of forming a 'domestic' space (this time as a nuclear family) through coming to terms with artificially imposed binaries of difference reinforces a traditional narrative of imperial domesticity. This narrative explains that differences *exist*, and will always exist, and in order to belong to a safe, secure, and civilized space, the 'savage' parts—in this case, the Klingon parts—must be removed. Such a narrative leaves no space for any form of symbiosis of 'living with' other creatures and non-human ways of life in the human-centric present: a prescription for a future that remains inherently imperial.

5.3 Captain and Caretaker: Creating a Home, and Finding a Way Home

Kathyrn Janeway—played by white American actress Kate Mulgrew—assumed firm control of *Voyager* during the pilot episode "Caretaker," and maintained that control throughout their seven year journey home. Unlike Torres, Janeway as Captain was a constant focus of the series—in typical *Star Trek* fashion, a trend only broken in the recent series *Discovery*—and served as the major driving force behind the entire narrative. Through keeping firm control of the ship and crew, including cultivating familial relationships like that discussed above with Torres, and maintaining Federation standards despite the lack of another Federation presence within 70,000 light years, Janeway successfully created a safe, secure, and civilized 'home' space aboard *Voyager*. In doing so, she was able to get her crew home, and further intrench narratives of imperial domesticity on the small screen, indicating how prevalent

such approaches remain in American outlooks about both present and future. To get home, *Voyager* must remain a safe haven from the wild 'foreign' spaces of the alien far reaches of outer space—and Janeway, as Captain and Caretaker, is the architect of that project and the eventual homecoming.

Recalling Taylor's observations early in the series run that audiences would need to believe Janeway, *a woman*, could command *Voyager*, the first episode strongly establishes Janeway's authority as Captain while also presenting moments of a presumably 'feminine' nature, thus irrevocably linking the two pieces in Janeway's character. This episode, discussed extensively in chapter two, is worth revisiting here due to the way it establishes Janeway as both captain *and* caretaker.[28] These features of Janeway's personality are highlighted before the ship leaves the Alpha Quadrant, and are reinforced frequently throughout the seven year voyage. Early in "Caretaker," Janeway greets a new *Voyager* crewmember, Ensign Harry Kim, who is visibly confused over how to address his new captain. This encounter follows directly after audiences see Janeway have a video chat with her lover, Mark, kneeling down in front of the screen and speaking familiarly, including explaining to Mark that "You never bother me, except for the way I love to be bothered, understand?". After saying goodbye and pressing a kiss to her fingertips and gesturing toward the screen (an action of soft affection audiences *certainly* never saw from famous *Enterprise* Captains James T. Kirk or Jean-Luc Picard), Janeway stands and calls for her new Ensign to enter. Kim first tries to address Janeway as "Sir," a title for someone in a position of authority in *Trek*'s 24$^{\text{th}}$ century, regardless of their gender. Janeway politely but firmly refuses this form of address, and then Kim more hesitantly calls Janeway "Ma'am". At this point, Janeway replies directly that, "Ma'am is acceptable in a crunch, although I prefer 'Captain,"' leaving no doubt about her role on the ship.

[28] "Caretaker," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 16, 1995).

Through taking the mantle of "Captain" in these first moments, rather than a gendered title of respect not directly tied to her position on *Voyager*, Janeway begins to establish her position of authority over her crew (and her audience). Included in her authority is the caring and compassionate side demonstrated in the previous scene. These traits are more often attributed to women than men, as Taylor acknowledges in her comments about Janeway's "caring and compassionate" treatment of her crew—Taylor explicitly contrasted these features of Janeway's personality against *The Next Generation*'s (male) Captain Picard. Through blending moments of authority with examples of presumed feminine actions and attitudes, the narrative positions 'feminine' traits—most notably the role of caretaker that Janeway fulfills in the Delta Quadrant—as part and parcel of Janeway's authority as Captain. Throughout the series, Janeway assumes the role of *Captain as caretaker*—a unique position enabled by her gender due to presumed gender role and the castaway *Voyager* narrative.

Janeway's central position as Captain is underlined at the end of the pilot episode when future First Officer Chakotay defends her decision to destroy the Array (over Torres' objections) by saying simply "She's the Captain!," reaffirming Janeway's position as Captain and ultimate decision maker for the ship. As quoted in chapter two, in the aftermath of the Array's destruction, Janeway outlines the new directive for *Voyager* to continue exploring in the manner of the United Federation of Planets while trying to find a way home. Part of that directive involves engagement with new alien species—many that I have outlined in the previous chapters. Additionally, the project concurrently requires cultivating a safe domestic space aboard *Voyager*, a task that Janeway prioritizes in numerous episodes throughout the series. Janeway's 'domesticating' project centers on utilizing her absolute authority to create and maintain a wholly Federation space aboard *Voyager*, limiting influence and interference from the Delta Quadrant with the ultimate end goal of getting her crew home safely. Much like the writings and actions of 19$^{\text{th}}$ century American women, Janeway crafts a safe

home space in direct contrast to the 'foreign' (defined in various ways as wild, uncivilized, barbaric, etc.) spaces of the Delta Quadrant. Like her 19th century female counterparts who were creating the identity and heart of the American nation as 'civilized,' and therefore worth both protecting from 'savagery' and expanding to civilize 'others', Janeway reinforces and maintains the civility and humanity of the Federation aboard *Voyager*. Her 'domestic' focus—presented through her compassionate authority with an end goal of total salvation of her 'home' and crew—becomes the new Prime Directive of the *Voyager* narrative. In doing so, Janeway perpetuates numerous imperial binaries, reinforcing the ties between the domestic and foreign spaces often juxtaposed in empire building projects, and further strengthening ongoing imperial narratives in American popular culture.

Janeway establishes a clear divide between the safe 'domestic' Federation space aboard *Voyager* and the wild and unexplored 'foreign' space outside the ship often throughout the series. My discussion will focus on the last two seasons to reinforce how the narrative of imperial domesticity is retained even when hope of returning home wanes amongst the crew (and is eventually achieved), although I first want to highlight how the threads are established earlier in the narrative. As noted in chapter three, Janeway is firmly opposed to sharing Federation technology with the Kazon, prompting three years of antagonism from the 'uncivilized' race. Realistically Janeway is partially motivated by the limited resources available to *Voyager*, including the inability to replace old, damaged, lost, or traded parts, but there is also a clear reluctance on her part to share Federation culture and advances with a race she deems 'uncivilized' in comparison to the Federation. In doing so, Janeway establishes a firm divide between 'us,' those who inhabit the same 'domestic' space she retains and reinforced through this action, and 'them,' anyone else inhabiting the 'foreign' space beyond *Voyagers* walls.

Beyond technology, Janeway prioritizes adhering to Federation policies as key in culti-

vating a safe Federation space aboard *Voyager*. There are numerous moments throughout the series when Janeway bends, disregards, and even breaks the Federation Prime Directive when it suits her purposes to maintain the safety of her crew and achieve *her* Prime Directive to return home, although she nonetheless follows Federation principles as her guiding policy throughout the journey. More specifically, she uses Federation policies and ideals—including the centrality of 'humanity' and 'humane' morals—as the standard with which to separate her safe 'domestic' space (*Voyager* itself) from 'everyone else'. The season one episode "Prime Factors" illuminates Janeway reinforcing Federation policies to establish standards aboard *Voyager* that separate them from the rest of the galaxy. In this episode, *Voyager* gains an opportunity to trade Federation stories (in essence, knowledge beyond understanding for Delta Quadrant inhabitants) for teleportation technology that could send them closer to home.[29] Ultimately Janeway forbids the trade when she cannot achieve it through legal channels, as sharing this technology with outsiders would violate the aliens own Prime Directive. In doing so, Janeway demonstrates extremely moral behavior to honor and respect the wishes of an alien race, as expected of a Federation Captain, establishing boundaries around her own behavior—often in contrast to others, including the Sikiarian representative who dangled the trade in front of Janeway with no intent to follow through. In the end, after several crew members trade for the technology anyway, they discover that the device is not compatible with Federation technology and it must be destroyed before irreversible damage is done to *Voyager*. This early episode presents Janeway prioritizing Federation policies and behaviors—retaining their status as law abiding Federation officers, even when stranded on the other end of the galaxy—against a possible quicker route home, even before they realize the technology is not compatible.

"Prime Factors" highlights crew rebellion against Janeway's authority, although that

[29]"Prime Factors," dir. Les Landau, Star Trek: Voyager (Paramount Television, March 20, 1995).

changes as time goes on and Janeway retains firm control over *Voyager*. Throughout the series, Janeway constantly takes action to protect the safety, security, and sanctity of her crew and ship. The season three episode "Macrocosm" demonstrates this point nicely. Mulgrew acknowledged that this episode "was a fresh start for Janeway," giving her the opportunity to do something new and different in her role as caretaker.[30] "Macrocosm" tells the story of Janeway rescuing the ship and crew from a 'macro' virus that has infected the biogenic parts of the ship and the entire crew, and features Janeway—stripped down to a tight grey tank top and her uniform pants—toting around a large gun, hunting the alien virus throughout various ship corridors, and healing/repairing the ship by distributing an antiviral gas as she goes.[31] Co-producer Taylor called this a "Rambo" storyline, and Mulgrew observed the obvious connection to Sigourney Weaver's character in Ridley Scott's *Aliens* franchise.[32]

Regardless of the actual inspiration for this episode, Janeway does the heavy lifting in this story (with a little help from the Doctor) and is instrumental in rescuing her ship and crew from the virus. Notably, the virus attacked not just the crew (which happens with regularity throughout *Voyager*'s duration in the Delta Quadrant, and often results in Janeway undertaking some kind of heroic, but not always physical, action), but *Voyager* itself. In this episode, Janeway undertakes actions to physically defend and protect her ship—the literal 'home' space of these Alpha Quadrant exiles—in order to continue her mission directive to secure the borders/boundaries of her ship *against* invasion and influence from outside 'foreign' spaces. This type of physical action was not typical of the narratives of imperial domesticity established by American women writers in the 19th century, but Janeway's literal protection and salvation of her domestic home space establishes her firmly as an agent of Federation imperial action against an opponent she never tries to communicate

[30] Anna L. Kaplan, "Kate Mulgrew," *Cinefantastique*, 29, no. 6/7 (November 1997): 84–86, 86.
[31] "Macrocosm," dir. Alexander Singer, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, December 11, 1996).
[32] Anna L. Kaplan, "Voyager Episode Guide," *Cinefantastique*, 29, no. 6/7 (November 1997): 100.

with—only eradicate. Such action will be repeated as *Voyager* continues their journey, including *Voyager*'s encounter with Species 8472 in the "Scorpion" sequence, and multiple encounters with the Borg for the last four seasons of the show.[33] These encounters have significantly larger reach and consequences for all parties—all in the name of safety, security, and salvation through preservation of 'home space' within the wild reaches of the untamed Delta Quadrant.

Janeway's endless efforts to cultivate *Voyager* as a safe 'home' space—filled with a family of crew—reach an apex in their encounter with another Federation crew in the "Equinox" episode sequence.[34] This sequence demonstrates Janeway's focus on preserving the humanity of the Federation and *Voyager* in the face of 'savage' foreign spaces, although this time the 'savage' space includes human Federation members who have lost their humanity due to their trials in the Delta Quadrant. As discussed in chapter four, this episode features an encounter between *Voyager* and another lost Federation vessel, the *Equinox* under command of human Captain Rudy Ransom. Upon learning that Ransom and his remaining crew have been stealing the life force of another alien species to power their warp engines, Janeway pursues a series of increasingly irrational actions to stop Ransom and prevent this 'inhumane' slaughter of aliens to continue. This episode, with the obvious contrast between a Federation Captain driven past the line of acceptable 'moral' behavior and Janeway herself being tempted to go 'too far' to stop Ransom, calls attention to the prescription for the Federation (humans most

[33]See chapter four for a longer discussion of the "Scorpion" episode sequence. Retaining awareness of how *Voyager* cultivates a narrative of imperial domesticity in that sequence makes it even more obvious *why* Janeway goes to such extreme lengths—making an alliance with the Borg and creating (and deploying) a weapon of mass destruction against Species 8472, an alien race notably never given a name or the opportunity to mediate their grievance with the Borg—to preserve *Voyager*: without the ship, there is no way home. Further, without the ship, *there is no home*. Janeway cannot accept settlement in the Delta Quadrant (the only feasible alternative to moving through the massive area of Borg space on their journey home) because doing so would alter the very nature of the crews understanding of 'home'—home is *Voyager*, until they can reach Earth.

[34]"Equinox, Parts 1 and 2," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, September 26, 1999).

notably) to always live up to high morally progressive standards in order to continue setting the Federation (and humanity) apart from 'everyone else'. These values are important, but this episode presents them in binary opposition to the 'savage Other,' albeit in this case, it is an 'Other' driven mad by prolonged exposure to the uncivilized *foreign* spaces of the Delta Quadrant. In doing so, the narrative of imperial domesticity—actions to keep the home space safe and secure to preserve the safety and civility of 'us'—is again reinforced, particularly the need, as with Torres, to "regulate the traces of the savage within us".[35] This continued contrast between domestic, civilized 'us' and foreign, savage 'other' presents only two ways of living: as either 'us', or 'them', with no room for an alternative option *or* a blend of approaches. This binary contrast hinders alternative possibilities for present and future living-with other life forms in ways that go outside of and beyond Western human-centered ideologies.

"Equinox" details how, unlike Janeway, Ransom was unable to establish a safe and secure domestic home space aboard the *Equinox*, and as such lost his humanity, and most of his crew. Ironically, the *Equinox* crew displays more 'familial' tendencies than the *Voyager* crew, including calling their Captain by his first name. Janeway never tolerates this informality outside of one-on-one encounters with select members of her Senior Staff, although it is hard to gauge how much of that difference is due to Janeway's gender and Taylor's remarks early on about how her Captain status would need to be constantly reinforced so 20th century audiences would believe it. Still, such familiarity (emphasis on 'familial') was not enough to save Ransom's crew, and, under the direction of their Captain, they 'devolved' away from Federation standards, morals, and expectations. For Janeway, these principles will *enable* the ultimate salvation of her crew; Ransom and the *Equinox* offer proof to her belief. After a series of increasingly tense and violent confrontations between Ransom, Janeway,

[35]Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," 582.

and the alien species Ransom was slaughtering, Ransom comes to see the error of his ways and sacrifices himself to destroy the *Equinox* and allow *Voyager* the opportunity to escape. These actions depends on Ransom rediscovering his humanity and dispelling the 'traces of the savage' that have emerged within due to the uncertain boundaries between 'domestic' and 'foreign' spaces he was never able to firmly establish in the manner Janeway did.

Dialogue between Chakotay and Janeway, previously quoted in chapter four, illuminates the significance of Ransom's 'humanity' (and temporary lack thereof) in this episode: Janeway tells Chakotay that, "I am angry. I'm damned angry. He's a Starfleet Captain, and he's decided to abandon everything this uniform stands for ... [and] I'm not going to stand for it". Although writer Ronald D. Moore objected to Janeway's actions in this episode by stating that she's simply "cranky and bitchy," not "grappling with any inner demons," or anything presumably more noble—a critique that would not likely have been leveled against a male *Trek* Captain like Picard—this dialogue gives explanation to not only Janeway's actions, but also to Ransom's final moment of self-sacrifice.[36] As both Janeway and Chakotay identify in this exchange, *Ransom is human.* As such, he makes the ultimate sacrifice to preserve the safety of his crew and *Voyager*, by extension, as their new 'home space' and vehicle home—and in doing so, further defines those boundaries for the *Voyager* crew. Notably, Ransom is played by a white male actor, the traditional imperial agent in foreign expansion. Backed by Janeway (a white female), the two work together to preserve their home, and their humanity, against attacking aliens and the savagery of the Delta Quadrant. As Janeway observes to Ransom "if we turn our backs on our principles, we stop being human;" a line Ransom crossed but an identity he redeemed in the end through modeling a narrative of imperial domesticity from the perspective of a male imperial agent. Ransom might have failed as caretaker (he was not a female Captain, after all), but he did succeed in recovering

[36]Anna L. Kaplan, "Ron Moore Q&A, Part IV" LCARSCom.Net | The LCARS Computer Network | A Star Trek Fan Site, May 19, 2019, https://www.lcarscom.net/rdm1000118/.

his humanity and aiding Janeway in once again preserving the boundaries of her safe 'home' space in the Delta Quadrant.

Janeway once again sets herself the task of bringing wayward Federation members back into the fold in the episode "Good Shepherd".[37] This episode details Janeway in her role as caretaker spending time with three under-performing crew members who do not feel a sense of belonging in the larger *Voyager* 'home' space.[38] After explaining that she has no wish to simply "deactivate" the crew members by relieving them of duty—a direct reference to the harsh Borg method for dealing with 'problematic' drones—Janeway attempts to form a direct connection with them instead in the hopes of instilling a sense of community and a desire to contribute to the *Voyager* family. To do so, Janeway takes crew members William Telfer, Tal Celes, and the extremely antisocial Mortimer Harren on an "away mission" aboard the *Delta Flyer* to investigate a "T cluster" for anomalies. The mission is complicated by unexplained disasters, presumably caused by dark matter molecules and some kind of "dark matter lifeform," although Janeway and the crew are eventually rescued by *Voyager* and return 'home' safely. Before their rescue, Janeway spends time with each crew member trying to establish a personal connection that will help them better acclimate to *Voyager*. For example, Janeway explains to Celes that she recruited her for *Voyager* due to her "unconventional thinking," and Janeway further encourages the continuation of such thinking during the away mission and upon returning to *Voyager*. Janeway working directly with Celes and the 'bonding experience' of facing danger together culminates in Celes and Telfer (after his own dangerous experience hosting a dark matter lifeform) deciding to stay on the *Flyer* instead of fleeing to the escape pods before attempting a dangerous maneuver to escape. In the end,

[37] "Good Shepherd," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, March 15, 2000).

[38] "Good Shepherd" is modeled after *The Next Generation* episode "Lower Decks," from the seventh and final season ["Lower Decks," dir. Gabrielle Beaumont, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Paramount Television, February 7, 1994).] "Lower Decks" highlighted the trials of a group of minor crew, a concept that is currently lending its name and premise to an animated *Trek* series created by Mike McMahan under the direction of *Trek* showrunner Alex Kurtzman.

Janeway is successful in bringing two of the three 'lost sheep' into the *Voyager* flock –the 'home' she has so carefully and consistently cultivated.

Mortimer Harren is an exception for most of the episode, indicating that not everyone *wants* to be saved—although the storyline presents this as no fault of Janeway's. Janeway attempts to draw Harren into numerous friendly and supportive conversations, including inquiries into his childhood and calling him by his first name. He replies to the latter by stating coldly, "even my mother didn't call me that," a negative parallel to the recent evolution of Janeway and Torres' mother-daughter relationship a few episodes prior in "Barge of the Dead". In the end, Harren alone seeks an escape pod to flee from presumed death aboard the *Flyer*, although he is saved from a dark matter lifeform at the last moment by Janeway, Celes, and Telfer. No direct evidence is offered one way or another regarding Harren's integration into the crew after the away mission, but the episode concludes on a hopeful note as Janeway implies to Tuvok that she rescued *all* of the lost sheep. As evident by the title and the storyline, this episode is a direct allusion to the Christian parable of the Good Shepherd, wherein Jesus explains to his disciples:

> How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.[39]

The phrase "the good shepherd" is used in the book of John (10:11 and 14), in both instances, refers directly to Jesus, perceived as the ultimate caretaker of his Christian 'flock' of disciples, believers, and followers. This *Voyager* episode positions Janeway in the same position with regard to her crew, including the overt Christian references. 19th century

[39]Matt. 18:12-14 King James Version

narratives of imperial domesticity were consistently rooted in American Christianity and cultivated the missionary 'salvation' narrative of Western imperialism through the age of "new imperialism" in the 19th and 20th centuries. Drawing on a long American tradition of religious fervor, including John Winthrop's famous "city on a hill" sermon from 1630, narratives of imperial domesticity normalize and internalize the 'salvation' nature of Christian parables like the Good Shepherd, and further American imperial actions in the 19th century. As the continuation of such narratives well into the 20th and 21st centuries demonstrate (this episode aired in March 2000), these tendencies to use Christianity as a marker for 'civilized' and 'savage' (and the associated borders cultivated through the unquestioned assumption of these human created concepts as 'Truth' about the world) have not abated.

Janeway continues to save both ship and crew from various Delta Quadrant problems as they continue to journey toward Earth. The story retold by Neelix to Borg children Icheb, Mezoti, Azan, and Rebi (rescued several episodes earlier in "Collective") as a ghost story in "The Haunting of Deck Twelve" is one example.[40] An episode noted for the 'creepiness' factor (it comes in at 14 on *TheGamer's* list of "25 Creepy *Star Trek* Episodes" and 16 on a similar list published by *Heroes & Icons*), Janeway once again serves as the singular savior of *Voyager* when the ship is possessed by an alien entity.[41] "Haunting" underlines the role Janeway plays on the ship—like in "Macrocosm," a role that coalesces on *physical* salvation as caretaking. Doing so details how a female character can use physical and intellectual acumen to demonstrate their status as leader while still maintaining a 'caring and compassionate' nature.

At the end of "Haunting," Janeway returns the alien entity to a nebula so it can live

[40] "The Haunting of Deck Twelve," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 17, 2000).

[41] Guy Desmarais, "25 Creepy Star Trek Scenes That Set Phasers To Stun," TheGamer, April 16, 2018, https://www.thegamer.com/star-trek-scenes-set-phasers-trivia/; H&I Staff, "18 Eerie, Disturbing and Downright Scary Star Trek Episodes," Heroes & Icons, October 26, 2017, https://www.handitv.com/lists/18-eerie-disturbing-and-downright-scary-star-trek-episodes.

"happily ever after" after it attempted to possess her ship. In doing so, Janeway emphasizes her role as both caretaker and savior for her crew as she simultaneously maintains the safe 'home' space aboard *Voyager* even when facing a 'creepy' alien possession. Salvation and separation from the 'wild', 'foreign', and 'uncivilized' Delta Quadrant (complete with unexplained alien entities who reside in nebulas and can possess a Federation starship at will) go hand in hand throughout this season and the entire *Voyager* narrative, with Janeway always taking the central role as the 'Good Shepherd' caretaker who protects and maintains the safety and security of her flock in any role required. The physical side of her caretaking would likely fall outside of the expectations for homemaking (and nation building) women of the 19th century, but Janeway's actions consistently create a 'home' space *and* delineates that space from the surrounding space, alien entities included. *Voyager* belongs to Janeway and her crew—no alien entities allowed.[42] This consistent repetition and recreation of salvation through difference—internal difference, in this case—constrains the *Voyager* narrative to imperial ideologies of difference that reinforce and maintain American/Western imperial forms of engagement with other living organisms. When applied to possible future encounters with aliens—or expected domestic and foreign policy plans in the present—these narratives restrict possibilities where non-imperial modes of engagement can offer more options for relating in a non-human-centric future.

Season seven continues to reinforce the narrative of imperial domesticity cultivated throughout the prior six seasons, culminating in the penultimate finale "Endgame" when the ship and crew finally return home. "Shattered" recounts many of these moments in a

[42]This said, a *Voyager* fan will likely note that there *are* a few aliens on *Voyager*, notably the Telaxian Neelix who joined the crew in "Caretaker" and (at this point in season six) the Borg children Neelix tells this story to in "Haunting". These aliens become part of the *Voyager* family over time, although Neelix will opt to leave the ship near the end of season seven, and all but one of the Borg children will return to their families. When *Voyager* returns to Earth in "Endgame," Icheb is the only Delta Quadrant alien who remains on board (he joins Starfleet). Still, for spending seven years in the Delta Quadrant, the limited number of alien crew is noteworthy—Janeway did not open her doors for many in her efforts to maintain a safe 'home' (human) space on *Voyager*.

time travel variation of the 'montage' episode style, typically a combination of clips from previous episodes.[43] In this episode, *Voyager* experiences an unexplained temporal distortion, and First Officer Chakotay experiences numerous moments of the past and future of *Voyager*, including encounters with a version of Janeway from before *Voyager* entered the Delta Quadrant. The episode recalls notable moments in *Voyager*'s journey through the lens of a Janeway who has not yet become the ship caretaker, including one last appearance by the Cardassian spy Seska, Tom Paris' *Captain Proton* holodeck program, and a grown up Naomi Wildman (born in season one, and the only child aboard *Voyager* until the Borg children rescued in "Collective" and then the birth of Torres and Paris' daughter in "Lineage"). Past-Janeway moves through these encounters with present-Chakotay, and she struggles to understand why she would destroy the Caretaker's Array and strand the crew in such a hostile place. Past-Janeway observes that the Delta Quadrant is a "death trap," for example, when expressing her disbelief that she would ever choose to save an unknown alien race (the Ocampa) at the expense of her crew.

In the end, however, past-Janeway comes to realize that the crew of *Voyager* has become a family through their trials and experiences in the Delta Quadrant, and accepts that she should not attempt to alter that fate. This recalls the 29$^{\text{th}}$ century Temporal Prime Directive not to change the past, which present-Janeway mentions to Chakotay in the final scene after the temporal anomaly has been resolved through the combined efforts of past-Janeway, Chakotay, and various crew members from multiple timelines. Through living these not-yet and not-quite moments, past-Janeway comes to realize that the experiences in the Delta Quadrant, due to the wild and foreign nature of the space and its inhabitants, will in turn allow her to cultivate *Voyager* as a safe home space with the crew forming a tight knit family. In the final scene, present-Janeway uses the Temporal Prime Directive to avoid explaining

[43] "Shattered," dir. Terry Windell, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 17, 2001).

to Chakotay how she knew about the location of his well-hidden stash of cider. This short scene heavily implies that Janeway knew what would happen that day in "Caretaker," and was willing to strand her crew *in order to create a family.* Back-dated foreshadowing or not, the narrative of imperial domesticity, especially distinctions between safe 'domestic' spaces and wild 'foreign' ones inhabited by 'savages' who must be excluded in order to establish the 'civilized' home, sets the stage for this approach to family-building, and all of it depends on tenets of American imperialism and nation building that often go unacknowledged, especially in popular culture narratives such as *Star Trek.*

Distinctions between the 'civilized' Federation and 'uncivilized' everyone else is reinforced yet again in "The Void," an episode that repeats many themes seen throughout the series and discussed frequently in my analysis of threads of ongoing imperial narratives in *Voyager.* "The Void" details a series of encounters between *Voyager* and various other ships trapped in a "void" in space.[44] Various factions exist within the void, all preying on other factions and unallied ships for supplies and resources. *Voyager* participates in various alliances, although Janeway ceases to work with one alien named Bosaal after discovering that the technology he brought to *Voyager* to help them escape the void was scavenged from the wreck of a ship Bosaal destroyed. Janeway's refusal to work with Bosaal and his illicitly acquired technology rests on Federation principles, specifically the adherence to 'humane' behavior and morals valued so highly (see chapter four for more). That said, Janeway herself has been willing to overlook such tendencies in alliances with aliens, most notably the Borg in the "Scorpion" episode sequence, when it conforms to her personal Prime Directive to preserve her crew and help them get home. Despite this inconsistency, Janeway continues to serve as caretaker in "The Void," reassuring her crew they will escape the void regardless of the failed alliance with Bosaal, and ultimately succeeding through a more palatable alliance with other aliens,

[44] "The Void," dir. Mike Vejar, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 14, 2001).

including a species native to the void. Episodes like "The Void" focus on outside conflict with other aliens, but Kaplan reminds us that we cannot explore those spaces as wholly separate from the 'domestic' internal spaces, as 'foreign' only exists in contrast to a clearly established 'domestic' space. In this case, the space of humane Federation inhabitants cultivated and cared for by Janeway even in an area of space 'void' of anything else.

In some respects, Janeway's authority as Captain does push beyond restrictions assigned on her by society due to her gender where—recalling Taylor's remarks—20th century audiences might not believe a woman in a leadership role.[45] That said, Janeway nonetheless also *at the same time* reinforces imperial binaries of safe 'domestic' spaces that must constantly be protected from wild and uncivilized 'foreign' spaces. *Voyager* undoubtedly features a smart and accomplished woman in a central role in the 1990s, but the series nonetheless presents the message that a woman must hold extremely firm to her authority at all costs in order to keep the 'home space' safe, secure, and civilized in the face of frontier threats, including being lost in foreign space. Through these actions, *Voyager* creates a believable female Captain in the character of Kathryn Janeway, who—following centuries of women pursuing the presumably vaulted task of 'republican motherhood' and imperial processes of domesticity to "forge bonds of internal unity while impelling the nation outward to encompass the globe"[46]—remains the driving compassionate authority for *Voyager* who ultimately enables their salvation from the 'frontier'.

[45]Given the limited number of women in leadership roles in the U.S. and the world, in politics and other venues, the comment likely still holds even 25 years later.

[46]Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," 587.

5.4 Salvation, Humanity, and Individuality: Becoming Human and Reinforcing Boundaries

As many of the examples discussed in this chapter so far indicate, the concept of 'humanity' holds prime importance for Janeway throughout the series, and through her it remains central to the safe, 'domestic' family that develops aboard *Voyager*. 'Humanity' is a nebulous and hard-to-define concept, but in the context of *Star Trek*, it is centered on behaving and acting in ways that reinforce the Federation moral imperatives, and performing acts of 'being an individual'. Characters like Torres speak to this component of 'humanity' through the (re)creation of a civilized 'domestic' space removed of 'savagery' and 'foreign' influences. The inclusion of recovered Borg drone Seven of Nine (played by Jeri Ryan) in seasons four through seven highlights the significance of humanity, and rediscovering humanity through practices of individuality, as part of the overall salvation narrative of *Voyager's* imperial domesticity. Unlike the noticeable inclusion of gender dynamics and presumed gender roles and expectations evident in Torres' and Janeway's storylines, Seven (despite wearing an extremely form fitting uniform that consistently calls attention to her physical form as distinctly female) occupies a less overtly gendered space within the series with 'humanity' taking the central focus of her narrative rather than 'gender'. That said, moments of expected female actions and behaviors do arise in Seven's story, notably in her position as another daughter figure for Janeway, becoming a sort-of mother figure for another recovered Borg drone (the teen Icheb), and a last minute romantic relationship with Chakotay. Seven occupies a different space within *Voyager* than the other central female characters: that of a colonized subject brought into the fold of 'civilized,' 'domestic' space by caretaker and savior Janeway. Ultimately, Seven's storyline demonstrates the effectiveness of imperial domesticity as Seven becomes the ideal colonized subject: her savagery is removed and her humanity

and individuality are restored. The sanctity of *Voyager* is maintained through her actions to constantly suppress/remove any traces of the savage Borg 'Other' from within the confines of the Federation human spaces in the Delta Quadrant—both within *Voyager*, and Seven herself.

First introduced in "Scorpion Part II" as the Borg who worked with Janeway to develop the biological weapon eventually used on Species 8472, Seven of Nine was mentally severed from the Collective—'freeing' her from their influence—at the end of that episode. Seven traveled with *Voyager* for the rest of their journey, eventually becoming a key member of the crew, and as the extended trailer for CBS's newest *Trek* series *Star Trek: Picard* hints (released on June 20, 2019 by CBS at the San Diego ComicCon), Seven remains a significant figure in the Federation after *Voyager* returns home in the series finale "Endgame".[47] The new show features *The Next Generation* Captain Jean Luc Picard, although the dialogue at the beginning of the trailer, "Have you ever been a stranger to yourself?," applies just as aptly to Seven as it does to Picard, as her journey with *Voyager* focuses heavily on rediscovering the humanity she lost to Borg assimilation at a young age.[48] Seven's journey can easily be read as necessary salvation from evil, and the attempt to achieve human abilities, emotions, and individuality is a common *Trek* theme explored in each series with characters like Spock, Data, and Oto. That said, awareness of the imperial overtones of Seven's transition brings insight into the ongoing imperial narratives at play in her journey. Seven's narrative is a story of a formerly colonized subject 'saved' by a white woman and brought into the fold of the 'ideal' civilization. Janeway functions as the 'white savior' who rescues, recovers, and

[47] Thom Craver, "Patrick Stewart Introduces New 'Star Trek: Picard' Trailer at San Diego Comic-Con," accessed September 24, 2019, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/star-trek-picard-trailer-san-diego-comic-con-released-today-2019-07-20-watch-video-exclusive-sdcc-trailer/

[48] In "The Gift," Janeway learns that a two exobiologists, Magnus and Erin Hansen, disappeared two decades prior along with their young daughter Annika. In "The Raven," Seven relives her assimilation by the Borg at the age of six—she spent the next five years in a Borg 'maturation chamber,' and then 13 years as an active Borg drone. [LeVar Burton, "The Raven," Star Trek: Voyager (Paramount Television, October 8, 1997).]

domesticates Seven, removing the traces of savagery (except a few visible cybernetic features and the vast knowledge of the Borg Collective), which allows Seven to become fully human once again. Seven's humanity repeatedly contributes to the ultimate salvation of *Voyager* and further defines the boundaries between the 'foreign' space of the Delta Quadrant (and it's evil resident aliens, the Borg), and the safe 'domestic' home space of the Federation and the Alpha Quadrant.

The 'white man's burden'—saving the 'savage Other' from barbarism and granting them access to civilization and 'humanity'—is typically explored and framed through white male imperial agents acting on foreign soil and the narratives crafted by white male leaders in the metropole, although the narrative of imperial domesticity *enabled* such naturalization of imperial aims.[49] Kaplan notes, for example, that Harriet Beecher Stowe's *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* "inexorably links women's work at home to the unfolding of America's global mission of 'exhibiting to the world the beneficent influences of Christianity"'.[50] Further, as Chandra Mohanty so eloquently articulates, such 'domestic' connections remain central to ongoing (post)colonial frameworks and the 20th and 21st century world.[51] Mohanty critiques the way binaries (especially men/women) serve to universalize and homogenize categories like "women," even within the field of feminist theory, which then 'creates' the category of third world woman who must be 'saved' by white women, even in the '(post)colonial era' after the Second World War. Janeway models this narrative of imperial domesticity with Seven of Nine, starting with her actions in the episode immediately following "Scorpion".

Janeway assumes the role of 'parent' to save Seven from the horror of her Borg existence.

[49]See scholars like Roxanne Doty and Jeanne Morefield for in-depth analysis of how these narratives have been crafted in both past and present imperial encounters. Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Jeanne Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism: Anglo-American Decline and the Politics of Deflection* (Oxford University Press, 2014)

[50]Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," 586.

[51]Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review*, no. 30 (1988): 61–88, https://doi.org/10.2307/1395054.

In "The Gift," following a discovery that Seven was originally human, Janeway orders the ship's holographic doctor to remove as many of Seven's implants as possible with the direct aim of returning Seven's humanity.[52] This transformation is done against Seven's express wishes. In justifying her actions to strip Seven of her Borg identity *against her will*, Janeway observes to the Doctor that "Underneath all that technology she's a human being, whether she's ready to accept that or not, and until she is ready, someone has to make decisions for her. Proceed with the surgery." The Doctor responds with a solemn, "Aye, Captain," reinforcing Janeway's authority despite his own misgivings, and removes most of Seven's implants. This process restores her human appearance and physiology except for a few small visible cyborg parts. In this moment, Janeway undertakes her role of caretaker to serve as the agent of salvation for Seven, who is presented in an almost child-like way—someone who can not yet make decisions for herself, and therefore needs a parent to make decisions for her. The imperial overtones of the parent/child binary have direct ties to Western imperialism. Bill Ashcroft observes that

> The child became important to the discourse of Empire because the invention of childhood itself in European society was coterminous with the invention of that other notion of supreme importance to imperialism—race. … Cross-fertilization between concepts of childhood and primitivism enabled these terms to emerge as mutually important concepts in imperial discourse. Whereas 'race' could not exist without racism, that is, the need to establish a hierarchy of difference, the idea of the child dilutes the hostility inherent in that taxonomy and offers a 'natural' justification for imperial dominance over subject peoples.[53]

Janeway assumes the position of 'parent' in this imperial binary, casting Seven as a child who needs to be saved until she is able to make her own decisions. Despite Seven's numerous demands throughout this episode to be returned to the Collective and emotional cries of "We

[52]"The Gift," dir. Anson Williams, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, September 10, 1997).

[53]Bill Ashcroft, "Primitive and Wingless: The Colonial Subject as Child," in *Dickens and the Children of Empire*, ed. Wendy S. Jacobson (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2000), 184–202, 184-185.

are Borg!," referencing the collective nature of the Borg hive-mind, Janeway continues to push a human transformation on Seven, claiming repeatedly that her human individuality and unique mind will be pleased with the changes once her mind is able to accept them. This reliance on the 'natural' process of learning to be an individual reflects the process of 'growing up' and gaining reason and rational thinking—the same message implied repeatedly through Western imperial actions throughout the world.

This sequence paints Janeway as a noble savior, and it is obvious audiences are supposed to support Janeway's actions— after all, who wouldn't want to save Seven of Nine from this fate worse than death? Still, under the 'humanitarian' aim of Janeway's actions to save Seven, this role of 'white savior' *against Seven's direct wishes* positions Janeway as an imperial agent forcing her will and authority on others through the guise of a 'caring and compassionate' desire to 'save' Seven from the 'horror' of Borg existence. Often presented as technologically superior to the Federation, as discussed in the previous chapter, the Borg are nonetheless positioned as inferior to the Federation in terms of humane actions and 'moral humanity' so valued by the Federation. That contrast is demonstrated clearly with Janeway's salvation of Seven and the implication and direct observations by Janeway that Seven will be better off after she transitions back to 'civilized' humanity.

By the end of "The Gift," Seven accepts her status as human (or as "human-in-training"), despite her adamant objections earlier in the episode. This indicates that Janeway was correct in her observation that Seven would be happy with the reversal once her mind was 'human enough' ('civilized' enough) to accept the change. This narrative move of fairly easy acceptance undermines Seven's passionate objections earlier in the episode, implying that she only wanted to remain Borg since she did not know better as a direct result of Borg assimilation and indoctrination, and her eventual acceptance of her recovered status gives proof to Janeway's earlier claims. Seven has 'grown' into her human individuality and sees

how and why her presumptive 'mother' was right. Salvation, in this moment, becomes forced assimilation into the only acceptable culture—the imperial culture of the United Federation of Planets, presented throughout *Star Trek* as the ideal point of development for all alien species encountered by the Federation and, through the televised science fiction narrative, for audiences watching in the 1990s and into the present.

The next several seasons explore the mentor (caretaker, parent/child, mother/daughter) relationship between Seven and Janeway, and Seven's continued process of 'humanization' (more aptly: 'domestication' or 'colonization'). Seven does exhibit temporary resistance to the process at times, although in the end she fully immerses herself in the human Federation civilization. In the episode "Hope and Fear," for example, Seven pushes back against Janeway's mandate of human individuality, criticizing Janeway because "you influenced me with your culture, and attempted to make me in your image".[54] Seven's comments here are a non-subtle reference to the process of colonization that Janeway forced on Seven, a clear-cut example of the white woman who undertakes a task to 'save' the 'third world woman' (formerly colonized women from (post)colonial nations) from a presumed 'uncivilized' status. Despite moments of resistance like this one, however, Seven acquiesces to Janeway's demands, and eventually takes her message of human individuality and 'humanity' as the key to happiness to other Borg. In doing so, Seven and Janeway reinforce the mandate of imperial domesticity to remove the savage from within the 'civilized' and 'domestic' spaces of the 'home' region and perpetuates the salvation narrative of Euro-American imperialism to additional 'savages' (other Borg, in this case).

The second episode of season six, "Survival Instinct," highlights the significance placed on human individuality throughout Seven's storyline—a focus engineered by Janeway through her initial colonization of Seven in "The Gift," and modeled throughout her extensive care-

[54]"Hope and Fear," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 20, 1998).

taker and savior role on *Voyager*. "Survival Instinct" positions Seven against three other former Borg drones who seek individuality of their own volition, and eventually shows Seven's full acceptance of the value of individuality over anything else, including life itself.[55] The drones were severed from the Collective as a result of actions taken by Seven years earlier due to her extreme fear of dying alone after a shipwreck, and as a result they share a mental link with one another. In order to help the three drones, Seven must make a choice: send the former drones back to the Collective to ensure their survival, or ask the Doctor to sever their mental link even though they will not long survive the separation. Seven seeks advice from Chakotay, another strong advocate aboard *Voyager* for the value of individuality and humane action, who suggests that one month as an individual would be better than a lifetime as a Collective drone. "What would you choose?" he prompts, and in the end Seven (and the Doctor) agree that one month as a true individual is better than returning the former drones to the Collective. Seven explains her rationale by stating that "Survival is insufficient," implying that in order to fully 'live,' one must be capable of individual self-expression, thought, and determination—Federation values given precedence over Borg existence of collective thinking and action.[56] Certainly the Borg perpetuate extreme violence against all other alien species in order to achieve their own single minded goals, and are thus *not* a species to admire, but the narrative of episodes like "Survival Instinct"—and Seven's entire storyline that prioritizes selecting human intelligence and approaches to life over any alternative—position these two approaches as a binary that is constantly reinforced. This binary posits the Federation ideals as the only possible 'humane' choice, thus Seven's extreme horror at the idea of sending the former drones back to the Collective, even when not doing so means they will soon die. In choosing to preserve the Federation values over Borg ones, Seven demonstrates how extensively and successfully she has been colonized. Follow-

[55]"Survival Instinct," dir. Terry Windell, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, September 29, 1999).

[56]Recall Adam Roberts' observation that the Borg *have no values*, making them the antithesis of the Federation way of life. Adam Roberts, *Science Fiction* (Routledge, 2006), 120.

ing Janeway's actions to remove the 'savage' from within the borders of the safe 'domestic' space (and its inhabitants), as prescribed by tenets of imperial domesticity, Seven continues to perpetuate those practices with other Borg.

Additional season six episodes "Collective," "Child's Play," and "Unimatrix Zero" continue to reinforce this narrative, demonstrating how central it is to the overall *Voyager* storyline. "Collective" introduces four Borg children who have been abandoned by the Collective and are colonized into the *Voyager* crew, "Child's Play" details how the society of one of those children (Icheb) is willing to sacrifice him to the Borg for the good of their civilization, and "Unimatrix Zero" introduces an entire subgroup of Borg drones who are predisposed to individual thinking and have created a dream space wherein they retain their memories and individual identities and ends with these liberated individuals starting a Civil War within the Collective.[57] In each of these episodes, Seven plays a key role in uncovering more about the importance of human individuality—prized over a collective machine intelligence presented throughout the *Trek* franchise as a 'savage' counterpart to the 'civilized' Federation—and successfully preaches that narrative to other Borg drones. All of these episodes involve encounters beyond the boundaries of *Voyager*, but Seven and her journey to become a better/more complete and 'civilized' human retain central focus within each storyline, proving the effectiveness of Janeway's colonization of this former Borg drone. In doing so, the 'civilized' force of humanity and individuality succeed time and again over the 'savage' Borg in ways that disrupts the 'foreign' space of the Delta Quadrant and continues to set *Voyager* apart from her 'wild' surroundings. The constant repetition of the significance of human individuality limits this popular cultural narrative from engendering space for possibilities that think beyond human forms of individuality and morals. Given that humanity

[57]"Collective," dir. Allison Liddi, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 16, 2000); "Child's Play," dir. Mike Vejar, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, March 8, 2000); "Unimatrix Zero, Parts 1 and 2," dir. Allan Kroeker and Mike Vejar, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, October 24, 2000).

and Western-centric ideology is the problem of the Anthropocene, these Western human-and-individual-centric values will not prepare us for thinking and building non-imperial futures.

5.5 Endgame: Continuing the Narrative of Imperial Domesticity All the Way Home

Season seven shifts the focus away from the Borg until the series finale, again returning the narrative toward internal ship matters. The emphasis on 'civilized' individuality as a key Federation value that sets it apart from the 'foreign' space of the Delta Quadrant is repeated often. Consecutive episodes "Human Error," "Q2," and "Author, Author" denote this well: in "Human Error" Seven practices human traits and behaviors on the holodeck, "Q2" sees a return of the alien Q (introduced in *The Next Generation* pilot "Encounter at Farpoint") who brings his son to Janeway to teach him manners and 'appropriate behavior', and "Author, Author" sees Janeway advocate on behalf of the Doctor for legal rights as an individual.[58] Each of these episodes emphasize the importance of individuality and other human practices and behaviors. In "Q2," for example, Q—a mostly omnipotent entity—turns to Janeway, and the confines of *Voyager*, as his "only hope" to save his son from vengeance by the Q Continuum. Q's decision presumes that humans would be better at teaching moral behavior than a practically omnipotent society, and demonstrates the importance of Janeway and her crew continuing to set themselves apart, physically and ideologically, from the Delta Quadrant. This episode reinforces the message that *Voyager* is the only moral civilization in the entire Quadrant.

The series finale "Endgame" brings these threads into focus one last time. In this episode,

[58] "Human Error," dir. Allan Kroeker, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, March 7, 2001); "Q2," dir. LeVar Burton, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, April 11, 2001); "Author, Author," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, April 18, 2001).

future Admiral Janeway (from the year 2404—26 years into the future of the 'present' *Voyager* narrative) goes back in time, willfully violating the Temporal Prime Directive, to save the crew as it existed at the time of the episode (the year 2378) and get them home safe.[59] For the sake of clarity, this episode posits two possible futures for the *Voyager* crew: the version presented in Admiral Janeway's timeline when *Voyager* returned home after 16 years toiling in the Delta Quadrant, and the one presented after Admiral Janeway changes the past and *Voyager* arrives home under the command of Captain Janeway in 2378 after only seven years 'lost in space'. The former timeline is eventually deemed undesirable by both versions of Janeway, and the latter timeline is the 'new reality' created by the events of both Admiral *and* Captain (future and present) Janeways. In an attempt to prevent confusion in my analysis over the complex timelines, events, and multiple versions of characters, I will use "Admiral Janeway" when discussing the older future-timeline version of Janeway, and "Captain Janeway" to directly refer to the present-day version of Janeway in charge of the version of *Voyager* in this episode.

In the beginning of "Endgame," Admiral Janeway obliquely says goodbye to her now-older *Voyager* Senior Staff and goes back in time to arrive on *Voyager* in the Delta Quadrant in 2378. Upon arrival in the Delta Quadrant, Admiral Janeway reveals that she has spent ten years planning to return to this moment in time, and proposes a risky plan to Captain Janeway. The plan involves Captain Janeway taking *Voyager* into a Borg-filled nebula and using superior future technology and weapons to access a Borg transwarp corridor in order to return to the Alpha Quadrant in mere moments. Admiral Janeway considers Captain Janeway to be more idealistic than her present/future self, and hopes that Captain Janeway will be motivated by the desire to save her crew, regardless of the risk. To convince her younger self, Admiral Janeway explains to Captain Janeway that she will lose 22 crew

[59] "Endgame, Parts 1 and 2," dir. Allan Kroeker, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 23, 2001).

members in the next nine years, including Seven of Nine and Tuvok. Upon hearing of these possible losses, Captain Janeway comes to agree with Admiral Janeway that she must risk the Borg and journey home now, and thus alter the future in the interest of preserving her crew. For both versions of Janeway, the safety and security of her crew is her first priority.

Problems arise, however, when Captain Janeway and the *Voyager* crew realize that the Borg in the nebula are guarding one of six "transwarp hubs" that allow the Borg quick access to anywhere in the galaxy. In a remix of the dilemma of the pilot episode "Caretaker," the Starfleet crew realizes they have a choice to make: destroy a device that allows the Borg access to millions of inhabited worlds, or save the crew and go home—leaving the threat behind unattended. In an expression of the noble nature of Federation values, Captain Janeway and the crew are willing to take the longer route home in order to destroy the Borg threat, leaving Admiral Janeway to protest in disgust that she did not come all this way to watch her past self "throw it all away on some intergalactic goodwill mission!". Thankfully a solution is at hand: why not risk it all and do both? Admiral Janeway, Captain Janeway and the crew work together to devise a plan that will allow *Voyager* to destroy the hub and still use a transwarp corridor to return home, although it is dangerous and requires a significant sacrifice—someone will have to stay behind and distract the Borg Queen. After being reminded of how good it felt to work together with her *family* aboard *Voyager*, Admiral Janeway takes on this role, although the audience is left unaware of the full plan until events are playing out. To increase tension in the episode, the narrative makes it appear that Admiral Janeway has betrayed her younger self, telling the Borg Queen about *Voyager's* intent to destroy the hub. Instead, Admiral Janeway uses this rouse to get physically close to the Borg Queen so she can be assimilated by the Queen, and in doing so inject the Queen—and through her the Collective—with a neurolytic pathogen designed to destroy the Borg, originally engineered by the people living on Icheb's home world in "Child's Play". In

doing so, Admiral Janeway condemns herself as well, and this sacrifice is played out when *Voyager* destroys the Borg Cube (and Admiral Janeway) right before entering the transwarp corridor to return to the Alpha Quadrant.

These final actions of Admiral and Captain Janeway reinforce the role of 'caring and compassionate' caretaker she has assumed throughout the time spent in the Delta Quadrant, and even the ten years after returning home, in the case of Admiral Janeway. The thread of self-sacrifice recalls Captain Ransom's actions in "Equinox," although here the sacrifice is less about reclaiming humanity, even though Admiral Janeway has reclaimed her idealism and belief in lofty Federation values of 'intergalactic goodwill'. Instead, Admiral Janeway's actions denote how strongly she believes in *her* Prime Directive: she will do anything, including sacrifice herself, to give her crew the time they need to enact their plan and meet their goals—her sacrifice is the ultimate action she can provide as caretaker for her crew. As such, this episode highlights two key threads central to the ongoing narrative of imperial domesticity established throughout the *Voyager* storyline. First, the morally superior nature of Federation values and civilization are reinforced through originally being willing to sacrifice their quicker route home, and even some of their lives in the future, to destroy Borg technology that will be used against 'helpless' aliens. Second, these actions demonstrate the need to preserve and retain those values as a key part of the safe 'domestic' space that separates 'them' from 'everyone else'. These narrative goals coalesce in both Admiral and Captain Janeway's Prime Directive to get the crew home safe (and alive) at almost any cost, including the life of Janeway herself.

In "Endgame," *Voyager* continues to perpetuate a belief in the false binary of *domestic* and *foreign* as separate entities that must be retained in order to have a sense of 'self' and 'home'—of 'America' in contrast to (and morally superior to) 'everyone else'. Janeway concludes her narrative arc with an action she was unable to complete at the beginning

of the series: in "Caretaker," she could only serve and protect others—actions expected of a Federation Captain—and set the goal of getting her crew home safely. In "Endgame," after seven years of protecting *Voyager* and her crew and cultivating a safe family space aboard the ship, continually held apart from the Delta Quadrant through repeated actions and directives and the unrelenting push for *home*, Janeway unites those two goals in one entirely selfless action. Her final line of the series drives this point home (pun intended): "Set a course … for home". She spoke the same words at the end of "Caretaker," not knowing how long or hard the journey would be, and despite Harry Kim's argument earlier in "Endgame" that "maybe it's not the destination that matters. Maybe it's the journey," this *end goal* has been Janeway's mission from that moment in "Caretaker". The on screen visual as Janeway speaks these final words highlights the difference in *Voyager*'s situation: in "Caretaker" the ship was alone in space, and in "Endgame" a fleet of Federation ships turn as one to escort *Voyager* home. Under Janeway's command, they have returned to their safe 'domestic' space, and as such no longer have to hold themselves apart from their surroundings. Their diligent effort, undertaken and orchestrated by their caretaker Captain, has paid off—and reinforced a continued belief in ideas invoked in the writings of 19th century American women about the differences between *domestic* and *foreign* spaces that must be created and maintained through the actions of female homemakers. Such actions and attitudes helped define the nation and the empire when facing the 'wild' frontier during the time of achieving America's 'manifest destiny' to overspill the North American continent, and these concepts as an unquestioned 'Truth' about the world (and the galaxy) continues to resonate in American popular culture, as evident by *Voyager*'s use numerous features of imperial domesticity.

The two secondary storylines in "Endgame" that wrap up the character arcs for Torres and Seven further reinforce these tenets of separation and domesticity as unquestioned

'Truth': Torres gives birth to her daughter Miral, and Seven firmly solidifies her status as a member of the human Federation. Both of these threads highlight the presumed gender expectations for these two female characters and serve to strengthen their ties to the 'domestic' space they have cultivated aboard *Voyager*. Miral's birth happens concurrent to *Voyager*'s attack on the Borg in the nebula, which serves to keep the 'domestic' space of *Voyager* central to the storyline amidst an epic space battle against the main villain of the series. Keeping the 'home space' safe takes on added meaning with the inclusion of the newest family member, and this thread serves to wrap up Torres' storyline as she embraces her new role as 'mother' amongst her (largely human) immediate and extended family. This implies that, with the assumption of motherhood, Torres story *is* over, a troubling prospect that reflects the cult of domesticity that focuses women-as-mother as central to their entire identity, and the identity of the emerging nation. There is continued awareness of Torres' part Klingon nature, including the Doctor's acknowledgement that sometimes Klingon labor can take several days, but Miral's birth stands as the culmination of Torres' search for self-discovery and belonging. Through physically embodying the position of mother to her own daughter, mirroring the relationship she cultivated with Janeway, Torres symbolically cements her position within her immediate family, and the larger *Voyager* familial community and proves the successfulness of Janeway's mission: keep the family safe and secure. While ironically the birth happens in a moment of extreme danger *outside* the ship, no danger harms Torres or Miral in these moments—the safe 'domestic' home space *inside Voyager* is retained, and Torres 'comes home,' becoming a mother at the exact moment the ship returns to the Alpha Quadrant.

To conclude her journey of human redemption, Seven's humanity as separate from her previous Borg identity is affirmed in two significant ways. First, in a mental encounter with the Borg Queen, the Queen makes no attempt to coax Seven back to the Collective

(as she has done in all previous encounters). In a sexually charged scene with the Borg Queen that takes place in Seven's mind, the Queen tells Seven that she knows about their visitor from the future, and warns *Voyager* to stay away from the nebula. Actress Alice Krige, who played the Borg Queen in the *Star Trek* film *First Contact* (1996) and reprised the role in "Endgame," noted of this scene that it mirrored the Queen's attempts to seduce Captain Picard and Data from *First Contact*, where "it's all about power". As there was no reason she wouldn't take the same approach with Seven, Krige approached this role with the idea that the Borg Queen was "omni-sexual," as suggested by a producer, which serves to highlight the malevolent nature of the Borg Queen.[60] Implying that a more *open* sexuality is linked with malevolence is yet another small detail among many that the heterosexual and normative storyline of *Voyager* belies the belief in the 'progressive' and 'diverse' future often attributed to the franchise. In reality, as my project has articulated, the *Trek* franchise subscribes to a very restricted and imperial future that most often recreates contemporary values and expectations.[61]

For Seven in this scene, the threat from the Borg Queen differs greatly from previous encounters. In the past, the Queen has always attempted to lure Seven back to the Collective, including making promises that Seven can remain *un*assimilated if she returns. Threats that the *Voyager* crew will be assimilated when the Queen foils their plans are standard, and included again in this exchange, although in this conversation the Queen makes no attempt to barter with Seven for their safety. This difference implies that the Queen has finally realized that she will be unsuccessful in bringing Seven back to the Collective, indicating how successful Janeway has been in 'removing the savage' from Seven and bringing her back into the fold of humanity and their safe 'domestic' space. Seven is a fully individualized

[60] "Interview with Kate Mulgrew and Alice Krige," *Star Trek Magazine*, 169, no. 24 (November 8, 2012): 52.

[61] There are a few exceptions, however: see chapter six for details.

human now, and the Borg Queen can no longer seduce her back to the Collective.

To further underscore this evolution of Seven of Nine, and in contrast to her denial of seduction by the Borg Queen, Seven affirms a romantic relationship with Chakotay during the events of "Endgame". Like Torres' commitment to Paris after resolving her conflicted Klingon/human binary—the assumption that Torres must be one or the other—Seven is only able to take this 'final' step toward regaining her humanity after another surgical procedure to remove restrictions on her emotions by a remaining piece of Borg technology (a 'cortical node' that controlled many key features of a Borg drone). After the Doctor performs this procedure, Seven commits to exploring her romantic feelings for Chakotay, indicating that this final removal of Borg influence allows her to become 'fully human'. The additional implication with both Seven and Torres' storylines is that a romantic relationship is required to achieve the status of 'full civilized human' who no longer retains traces of the savage. Alternatively, Janeway is exempt from this presumed and implied requirement for a female to achieve complete belonging in the safe 'domestic' home space—human space—cultivated within *Voyager*. That said, Janeway—embodying the role of 'married to her job'—is able to act as caretaker regardless of her relationship status as she was already fully human to begin with, and in charge of the ship besides. Seven and Torres must affirm their status in other ways, largely by romantically aligning themselves with a fully human member of the community in order to be perceived as successfully and completely integrated.

Overall, *Voyager* presents three fascinating, well developed, and extremely intelligent female cast members who assume clear leadership positions in extreme circumstances. For these reasons, they deserve the continued audience and fan admiration that has been accorded to them in the two decades since *Voyager*'s epic conclusion in "Endgame". However, due to the continued need to established restrictive binaries between a safe 'domestic' home space within the confines of the ship and the 'uncivilized' 'foreign' space of the Delta Quadrant

as a central part of the series narrative and a key feature in the survival of the crew, these three female characters also serve to perpetuate aspects of imperial domesticity in popular American cultural narrative. In doing so, in part through narrative components linked to their gender and presumed gender expectations and roles, *Voyager* continues to advocate for an imperial understanding of the world (and the galaxy) split into 'us' and 'them' by a strong and impenetrable border. Such human-centric narratives perpetuate imperial ideologies of power and difference that limit exploration of non-imperial possibilities for the present and future—possibilities that are vitally necessary to address the ecological crisis of the Anthropocene.

Chapter 6

Voyaging Beyond Empire

6.1 Creating New Worlds of Possibility in *Star Trek*

> "It's almost like these are the myths of our times."
>
> Roxann Dawson (B'Elanna Torres, *Star Trek: Voyager*)

As my analysis to this point has demonstrated, *Star Trek: Voyager* is filled with threads of imperial modes of thinking and living. These motifs range from ongoing deflection of empire (past, present, and futures) through myths of American exceptionalism, strong ties to historical adventure and lost-race narratives that normalized and legitimized imperial power, connections to contemporary progress narratives that continue to reinforce and deflect the reality of ongoing imperial structures and ideologies, and narratives that perpetuate imperial ideas of domestic and foreign spaces and the boundaries constructed between those spaces. These frameworks work in tandem to center imperial approaches to the world as *unquestioned truths* about living in a future presumed 'utopia' that entrench binary modes of living in the late 20th century. There are small moments of exception, however. The purpose of this final chapter is to explore instances where *Voyager* offers hints of non-imperial narratives that create space to envision worlds guided by non-imperial ways of thinking, relating, living, and being. These exceptions are severely restricted by the imperial ideologies that underwrite the series, but I use this chapter to posit *some* approaches for thinking beyond empire already

present in popular culture narratives, and daily life in the Anthropocene. In doing so, I outline some *possibilities* that science fiction stories (or any stories) could pursue in order to offer sustainable narratives that engender forms of response to the impending (and ongoing) environmental crisis in the 'Anthropocene' and (as *Star Trek* ostensibly tries to do) think more holistically about possible futures.

This chapter serves as an extended conclusion to my project by working through the main argument offered by each chapter in turn. Starting with a recap of the argument of each chapter, I then shift into an exploration of moments of exception present in that particular narrative device using particular theories for alternative narrative. The exception to this study of exceptions is Chapter 2: the only alternative to continued imperial deflection and the narrative of American exceptionalism is to study and make known the history *and* contemporary presence (and possible futures) of empire. The suggestions I propose require a shift from ideologies of American exceptionalism and the Western belief individualism. My project has raised awareness of ongoing imperial ideologies with regard to one cultural narrative, and this final chapter will explore some possible options to move beyond such acknowledgment toward possible tangible change.

More specifically, in connection with my argument from Chapter 3 regarding the ongoing imperial narrative in the "lost in space" adventure framework central to *Voyager's* plot, I start with an exploration of Ursula Le Guin's "carrier bag theory of fiction" to propose stories of non-imperial 'ongoingness' and 'life stories' as one approach to avoid to imperial narratives. Next I discuss stories that emphasize living with(in) the ruins of empire as an alternative to the glorification of linear progress narratives with their embedded imperial mindsets discussed in Chapter 4. Finally, I utilize a framework proposed by Donna Haraway to highlight "Speakers for the Dead" in direct connection to the three main female *Voyager* characters (and my argument from Chapter 5) to further develop paths away from empire

and move *beyond* imperial modes of living and thinking. It will be apparent in each section that *Voyager* does not fully achieve these alternative narrative styles due to the overwhelming influence of imperial patterns highlighted throughout my analysis. Still, the existence of moments of exception, and moments that enable thinking about exceptions even when imperial mindsets remain, offers some hope for mainstream American science fiction narratives to move beyond imperial ways of thinking. As with my previous chapters, although I break the analysis into sections related to specific portions of the *Voyager* narrative, none of these approaches are limited to only one section. Rather, I break down types of exception to explore the threads in more detail. These narrative approaches are themselves intertwined, and all aim to create new worlds and new ways of engagement with *all* living things in a realistic manner—these are not hero stories, but they are stories of *possibilities*. Overall, this chapter posits the *possibilities* for a narrative like *Star Trek* to reach the utopian non-imperial position Roddenberry and so many others have aimed for. Although there is no requirement for *Star Trek*, or any other narrative of any genre in any medium, to pursue non-imperial approaches to storytelling, the climate crisis of the 21st century will not end without significant change in all facets of everyday life. The stories we tell *must* change, and popular science fiction narratives are an excellent place to look for inspiration.

A common argument from theorists, writers, and others exploring ideas for non-imperial futures is to move beyond human-centered approaches to living and engaging with all life. This shift requires avoiding centuries of beliefs regarding hierarchies of human and non-human life by looking to connections between *all* life. Instead of prioritizing human life, or that of specific humans as inscribed by imperial ideologies of difference and superiority, we need to 'think-with' and 'live-with' other organisms. Donna Haraway proposes the term "cultivating multispecies respons(ability)" to define this practice of pushing beyond human-centered approaches to thinking collectively about living/dying/surviving. Borrowing from

Hannah Arendt, Vinciane Despret, and Virginia Woolf, Haraway outlines "cultivating respons(ability)" as

> training the mind and imagination to go visiting, to venture off the beaten path to meet unexpected, non-natal kin, and to strike up conversations, to pose and respond to interesting questions, to propose together something unanticipated, to take up the unasked-for obligations of having met.[1]

Through unexpected encounters, unanticipated questions and answers, and assuming obligations for other forms of life it is possible to move beyond human-centered approaches to living. Such processes require an expanded understanding of *life*, *living*, and *dying* in ways that move beyond the limited Western imperial perception of human/other, in addition to numerous imperial binaries of difference and superiority that have governed centuries of interaction between humans. Dying will be a significant part of this adjustment, as many of the ecological results of human-imposed climate change have, and will continue to have, devastating effects for the lives of many organisms, humans included.

For centuries, human interactions with other life forms, including the Earth itself, have been written solely from the perspective of human agents under the domination of Western imperial practices and ideologies. Broadening our understanding of the large web of interconnected life forms on the planet (including the planet) is central to "cultivating respons(ability)" in productive ways that engender future *possibilities* for change. Hero-driven stories will not supply these ways of thinking, as those narratives posit one individual (or a small set of individuals) who rise to the occasion and save the day. Instead, we must write, tell, and create stories that increase the potential to think about living that involves innate awareness of past, present, and futures of *all* living beings. We must cultivate stories that highlight the tightly woven *web of life* that takes us beyond individuals to a part of

[1] Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016), 130.

something greater and forces us to retain the memory of all the critters our present way of life has destroyed. Non-imperial *possibilities* can occur through careful world building and storytelling that acknowledges imperial ideologies and the history of Euro-American imperialism and then moves beyond the ruins of empire to embrace non-Western alternatives to forming relations. Science fiction is a genre rooted in *possibilities* and encounters, and steeped in traditions of Euro-American imperial history and ideologies. Awareness of these features, however, and a deliberate effort to avoid them opens space for exploring non-imperial encounters, and being-with (living-with, dying-with) *all* forms of life in possible futures.

6.2 Voyaging Through the Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction

Star Trek: Voyager aired from 1995-2001 while America was navigating the vacuum of power in the aftermath of the Cold War and presumed American 'victory' over the Soviet Union. In the words of American statesman Francis Fukuyama, this was the era of the 'end of history'—"the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government".[2] *Voyager* reflects this way of thinking through projecting narratives of American exceptionalism and imperial ideology into the 24th century. *Voyager* is one iteration of the *Star Trek* universe originally created by Gene Roddenberry in the 1960s: a universe often granted status of a future utopia. In the words of *Trek* oral historian Mark Altman, this "progressive, liberal vision" of the future is worth admiring, and a future worth aiming for.[3] There is indeed a lot of admire about the fifty

[2]Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?," *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989): 3–18, 4.

[3]Mark A. Altman and Edward Gross, *The Fifty-Year Mission: Volume One: The Complete, Uncensored, Unauthorized Oral History of Star Trek: The First 25 Years* (NY: St. Martin's, 2016), 5.

plus years of storytelling set in a 'utopian' future, but as Edward Said encourages, it is also imperative to study the imperial narratives and ideologies rooted in cultural texts. This examination, as I have conducted here, highlights numerous features of ongoing imperial ideologies that remain in contemporary social, political, ethical, and cultural projects, narratives, and approaches. Through infused imperial ideologies of difference and superiority, *Voyager* contributes to the historical and ongoing practice of the United States to deflect the reality of their empire. In Chapter 2, I outlined the thread of American exceptionalism that dominated American foreign policy in the 1990s and additionally influenced the actions of the stranded Starfleet crew in the pilot episode "Caretaker".[4] "Caretaker" aired on American television in January 1995 and puts *Voyager* on a path to repeat and deflect imperial ideologies, including American exceptionalism. These modes of storytelling severely limit the possibility for *Voyager* to explore and propose non-imperial ways of engaging with others, although slivers of those non-imperial possibilities remain.

In Chapter 3 I argued that the "lost in space" plot of *Voyager* creates an ongoing imperial narrative through deep ties within historical adventure and 'lost-race' stories. Those stories normalized and legitimized Euro-American imperial practices, and these modes of engagement are retained in the presentation of *Voyager*'s journey home through the Delta Quadrant. Using specific examples from the first two seasons of the series, including the exploration of the Delta Quadrant with deliberate intent to map it for the Federation and repeated encounters with two alien races, the Kazon and the Vidiians, I demonstrated how the narrative frameworks of castaway-adventure and exploration enabled ongoing imperial concepts in the *Voyager* storyline. Central to my argument in this chapter is how *Voyager* utilized features of castaway narratives, infused with adventure, to set-up their exploration of, and eventual possession of, the Delta Quadrant. Being lost, therefore, is a necessary con-

[4] "Caretaker," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 16, 1995).

dition for the *Voyager* crew to take possession (intellectually, at least) of the new space. If imperial ideologies of difference are removed, however, *being lost* is one useful place to begin crafting alternative narratives for stories that break the molds of imperial thinking and offer space to tell realistic stories that explore *acts of relating* (acting and thinking collectively) in daily life.

Castaway narratives depend on the protagonist being lost, often through a series of accidental events, and often retain imperial ideologies of possession, power, and difference through the mode of storytelling. If written differently, however, stories of *being lost* can supply an opportunity to create non-imperial worlds and future possibilities. The narrative feature of being lost signals being removed from all previous ways of life except what the castaway brings with them—in *Voyager*, this is the ship itself, the crew, and their imperial ideologies of encounters with difference. Without the last feature, being lost affords the opportunity to create a non-imperial world with a history of imperial ideologies, but without the present and future reality of imperial mindsets. The 'lost in space' *Voyager* premise, therefore, opens the possibility for new forms of engagement with other living creatures, although the consistent imperial ideologies infused with the narrative prevent the realization of those initial possibilities for making new worlds.

To create new worlds, Le Guin proposes stories that follow the "carrier bag theory of fiction" to cultivate "ongoingness" in daily life. Explaining her approach, Le Guin declares that "Many theorizers feel that the earliest cultural inventions must have been some kind of container to hold gathered products and some kind of sling or net carrier".[5] This stands in direct contrast to powerful heroic narratives in Western culture. Heroic tales regularly glorify singular acts of triumph rather than ongoing features of daily life.[6] Instead of stories

[5]Ursula K. Le Guin, *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places* (Grove Press, 1997), 116.

[6]For a more detailed exploration of differences between large-scale heroic tales—like those inspired by Joseph Campbell's study of myth in *Hero With a Thousand Faces*—and 'everyday heroism', see my essay

that glorify the evolution of mankind along linear lines through 'heroic' actions, including centuries of imperial domination (re)told (in part) through stories of adventure and discovery, Le Guin argues that we need stories

> full of beginnings without ends, of initiations, of losses, of transformations and translations, and far more tricks than conflicts, far fewer triumphs than snares and delusions; full of space ships that get stuck, missions that fail, and people who don't understand.[7]

Stories that follow this framework move away from the heroic model of storytelling in favor of realistic stories of daily life. These are stories of continuing *process* rather than continuing *progress* that focus on aspects of living and dying through *acts of relating* between all living things. Conflict is not out of bounds within Le Guin's model, as "it's just one of those damned things you have to do in order to be able to go on gathering wild oats and telling stories," although she explains that conflict must be retained as simply part of the continuing process of living, dying, and relating—not as the central focus of the story.[8] This kind of storytelling is challenging, but stories that focus on *the things we carry* and the relationships cultivated through the collection, carrying, and use of *things* will allow us to retain a greater awareness of the]*web of life* that stretches far beyond the human (and the individual) and begin to achieve the multispecies respons(ability) needed to engender some survive in our current era of precarity.

Voyager offers moments of daily life that set up the potential for storytelling that cultivates respons(ability). Even though these moments are limited to slivers of *possibilities*, these almost-moments can serve as a starting point for science fiction, and other cultural

"The End of Everything: Survival Narratives and Everyday Heroism in *Battlestar Galactica*," in *Apocalypse TV: Essays on Society and Self at the End of the World*, eds. Michael Cornelius and Sherry Ginn, (McFarland, 2020), 102–12.

[7]Le Guin, *Dancing at the Edge*, 169.

[8]Ibid, page 168.

narratives, that can do more to foster non-imperial frameworks. In Chapter 3, I argued that *as it is currently written*, the 'lost in space' storyline is inherently imperial and—when coupled with the recreation of classic adventure and lost-race motifs—consistently normalizes and legitimizes imperial ways of thinking. *Voyager*'s original set-up, however, does create opportunity to explore exceptions to these overarching imperial tendencies. In particular, the ship functions as a carrier bag for the crew—a literal container in which they live, and sometimes die—and a significant percentage of the episodes take place within the confines of that container. Close to one quarter of episodes take place primarily aboard *Voyager*, and most of these deal fairly exclusively with internal conflicts (and the occasional alien threat). In light of my argument in Chapter 5 regarding the imperial mindsets behind a binary division between domestic and foreign spaces, I will point out that Le Guin uses the concept of carrier/container to refer to the act of *carrying*, not *containing*. To *contain* implies restriction with limited (or no) movement from within to without, or vice versa—an exclusionary practice. The objects Le Guin discusses (nets, bags, bottles, and worlds) are open to the *inclusion*, *transportation*, and *exchange* of materials (of lives, of stories). Concrete borders, like that cultivated on *Voyager* by features of imperial domesticity fostered primarily through Janeway, limit ongoing processes of *relating* to other life forms, although the significant focus on internal shipboard matters throughout the series does at the same time create space to explore 'the things they carry' and the container that carries *them*. In *Voyager*'s reality many of those 'things' are rooted in imperial mindsets and practices, although some of these episodes—and the interpersonal relationships that develop—flirt with moments of exception to imperial ideologies. All these transformations and conflicts are restricted to human (and humanoid) life forms, thus falling short of truly cultivating multi*species* respons(ability), but the hints nonetheless create opportunity for world making in non-imperial directions.

In an early moment of exceptions-that-could-have-been, several *Voyager* officers, includ-

ing a new First Officer and Chief Engineer, are killed during transportation to the Delta Quadrant. The loss of crew creates the space to build new relationships (*acts of relating*) with others, including those *Voyager* might not have otherwise encountered. This exchange is limited to humanoid aliens, and further limited almost exclusively to Alpha Quadrant individuals, but the need for crew creates space for storylines detailing new relationships and cultivate respons(ability) through taking up "the unasked-for obligations of having met".[9] Janeway and her Federation crew will extend their family to individuals they would not likely have engaged with otherwise: the rebel Maquis.[10] Bringing in the Maquis is practical decision for Janeway's slightly depleted crew, and this *transformation* of her crew has long-lasting and far-reaching consequences. This is no temporary placement of crew until the ship can return to a Federation station and offload the rebels. The closest Federation station is over 70,000 light years away, and Janeway's action brings the Maquis into their Federation community, potentially for the rest of their natural lives, if the crew is unable to find a quicker route home. Janeway's friendship with her new First Officer, former Maquis Commander Chakotay, is one *new relation* explored throughout the series that defines much of the narrative and contributes directly to the survival of *Voyager*.

The *acts of relating* between Janeway and Chakotay start very early in the series and spans the entire seven year journey home. The first regular episode of the series, following the two-part pilot, was designed to showcase the adjustments taking place by merging the Maquis and Federation crews. It centered around Chakotay nominating Torres—the other main Maquis character in the show—for the role of Chief Engineer, as *Voyager*'s original engineer was killed in "Caretaker".[11] Janeway eventually accepts his recommendation, although as I discussed in Chapter 5 the relationship between Janeway and Torres takes years to smooth

[9] Haraway, *Staying with the* Trouble, 130.
[10] See "Caretaker," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 16, 1995).
[11] "Parallex," dir. Kim Friedman, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 23, 1995).

out, unlike the almost immediately friendly relationship between Janeway and Chakotay.

This episode leads directly into a growing on-screen (and off-screen) relationship between Janeway and Chakotay, and Janeway will frequently rely on his advice and suggestions during numerous challenges *Voyager* faces. One significant feature of their relationship is the lack of a romantic component, unlike the relationships for the other two female main characters, Torres (with Tom Paris) and Seven (with Chakotay), although the prospect of a romantic relationship between Janeway and Chakotay has been, and remains, popular with fans of the series.[12] Through prioritizing a *friendship* over a romantic relationship, *Voyager* reinforces the importance of all kinds of *relating*, even if only in this small (yet ongoing) plot detail. In some instances (like against the Borg in "Scorpion") Janeway and Chakotay disagree, but he adheres to her commands as Captain throughout their Delta Quadrant adventure, and their friendship endures the stresses of Borg, Species 8472, and other threats. Future-Admiral Janeway from "Endgame" is partially motivated by the loss of Chakotay shortly after her *Voyager* returned to Earth in the altered timeline, and this fact culminates in present-Captain Janeway's agreement to alter that future timeline and take risks to ensure *Voyager* gets home earlier (see Chapter 5 for a longer discussion of this episode). All told, although the series gradually spends less time focusing on the *acts of relating* between the Federation crew and the original Maquis crew, it nonetheless begins from a position of being lost and the unasked for obligations of having met. In these moments, the series creates the *possibility*

[12] Archieveofourown.org is the most popular fan fiction website to date, and the aggregate 4.7 million (and counting) stories hosted on the website (including artwork, podfics, and other media) won a Hugo Award for 'Best Related Work' in 2019. Out of the 7620 *Voyager* fanfics on archieveofourown.org as of December 31 2019, 3384 of them involve the pairing of Janeway and Chakotay (including one published on 12/31/19). Although this does not always indicate a sexual relationship, the pairing tag *does* indicate a romantic relationship between the named individuals. This pales in contrast to the biggest *Star Trek* fan 'ship' of James Kirk and Spock from *The Original Series* and the revived feature films in the 2000s, but Janeway and Chakotay are an extremely popular fan pairing. See "Chakotay/Kathryn Janeway - Works | Archive of Our Own," accessed December 31, 2019, https://archiveofourown.org/tags/Chakotay*s*Kathryn%20Janeway/works; and "The Hugo Awards," The Hugo Awards, accessed December 31, 2019, http://www.thehugoawards.org/.

(although ultimately unachieved) of a new world through building relationships with new creatures/critters/living beings that would not have happened (most likely) without starting from a position of being lost.

The uncertainty of returning home that threads throughout the series narrative contributes to the *possibility* of making new non-imperial worlds. *Uncertainty* continues to offer *possibilities* for something different, especially when coupled with the threat and fear of failure to achieve their Prime Directive of returning home. Failure is not a requirement of carrier bag stories, although it is significantly more likely than imperial castaway tales make it out to be. Robinson Crusoe may have languished on his island for years, but he did inevitably return home—realistically, however, shipwreck victims rarely enjoyed such an ending. The same is true of *Voyager*, although the uncertainty of successfully returning home does dominate the storyline. Kate Mulgrew observed that even she was not sure *Voyager* would make it home until shortly before filming the series finale.[13] This uncertainty leads to an ongoing approach to the narrative that created space to explore carrier bag story moments, including ongoingness, getting stuck, failures, and a general lack of understanding. *Voyager* almost runs out of fuel several times, they are occasionally temporarily trapped by and in space anomalies, and the daily 'ongoingness' of their reality is hinted at from time to time. Neelix's video series "A Briefing With Neelix" (showcased in seasons two and three) highlights moments of daily life aboard the ship and serves as one of several threads that reminds audiences that this crew is doing the same thing, day in and day out, on their possibly never-ending journey home. Although these moments are consistently overshadowed by larger imperial directives and genre frameworks, including the constant presentation of alien species as "less" than the Federation (less developed, less civilized, etc.), these small moments detailing the struggles and possibilities of daily life give insight into how a science

[13]Ian Spelling, "Interview with Kate Mulgrew," *Star Trek Monthly*, no. 80 (2001): 100.

fiction television show might adapt Le Guin's suggestions for carrier bag narratives to create new worlds from a position of being lost.

Failure is a constant threat for the *Voyager* crew. It is doubtful that many audience members ever truly expected *Voyager* to remain forever lost, although some episodes present the possibility of ultimate failure (including sequences like "Scorpion" and "Year of Hell"). One episode stands out, however, where *Voyager* does fail, and the entire crew perishes—or at least a version of the ship and crew. In "Course: Oblivion," audiences watch the *Voyager* crew gradually discover they are actually clones generated in a previous episode featuring a Y Class planet.[14] These discoveries lead to philosophical questions about life, reality, and existence: what are they, if not the human beings they duplicated? What counts as human, anyway? The clone-crew continues their journey home while continuing to ask these questions, following the Prime Directive of the original ('real') *Voyager* crew. Even after realizing they are clones, and even as the cellular structure of clone crew members begins to deteriorate due to space travel leading to death, they continue their journey "home" beyond the point of possible return. This action stems from their assumed "human-ness," seeking out a "home" that is not theirs since they identify as human. In the end, however, they are not human, and their non-human-ness, coupled with their human desires for Earth, kills them. Throughout the episode, each main character dies, including clone-Janeway, and then the clone-*Voyager* dissipates entirely. The real *Voyager* observes one small trace of a Federation ship signal, but remains unaware of the fate of their clones: a significantly more realistic ending to a castaway adventure narrative than the eventual triumphant return of *Voyager* in "Endgame," flanked by an armada of Federation ships.

This moment in "Course: Oblivion" embraces the carrier bag narrative, as heroes do

[14] "Course: Oblivion," dir. Anson Williams, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, March 3, 1999). This episode is a sequel to "Demon," [dir. Anson Williams, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 6, 1998)], although "Oblivion" aired almost a year after "Demon".

not save the day and the entire voyage fails. The return to normalcy—with one *Voyager* populated by a (mostly) human crew—with the demise of the clone *Voyager* (ship and crew alike) recalls Haraway's acknowledgement that many living organisms will die as a result of the environmental crisis, and speaks to Le Guin's awareness that failure *must* be portrayed in realistic fashion in carrier bag stories. Carrier bag stories offer one option for building new worlds that can push beyond restrictive practices and ways of thinking within current structures, including oppressive imperial frameworks that continue to dominate in the 21st century.

"Course: Oblivion" offers one model for storytelling that provides exceptions to imperial approaches through the focus on daily struggles, and the realistic failure of those struggles. Unlike a narrative that fully cultivates multispecies respons(ability), however, the episode does propose that these non-human entities assume human identities, practices, and goals with almost no regard for their former existence as a form of liquid metallic substance (the original-*Voyager* crew dubs it "Silver Blood") that can replicate any living lifeform. This plotline creates the opportunity to explore classic science fiction questions relating to what it means to be human, and this limits "Course: Oblivion" from exploring non-human life and *acts of relating*. The episode does portray a realistic example of the adventure of a castaway, although it nonetheless continues to cement the human as the figure of central importance in the 'Anthropocene'. The true humans (and other Alpha Quadrant humanoids) survive, and their non-human clones die as a direct result of their assumption of human motivations. Still, the presentation of failure (and spaceships that do more than just get stuck, but instead utterly disappear) offers the exploration of *possibilities* related to those very failures. In this episode, we see what by all rights should happen to a spaceship thousands of light-years from its home base, without support and knowledge of the surrounding area. *Voyager* may not completely engage Le Guin's carrier bag narrative, or her prescription for creating new

worlds from a position of being lost, but the *possibilities* exist in the framework, even if those possibilities and exceptions were constantly overshadowed by imperial practices and concepts that normalized and legitimized Euro-American imperialism through adventure, castaway, and lost-race narrative approaches.

6.3 Avoiding Linear Progress and Living-With(in) The Ruins of Empire

In Chapter 4 I demonstrated how the emphasis on linear progress as the ideal form of development, written into international relations and foreign policy since the Second World War and portrayed often in narratives like *Star Trek*, recreates imperial mindsets and practices as ongoing features of relating with an inherent power imbalance. Through alien encounters that continue to create and maintain difference, *Voyager* reinforces centuries old hierarchies between peoples that were rooted in Euro-American justifications for imperialism. Often presented in the guise of 'help,' much like American foreign policy and "humanitarianism" in the 1990s, the constant prescription of a Western model of success and development constantly sets the Federation (and American) civilization as the ultimate civilized 'truth' to progress toward. Through clear contrasts established and reinforced between "less developed" and "more developed" races/civilizations/species, such binary-based hierarchies continue to perpetuate imperial mindsets that center the Western world (and the futuristic Federation) as the idealized civilization that all societies should strive to meet. Simultaneously, these binaries also ensure that non-Western societies can never actually cross the barriers firmly entrenched through the same imperial mindsets. Through an examination of multiple alien encounters throughout seasons three, four, and five of *Voyager*, I demonstrated how these binaries were continually reinforced as part of the frame of 'progress' that continues to

perpetuate imperial ways of thinking in the late 20th and early 21st century.

In this section, I explore ways to tell narratives that break from this glorification of endless linear progress, rooted in imperial ways of thinking, with narratives that account for the *ruins of empire*. Doing so builds on Le Guin's carrier bag framework for making new worlds when the current world is lost, as that position is a place of *ruination*. In order for stories to push outside the limits of imperial thinking and tell different stories of *possibilities* and *acts of relating*, the lived-with ruins of empire must be not only accounted for, but woven into the stories themselves, as these are what people are "left *with*" in the aftermath (and ongoing present) of empire.[15] *Voyager* offers moments that model these practices and processes of living within the ruins of empire, especially through episodes that break traditional (Western, 'progressive') narrative approaches, although as with stories that break the standard imperial adventure framework, these moments are few and far between amidst the general glorification of progress throughout the series.

Stories that critically engage the ruins of empire demonstrate awareness of the historical and contemporary destruction of Euro-American imperial practices and concepts. Ann Stoler proposes the idea of telling and writing "recursive histories"—histories that "*fold back on themselves* and, in that refolding, reveal new surfaces, and new planes"—as a method to explore the ruination of empire.[16] Unlike nostalgia for the past 'greatness' of the empire (including phrases like "Make America Great Again," as popularized in the 2016 Presidential campaign by Donald Trump), study of recursive histories of imperial ruination calls direct attention to what remains of empire *and* ways of life destroyed and altered by empire, past, present, and (if left unchanged) futures. Stoler cautions that this focus on ruination is not "on inert remains but on the histories they recruit and on their vital refigurations"—the

[15]Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Duke University Press, 2016), 348, emphasis in original.

[16]Ibid, 26, emphasis in original

lived-with realities of empire, past and present.[17] These realities are not always easy to see, Stoler cautions, and require significant examination of imperial processes, including deflection of empire itself, as I have tackled in this project. Throughout my analysis I have called attention to the extensive ways *Voyager* (and America itself) deflects the realities of their ongoing empire and imperial practices (including development), and on the ruins created in the wake of that idealization of endless progress, itself an imperial act. Avoiding elements of linear progress, then, becomes one significant way to live-with(in) the ruins of empire and focus on acts of relating and processes of ongoingness.

Linear progress along Western models has often been a central point of imperial cultural narratives, and these stories reinforce a belief that the world (and presumably our daily lives) will always be better (get better) tomorrow, and the day after, and the day after that. Anna Tsing acknowledges that while "Progress felt great; there was always something better ahead," in reality, "progress stopped making sense," especially in the aftermath of disasters like the United States bombing of Hiroshima, Japan on August 6, 1945—an act that demonstrates the extremely destructive nature of 'endless progress'.[18] In reaction to limiting and restrictive stories and acts of progress, Tsing advocates for a world built on the edge and processes of world-making that focus on *acts of relating* and the *possibilities* for new ways of thinking about life, death, and precarity. To engage these stories in ways that do not continue to glorify progress, Tsing offers a "riot of short chapters" that "tangle with and interrupt each other" rather than a traditional linear recounting of her anthropological studies.[19] This method—a physical manifestation of her aim to tell big histories (of capitalism and precarity) with small details—is one direct way to break linear progress narratives, even within academic writing. By avoiding a classically linear argument rooted in a

[17]Ibid, 348.
[18]Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 25.
[19]Ibid, viii.

thesis with evidence that continues to build upon the points in a chronological or otherwise straightforward manner, Tsing calls direct attention to the way a belief in linear progress resonates in the most basic components of our language and knowledge sharing mechanisms. This in turn creates space to explore the lived-with ruination of empire in practical and critical ways. Breaking the traditional pattern, then, becomes a way to tell stories that can go beyond imperial frameworks and instead explore the ruination of empire through ongoing stories of daily life.[20]

Ultimately, the idealization of linear progress throughout the *Voyager* series is evident through the method of the narrative itself and the overall presentation of the journey as a quest with a specific beginning, middle, and end, which significantly limits options for exploring the ruins of *Voyager's* own imperial Federation and way of life. Much like the imperial hero stories Le Guin critiqued through her proposal for carrier bag narratives that can create new and different (non-imperial, non-hero) worlds, stories of linear progress limit *possibilities* of *processes* and *acts of relating* that can cultivate multispecies respons(ability). That said, there are moments of exception scattered throughout the series narrative. "Course: Oblivion" is one episode that offers a slight interruption of the linear progress of *Voyager*, although the real *Voyager* is never aware of the existence (and demise) of their clones. The original ruinous introduction to the Delta Quadrant is another *possibility* for exception, even though as I noted in the previous section, the *possibilities* within this initial moment are lost through the inclusion and repetition of imperial concepts and practices. As I observed in Chapter 2, "Caretaker" positions *Voyager* in the ruins of their own civilization through their disastrous entry into the Delta Quadrant at the hands of the Caretaker. The ship itself

[20]I acknowledge that, unlike the method I advocate for in this section, I have followed the traditional pattern of exposition and argumentation in crafting this dissertation, as expected by academia. Tsing and Haraway, in contrast, are well established scholars who can 'get away with' breaking these molds to aid in their arguments. Still, I am aware that my argument in this section about following a method unlike typical progress stories is broken, in part, by my own methodological approach progressing linearly from one point to another to create an argument, although I am not unaware of this disruption.

suffers physical destruction, several crew members perish, and at the end of the episode *Voyager* is left stranded in an area of space entirely unknown to them. While this moment of possible exception is dashed through casting the Kazon as uncivilized in direct contrast to the Federation, and Janeway's determined aim to protect the 'helpless' Ocampa from the 'savage' Kazon (recreating and reinforcing numerous imperial binaries), the set-up and basic premise of the show signals one area of *possibility*.

Non-linear narratives in stand-alone episodes offer another space for *possibility* within the standard 'progressive' *Voyager* framework, especially in time travel episodes that, by their very definition, break expectations of the linear passage of time. *Voyager* makes extensive use of time travel as a plot device, although as John Reider observes, time travel is a frequently used device that recreates conditions that reinforce binary differences between the "more advanced" explorer and the "less developed" population they encounter.[21] One *Voyager* episode stands out as an exception to this oft-used binary. "Shattered" details Chakotay becoming 'unstuck in time' and encountering numerous notable moments in *Voyagers* Delta Quadrant adventure, including revisiting scenes from "Caretaker".[22] I argued in Chapter 5 that this episode demonstrates the cultivation of a safe 'home' space for the family that the crew becomes, and therefore contributes to the narrative of imperial domesticity reinforced throughout the series, but this episode concurrently illustrates the *possibilities* of storytelling from a non-linear standpoint.

Layering of imperial narrative with non-imperial *possibilities* is not unheard of: Said observed that narratives can (and do) reinforce imperial frameworks *while at the same time* offering critiques of various features of imperial practices.[23] Said's points to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in making these observations, as I observed in Chapter 4. Ultimately, the

[21] John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Wesleyan University Press, 2012), 76.
[22] "Shattered," dir. Terry Windell, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, January 17, 2001).
[23] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage Books, 1994).

classic anti-imperial text concurrently demonstrates how pervasive imperial ways of thinking are as Conrad's intended critique of the violence of European imperial practices in Africa nonetheless remains infused with the unquestioned imperial belief that African natives 'need' European 'civilizing'. Pervasive imperial messages aside, it is worth pointing out the moments of exception—in addition to studying in depth the imperial concepts that remain uninhibited by the critiques and exceptions—in order to begin to explore the *possibilities* for more *if* the imperial threads can be avoided. *Voyager* does *not* avoid reinforcing imperial narratives, as I have demonstrated throughout this project, although the moments of exception do offer a starting point for a more sustainable narrative toward cultivating multispecies respons(ability). Through identifying and articulating the ways these moments of exception exist within the overwhelming imperial ways of thinking, it becomes possible to see where and how to break those imperial molds.

In "Shattered," Chakotay experiences time as shattered, inexplicable, and unpredictable. Unlike the usual frame for time travel episodes (including the series finale "Endgame"), there is no pattern to Chakotay's experiences. Instead, he moves from one time period and series of events to another as he moves throughout the ship, encountering previous enemies and future events. To restore the timeline, Chakotay has to work with past-Janeway from *before* they became friends as a result of their trials in the Delta Quadrant. The episode does have a clear beginning (*Voyager* passes through a temporal anomaly and things go wrong), middle (Chakotay walks through *Voyager* and experiences numerous past and future events in a random sequence), and end (Chakotay and past-Janeway fix the problem and return *Voyager* to 'normal'), thus reinforcing yet again the belief in linear progress and the role of the hero who will save the day. The middle sections, however, highlight something different. "Shattered" demonstrates ways a character can engage with their own recursive histories, including those from possible futures (in one scene Chakotay and past-Janeway

encounter Naomi Wildman and Icheb 23 years into the future), to *see* new possibilities for ongoing acts of relating within the ruins of empire. This episode features Chakotay's close friendship (*relating*) with Janeway (past, present, futures) through a physically ruined version of *Voyager*—things start to go wrong with a warp core breach, which would otherwise have completely destroyed the ship and all its personnel. An act of ruination, then, creates space to explore the possibilities of relating in non-linear ways, even within the larger imperial progressive frame of the episode and *Voyager*'s larger journey.

Non-linear narratives create space to explore the ruins of empire as they break expected methods of progress, and further, allow for detailed engagement and *acts of relating* with the ghosts and monsters created through the Euro-American imperial project. Detailed study of ghosts—"the vestiges and signs of past ways of life still charged in the present"[24]—and monsters—"the wonders of symbiosis *and* the threats of ecological disruption"[25]—disrupts human-centered visions of endless progress in ways that push toward cultivating multispecies respons(ability). Storytelling that lives-with(in) the ruination of empire, telling stories of containers and the ongoingness of daily life, must engage with these non-human remains. *Voyager* shows glimmers of *possibilities* with regard to this kind of storytelling with the episode "The Haunting of Deck Twelve".[26] This episode takes a traditional 'ghost story' approach, and—as I argued in Chapter 5—centers on Janeway's role as caretaker-Captain and contributes to the firm borders established between *Voyager* and the Delta Quadrant. That said, it also serves to disrupt narratives of linear progress through the method of storytelling employed in the episode. Neelix tells the story of the Haunting to the Borg children after the events have taken place, and the conflict in the episode is recounted in

[24]Anna Tsing et al., *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017), G1.

[25]Ibid, M2, emphasis in original.

[26]"The Haunting of Deck Twelve," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, May 17, 2000).

various segments interspersed with scenes of Neelix and the children reacting to the tale.

Beyond these mild disruptions to linear narration, and Neelix himself functioning as an unreliable narrative to evoke images of classic ghost stories, this episode offers *possibilities* for storytelling that explores the ruins of empire through the *ghost* itself. The ghost is a non-human entity, disrupted by *Voyager*'s passage through a nebula who was trying to engineer its return through disrupting *Voyager*'s systems. In essence, the entity in "Haunting" is a non-human living being trying to survive in the aftermath of empire, in this case the literal passage of *Voyager*—the embodiment of the Federation and their imperial mandates of exploration and progress—moving through 'unknown' space on their journey home. The entity highlights the threat of ecological destruction wrought by endless progress (monsters) and how past ways of life are forever changed—yet always present—in light of 'progress' (ghost), although the *possibilities* to explore these features are disrupted in the end. Janeway, once again acting as caretaker-Captain whose main aim is to keep her ship safe, secure, and 'civilized,' serves as the hero and returns the entity to the nebula, and *Voyager* once again resumes their journey after the slight delay, indicating that these moments of the evidence of the lived-with ruins of empire are nothing more than a ghost story to tell in the dark. Nonetheless, "Haunting" creates space to explore ways of storytelling that avoids the glorification of linear progress through a non-linear narrative style and the introduction (brief though it is) of an entity that represents the lived-with ruins of empire and imperial ways of life.

The character of Chakotay, *Voyager's* former Maquis First Officer, represents another moment of *possibility* for storytelling that engages the ruins of empire, although as with the other instances I have explored, these instances are limited and underdeveloped. Chakotay represents literal living-with(in) the remains of empire, as his character is the descendent of surviving indigenous people of North America who left Earth sometime in the 22nd century. His people moved to a colony on the edge of Federation space to live outside of the technolog-

ically advanced Federation. Considered "contrary" growing up in this stereotypical 'native' society, Chakotay was dissatisfied with his peoples tribal attitudes toward technology and joined Starfleet, only to leave for the Maquis when his father was killed by Cardassians after the Federation-Cardassian War, which provides the backdrop for *Voyager*.[27] *Voyager* producers explained that they hoped Chakotay would offer Native Americans the "same kind of role model and same kind of boost" offered by Nichelle Nichols in her role as Lt. Uhura in *The Original Series,*[28] which gives the character significant potential to explore living with(in) the ruins of Euro-American empire in a future utopia.

Chakotay is the first character on-screen in the pilot episode, and Janeway selects him to serve as her First Office at the end of "Caretaker" in order to symbolically and literally bring the Maquis and Federation crews together—a significant first step in her efforts to create a cohesive family unit aboard *Voyager*. Doing so signifies that Janeway seeks Chakotay's unique perspectives, and she will often turn to him for advice based on his experiences growing up and as part of the Federation, the Maquis, and the *Voyager* command staff (the "Scorpion" sequence, discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, details this well). In placing Chakotay in this central position as second-in-command, Janeway creates the space for Chakotay to influence the family that develops, although Chakotay will rarely do anything but bow to Janeway's decisions. As he observed at the end of "Caretaker," "She's the Captain," and he rarely pushes for any subversion of Federation policies within the Delta Quadrant. This would have been a prime moment for Chakotay to bring his native practices and cultural ways of life into *Voyager's* journey, but as his backstory indicates, he always aspired to explore the galaxy as part of the Federation. Through his "individualistic" mindset that contrasts the "communal way of thinking" of his native people,[29] Chakotay's storyline takes

[27]See "Caretaker" and Chapter two for more on this backstory.

[28]Stephen Edward Poe, *A Vision of the Future* (Simon and Schuster, 1998), 174. Further, see Chapter four for a longer discussion on race, on-screen diversity, and 'progress' in *The Original Series*.

[29]Rick Berman, Michael Piller, and Jeri Taylor, "*Star Trek: Voyager* Bible" (1995), 9.

moments of *possibility* to explore living-with(in) the ruins of empire and instead reinforces Federation ideals.

The *Voyager* Bible describes Chakotay as a "complex man" who "spans two cultures, one foot in each, belonging to both and yet to neither," which highlights the imperial mindsets that shaped his characterization despite an honest desire to provide on-screen diversity.[30] Chakotay embodies an imperial binary between the 'civilized/technological/progressive/advanced' society and the 'Other,' a divide that presumes that two cultures are the only possible options as he straddles a border between them, yet does not (and perhaps cannot) belong to both/either. Much like the binary reinforced throughout Torres' story arc, Chakotay's "either/or" storyline only pays lip service to the *possibilities* Chakotay could have explored in depth living-with(in) the ruins of empire. Chakotay does bring visible diversity to the screen and promotes ongoing native traditions in the face of homogenized Federation culture, but his storyline falls short of exploring how native cultures remain vibrant in the face of ongoing imperial practices and the ruination that results from living-with(in) Euro-American empire. Many of Chakotay's 'native' moves were critiqued by Native Americans for their stereotypical representations, including examples highlighted in early episodes "The Cloud," "Initiations," "Tattoo," and "Waking Moments".[31] These episodes demonstrate generic native practices, including communing with spirit guides ("The Cloud"), spiritual reawakening after meeting the 'Sky Spirits' of his people—who are actually aliens—("Tattoo"), and general comments about native ways of life. In "Initiations," for example, Chakotay observes that "My people taught me that a man does not own land. He doesn't own anything but the courage and loyalty in his heart. That's where my power comes from," and flashbacks to his childhood perpetuates the stereotype that native populations desire a non-technological

[30]Berman, Piller, and Taylor, "*Star Trek: Voyager* Bible," 9.
[31]Stephen Edward Poe, *A Vision of the Future* (Simon and Schuster, 1998), 199.

existence.[32] These generalized moments never significantly impact *Voyager's* journey, nor does Chakotay advocate for practices that move beyond the imperial Federation mandates for exploration and endless linear progress. Chakotay's presence on screen diminishes as the series progresses, perhaps a reflection of Native critiques of his character, which serves the added purpose of demonstrating how his early centrality within the ship due to his unique position within (and simultaneously outside of) the Federation fades as *Voyager's* journey continues. Chakotay had the potential to represent the ghosts and monsters living-with(in) the ruins of Euro-American empire on the edge of the galaxy, even though his role in world making serves only to reinforce imperial concepts and practices, including a belief in endless linear progress.

6.4 Speakers for the Dead and the Importance of Memory

In Chapter 5, I argued that through retaining narrative approaches to the process of imperial domesticity, the three central female *Voyager* characters—Chief Engineer B'Elanna Torres, Captain Kathryn Janeway, and recovered Borg drone Seven of Nine—continue to (re)create a safe 'home' space aboard *Voyager* in direct contrast to the unsafe 'wild' spaces of the Delta Quadrant. Doing so becomes part of their Prime Directive, as a 'home' (and family) is presented as necessary to retain the drive and desire to return to Earth (the real 'home'), and such practices subscribe to imperial ways of thinking, especially involving hierarchies between "us" and "them". There are significant moments of exception for each of these characters, however, that allows space to explore the importance of memory as a way to cultivate

[32] "The Cloud," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 13, 1995); "Tattoo," dir. Alexander Singer, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, November 6, 1995); "Initiations," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, September 4, 1995).

respons(ability) in ways that could possibly go beyond imperial modes of engagement. All of these moments continue to prioritize the human(oid) as the central figure of importance, and none of these moments break the carefully established borders between *Voyager* and *everything/everyone else*, but they create *possibilities* to inspire other narrative approaches, and their existence offers a space to start exploring new ideas for non-imperial world making. In this section, I extend narrative possibilities for cultivating multispecies respons(ability) through embracing a narrative figure of "Speakers for the Dead" that can build worlds of ongoingness and live-with(in) the ruins of empire.

In elaborating on the significance of an interwoven past/present/futures in worlding (Le Guin's phrase was 'world making') as a way toward cultivating multispecies respons(ability) in ways that acknowledge the imperial ruination, past and present, and yet strive for a different present and possible futures, Haraway proposes prioritizing stories that highlight Speakers for the Dead. In Haraway's conception, Speakers for the Dead will "bring into ongoing presence, through active memory, the lost lifeways … moving through mourning to represencing, to the practice of vital memory".[33] This process involves an active awareness of past, present, and futures through engagement with life forms long gone, recently lost, and those not yet born. Typical conceptions of 'the dead' include the former two categories, but those 'not yet born' reflect the ongoingness central to world making and living within the ruins of empire. To function as a Speaker for the Dead, one must tell stories of all those who came before *and* retain awareness of those who live in the present and who (might) come after. *Remembering* is key to this process, as is the concept of active memory—memory that includes awareness of the future as deeply connected to the past and present.

Science fiction has often featured Speakers for the Dead, most notably Orson Scott Card's novel by the same name in his well-known series *Ender's Game*. Card's series features a young

[33]Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 166.

boy trained by his military to 'role play' a war against another species, although Ender later realizes the game was no simulation, but the full scale destruction of the alien planet. In the sequel, *Speakers for the Dead*, Ender takes up the task of Speaker for the Formic species by 'carrying' the Queen and telling her story.[34] As Haraway explains, "the task of the Speaker for the Dead is to bring the dead into the present so as to make more response-able living and dying possible in times yet to come".[35] Bringing the dead and those not yet alive into the present with those currently living with(in) the ruins of empire reaffirms the "ongoingness" of multispecies respons(ability) through *acts of relating*. Doing so requires awareness of the violent histories of imperialism, but in acknowledging those histories and absorbing them and acting from a position of *relating* with those life forms, Speakers for the Dead—and stories that explore what it means to be a Speaker and to actively remember, and honor those remembered as part of living-with in the present and futures—create new ways of thinking/being/living/dying that cultivate "living-with" other organisms.

Within the narrative and *Trek* universe, *Voyager* creates space for temporary *remembering* and *living-with(in)* through stories that blur, at times, the harsh divide consistently cultivated between the safe 'home' space aboard *Voyager* and other life forms and spaces in the Delta Quadrant. This models some methods for approaching Speakers for the Dead in a popular science fiction televised text, although none of these episodes fully break the borders/boundaries established by Janeway and her crew. The temporary feature of these encounters limits the full creation of Speakers for the Dead in the manner that moves beyond imperial boundaries and the ongoing vestiges of empire, but each moment demonstrates that these kinds of stories are *possible* in science fiction, and in *Star Trek*. The *Voyager* episodes I will discuss recall a popular and successful *The Next Generation* episode that also models

[34]Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game* (Macmillan, 2010); Orson Scott Card, *Speaker for the Dead* (Paw Prints, 2008).

[35]Haraway in Tsing et al., *Arts of Living*, page M33.

(to a certain degree) how a *Trek* character can become, at least temporarily, a Speaker for the Dead with the fictional universe. "Inner Light" features Picard becoming-with through experiencing memories of a lifetime lived as an alien man named Kamin as Picard/Kamin struggles (and fails) to save his planet from environmental destruction.[36] This episode won a Hugo Award in 1993 for Best Dramatic Presentation,[37] and although Picard rarely refers to his experiences living a lifetime trying (and failing) to save Kamin's planet, this model of storytelling finds echoes in several *Voyager* episodes. In all of these stories, the characters fail in significant ways, indicating that the real story starts when heroes fail and worlds are lost: these moments create opportunities for living-with and active remembering for the characters.

Episodes that focus on character's *remembering* creates space for *Voyager* to explore the *possibilities* of *relating* (becoming-with) other lifeforms and offer examples for ways that science fiction stories from the imperial center might achieve the kinds of stories required to fully respond to the human-centered environmental crisis of the 'Anthropocene'. These stories force the major female characters outside of their comfort zone within their home space, at least for a short period of time, although none permanently break down the barriers constructed between 'domestic' and 'foreign' spaces that keep *Voyager* and crew safe and secure on their journey through 'uncharted' (to them) space. In "Remember," Chief Engineer B'Elanna Torres—still early in her struggles over identity and belonging, and years before she will overcome those hurdles through tossing her Klingon identity overboard in "Barge of the Dead"—begins to experience vivid dreams of a forbidden love affair while *Voyager* transports a race of telepathic aliens called Enarans.[38] In the dreams, Torres is a young Enaran woman

[36] "Inner Light," dir. Peter Lauritson, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Paramount Television, June 1, 1992).

[37] "1993 Hugo Awards," *The Hugo Awards* (blog), July 26, 2007, http://www.thehugoawards.org/hugo-history/1993-hugo-awards/.

[38] "Remember," dir. Winrich Kolbe, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, October 9, 1996).

named Korenna who is in love with a "Regressive" named Dathan, a persecuted group in Enaran society who fear technology. Through the dreams, Torres watches/lives Korenna's discovery of a genocide being committed against the Regressives, and at one point she tells First Officer Chakotay "I don't know what I …. What *she's* going to do". This slip of the tongue indicates how Torres is living-with(in) these experiences, feeling as if she is the one making these decisions rather than simply walking through someone else's memories.

Eventually, Torres/Korenna gives her lover over to the authorities (in the figure of Korenna's father), which culminates in Dathan's execution. The most chilling part of the episode is when Torres/Korenna chants "Yes, yes, yes!" with the crowd after her lover is executed, caught up in the act of imperial violence against the "Other". Through a confrontation with the elderly Korenna on *Voyager*, Torres learns how the Enarans have covered up the genocide by altering the story and memory of the events. The Prime Directive forbids interference by the *Voyager* crew in Enaran affairs, preventing Torres from making these discoveries public and telling the correct version of history to the wider population. Instead of making the information public, Torres takes her memories of Korenna's life to a young Enaran, Jessen, and shares the memories again. The implication in these final moments is that Jessen will become-with Korenna and take that experience and those memories back to her home planet, creating the possibility for the knowledge to spread farther and perhaps change past/present/futures; as Torres note, "it's not just a matter of history. This could happen again if people don't know it happened before". Torres explains to Jessen that "[Korenna] showed me everything—no apologies, no requests for forgiveness. Just the truth". It is then left up to Torres and Jessen to live-with those memories, and the experiences (and truths) they contained.

"Remember," as the title implies, creates a situation where Torres lives-with(in) experiences of another race and highlights the importance of acts of remembrance. Living the

experience of a society torn apart by ideology is not dissimilar from Torres' own struggles over her biracial identity and the associated expectations of (and tensions between) Klingon and human ideologies and approaches to life, even though Torres never seems to make those connections. The lack of personal connection, and presumed absolution after passing the memories on to Jessen, seems to free Torres from her obligations for having lived these experiences, which are a clear allusion—in the minds of the producers—to the persecution and destruction of Jews and other 'non-desirable' peoples by Germany during the Second World War.[39] By the end of the episode, Torres has learned this history needs to be remembered, although that appears limited to the need to remember in order to prevent something like it from happening again. This limitation on memory within the episode restricts the potential to consider (and demonstrate) how those living and yet to come will take that memory as part of their lives and *respond* in ways that (hopefully) move beyond those acts of imperial violence, but "Remember" does present an intriguing exploration into one way of becoming/being a Speaker for the Dead.

The episode "Memorial" utilizes the same basic plot device as "Remember" to explore the role of *memory* in another alien encounter, and allows Janeway the opportunity to push (slightly and temporarily) the concrete boundaries she has continuously erected to keep her *Voyager* crew safe and secure. "Memorial" details events surrounding the telepathic transfer of memories from a physical war memorial on a planet (Tarakis) marking the site of a massacre that occurred in the 21st century.[40] Told through a series of flashbacks to the massacre itself, perpetuated by Nakan Commander Saavdra against Nakan colonists on Tarakis who resisted forced relocation, the *Voyager* senior staff experiences the events *as their own mem-*

[39]Anna L. Kaplan, "Voyager Episode Guide," *Cinefantastique*, 29, no. 6/7 (November 1997): 92. Originally, this episode was conceived as a *Next Generation* episode to feature the character Deanna Troi, although Lisa Klink re-wrote it for Torres. Brannon Braga observes the intended Holocaust connection in this episode recap, although he acknowledges that the 1993 film *Schindler's List* detracted (in his opinion) from the genocide story told in "Remember".

[40]"Memorial," dir. Allan Kroeker, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, February 2, 2000).

ories. Neelix, Paris, and Kim are first shown suffering flashbacks to at-the-time unexplained violence, and in time Chakotay and Janeway and a significant number of unnamed crew suffer similarly and begin to exhibit signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. In a similarly chilling scene to the one where Torres/Korenna chants alongside other Enarans after the execution of her lover in "Remember, the *Voyager* crew is seen on-screen acting out the events of the Nakan massacre. Eventually Janeway and the crew realize what has happened, and return to Tarakis to learn more. They discover a memorial containing an inscription that explains: "Words alone cannot convey the suffering. Words alone cannot prevent what happened here from happening again. Beyond words lie experience; beyond experience lies truth. Make this truth your own". As the message indicates, *words alone cannot convey the suffering*, so the memorial telepathically transmits memories of the massacre to the anyone who comes within range. The Nakan who erected this memorial hoped that sharing these experiences would create greater understanding through experience, and urge any travelers to "make this truth your own"—and live-with the memories. Through this memory transfer, the *Voyager* crew become Speakers for the Nakan dead.

The crew discusses their conversion into Speakers for the Dead while debating whether or not to fix the memorial, which is losing power. Chakotay, Paris, and Kim argue against boosting the power supply, stating that the memorial forces unsuspecting innocents to suffer memories of actions they did not commit. Janeway and Neelix, in contrast, argue for the importance of retaining these memories, using the same position taken by Torres in "Remember:" these memories/experiences allow others to learn from them, and hopefully prevent such actions from happening again. Janeway—in her role as compassionate Captain—makes the final decision: *Voyager* will update the power supply on the memorial, and a warning beacon will be placed to alert travelers before they get too close so no one is ever surprised by the memories again.

Both of these episode present the concepts of *remembering* and *active memory* as directly tied to preventing similar events in the future, and demonstrate some *possibilities* to explore Speaker for the Dead narratives, although these possibilities are limited by the imperial narrative. Janeway and the crew become Speakers for the 82 dead Nakan colonists, as did Torres for the Enarans, and they will (presumably) retain those memories and experiences for the rest of their lives, requiring a unique form of living-with(in) another alien race. That said, these *act of relating* are limited with regard to a broad engagement to cultivate respons(ability), most notably through the human(oid)-only encounter. Further, the memory transfer only includes details of the conflict and massacre, placing prime (and sole) importance on the direct acts of violence, which does serve to horrify, but does not retain the kinds of daily-life memories that would more completely foster acts of *living*-with. Finally, the events, while shocking, do nothing to break down the borders of safety and security aboard *Voyager*. No one is prompted to go seek out the Nakan and further engage with their society, or ask any additional questions about these events and their legacy for the Nakan. With regard to Haraway's proposal regarding Speakers for the Dead who speak for those dead, those still living, and those yet to come, this engagement with details of a specific tragedy never achieves a respons(ability) that goes beyond ensuring the memorial (and it's telepathic functions) remains active. Haraway's framework pushes far beyond the oft-quoted refrain that 'those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it', but these short moments of *possibility* where the *Voyager* crew lives-with (even temporarily) another alien race through telepathic memory transfer offer hints of what a Speaker for the Dead narrative might look like, even on a popular American science fiction television show. Such a narrative would create space for characters of live-with the experiences of other lifeforms, and take on their experiences in ways that would fundamentally alter the main characters lives.

Another exploration of *remembering* and *memory* within the *Voyager* narrative comes

from Seven of Nine. Seven of Nine serves a unique Speaker for the Dead function, since her previous Borg self was part of a Collective—in essence, a hive-mind that shared all thoughts, experiences, and memories endlessly with all other drones. In "Infinite Regress," Seven deals directly with the memories of aliens she assimilated as a drone.[41] Caused by an alien virus infecting a 'vinculum' (Borg transponder device) of a destroyed Borg cube, Seven begins to exhibit multiple personalities, including a young child, a Klingon warrior, a Ferengii trader, and several Federation officers. In addition to demonstrating behavior and actions of many of the Borg victims, including eating like a Klingon and trying to trade with Janeway as a Ferengii, Seven struggles with this direct awareness of her victim's daily lives. Unlike "Memorial," which only shared events of the massacre itself, "Infinite Regress" shows numerous features of the daily life (eating, playing, trading, grieving) of multiple species who suffered the same fate of Borg assimilation. As such, Seven unwillingly (as Torres was in "Remember" and the entire crew in "Memorial") undertakes a more holistic 'Speaker for the Dead' role in this episode, enabled by her previous 'life' as a Borg drone.

This episode models the actions of a Speaker for the Dead—including undertaking such tasks 'unasked'—although Seven's transformation into a Speaker is presented as an illness to be cured due to the *Trek* categorization of Borg as 'evil' and 'unnatural: as 'unhuman'. 'Hive-mind' thinking is actively discouraged in favor of praising human individuality, as I argued in Chapter 5, a thread retained in this episode. Seven's personality (and still in-progress transition from Borg to human individual) is gradually overcome by these alternative lives, and crew (notably Janeway and the Doctor) fear she will lose her own identity entirely as this "terrible" remnant of her Borg life asserts itself. Even though Janeway jokes about Seven's illness (Janeway asks Chakotay if he "met anyone interesting" after talking with Seven), she prioritizes saving Seven *from* these memories, even risking an attack on *Voyager*

[41] "Infinite Regress," dir. David Livingston, *Star Trek: Voyager* (Paramount Television, November 25, 1998).

by the aliens who created the virus and plan to use it to destroy additional Borg. Doing so once again places utmost importance on Seven's emerging human personality and identity, which severely limits the *possibilities* of Seven to live-with through in-depth and ongoing *acts of relating* with these Borg victims. This act of 'salvation' recalls Janeway's colonization of Seven in "The Gift" (see Chapter 5), and again affirms that singular human identity and mind, uncluttered by experiences of others, is of central importance to Janeway's Prime Directive, and part and parcel of retaining a safe space for her crew aboard *Voyager*. In the end, Seven is 'cured' from this affliction, recovers her individual identity, and moves on.

"Infinite Regress" ultimately puts the same significance on memory and remembering as "Remember" and "Memorial". In "Memorial" (which chronologically occurs—most likely—a year or so after "Infinite Regress," although "Memorial" does not contain a Stardate timestamp), Seven counsels Neelix that feeling guilt over her victims helps her remember *in order not to repeat these acts again*, indicating that Seven retains awareness of her actions as a Borg (and possibly these events in "Infinite Regress"). This admission falls directly in line with the significance of memory and remembering as outlined in "Remember" and "Memorial," where the importance is placed on *learning from* history in order to prevent *repeating it*, rather than using those experiences to improve *acts of relating* and becoming-with other living (and dead and not yet born) organisms. In the latter instances, these experiences would affect all aspects of daily life and create a wider understanding of life, rather than those only related to the specific historical event one wants to prevent. The two are related, but *relating* speaks to a deeper connection between life forms. Despite these limitations on memory, and the restrictions on human(oid)-centered *relating*, it is noteworthy that these episodes exist at all, especially since they differ in notable ways from the typical hero-driven narrative of the series. As Le Guin observed when proposing the carrier-bag style of narration, these stories are not *easy*, but they can work—and through that working,

contribute to a world-making process that cultivates multispecies resons(ability) through tales of ongoingness, remembrance, and possibilities/processes of relating with(in) the ruins of empire.

6.5 Writing Non-Imperial Futures

Best-selling contemporary science fiction author Kim Stanley Robinson observed that speculative fiction serves as a "modeling exercise" to explore what *might* happen in possible futures.[42] This modeling exercise is not limited to positive outcomes, although *Star Trek* is frequently framed as an ideal outcome through its emphasis on human progress and individuality. While Robinson expressed the opinion that "space opera" (a broad science fiction category within which the *Star Trek* franchise belongs) "seems a distraction" amidst the looming climate crisis, my analysis of these moments of exception and possibility within the largely imperial *Star Trek: Voyager* series narrative demonstrates that space opera *can* offer sustainable and realistic responses to the crisis—*if* the overwhelming imperial frameworks so pervasive within the genre is avoided. Instead of stories that repeat and maintain imperial approaches and ways of thinking about the world, we need stories of ongoingness, acts of relating, *possibilities* that engage living-with(in) the ruins of empire, and stories that embrace living acts of memory that expand to all creatures past, present, and yet to come. That is certainly a tall order, but such stories *must* be written into global cultural narratives in order to model sustainable ways of living within and viewing the world. Robinson notes that fiction writers have a "moral imperative" to explore realistic avenues for *response*.[43] Such stories, especially those that start from the position of being lost—including ships that get

[42]India Bourke, "Kim Stanley Robinson: 'What the Hell Do We Write Now?,"' accessed December 30, 2019, https://www.newstatesman.com/kim-stanley-robinson-interview.

[43]Bourke, "Kim Stanley Robinson."

stuck and characters that fail—will serve to model and influence ways of seeing and viewing the world that engenders multispecies respons(ability) and embraces the webs the bind *all* life, rather than continuing to perpetuate imperial mindsets and hierarchies.

Star Trek: Voyager holds a significant place in popular televised American science fiction for the justifiably noteworthy achievement of putting the first woman on the bridge of the multi-decade franchise. That achievement comes coupled with imperial mindsets an ways of thinking about the world, however. *Voyager* and the centuries of imperial ideologies and traditions it was built upon have influenced many 21st century space operas, including the award-winning saga *Battlestar Galactica* (2003-2009) revived by former *Trek* producer Ronald D. Moore. *Battlestar* fulfills Moore's vision of what *Voyager* could have been, tossing a group of 50,000 human survivors into the void where the only additional 'life' in existence are robots hell-bent on the destruction of the entire human race. In part because it was deliberately modelled on *Voyager* and the 'lost in space' framework influenced by centuries of imperial practices and concepts, *Battlestar* is similarly infused with imperial ways of thinking about the world, as are additional popular space opera science fiction like *Firefly* (2002-2003), *The Expanse* (2015-present), and of course *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001-2005), *Star Trek: Discovery* (20017-present), and (likely) the much-anticipated *Star Trek: Picard* (2020). Additional space opera has flourished on the 'big screen' in recent years, indicating a continued interest in the genre. Cinematic blockbuster hits like *Star Wars Episodes VII - IX* (released by Disney in 2015, 2017, and 2019) alongside 'stand-alone' films *Rogue One* (2016) and *Solo* (2018), are likewise infused with imperial mindsets. This short list is incomplete, nor is the purpose of my project to craft a detailed argument with regard to any of these popular series, but the major themes I have outlined can—and, as Said argues, *should*—be explored within them and other extremely popular media like the science fiction influenced Marvel Cinematic Universe. America was (re)creating itself in the aftermath of presumed

'victory' in the Cold War and the supposed 'end of empire' when *Voyager* was created and aired, and the imperial policies and practices of America (both 'domestic' and 'foreign') in the 90s and since the dawn of the 21st century (including the terrorist acts of September 11th and George W. Bush's still-ongoing 'war on terror') are reflected and reinforced through this and other subsequent popular culture narratives.

Prime time television viewing is changing in the 21st century, especially in the era of streaming services, but this has not altered the fundamental ability of television and television narratives to act as contemporary oral storytellers, transmitting and reflecting ideas and beliefs. In *Reading Television*, John Fiske and John Hartley argue that "Television performs a 'bardic function' for the culture at large and all the individually differentiated people who live in it".[44] In the case of television, the 'bard' is the story itself, rather than a specific author, because there is no single identifiable author of a television series. The bard is the story who/that tells a story—a story and storyteller central to culture: "The bardic mediator occupies the *centre* of its culture; [because] television is one of the most highly centralized institutions in modern society".[45] Ultimately, Fiske and Hartley conclude that in traditional cultures and in regard to contemporary television, "Bardic functions, appropriately, has to do with *myths*".[46] These mythologies "emerge as the *conventions* of seeing and knowing, the *a priori* assumptions about the nature of reality which most of the time a culture is content to leave unstated and unchallenged".[47] Roland Barthes argues that contemporary cultural myths naturalize the world, and Fiske and Hartley give television that same providence. Like Stuart Hall and other structuralists argue, realism is a human construct that nonetheless corresponds to the way we perceive the world. Therefore, language (including television)

[44]John Fiske and John Hartley, *Reading Television* (Methuen, 1978), 85.
[45]Ibid, 86, emphasis in original.
[46]Ibid, 87, emphasis in original.
[47]Ibid 87, emphasis in original.

"can in fact be thought of as the *power* which allows men to *produce the natural*".[48] Television as visual cultural storytelling and mythology naturalizes the world, and makes the myth 'real,' and it certainly has the potential to do so for stories that move beyond expected imperial frameworks.

In order to alter the continued recreation of stories that reinforce, reflect, and recreate imperial mindsets about living in the world—stories that can help *respond* to the impending climate disaster of the 21st century—we need new stories. We need stories that focus on *possibilities* and *acts of relating* and living-with(in) the ruins of empire that retain an awareness of those long dead, those recently lost, and those not yet born. We need stories without heroes that detail taking up the unasked for obligations of having met *all* living creatures. We need stories that allow us to build new worlds *without* the tools of imperial domination so prevalent in contemporary stories being produced within the empire, even stories of presumed future utopias. We need stories that begin from a position of being lost and *make new worlds* without empire and imperial ways of thinking. Doing so will not be easy, but *Voyager* shows us that even within the oppressive imperial frameworks and mindsets that infuse almost all features of the series, it *is* possible to break free. *Voyager's* moments of exception to imperial thinking never overcome the numerous acts of imperial deflection and creation that take place throughout the series narrative, but they do exist, showing us what is possible if conscious effort to study and avoid imperial frameworks took place. If such a task could be undertaken successfully, especially in a series with such innate popularity as *Star Trek*, such tales will then become part of our cultural myth, and become naturalized ways to see the world and contribute to a realistic way of responding to the present crisis. *Star Trek* has this potential through the creation of non-imperial worlds of possibility for *all* living organisms, *if* effort is made to avoid imperial ideologies.

[48]Ibid, 160-161, emphasis in original.

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