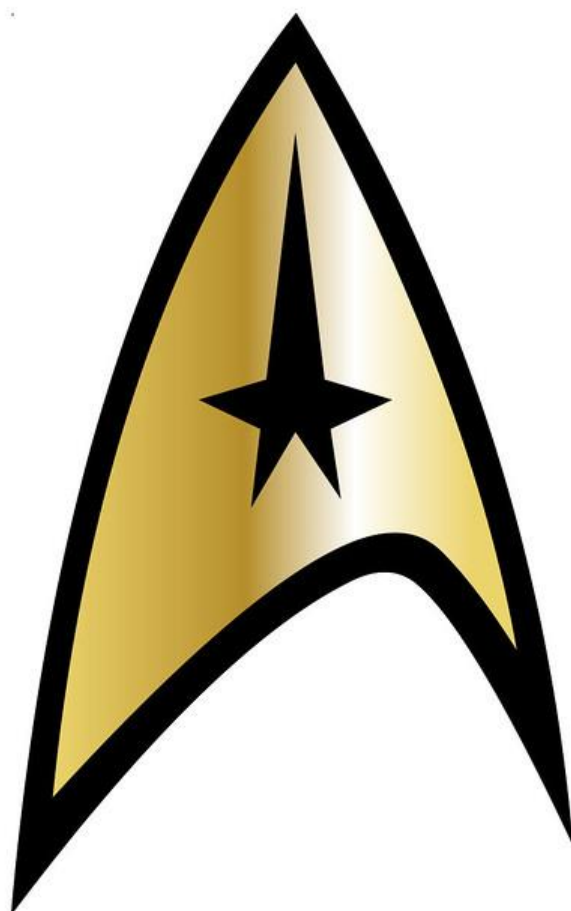


STAR TREK



Concise Episode Guide

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STAR TREK Episode Guide

How to Use This Episode Guide

Welcome fellow *Star Trek* fans (Trekies? Trekkers? honestly I don't care, y'all are welcome here, regardless of where you come down on *that* side of that particular debate). I made this guide partly for myself, so I could watch the entire franchise and all of its iterations and episodes in a particular order, but I also made it for *you* because you may have questions about how to best go about that.

How to Interpret the Font Color and Episode Numbers:

Font Color:

Black Text - Alpha Canon (Prime & Mirror Universe)

Blue Text - Alpha Canon (Kelvin Universe)

Red Text - Beta Canon (Prime & Mirror Universe)

Green Text - Online Gaming

Abbreviations:

Ang: Star Trek: USS Angeles

AvU - Star Trek: Avalon Universe

CI STOSS - Certifiably Ingame's Star Trek Online Story Series

DISCO – Star Trek Discovery

DrD – Star Trek: Dreadnaught Dominion

DS9 – Deep Space Nine

ENT – Star Trek: Enterprise

EXT – Star Trek: Starship Exeter

FGT – Star Trek: Starship Farragut

Fd1 – Star Trek: Federation One

HeC – Star Trek: The Helena Chronicles

HdF – Star Trek: Hidden Frontier

Int – Star Trek: Starship Intrepid

KHA – Star Trek Khan (Audio Drama)

LDS – Star Trek: Lower Decks

Ody – Star Trek: Odyssey

Ph2 – Star Trek: Phase 2 / New Voyages

PIC – Star Trek: Picard

PROD – Star Trek: Prodigy

S31 – Star Trek Section 31

SFA – Starfleet Academy

SNW – Star Trek: Strange New Worlds

STC – Star Trek Continues

TAS – Star Trek: the Animated Series

TNG – Star Trek: the Next Generation

TNZ – Star Trek: Tales from the Neutral Zone

TOS – Star Trek: the Original Series

VAL – Star Trek: Starship Valiant

VOY – Star Trek: Voyager

The numbers in parenthesis following “cannon” episodes: (black or blue text) represents the release order in numerical sequence. Thus TOS 6: The Man Trap is numbers “(1)”, because it was the first episode every broadcast, even though it wasn't the first episode produced or even the first episode in chronological sequence. The numbers in brackets indicate the runtime of a given episode, only used when it deviates from the standard length or is a streaming episode (where standard lengths aren't required).¹

Non canonical episodes (in red or green) are not so numbered, because they're noncanonical, and some of the

episodes in these various series aren't included in this guide due to exceptionally poor quality, such as much of the Dreadnaught Dominion series, which has very poor production quality and generally substandard acting, in my opinion.

At first glance, these episodes are listed in strictly chronological order, *as if one is watching the entire franchise as a whole*, meaning that they're ordered from earlier to later in the vast timeframe in which *Star Trek* largely takes place (2151 - 4300 AD) from ENT: *Broken Bow* to ShortTrek: *Calypso*.²

¹ The list of these isn't (yet) comprehensive, therefore some non-standard length episodes aren't yet completely catalogued.

² This isn't necessarily easy in every case. The “setting” of some episodes, especially those involving time travel isn't always contained

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This is how I prefer to watch *Star Trek*, however there are other ways one could watch the franchise, including:

- Broadcast Order (from TOS: *The Man Trap* to whatever the most recent release of any iteration of the franchise);
- Production Order (same as above, but beginning with *The Cage*)
- By series in order of release (TOS, TAS, TOS movies, TNG, DS9, TNG movies, VOY, ENT, Kelvin reboot movies, DISCO, Short Treks, PIC, LDS, PROD, SNW, Very Short Treks, Section 31 (movie), SFA)
- The above, with the addition of the fan produced material
- And many others.

This guide *somewhat* allows for these alternative methods. The episodes are (mostly) grouped by series, so one can derive an order from that, even where—such as when seasons of TNG and DS9 or DS9 and VOY were in their first runs simultaneously and were set in the same fictional future time as they ran simultaneously and are thus listed together.

If one wishes to watch the episodes in broadcast order, that is listed as well after each episode title in parenthesis (unless it's beta canon material)

Where it's not entirely possible to place an episode in a particular timeframe (as is the case with the *Very Short Treks*, since these aren't meant to be canon, but were—as it turns out very hit and miss—attempts by the franchise to “laugh at itself”), I indicate as much.

If one wishes to follow particular story or character arcs, there are far too many of these and the webs of connections between them is far too complex (*especially* if one adds in the STO material that *greatly* fleshes out hanging canon threads, such as establishing that the mysterious dead individual from the future in ENT: *Future Tense* is none other than the creator of the mysterious “tox utat” that is found and destroyed by Picard and Vash in TNG: *Captain's Holiday*; and furthermore all of this ties into the Temporal Cold War, the Krenim from VOY: *The Year of Hell*, and the “Planet Killer” from TOS: *The Doomsday Machine*. And to top it off, another such planet killer was used

within a linear timeframe. For example, the movie, *Star Trek (TNG) First Contact* begins in the 24th Century, but the bulk of it occurs in the mid 21st Century, nevertheless, the story *centers* on a 24th Century plot line. By contrast, ENT: *First Flight* largely involves Captain Archer sharing half-decade old memories of his newly deceased comrade, AG Robin-

by the Na'Kuhl to destroy Gorlondon Core rendering it into the post-apocalyptic hellscape seen in TNG: *The Enemy!* for me to lay out here, though the “Memory Alpha” and “Memory Beta” wikis do a fairly thorough job of covering those.

Regardless of these options, my preference is to watch the franchise in chronological order, for reasons I will explain later.

Keep in mind, that this is only possible due to the evolution of visual media and digital—and to an extent, shareable—media. There was a time, when *Star Trek* was in its first generation, where this wasn't possible.

Those Old Syndications

In truth, there's no “proper” order in which to watch *Star Trek*. This is especially true in an age of on-demand media. One can watch practically any episode they like, in any order they like, as long as they have access to them.

This wasn't always the case, however. For those of us who're old enough to have lived in a time before streaming television, digital media players, home video players, or even (relatively ubiquitous) cable television—ie when only the *Original Series* and *Animated Series* (which had largely disappeared), and maybe a few of the movies had been released—in the United States, one had to watch *Star Trek* episodes on local broadcast television stations, usually “UHF” (ie broadcast stations from channels 14-80), or the rare independent commercial VHF channels (2-13) that weren't tied to a particular network or the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

Then, one was lucky to even *have Star Trek* as a choice, and if we were so lucky, it'd be on once a day on weekdays, usually in the late afternoons. For example, in the San Francisco Bay Area, where I've lived most of my life, TOS episodes could be seen on Channel 2 (KTVU), before it became a “Fox” affiliate, and later Channel 44 (KBHK), before it became the short-lived UPN (Paramount) network and broadcast on cable as Channel 12. If one had basic cable, they might also catch it on Channel 40 (KCRA) in Sacramento.

Of course, one didn't get to choose the episodes they watched; they had to be content with what the network

son, but because it's triggered by events in 2153 (Robinson's untimely death), it's properly set then. The rule of thumb used is: in what year *from the perspective of our hero characters* does the story initially unfold. That's why VOY: *Living Witness* is taken out of VOY, Season 4 and instead listed right before Season 3 of DISCO.

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was showing that particular evening. That meant that someone new to the series might be exposed to the really good episodes or some not so stellar entries (especially if one came in during TOS's abysmal third season!). In my case, I was extremely lucky, in that my first exposure to the franchise was the near pitch perfect first season episode, *Arena*, which is *quintessentially Star Trek* (it's coincidentally the first time the "Federation" is actually mentioned).

In truth, I knew about the series before I'd seen that episode (when I was about ten). Someone—I forget who—gave me a sort of "view master" type toy as an eighth birthday gift, in which one could watch five-minute, silent video clips from movies or television shows, and the only clip I had (which came with the toy) was a segment from the second season episode: *By Any Other Name*. Also, I had ordered a copy of *A Star Trek Catalog* (1979: Grosset & Dunlap) through the Arrow Book Club (something that was offered to public elementary school students as an inducement to encourage reading), which included an episode guide.

The *Catalog*, published just prior to the release of *Star Trek the Motion Picture*, listed the TOS and TAS episodes in their original broadcast order, meaning precisely how they were released when the show debuted on NBC network television in fall of 1966. This meant that *The Man Trap* was listed as "Episode 1", followed by *Charlie X* (2), *Where No Man Has Gone Before* (3), and so forth. This was also how Channel 2 broadcast them in syndication in the 1970s and 1980s (after I'd seen *Arena*, I managed to catch *Who Mourns for Adonis*, and then forgot about the show for a few years, until catching it again when I was 12, seeing *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, and then being instantly hooked for life). This is, however, not the order in which the episodes are *produced* though I wasn't fully aware of it at the time.

Most fans of the series are at least partially aware the TOS had *two* pilot episodes, and that the first one, *The Cage* was rejected by the Network for being "too cerebral" (or, at least, that's the official reason). Details of that particular story have been given in countless other histories of the franchise, so I won't waste any time going into it here, except to point out two very crucial points:

1. *The Cage* is the *true* first episode of *The Original Series* (it's also, by circumstance, the pilot of SNW. Anson Mount described the newer series as "the longest pilot to series pickup in history.")

2. Outside of a few *Star Trek* conventions—if one was lucky enough to attend one also attended by Gene Roddenberry, who'd occasionally screen it, and even then they could only watch it in black & white, rather than color—that episode was never seen by most fans (except for the parts later incorporated into the TOS: two-parter, *The Menagerie*).

It wouldn't be until *Star Trek's* 20th Anniversary (in 1986) that the episode was finally broadcast on commercial television, partly as a teaser for the new UPN network and the announcement of the creation of a new series to be called, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (TNG).

The second TOS pilot wasn't *The Man Trap*, either, however. It was in fact, *Where No Man Has Gone Before*. Although this episode was the third episode ever broadcast, any carefully observant viewer will notice that the sets of the *Enterprise* and the props used in James R (sic) Kirk's maiden voyage much more closely resemble those of Christopher Pike's in *The Menagerie* (and *The Cage*).

In fact, it seems that the order in which the TOS episodes were initially broadcast diverges substantially from the order in which they were produced, and in fact that is (almost without exception, although occasionally there are some rare instances) true.

Interestingly, first and/or second-generation fans, such as myself, *did* have an opportunity to see this demonstrated. Although Channel 2 chose to broadcast the episodes in broadcast order, Channels 40 and 44 did *not*. After two complete runs through the series, Channel 2 dropped the series for a while in the mid-1980s. By then, our family had installed cable, and I was able to watch on Channel 40, instead. However they seemed to be broadcasting the episodes out of order (there was another frustrating thing I noticed, and that was each episode seemed to be missing several scenes I could *swear* I remembered). At first, I assumed Channel 40 was being ship-shod and not especially concerned with maintaining any semblance of continuity (Channel 44 hadn't picked up the show yet for syndication), but each time through, Channel 40 maintained the same order, so there *was* a pattern to it.

Then, after a time, Channel 2 brought the series back. Now I could watch the series *twice* a day instead of once! (you younger binge watchers have no ideal). As luck would have it, Channel 2 resumed broadcasting in broadcast order, such that they were more or less two weeks behind Channel 40, so I'd watch the episode on the latter first, then approximately two weeks later (more or less, because

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the order was different), I'd watch it *again* on Channel 2. I quickly discovered that I had not been mistaken about missing scenes. The episodes shown on Channel 2 included a number of scenes that were *cut* from the episodes broadcast on Channel 40!

When Channel 44 picked up *Star Trek* a short time later, they showed the episodes in the exact same order as Channel 40, but cut less scenes. I'd also learn, from this, that Channel 2 *did* cut scenes, but *different* ones (they'd usually accomplish this through a single "jump cut" rather than individual scenes cut throughout the episode.)³

This made watching what had become my favorite television series quite frustrating (and it was the beginning of my becoming an obsessively detail oriented fan), but it also was an indication—though I didn't realize it at the time—that after almost two decades of patiently waiting, *Star Trek* was about to be reborn, and that the 79 episodes, the 22 rarely seen animated episodes, and the four theatrical movies were but an appetizer for the absolute *feast* we'd all be served. *TOS* was but a humble beginning!

About this time, my family got its first video cassette player / recorder (VCR), and we could rent or buy complete *TOS* episodes, this reality was brought home (so-to-speak) dramatically. The episodes were all uncut, which made for a much more rewarding experience, and they were all numbered (usually in squares on the side of the VHS tape box, with squares color coded for each season of *TOS*: gold for Season 1, magenta for Season 2, and blue for Season 3). The numbers didn't match those in the *Star Trek Catalog*, however, but they *did* precisely match the order in which Channels 40 and 44 were showing them, so clearly there *was* a logical pattern, one which I would soon learn was based on *production* order, rather than *broadcast* order.

While not, perhaps, as heated as the silly debates over whether Han Solo or Greedo "fired first" (depending on which release of the first *Star Wars* movie one prefers—which in my case is the remastered version, though I

couldn't care less about whether it's Han or Greedo who fired "first", because for me the restored reunion scene between Luke and Biggs and the vastly improved space battles are what do it for me), the arguments over whether to watch *TOS* episodes in broadcast vs production order is one that fans have strong opinions about. Personally I initially favored the former—mainly because that's how I first experienced the series—but grew to prefer the latter, mainly because the continuity flows more smoothly. There are certain subtle evolutions from episode to episode that make more sense if one watches them in production order, or even visual clues (for example, Uhura's uniform is *gold* in the first two *TOS* episodes that feature her: *The Corbomite Maneuver* and *Mudd's Women*. We only hear her voice in *The Enemy Within*, which immediately follows, but thereafter she wears a red uniform).

It seems that Roddenberry and his fellow producers agreed, which is why the majority of independent stations that broadcast reruns of *Star Trek* in syndication as well as the release of the show on commercially available VHS tapes did so that way. Most official *Star Trek* related show guides that included a list of episodes did so as well. For a time, by the turn of the millennium at least, it looked as though production order would win out.

Fast forward two decades later, and it seems the pendulum has swung to the opposite extreme. Now, in DVD sets and on Paramount Plus streaming television, the episodes are numbered in *broadcast* order—with one notable exception: *The Cage* is now listed as "Episode 1", which it properly is, but not in *broadcast* order, since it wasn't released as such until 1986, and even then, it's not the same version as is available now, because the 1986 release featured the non-Menagerie material in black-and-white only, because the original master tape was presumed lost. That turned out not to be the case, and now the version of *The Cage* that is available as "Episode 1" is a seamless, color throughout episode as if it was always available as such

³ What was going on here was, unfortunately, a hard and fast reality of syndication of television shows. Typically, after running for two or three seasons on network television, popular series would find their way to lower budget, independent local stations. Because they weren't part of a branded network, they had less money to spend, and they typically compensated by showing more commercials during act breaks. Since television was organized around 30 and/or 60 minute segments, almost exclusively beginning on the hour or half hour, television shows were of uniform length (usually 50 minutes for hour-long slots, or 23 for half-hour shows). To show more commercials, one had to cut a few segments from each episode. Evidently the Sacramento station had a

higher profit margin to meet, or they *really* felt it necessary to squeeze in extra commercials featuring used car salesman, Cal Worthington and his "dawg" (usually some absurdly ridiculous animal companion), "Spot." All syndicated series suffered this same fate. Sometimes, like in the case of Channel 44 and "The Brady Bunch" there were *two versions of each episode* used in syndication with one set of cuts in the first version, and a *different* set in the second. The versions would alternate, so that if one watched the series through a sufficient number of runs, they'd see every scene—just not in a single setting! The process of "stripping" popular TV series for syndication is worth its own book. With streaming services, this no longer happens. All episodes are available uncut.

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(except for the remastered special effects, which were done for all TOS episodes in the early 2000s).

No doubt the partisans of “broadcast order” (*The Cage* excepted) got the ear of Paramount’s executives as well as the producers that took over upon Roddenberry’s passing. This is ironic given the tendency among many of the more vocal fans with purist attitudes and sentiments to claim to be speaking as if “it’s what Gene (Roddenberry) wanted”, when what the “Great Bird of the Galaxy”, as he was affectionately known, wanted isn’t always what fans assume it is (as I will detail closely later in the guide!)

As it turns out, the decisions that went into the broadcast order of TOS weren’t at all what Roddenberry & co wanted. For the most part, these choices were forced upon the production staff by circumstance. *Star Trek* had an incredibly meager budget, even by mid-1960s standards, and yet it had lofty ambitions, especially in depicting a 23rd Century utopian future. Even within those constraints, the creators did a remarkable job, but this involved numerous sacrifices.

One of these involved post production. For its time (the mid 1960s), the special effects, particularly those involving interstellar exterior scenes—produced in a time when computer technology was in its infancy and nowhere near prevalent enough to be used in Hollywood productions—took an inordinately long time to fully develop. Episodes involving large numbers of these took especially long to complete. That is why, for example, *The Corbomite Maneuver*, which is actually the first *true* Season 1 episode (made over a year after the second pilot), and only the third overall, was broadcast *tenth* in the show’s original run. All of those exterior shots involving the cube buoy marker and Balok’s giant ship, *The Fesarius*, were very complicated. If one watches that episode knowing that it’s meant as something of a first full flight of the Captain Kirk era if the OG *USS Enterprise*, a lot of the dialogue and character interactions (including especially Kirk, who seems much harder edged than he ultimately becomes) make a *lot* more sense. One might also notice that McCoy isn’t referred to as “Bones” yet either.

This post production challenge plagued the creative staff throughout the entire run of TOS, but it was *especially* true of the show’s debut season. This explains the seemingly random order in which episodes were released. It also explains why Gene Coon was brought in as a line producer midway through the season (a choice that had much deeper and lasting contributions to *Star Trek* than most realize), and why Roddenberry repackaged much of *The Cage*

into the two-part episode, *The Menagerie* (it was a desperate attempt to save money and allow post production to meet the deadlines. Fortunately, it succeeded beautifully).

The only exception to this pattern was the choice of *The Man Trap*, the sixth episode ever produced, to serve as the debut episode. In this particular case, it was a mutual decision of both the show’s creators and the network. Sci-Fi typically involved creepy malevolent monster villains, and unfortunately this particular episode qualified, even if the ethics presented were rather reactionary by the franchise’s progressive values (and as far as such cliches go, this particular entry still at least considered the ecological loss of the destruction of “the last of its kind”). It also, sadly, fed into sexist tropes, especially its title, which is unfortunate, because it was *originally* titled, “The Unreal McCoy”, for obvious reasons. Frankly, I think *The Corbomite Maneuver* is a far superior story, and it is far and away a much better example of the progressive message the show meant to convey, namely that fear and prejudice are the real monsters, not unfamiliar unusual people (or species).

The Next and Further Generations

TNG, DS9, and VOY are all more or less contemporaneous series, set in the years 2364 (TNG: *Encounter at Farpoint*) through 2378 (VOY: *Endgame*). Unlike TOS and TAS, their production order occasionally deviated a bit from their broadcast order, all of these episodes were written as if their broadcast order corresponds to their in-universe order, regardless of rare production order deviations. Thus, the episodes have almost never been broadcast (or ordered, in the case of streaming services) in any order other than that in which they were originally broadcast.

That established, some of the series ran concurrently. DS9 began midway through TNG’s run. VOY began during DS9’s second season several months after the TNG finale, *All Good Things*. Although not essential for each series if watched on their own, there *are* subtle tie-ins in the series that precedes it. For example, in the two-part sixth season TNG episode, *Chain of Command, Parts 1 & 2*, it’s Captain Jellico’s forcing the Cardassians’ hand that ends the occupation of Bajor, thus setting up DS9 (the events in DS9: *Emissary* immediately follow). The events in the seventh season TNG episodes *Journey’s End* and *Preemptive Strike* and the two part DS9 episode, *The Maquis* all set the stage for VOY: *Caretaker* (and observant viewers will note the presence of the Cardassian, Gul Evек, in many of

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these episodes). Therefore, VOY: *Caretaker* happens shortly after DS9: *The Maquis* (although it begins right after DS9: *Past Tense, Part 2*).

During concurrent runs, the episodes don't quite always alternate between series, however, because occasionally one might be on a short hiatus while the other was not, therefore occasionally there might be as many as four or five episodes of one series between two of the other, but mostly they do alternate. (That said, where a series released a two-or-three-part episode, I deviate from strict chronological order to allow uninterrupted viewing of multi-part episodes).

Prequels and Prologues

Placing *Star Trek Enterprise* in the order is easy, since it is set in the mid-22nd Century and the only iteration of the franchise to feature this period in its long timeframe. As for its much-maligned finale, *These are the Voyages...*, I have a humble suggestion: instead of watching it right after *Terra Prime*, instead watch it in combination with TNG: *The Pegasus* between the scene in Picard's quarters where he confronts Riker and the scene in Picard's ready room where he contacts Admiral Necheyev. Doing this turns the TNG episode into an "extended edition", and it makes more sense, in my opinion. One can also watch the two-part episode *Through a Mirror, Darkly* in its place in the running order or after TOS: *The Tholian Web*, if they like. It works either way. They can even do both.

Likewise, one can watch the incredibly pitch perfect SNW and LDS crossover *Those Old Scientists* either in order of SNW, LDS, or *both*, because it blends both series's "feel" so seamlessly, one'd be forgiven for thinking that all crossovers in the franchise were as easy to create.

Outside of some fan produced material (which I have included, because I think it's the best one can do to fill in the gap created by the untimely cancellation of *Enterprise*), the next episodes in chronological order are some of the Short Treks that serve as prequels to *Discovery* (DISCO) and *Strange New Worlds* (SNW), followed by *The Cage*, Seasons 1 and 2 of DISCO, and SNW.

Some of the Short Treks need to be sprinkled into the running of Seasons 1 and 2 of DISCO, because they relate to the overall story. This is *especially* true in the case of *Runaway*, because it's part of the season 2 story arc (it shows how Sylvia Tilly met the soon-to-be Queen of Xahia, Mi Hani Ika Hali Ka Po, and a few clips from this episode are

seen in the flashback clips of *Will You Take My Hand, Part 1*).

Some of the remaining Short Treks are difficult to place in the order, so I've made my best guess, though *Children of Mars* goes right after the conclusion of *Prodigy* (PROD) Season 2's finale and just prior to the first episode of *Star Trek Picard* (PIC)

After the Next Generation, Dominion War, and Voyager's Endgame

The last TNG movie, *Nemesis* immediately follows VOY: *Endgame*. The "Kelvin Universe" reboot movies follow shortly after, because—although they take place in an alternate universe set in the SNW and TOS era there, these stories are prompted by events in the "Prime" Universe in the post VOY years.

Lower Decks's, then *Prodigy*'s entire runs follow in succession, which then brings a close to the 24th Century material. The Short Trek: *Children of Mars* more or less coincides with the final minutes of PROD: *Ouroboros, Part 2*, and sets up the first season of *Picard*, which rounds out the last years of the 24th Century.

The 25th Century

PIC Seasons 2 and 3 kick off the 25th Century, but beyond that, there is no canonical material for three quarters of a millennium. That said, *Star Trek Online*—while not officially canon—is definitely worth a look, because it features most of the primary and secondary characters from every iteration of the franchise, most of whom are voiced by their original actors (with the exception of Scotty, who is voiced by James Doohan's son, Chris). By its nature as a mass online role-playing game, STO prominently features space and melee combat battles, but throughout there is also plenty of story material which fleshes out existing canonical threads and story arcs that are otherwise left incomplete.

It's important to stress that *Star Trek Online* stories *are not* canon, therefore, anything that occurs there *may* be contradicted by later produced canonical episodes. That said, outside of a few minor inconsistencies (Such as Seven-of-Nine's appearance or whether or not she's a Starfleet officer or not—at least in the proper sequence of events that happen in supposedly contemporaneous canonical episodes), *Star Trek Online* attempts to be canonically consistent (to the point of rewriting existing stories to

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conform to canonical changes, and re-recording dialogue to fit them).

Likewise, the writers and producers of newer episodes of *Star Trek* seem to mostly steer clear of contradicting the events in *Star Trek Online*. There are even instances where elements from it (such as new starship designs that debut there) are later incorporated into canon. Sometimes it may be coincidental (it cannot be conclusively proven that the revelation made in STO that the Iconians still survive in the 25th Century was directly referenced by Admiral Vance in the Season 4 of DISCO), but either way, STO could best be described as “soft canon”, meaning that it’s canonical until it isn’t.

The 31st and 32nd Centuries and Beyond

Finally, the *Voyager* episode “Living Witness” (which happens before “the Burn”), is followed by Seasons 3-5 of DISCO (which take place post-Burn), *Starfleet Academy*, and

then finally (at some distant future date, perhaps even in the 42nd Century) the *Short Trek*, “Calypso” round out the timeline. The finale is, admittedly a melancholy final note, albeit a sweet, if sorrowful one. The viewer is left wondering if the V’drey’ish (Federation) devolved into something to be feared (if that’s indeed what’s happening), or something else. It’s a mystery, and likely that’s the point, even if that is merely a subtext for what is essentially a tragic love story.

But then, who knows? For many years, the final chapter on *Star Trek* seemed to be “Turnabout Intruder”. Who then could have predicted just how much more stories left to be told. I suspect, given the franchise’s cultural phenomenon status, it’s entirely possible that new stories may actually be produced as far away in time as “Calypso” is narratively. Only time will tell!

With that, let’s launch right into the “Prime Universe” with the ENT premier, *Broken Bow*...

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22nd Century

2151-52 AD (Enterprise, Season 1)⁴

1. ENT 1: Broken Bow (629) (86m)
2. ENT 2: Fight or Flight (630)
3. ENT 3: Strange New World (631)
4. ENT 4: Unexpected (632)
5. ENT 5: Terra Nova (633)
6. ENT 6: The Andorian Incident (634)
7. ENT 7: Breaking the Ice (635)
8. ENT 8: Civilization (636)
9. ENT 9: Fortunate Son (637)
10. ENT 10: Cold Front (638)
11. ENT 11: Silent Enemy (639)
12. ENT 12: Dear Doctor (640)
13. ENT 13: Sleeping Dogs (641)
14. ENT 14: Shadows of P'Jem (642)
15. ENT 15: Shuttlepod One (643)
16. ENT 16: Fusion (644)
17. ENT 17: Rogue Planet (645)
18. ENT 18: Acquisition (646)
19. ENT 19: Oasis (647)
20. ENT 20: Detained (648)
21. ENT 21: Vox Sola (649)
22. ENT 22: Fallen Hero (650)
23. ENT 23: Desert Crossing (651)
24. ENT 24: Two Days and Two Nights (652)
25. ENT 25: Shockwave, Part 1 (653)

2152-53 AD (Enterprise, Season 2)

26. ENT 26: Shockwave, Part 2 (654)
27. ENT 27: Carbon Creek (655)
28. ENT 28: Minefield (656)
29. ENT 29: Dead Stop (657)
30. ENT 30: A Night in Sickbay (658)
31. ENT 31: Marauders (659)
32. ENT 32: The Seventh (660)
33. ENT 33: The Communicator (661)
34. ENT 34: Singularity (662)
35. ENT 35: Vanishing Point (663)
36. ENT 36: Precious Cargo (664)
37. ENT 37: The Catwalk (666)
38. ENT 38: Dawn (667)

39. ENT 39: Stigma (668)
40. ENT 40: Cease Fire (669)
41. ENT 41: Future Tense (670)
42. ENT 42: Canamar (671)
43. ENT 43: The Crossing (672)
44. ENT 44: Judgment (673)
45. ENT 45: Horizon (674)
46. ENT 46: The Breach (675)
47. ENT 47: Cogenitor (676)
48. ENT 48: Regeneration (677)
49. ENT 49: First Flight (678)
50. ENT 50: Bounty (679)
51. ENT 51: The Expanse (680)

2153-54 AD (Enterprise, Season 3)

52. ENT 52: The Xindi (681)
53. ENT 53: Anomaly (682)
54. ENT 54: Extinction (683)
55. ENT 55: Rajiin (684)
56. ENT 56: Impulse (685)
57. ENT 57: Exile (686)
58. ENT 58: The Shipment (687)
59. ENT 59: Twilight (688)
60. ENT 60: North Star (689)
61. ENT 61: Similitude (690)
62. ENT 62: Carpenter Street (691)
63. ENT 63: Chosen Realm (692)
64. ENT 64: Proving Ground (693)
65. ENT 65: Stratagem (694)
66. ENT 66: Harbinger (695)
67. ENT 67: Doctor's Orders (696)
68. ENT 68: Hatchery (697)
69. ENT 69: Azati Prime (698)
70. ENT 70: Damage (699)
71. ENT 71: The Forgotten (700)
72. ENT 72: E² (701)
73. ENT 73: The Council (702)
74. ENT 74: Countdown (703)
75. ENT 75: Zero Hour (704)

2155-56 AD (Enterprise, Season 4)

⁴All episodes are approximately 43-44 minutes in length, unless otherwise indicated.

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76. ENT 76: Storm Front, Part 1 (705)
77. ENT 77: Storm Front, Part 2 (706)
78. ENT 78: Home (707)
79. ENT 79: Borderland (Part 1) (708)
80. ENT 80: Cold Station 12 (Part 2) (709)
81. ENT 81: The Augments (Part 3) (710)
82. ENT 82: The Forge (Part 1) (711)
83. ENT 83: Awakening (Part 2) (712)
84. ENT 84: Kir'Shara (Part 3) (713)
85. ENT 85: Daedalus (714)
86. ENT 86: Observer Effect (715)
87. ENT 87: Babel One (Part 1) (716)
88. ENT 88: United (Part 2) (717)
89. ENT 89: The Aenar (Part 3) (718)
90. ENT 90: Affliction (Part 1) (719)
91. ENT 91: Divergence (Part 2) (720)
92. ENT 92: Bound (721)
93. ENT 93: In a Mirror, Darkly, Part 1 (722)
94. ENT 94: In a Mirror, Darkly, Part 2 (723)
95. ENT 95: Demons (Part 1) (724)
96. ENT 96: Terra Prime (Part 2) (725)⁵

2156-60 AD (The Earth-Romulan War)

97. The Romulan War 1: Preamble to War

98. The Romulan War 2: Election 2158
99. The Romulan War 3: The Romulan War, Part 1
100. The Romulan War 4: They Want Us Dead
101. The Romulan War 5: Hunting Grounds (The Battle of Terra Nova)
102. The Romulan War 6: The Fighting Fourth
103. The Romulan War 7: Sleep is Hard to Find, Part 1
104. The Romulan War 8: Sleep is Hard to Find, Part 2
105. The Romulan War 9: Ships of the Line
106. The Romulan War 10: Final Flight
107. The Romulan War 11: The Romulan War, Part 2 (unreleased)
108. Star Trek Horizons
109. CertIngame: First Months of the Romulan War
110. CertIngame: Second Year of the Earth-Romulan War
111. CertIngame: Andoria, Tellar and Vulcan in the Romulan War
112. CertIngame: Final Year of the Earth-Romulan War
113. CertIngame The Battle of Cheron

2200 AD

114. Pacific 201, Part 1
115. Pacific 201, Part 2

⁵ Insert episode ENT 97: *These are the Voyages* within TNG XX *The Pegasus*.

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23rd Century

ca. 2230 AD

116. ShortTrek 9: The Girl Who Made the Stars (767) (7m)

2239 AD

117. ShortTrek 3: The Brightest Star (747) (15m)

ca 2250s AD

118. ShortTrek 6: The Trouble with Edward (764) (14m)

2253 AD

119. ShortTrek 5: Q&A (763) (14m)
120. TOS 1: The Cage (131)⁶ (63m)
121. ShortTrek 7: Ask Not (765) (9m)

2256-57 AD (Discovery, Season 1)

122. DISCO 1: The Vulcan Hello (730) (42m)
123. DISCO 2: The Battle at the Binary Stars (731) (38m)
124. DISCO 3: Context is for Kings (732) (47m)
125. DISCO 4: The Butcher's Knife Cares Not for the Lamb's Cry (733)(49m)
126. DISCO 5: Choose Your Pain (734) (46m)
127. DISCO 6: Lethe (735) (49m)
128. DISCO 7: Magic to Make the Sanest Man Go Mad (736) (46m)
129. DISCO 8: Si Vis Pacem, Para Bellum (737) (40m)
130. DISCO 9: Into the Forest I Go (738) (46m)
131. DISCO 10: Despite Yourself (739) (48m)
132. DISCO 11: The Wolf Inside (740) (48m)
133. DISCO 12: Vaulting Ambition (741) (37m)
134. DISCO 13: What's Past is Prologue (742) (42m)
135. DISCO 14: The War Without, The War Within (743) (48m)
136. DISCO 15: Will You Take My Hand? (744) (45m)⁷

2257-58 AD (Discovery, Season 1)

137. DISCO 16: Brother (749) (57m)
138. Short Trek 1: Runaway (745) (15m)

139. DISCO 17: New Eden (750) (43m)
140. DISCO 18: Point of Light (751) (49m)
141. DISCO 19: An Obol for Charon (752) (51m)
142. DISCO 20: Saints of Imperfection (753) (51m)
143. DISCO 21: The Sound of Thunder (754) (55m)
144. DISCO 22: Light and Shadows (755) (39m)
145. DISCO 23: If Memory Serves (756) (54m)
146. DISCO 24: Project Daedalus (757) (52m)
147. DISCO 25: The Red Angel (758) (47m)
148. DISCO 26: Perpetual Infinity (759) (48m)
149. DISCO 27: Through the Valley of Shadows (760) (45m)
150. DISCO 28: Such Sweet Sorrow, Part 1 (761) (47m)
151. DISCO 29: Such Sweet Sorrow, Part 2 (762) (62m)

2258-59 AD (Strange New Worlds, Season 1)

152. SNW 1: Strange New Worlds (844) (52m)
153. SNW 2: Children of the Comet (845) (52m)
154. SNW 3: Ghosts of Illurya (846) (45m)
155. SNW 4: Mento Mori (847) (53m)
156. SNW 5: Spock Amok (848) (51m)
157. SNW 6: Lift Us Up Where Suffering Cannot Reach (849) (50m)
158. SNW 7: The Serene Squall (850) (49m)
159. SNW 8: The Elysian Kingdom (851) (53m)
160. SNW 9: All Those Who Wander (852) (52m)
161. SNW 10: A Quality of Mercy (853) (62m)

2259-2260 AD (Strange New Worlds, Season 2)

162. SNW 11: The Broken Circle (884) (52m)
163. SNW 12: Ad Astra per Aspera (885) (57)
164. SNW 13: Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow (886) (61m)
165. SNW 14: Among the Lotus Eaters (887) (57m)
166. SNW 15: Charades (888) (60m)
167. SNW 16: Lost in Translation (889) (54m)
168. SNW 17: Those Old Scientists (890)⁸ (48m)
169. SNW 18: Under the Mask of War (891) (49m)
170. SNW 19: Subspace Rhapsody (892) (62m)
171. SNW 20: Hegemony, Part 1 (893) (53m)

⁶ This was the very first produced episode of the entire franchise, but it was released 131st in order.

⁷ There is a "bonus" scene, only available on the DVD sets where Leland (from Section 31) recruits Georgiou; it's approximately 4

minutes in length. This should be viewed following the conclusion of this episode.

⁸ This episode could also be watched immediately following LDS 26: *Hear All Trust Nothing* (according to the stardate Brad Boimler recites at the episode's inception).

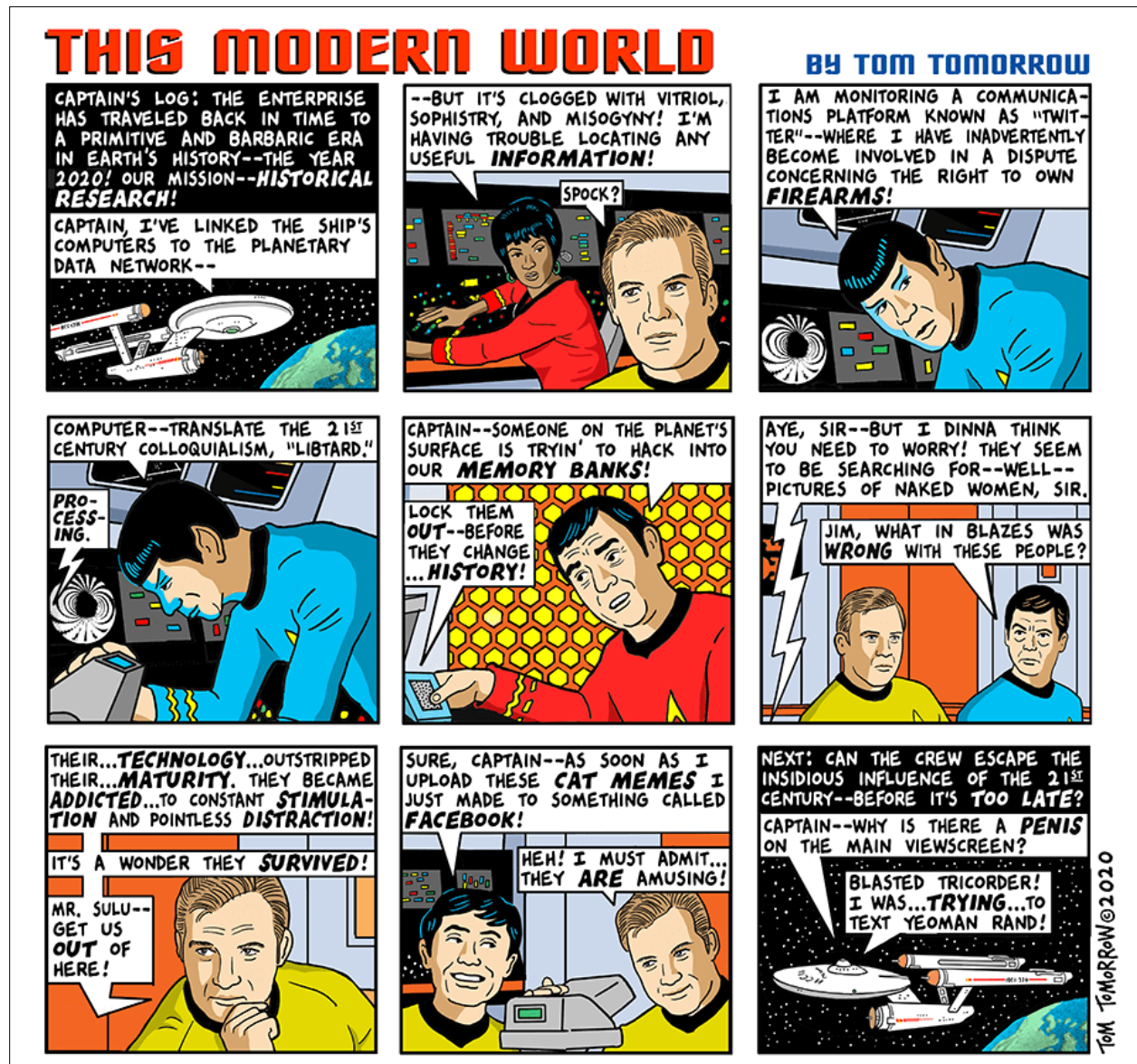
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2260-2261 AD (Strange New Worlds, Season 3)

- 172. SNW 21 Hegemony, Part 2 (950) (47m)
- 173. SNW 22. Wedding Bell Blues (951) (49m)
- 174. SNW 23. Shuttle to Kenfori (952) (50m)
- 175. SNW 24. A Space Adventure Hour (953) (47m)
- 176. SNW 25. Through the Lense of Time (954) (54m)
- 177. SNW 26. The Sehlat Who Ate Its Tail (955) (49m)
- 178. SNW 27. What Is Starfleet? (956) (46m)
- 179. SNW 28. Four-and-a-Half Vulcans (957) (54m)
- 180. SNW 29. Terrarium (958) (56m)
- 181. SNW 30. New Life and New Civilizations (959) (55m)

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Star Trek the Original Series was more revolutionary than you think...



pres·ent·ism

/ˈprezən,tɪzəm/

noun

1. uncritical adherence to present-day attitudes, especially the tendency to interpret past events in terms of modern values and concepts.

Warning: the following piece contains spoilers. If you're not intimately familiar with Star Trek TOS, you may want to wait to read this until you've seen every episode.

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It's understandable that many would be tempted to hold *Star Trek TOS* up to contemporary standards on matters of racism, sexism, gender specificity, and more. Certainly, there are many examples that seem quite cringeworthy in 2021, especially as the world struggles to move past the dystopian Trump Administration and others like it. James T Kirk's womanizing, the fact that the BIPOC and/or women cast members generally play subordinate roles, that women in Starfleet were expected to dress in mini skirts and nylons (to say nothing of gender binaries and heteronormativity) are just a few that come to mind. However that is a temptation that I would argue should be avoided. (Granted, I'm a cis-gendered, white, heterosexual dude—albeit a highly sensitive one—so my biases and conditioning filter my judgment, of course!)

That's not to say that those who take issue with these flaws, generated by the evolution of time that they may be, shouldn't. And nobody who is repulsed by the cultural baggage that any fictional work weaves in—intentionally or not—should be judged negatively for feeling angry or repulsed by it. Controlling the reactions of others is never a good idea. People feel what they feel, and that should be respected.

My intent here is not to engage in tone policing or to whitewash the inevitable flaws that were part of *Star Trek TOS*. My only wish is to put it into historical context and provide those who wish to wade through those imperfections with a bit of background. In my opinion, flaws included, *Star Trek TOS* was a mostly good faith effort at providing progressive outlook to humanity's future. Many who watched the series when it aired would heartily agree.

For all of its flaws—created by social evolution and the passage of time—*Star Trek TOS* was far ahead of its time, and it constantly pushed the envelope on social issues, at least as much as it could get away with in the mid-late 1960s when it first aired. In fact, its writers, producers, and principal actors often tried to push it *further*, but were constantly kept in check by the network (NBC, at the time), and occasionally also by *Desilu Studios*.

Times have certainly changed, but the *Original Series* was about as progressive a show one could get away with in those times, even though some of the messages which then were quite subversive don't translate so well today.

There are always people on the left (and don't get me wrong, I consider my political perspective to be libertarian eco-socialist, which is substantially green/left), who take a dour and sanctimonious view of pop culture, particularly dogmatic sectarians. There are some, including Michael

Parenti, just to name one example, who'll insist unapologetically that *TOS* was actually quite reactionary, but frankly I think that's ultra-left rubbish. At best, it's an incredibly shallow assessment of the series.

In fact, *Star Trek* frequently pushed back on racism, sexism, fascism, war mongering, religious dogma, superstition, ecological destruction, and even anti-/communism throughout its three year run and did more to inspire revolutionary views than any paper pushing sectarians could dream of doing in an entire lifetime.

To begin with, the mid 1960s, when *Star Trek* was conceived by Gene Roddenberry, was not long after the McCarthyist red scares which were a sustained and deliberate attack on the left and the power of organized labor. While Hollywood wasn't actually the primary target, it was certainly the most visible one, and seven years of over-the-top rabid anti-communist witch hunting by the likes of Senator Joe McCarthy, Roy Cohn, J Edgar Hoover, et. al almost completely drove the US left underground and ushered in a reactionary period in US history. Revolutionary political views could get one fired or even blacklisted, so those with genuinely left leaning perspectives had to tread carefully. For left leaning producers, such as Rod Serling or Gene Roddenberry, one had to acquire a lot of credibility before being able to pitch groundbreaking shows like the *Twilight Zone* or *Star Trek* when the standard yardstick of wholesomeness was *Leave it to Beaver*. Even then, these producers had to fight constantly to prevent their ideas from being chopped to bits. Roddenberry had to face these challenges right from the start.

For example, Roddenberry initially wanted to cast a woman in the role of First Officer. In fact, he actually *did* cast a woman, Majel Barrett, for the role of "Number One", in *The Cage*. Most accounts of *Star Trek* history record that NBC rejected that episode for being "too cerebral" (preferring a more "action-adventure" oriented show), and then made the unprecedented request for a *second* pilot, which became the episode *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, but what's sometimes forgotten is that the Network *also* demanded that Roddenberry write out both the parts of "Number One" (because they were adverse to women having command or even near command responsibility—a concept that's mainstream now, but was considered very radical then—and careful viewers will notice that Commander Una actually *does* take command of the *Enterprise* for a significant part of the episode while the Talosians hold Captain Pike captive) and Mr. Spock (because to them he resembled Satan).

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The Network had still other bones to pick with Roddenberry:

- (1) They found it incredulous that *nobody* in the crew smoked cigarettes during the entire story (a complaint *anybody* would consider ridiculous today);
- (2) They objected to the fact that the women—as well as the men—wore pants (horrors!);
- (3) They worried that the cast was a little too “integrated” (though most of them were nevertheless white dudes; one wonders the levels of apoplexy they’d experience if a visitor from the future described the *ST DISCO* crew!)

The Network wasn’t the only source of consternation. Lucille Ball—who’d presided over the studio executives’ meeting where the decision was made to produce the show, and spoke favorably about it—was none too keen on the fact that Roddenberry had cast his then-mistress (Barrett) in such a prominent role (that they were an item was not a particularly well-kept secret). The socially liberal (though by then economically conservative) Ball probably worried less about Roddenberry’s private affairs (literal as well as figurative) than she did about how it could impact her business (and Lucille Ball was nothing if not a very shrewd business person). Ball decreed that under no circumstance was Barrett to continue in the role of Commander Una, or any others for that matter.

Most productions and/or producers wouldn’t have survived much scrutiny, but Roddenberry had already amassed a great deal of cred, *even before Star Trek* made him the now legendary “Great Bird of the Galaxy”, and he used that to push back as much as he could (and it’s even possible that this was one reason NBC requested a second pilot).

And in the end, Roddenberry got much of what he originally wanted:

- (1) The role of Spock was retained, though altered somewhat by combing his initial character aspects (his logic, sharp mind, and the fact that he was from the mythical planet Vulcan) with many of those initially envisioned for Number One (her lack of emotions, her close platonic bond to the captain, and the role of First Of-

ficer), and somehow that assuaged Network’s objections;

- (2) the cast remained multi-ethnic—and even became *more* so with the additions of Uhura and Sulu (plus several minor characters as well, such as Charlene Masters, Dr M’Benga, and Esteban Rodriguez), with men and women of just about every nationality serving together as equals (at least as much as possible within a chain-of-command structure), though for reasons never explained, while it was permissible to have characters of Japanese or Thai descent, Chinese were “right out”;



- (3) Women could hold important roles (not just that of yeomen, nurses, and secretaries, though they did plenty of that as well), but they weren’t allowed to be shown in command (though the *Star Trek* writers’ guide *actually stated* that Uhura was fourth in line in command behind Kirk, Spock, and Scotty; they just couldn’t *show* that on screen), and they had to wear “appropriate” clothing (ie nylons and miniskirts)

Roddenberry even had the last laugh on Lucille Ball. Though he was technically barred from casting his mistress, Majel Barrett, he’d initially done so in *The Cage* under the pseudonym “M Leigh Hudec”, with her natural hair color (dark brunette). Through a little sleight of hand and

⁹ In actual fact, this was Majel Barrett-Roddenberry’s name at birth, however, she is now known by her stage name.

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some hair dye, Roddenberry not only managed to sneak Barrett back onto the Enterprise *once*, but *twice*.

Majel Barrett played the part of Nurse Christine Chapel in two early episodes (*The Naked Time* and *What Are Little Girls Made Of?*), and did so under assumed hair (dirty blonde—though in some scenes the lighting reveals her natural dark brown, giving her a salt-and-pepper look) and her real name. She also provided the voice of the Enterprise Computer in *Mudd's Women*, a role she'd reprise through much of *TOS* (in monotone), but also in *TNG*, *DS9*, *Voyager*, and even the last episode of *Enterprise* (in her natural voice) *as well*. Indeed, Majel Barrett-Roddenberry has (thus far) had parts in more episodes in the entire *Star Trek* franchise than any other actor, *including Michael Dorn!*

(It's not entirely clear just how Roddenberry was able to get away with sneaking Majel Barrett back onto the show, because the fans quickly recognized that she was the same actor playing all three roles. Indeed, in many Trekkies' early "head" canon, Una was Christine Chapel's older, somewhat estranged sister and had also provided the voiceprint for Starfleet's computers. This latter bit of lore has even possibly been given very subtle fan service in the *ST DISCO* era Short Trek, *Q&A* when Number One identifies the Enterprise food sequencers as the "UnaMatrix", though obviously that's primarily a play on the Borg Collective's network interface!)

The progressive vision that *Star Trek TOS* attempted to present (and often succeeded) was of a united planet Earth, no longer divided by race, creed, or nationality (and they would've likely openly declared it free of class division, too, though the Network would've prevented it, so this was intended, but thoroughly downplayed—at least until the *TNG* series). This was demonstrated by consciously casting characters of all colors and nationalities, and (at least somewhat) casting them as equals. And while it's true that Captain James T. Kirk (and before him Robert April and Christopher Pike) were (at least as far as official canon states) cis-gendered, heterosexual white dudes, Captain Kirk answered to at least one superior officer of color, Commodore Stone (Percy Rodriguez) in the episode *Court Martial*. The writers deliberately cast a Black man in the role, and he was anything but a racist stereotype.

By contemporary standards, the crew of the *USS Enterprise* doesn't seem particularly diverse (especially if one compares it to the crew of the *USS Discovery*, which coalesces ten years prior to *TOS* canonically, though the show is in production a half century later), but by mid 1960s standards, it was. One might take a quick glance at the

crew and dismiss it as being predominantly white dudes—heterosexual and heteronormative dudes, at that (with the exceptions of Uhura, Sulu, and a smattering of others)—but the creators and writers went to great lengths to represent as many nationalities as possible (or at least as much as the Network would permit).

Uhura represented a United Africa (and her name translates as "freedom" in her character's native Swahili—and in a lucky coincidence, her first name, though it's not heard onscreen until *Star Trek V*, "Nyota" translates as "Star", i.e. "Star of Freedom"). Indeed, the very notion of a United Africa free of Euro-American colonialism is even by contemporary standards a very radical notion (which is probably why that information was often downplayed on screen).

Hikaru Sulu was of Japanese American origin (and that's fitting considering some of his family was held in US internment camps during World War II).

Scotty was obviously Scottish (though Jimmy Doohan isn't), though at times his character seems a tad caricatureish, he's nevertheless considered an essential part of the crew.

Sometimes overlooked, other nations had representatives as well (though they only had occasional parts in one or two episodes)

Navigation Specialist Kevin Riley (Bruce Hyde) appears in *The Naked Time* and *Conscience of the King* and makes no secret of his Irish heritage.

Navigation Specialist DeSalle (Michael Barrier) appears in three episodes (*Squire of Gothos*, *This Side of Paradise*, and *Catspaw*) and shared Jean-Luc Picard's French heritage.

Meteorologist Carl Jaeger (Richard Carlyle) who appeared in *Squire of Gothos* had German roots.

Transporter Chief Kyle (John Winston), though his first name was never established, appeared in numerous episodes, beginning with *Tomorrow is Yesterday*, and ending with *Star Trek II, the Wrath of Khan* (by that time serving as the *USS Reliant's* Communications Officer). He was obviously of English descent.

Security Chief Giotto (Barry Russo) who appears in *Devil in the Dark*, and is one of only a handful of characters other than Scotty and McCoy to hold the rank of Lieutenant Commander, likely represented Italy.

These supporting characters weren't just limited to Europeans, either:

Exo-Biologist Esteban Rodriguez (Julius Caesar Lopez) appeared in *Shore Leave*, and is likely of Puerto Rican descent.

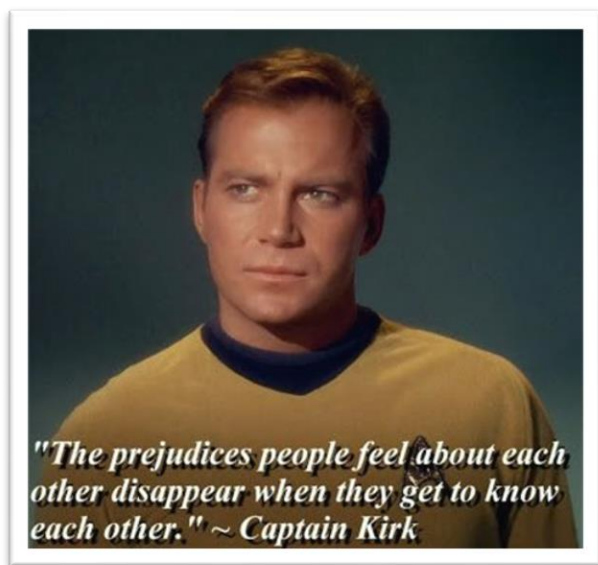
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Security Officer / Yeoman Tamura (Miko Mayuma), seen in *A Taste of Armageddon*, shares Sulu's Japanese heritage.

Dilithium Specialist / Assistant Engineer Charlene Masters (Janet MacLachlan) who appeared in *The Alternate Factor*, was of African-American heritage.

Specialist in Vulcan Medicine and Assistant CMO M'Benga (Booker Bradshaw), a character that deserved far more than the two episodes in which he appeared (*Private Little War* and *That Which Survives*) also had African roots.

There were several other cast members of color, as well, and while we might describe that as tokenism—and to some extent that's true—in the mid 1960s, substantial regions of the US were still racially segregated, and integrated casts were a definite novelty.



Not only did the creators envision a “United Earth”, they envisioned a *United Federation of Planets* as well, in which Earth was but one of many equal worlds working together for mutual aid and cooperation. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints, actually showing this was extremely difficult, but the second season episode *Journey to Babel*, written by long time Star Trek “Jack-of-all-trades” Dorothy Fontana, showed this vision onscreen in all of its glory. Here, the Federation isn't just Humans and Vulcans, but Andorians, Inthanites, Tel-lerites, and numerous other species as well (though, granted the Andorian and Tellerite costumes left a lot to be desired and would be vastly improved). The episode is primarily and fondly remembered for the onscreen debut of Spock's parents (Sarek of Vulcan and Amanda Grayson of Earth), but it's truly remarka-

ble accomplishment is showing what the Federation looked like. Such a concept had been teased in some of the more visionary science-fiction texts, but never on commercial television! (It's also notable that Spock's parents being of different worlds was, itself, a radical concept in the 1960s!)

Indeed, many of *Star Trek TOS*'s best episodes were those that pushed back on fear of the unknown and prejudice. In fact, the first episode to feature the full cast, *The Corbomite Maneuver*, is a perfect example of Star Trek urging us to overcome our fear of the unknown. Other excellent examples include *The Menagerie* (though really it's a repackaging of the unaired first pilot, *The Cage*), *Arena*, *Devil in the Dark*, *Day of the Dove*, and *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield*. Other well regarded episodes challenge the idea of Human arrogance and hubris (and one could argue, by extension, challenge the idea of patriarchy and white supremacy), such as *Arena* and *Errand of Mercy*, in which Captain Kirk is reminded that no matter how good are his intentions, he has no mandate to be the Galaxy's policeman. Such notions in the post-WWII era were substantially left-of-center, politically (though there were a number of episodes, usually involving the Klingons as adversaries that regrettably fell into a Cold War framework, notably *Friday's Child*, *A Private Little War*, and *Elaan of Troyus*, however a good antidote to those is the exceptional antiwar and anti-violence story, *Day of the Dove*).

Some, particularly anti-authoritarians, have understandably raised the question of how such a utopian society could still be organized around a military hierarchy, but such questions read too much into things. Starfleet—an entirely voluntary organization—has hierarchical rank, but Starfleet doesn't run the Federation, let alone any of its member planet governments. In fact, later iterations of Star Trek, particularly *DS9* and *Enterprise* feature storylines in which the main characters argue profusely *against* rogue Starfleet brass and/or actual military forces usurping their authority and mandate.

It's also important to remember that TOS was produced when libertarianism (left and right) and grassroots localism were at something of a nadir. The left-libertarian counter culture of the 1960s really didn't hit its stride until late 1968, by which point *Star Trek* was in the midst of its disastrous third and final season.

As for right-libertarianism (which, honestly is something of a contradiction in terms, and is particularly prone to degradation into fascism and right-authoritarianism), one of the best episodes of TOS, *Mirror Mirror*—which

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spawned numerous sequels throughout the franchise and even a good deal of so-called “beta canon”—shows what life in such a universe would look like in its extreme.

Clearly, the creators of *Star Trek* were arguing against such dystopian futures.

Yet another progressive idea that pushed the envelope, in the 1960s at least, was the notion that the main hero, the paragon of virtue himself, Captain Kirk could be fallible, or even openly vulnerable. Good examples of these include *The Enemy Within*, *Conscience of the King*, *City on the Edge of Forever*, *Obsession*, and *The Deadly Years*.

In fact, there were a number of episodes (or scenes from particular episodes, at least) that were quite progressive at the time, but don’t translate at all well by contemporary standards, but considering the times, one shouldn’t judge them overly harshly. These include:

Mudd’s Women: This is the first of half a dozen episodes of *ST TOS* and *DISCO* involving the irascible galactic con-man Harcourt Fenton (“Harry”) Mudd. In this first installment, Mudd is trafficking in three young women (“wiving settlers”), and has them taking a drug which enhances their attractiveness (to the point that all of the fully human males among the crew of the *Enterprise* are distracted from carrying out their duties). Two of the trio are entirely invested in the scam, but the third, Eve McHuron, has mixed feelings about the whole operation at best (her ambiguity is complicated by the fact that even though Mudd dispatches her to beguile Captain Kirk, she is genuinely interested in him on an honest level and almost spills the proverbial beans). Meanwhile the *Enterprise*’s dilithium crystals are failing, which works to Mudd’s advantage as the nearest source of dilithium is an isolated mining colony on Rigel XII populated by lonely human male mine workers! In the end, Eve blows the lid on the scam, but the head miner, Ben Childress, winds up marrying her anyway after realizing that she is more desirable as a (near) equal, is a well-rounded individual, and her beauty is more internal than skin deep.

By contemporary standards, this story—involving the selling of women to lonely miners for the purpose of marriage (or even companionship)—is downright cringeworthy, but for its time, it was substantially more progressive in its outlook than one might think. Whatever century *Star Trek* stories unfolded (in this case the mid-23rd), this particular episode was written and produced a full decade before what became known as “Women’s Lib”. The idea of women being independent and having careers, let alone

commanding a *Constitution* (or *Intrepid*) Class starship was considered beyond the pale. For all of its flaws and dated values, the idea of a woman being appreciated for her talents and intellect, respected as an individual rather than property, and her internal beauty being recognized as superior to the subjective male dominant standards of largely subjective skin-deep attractiveness pushed the envelope pretty far in 1966.

For that matter, the treatment of women in *Star Trek TOS*, particularly among the *Enterprise* crew, definitely seems dated by today’s standards. Indeed, the costumes alone would seem designed to objectify them as sexual objects. If one applies contemporary values, that’s certainly true, but not so much in the mid-1960s at the dawn of the so-called “Sexual Revolution”. In those days, much of the American public still held substantially Victorian values about heterosexuality (let alone non-heterosexuality), and in that sense, *Star Trek* was striking a blow for liberation.

While the Network prohibited the women from wearing pants, they also had limits on just how “sexually titillating” their costumes could be (for example, while bare midriffs were allowed, showing the navel was as verboten as exposing women’s breasts). This explains, to some extent, *Star Trek*’s costume designer William Ware Theiss’s designs for some of the women’s costumes which pushed back on the limitations. Indeed, the writers, actors, and creative staff were known to refer to the “Theiss Titillation Theory” which amounted to speculation over whether crucial parts of the costume would fall off (they never did).

An example of an episode that wasn’t particularly progressive, but has a notably progressive scene that doesn’t translate well, is **The Man Trap**: this is often numbered as the first *Star Trek* episode, but that’s only true in the sense that it was the very first episode of *Star Trek* ever broadcasted. It wasn’t even one of the two pilots, and was, in fact, the sixth episode of *Star Trek* in production order. The NBC Network made the choice to run that episode first, because they (foolishly) believed that the audiences would “get” that episode most easily, possibly because the plot involves a malevolent alien salt vampire that disguises itself as humanoid women to prey upon the imagination of the men upon whose salt the “vampire” feeds. The final result is that the crew of the *Enterprise* have to kill the alien. This was precisely the reactionary message that the creators of *Star Trek* desperately wanted to avoid. That the story also has a sort of tacked on ecological message as an afterthought doesn’t soften the blow. Worse still, the fact that the creature is female and the addition of the cringe-

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worthy episode title make it unfortunately sexist, even by mid-1960s standards (the episode's original title was actually *The Unreal McCoy*, for reasons which are obvious—as the creature temporarily disguises itself as the doctor—but since the episode was chosen to lead off the series, and the characters all new, the title was changed...for the worse).

For all of its flaws, though, one scene in particular bears mentioning, because of how easily it can be misinterpreted by contemporary audiences. During the early part of the story, while Kirk and McCoy lead a landing party on the surface of the “Salt Vampire’s” planet (M-113), Uhura gets somewhat flirty with Spock and quips about blowing up her console if she has to “open one more hailing frequency”. Some have pegged this as “making Uhura into a sex object” (even though the emotionless Spock isn’t interested, as evidenced by his “Vulcan has no Moon” line), however that was definitely not the purpose for this exchange.

In fact, this scene serves two purposes for Uhura in particular. First, though this is easy to miss, it sets up the later scene when Uhura encounters the creature, and it appears as an African male crewman, with whom she attempts to converse in Swahili. (After all Uhura is allowed a little romantic interlude if Captain Kirk is!) More importantly, the producers were making a conscious effort to establish that Uhura was not merely a one dimensional token Black character, and there’s a somewhat humorous story behind that:

In the *Corbomite Maneuver*, which was actually produced before *The Man Trap* (the fact that Uhura wears a gold uniform rather than her familiar red is one of several clues the viewer might miss), and is a far more progressive story than *The Man Trap*, the women, unfortunately, are mostly limited to mundane tasks, such as Rand “hovering over” Captain Kirk serving him “dietary salad” or making hot coffee with a hand phaser. Likewise, Uhura mainly just “opens hailing frequencies” umpteen times (though, in fairness, that is realistically what a head communications officer would do in a First Contact experience as depicted in the story). In an outtake, which was recorded, and is included in some of the blooper reels, Nichols turns to the camera and declares, “if I have to open up one more hailing frequency, I’m gonna blow up this goddamn panel!”

Whether that was frustration resulting from a busy production schedule or feelings of being tokenized or both, the producers seemed to have good intentions. They wanted Uhura to be a respected member of the crew and not just a one dimensional token. However this wasn’t al-

ways easy to achieve, and no doubt white progressive producers like Gene Roddenberry and his staff are not immune to systemic racism (to say nothing of the writers), and so Uhura was often underutilized. Indeed, Nichols considered quitting the show, until none other than Martin Luther King Jr convinced her to stick with it due to her being a positive role model for the Black Community.

However, in the case of this *particular* scene, the show’s creators were actually attempting to show Nichols (and Uhura) respect.

One other possibility that often slides under people’s radars is that it’s conceivable that the creators had considered the possibility of an Uhura-Spock romance (there are continued hints of her having an interest during her musical scene in *Charlie X*), but the Network probably would’ve quashed it, no doubt because even though Nimoy was playing a Vulcan, many viewers would’ve balked at the idea of what they’d perceive as an interracial romance (and if anyone doubts that, one need only look at the racist drivel some of the fans were spewing in the letters section of the comic adaptation of *Star Trek V* when Uhura and Scotty had a brief fling *a full two decades later!*)

The Omega Glory: this is one of four “exactly like Earth” episodes aired during season two, which were designed to save money by using existing sets and costumes. In this case, the *Enterprise* encounters a sister ship, the *USS Exeter*, and discovers that its entire crew, except for its Prime Directive violating captain, have perished from some artificially created pathogen indigenous to the planet where they find the *Exeter*. The pathogen was created in a war between the planet’s two main powers, the “Comms”, who turn out to be yellow-skinned humanoids resembling Asians (and “Comms” is short for “Communists”), and the “Yangs”, white skinned humanoids *who have an exact verbatim copy of the US Constitution and American Flag* (and are actually “Yankees”)!

Admittedly this is particularly bad science fiction, and it seems like Cold War propaganda at its worst, but in fact, this isn’t quite the case. First of all, this episode was written by Gene Roddenberry, who had socialist leanings, and it was clearly intended to push back against McCarthyism (hence Kirk’s line that the holiest of holies, “E Pleb Neesta” (We the People) wasn’t written just for the Yangs, “but the Comms as well!”). In fact, the story had even been considered for the pilot, but Roddenberry developed other stories instead, and this particular script was put in the back burner. The fact that it was ultimately used (and

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probably never revised to write out the more patently ridiculous concepts of exact Earth parallels), was likely due to an attempt to save money (the script wasn't used until the end of Season 2, when NBC came close to cancelling the series, a move they'd eventually make one year later).

Had the NBC Network "Broadcast Standards Department" (yes, their *actual* initials indeed were "B.S.") not been a constant gatekeeper and self-appointed guard rail against "godless communism", "Satan's hordes", and every other perceived threat to America, Mom, and Apple Pie (read: conservative white evangelical Christian white bread suburbia), *Star Trek* might've pushed the proverbial envelope still further.

For example, DeForest Kelley teased the idea of an episode dealing with the horrors of slavery and racism by having McCoy and Uhura accidentally crash land on a planet with an Apartheid government, except with the dark skinned people being the oppressors. In the story, Uhura would defend McCoy from the natives' prejudicial mindset. The idea wasn't to suggest that "given the chance black people would be just as oppressive as white people", but that white people have a difficult time truly understanding what it's like to deal with the oppression of systemic racism.

Gene Roddenberry, himself, had wanted to tackle economic issues. For example, he wanted to do at least one story where the people on the planet visited by the *Enterprise* in that instance were all socialists, but had a diversity of differing socialist visions (the intended message being that the authoritarian state capitalism of Stalinism was but one particularly bad (and much caricatured) version of it). He'd also wanted to do one about a planet where labor unions really had gone too far—not as an anti-union story, but rather as a story to show just how overstated the anti-union arguments being made in the 1960s were (Roddenberry was pro union). Such ideas probably would've been too cerebral for most audiences, though.

Even episodes where *Star Trek* broke societal taboos, the circumstances had to be driven by unusual conditions. For instance, the third season episode, *Plato's Stepchildren*, includes the now famous "first interracial kiss..." (between William Shatner and Nichelle Nichols) "...on (American) broadcast TV", but it was only permissible because Kirk and Uhura were forced to engage in the act "against their wills", due to the telekinetic abilities of the (absurdly Athenian Greek) aliens holding them hostage (and the two actors actually don't kiss. Shatner's head obscures Nichols'

so the viewer doesn't actually see a real kiss. Both Shatner and Nichols have confirmed that the kiss was faked).

Likewise, even though (by Season 2 at least) after the regular cast was fully established, and all of the one-off higher ranking characters, like Security Chief Giotto or Records Officer Ben Finney were quietly forgotten, the *Star Trek Writers' Guide* (a document given to show writers and directors) *actually stipulated* that Uhura was fourth in command (after Kirk, Spock, and Scotty), but was never allowed to actually command the *Enterprise* on screen (Lieutenants Sulu and DeSalle each took command on separate occasions (Sulu in *Spock's Brain*, DeSalle in *Catspaw*—and DeSalle was not a regular character, appearing only thrice!), and even Chekov—an ensign—was given "the Conn" in *Journey to Babel*). Evidently the Network wouldn't allow a black woman to actually take command. In fact, it wasn't until the *TAS* episode *The Lorelei Signal* that Uhura was finally given the chance, and even that was dependent on the plot point of all the men being mesmerized by the matriarchal antagonists featured in the episode! It wasn't for lack of trying by the writers and creators!

(In fact, when *TAS* was proposed, Filmmation didn't want to hire anyone besides Shatner, Nimoy, Kelley, Doohan, and Barrett-Roddenberry—ostensibly due to budgetary constraints, but were forced to relent when Nimoy refused to voice the part of Spock unless Nichols, Takei (the only actors of color), and Koenig were included. The final result was a compromise. Uhura and Sulu were retained, but Chekov wasn't, hence his absence in the Animated series. However, Koenig was paid to write one episode, *The Infinite Vulcan*, instead).

The Enterprise Incident represents another telling example of how the Network's gatekeeping prevented *Star Trek* from going further than it did. In the broadcast version of that episode an apparently unusually irritable and fatigued Captain Kirk recklessly orders the *Enterprise* to cross the Romulan Neutral Zone, where they're promptly apprehended by three Romulan battle cruisers (two of them designed like Klingon D7s thus signifying that the two long-time enemies have settled their differences just enough to unite against the Federation), led by an unnamed female Romulan commander who's justifiably pissed and suspicious. She suspects a plot, and yet she's charmed to the point of infatuation by Spock and tries to turn him towards the Romulan side. Inexplicably, Spock appears to agree and apparently throws Kirk under the proverbial bus, declaring the captain "insane". In the presence of Dr McCoy, Spock, and the aforementioned Romulan com-

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mander, Kirk appears to fly into a rage, threatening to kill Spock for insubordination and treason, forcing Spock to use the (nonexistent) “Vulcan Death Grip”, thus killing the captain in self-defense.

However, it’s all a ruse, and as the Romulan commander suspects, a Federation plot to steal the Cloaking Device (which the very much *not* dead Captain Kirk pulls off while disguised as a Romulan centurion—complete with pointed ears), and Spock and McCoy were in the know.

As far as cloak-and-dagger stories and/or Star Trek episodes involving the Romulans go, it’s definitely considered one of the better ones, but, according to David Gerrold, it’s not the entire story Dorthy Fontana wanted to tell. Fontana had been inspired by the very real life *Pueblo Incident*, in which the North Koreans had captured an American war ship involved in the Vietnam War. This episode was to end with Kirk questioning the ethics of the Federation (and—had this episode been written more recently—perhaps Section 31?) and feeling used. There was a definite hint of challenging the idea that the Federation (standing in for the US of A in this particular story) was always justified in its actions, a development that would only finally manifest around Season 6 of *ST TNG*. However, in 1968, this was too controversial for the Network, so this angle was written out.

David Gerrold himself, wasn’t spared the heavy hand of Network censorship. He is best remembered for having written *The Trouble With Tribbles* (and its Animated series sequel, *More Tribbles, More Troubles*), which was a fairly remarkable feat, considering he was an amateur writer and his *Star Trek* script his first actual sale, and its strong ecological message mixed with light hearted humor resonated well with the fans (understandably, because Gerrold came from the main target demographic, i.e. young, progressive 1960s idealists, thus giving him a proverbial finger on that particular pulse), however he also wrote another *TOS* episode that didn’t fare so well.

The third season episode, *The Cloud Minders*—also written by Gerrold—deals with the plight of exploited laborers and slavery, but according to Gerrold, the original story was actually even more forceful in that the “troglydye” miners didn’t just want to require the well to do Stratos cloud city dwellers to occasionally spend time in the mines; they wanted to dismantle the class system on that planet entirely. However that was far too anti-capitalist a message for the Network, and thus the story was watered down.

In fact, Gerrold experienced a taste of this pro-capitalist gatekeeping as early as his first drafts for *The Trouble With Tribbles*. Initially the antagonists weren’t the Klingons, but *rival grain corporations*. However, even the almost-as-progressive-as-Gene Roddenberry line producer, Gene L. Coon wrote “**big business angle out**” in red ink on the script. In the 1960s, with commercial television still finding its way, suggesting that corporations—even fictional ones—had less than noble intentions (especially given the fact that real ones represented the lion’s share of the sponsorship) was right out (though to be honest, and David Gerrold will heartily agree, the presence of Klingons made it a much better story, because by the time the episode aired, they were a familiar adversary).

To be fair, Gene Coon, perhaps even more than Roddenberry, especially in the matter of fine details, shaped the utopian universe of the 23rd Century (the Federation was his idea, expanding upon Roddenberry’s concept of a “United Earth”), and as such he had secondary considerations, such as leaving it unknown whether or not corporations even still existed in this bright future. However, for all of his progressiveness, Coon was tasked with making sure that *Star Trek* remained on the air, and that sometimes meant having to couch the utopian ideals in order to get by in the less than utopian real world.



That’s not to say Coon didn’t push back hard against the B.S. (Broadcast Standards, that is). David Gerrold recalls hearing Coon slam down the phone after telling them that “(they were) full of shit!” when the Network B.S. Department informed Coon that a humorous scene intended for the teaser of *Wolf in the Fold*, in which Kirk, McCoy, and Scotty were experiencing a range of shifting emotions

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upon consumption of different layers of a multi-layered beverage in the pub on Argelius. The Network feared this would come across to the viewers as a narcotic or hallucinogen, and ultimately the scene was cut (whether or not it was ever filmed is a mystery).

Perhaps no greater example of how cultural censorship held *Star Trek* back is the third season episode *The Way to Eden*. In it, a band of five countercultural rebels—which could best be described as “space hippies”—who’ve stolen a Starfleet shuttlecraft are apprehended by the crew of the *USS Enterprise*. Their leader is a mild caricature of Charles Manson (minus the crypto fascist leanings and bloody murders, thankfully), though the principal antagonist is a former Starfleet Academy classmate and love interest of Pavel Chekov’s, Irina Galliulin. The band of “hippies” are in search of a legendary planet called “Eden”, a literal paradise (or so they think). The band takes over the *Enterprise* after lulling the crew with their space hippie music and incapacitating them with ultrahigh sound, and takes the ship and its crew to the planet they assume to be Eden, which is on the wrong side of the Romulan Neutral Zone (though, conveniently, the Romulans don’t even show up). Unfortunately for the space hippies, the planet proves less than “edenic”, because the flora is highly acidic and toxic.

This is often counted among the ten worst episodes of *TOS*, for many good reasons, not the least of which is the fact that the story painted a rude caricature of one of *Star Trek*’s likely core demographics, making the “space hippies” one dimensional strawmen, but worse still, the *Enterprise* crew—with the exception of Spock—play the part of rigid squares. Kirk and Chekov come off as particularly uptight. By 1969, this was an exceptionally tone deaf spin on the countercultural subcultures, many of whom were “into” *Trek*.

The worst thing of all, however, is the fact that the final product was not was originally envisioned or intended at all!

The original story concept involved Dr McCoy’s estranged daughter, Joanna (which was also the episode’s original title), visiting the *Enterprise*, bringing up old wounds for the simple country doctor. (Little known is the fact that according to the *Star Trek* Writers’ Guide, Bones is a divorcée, and DeForest Kelley and D.C. Fontana conceived of the character together. Fontana hatched the idea of McCoy having an estranged son, but Kelley suggested, instead, that it should be a daughter). Making matters still worse, the object of the rebellious and angsty Joanna wasn’t Chekov, but Captain Kirk! Topping it off, the feel-

ing was mutual, but Kirk was forced into the challenging position of balancing professional ethics, his friendship with McCoy, and true love. And, if wasn’t going to be a one-off story. The complicated triangle was considered as a running subplot for the never produced fourth session of *TOS*. According to an episode note on the Memory Alpha fan wiki:

In *The Making of Star Trek* by Stephen E. Whitfield and Gene Roddenberry, which was written before the original series’ third season had aired, Gene Roddenberry is quoted as saying “In a future story we will bring McCoy’s daughter Joanna aboard. She will be a lovely girl, and Captain Kirk, of course, is going to be involved with her. Dr. McCoy is suddenly going to discover he is a father viewing Kirk from a father’s perspective. An interesting and sometimes angry new McCoy-Kirk relationship will be seen.”

While the writers and producers never intended to evolve *Star Trek* into “*Peyton Place* in Space”, they did want to add complications that tested the characters’ resolve, and make it clear that, while problems of bigotry, warfare, and inequality were tough enough to tackle, but ultimately something that humanity could grow past, interpersonal relationships will always be challenging. In McCoy’s case, he had to choose between family and career.

However, the Network would have none of it, and the entire idea was quashed. As for the titular Joanna, the only canonical reference to her, outside of the *Writer’s Guide*, is an offscreen reference in *TAS* episode *The Survivor*.

For many galling reasons, Season 3 of *TOS* is by far considered the show’s worst, and that reputation is well deserved. In contrast to just about every other iteration of the *Star Trek* franchise that seems to struggle to find its identity and hit its stride *until* its third year, *TOS*’s first season is by far considered its best. The first ¾ths of Season 2 is almost as good. However, near the end of Season 2, the series began to noticeably decline, and it became all too obvious at the onset of Season 3, that *Star Trek* had deteriorated in quality considerably.

That’s not to suggest that every episode of the third season was subpar. In fact, it includes some of the best episodes of *TOS*, such as *The Enterprise Incident*, *Day of the Dove*, *The Tholian Web*, *The Empath*, and *That Which Survives*, but these are the exception rather than the rule.

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There are likely many reasons for this fall, but most accounts suggest that the main factors leading to it were a combination of the following things:

First, among other battles Roddenberry had to fight over with the NBC Network was the show's time slot. The Network kept offering times that were terrible for the show's primary demographic: older teens and young adults. The Network claimed that the show's ratings were less than stellar, but these claims were highly debated (especially since *Star Trek's* main audience didn't have a specific category in those days, but also because the show was actually popular with almost every other category, just not as much as the shows that drew peak audiences for them). This would ultimately come to a head at the onset of the third season, but other factors compounded the problem:

In actual fact, while Gene Roddenberry was the visionary, most involved with *TOS* would quickly agree that it was line producer Gene L. Coon and associate producer Herbert Justman that actually made that vision a reality (along with all the front line workers, cast, and crew, of course). However, the constant battles with the network, the production's extremely limited budget, and the pressures of producing the high quality product *Star Trek* was (and Coon, Justman, and Dorothy Fontana were all dedicated perfectionists) took their toll, particularly on Coon. Differences with Roddenberry over the tone of the show (Coon preferred more lighthearted comedic stories whereas Roddenberry preferred a more serious tone) was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Coon resigned from the show approximately 2/3 of the way through the second season (he would pass away a mere five years later). Writer and director John Meredyth Lucas finished out his tenure, and he at least kept the *Starship Enterprise* on course, but he was never considered as a long term replacement. Gene Roddenberry, who'd stepped back from line production duties at the urging of the creative staff at the onset of the series going into regular production and passed it on to Coon in the first place, considered taking up the role once again for the third season, and had he done so, things might've turned out differently.

In fact, Roddenberry produced the final episode of Season 2, *Assignment Earth*, which was also to serve as a pilot for *Star Trek's* first spinoff series, but it was rejected by the Networks. The story, focusing heavily on the guest characters, Gary 7 and Roberta Lincoln, isn't one of *Star Trek's* best, but it's hardly one of its worst either, and its anti-nuclear war message was very resonant for its time, being only six years removed from the Cuban Missile Cri-

sis of 1962 which is the closest humanity came to nuclear war by far. However, the episode is well directed and even better produced, and it shows. This is potentially how *Star Trek's* third season should've looked.

And perhaps it wouldn't have been limited to *Star Trek. Assignment Earth*, had it spawned a standalone series could've led to others. The recently produced fan series *Starship Exeter* and *Starship Farragut* offer a tantalizing glimpse into that might've been world, but it wasn't to be.

No sooner had Roddenberry verbally agreed to take on production duties when the Network informed him that *Star Trek's* new time slot would be at 10 PM on Sundays. At this point Roddenberry essentially gave up. He hired Fred Freiberger to fill the role of line producer and removed himself from the series in all but name. Worse still, Paramount Studios purchased the Desilu Studios productions and had little interest in keeping *Star Trek* going. The NBC Network poured salt into the wound and cut the show's already anemic budget still further. Many of the show's staff resigned as well. Most of the cast and crew absolve Freiberger of any responsibility for *Star Trek's* agonizing slow death over its final season, but it's fair to say he didn't possess the desire or the ability to push the envelope or maintain the show's quality. Faced with all of these limitations, Freiberger could only go through the proverbial motions.

It's no surprise then, that *TOS* Season 3 is an unmitigated disaster, with the overwhelming majority of the worst episodes having resulted from it. Although not the first episode produced for it, the Season 3 premiere, *Spock's Brain* (ironically written by Gene Coon under a pseudonym), is comically bad, horribly sexist, atrocious science fiction, and generally regarded as the worst episode of the entire series (rumor has it that the horridness was intentional, and that it was meant as a "Fuck You!" to the Network, but as such, it shouldn't have been made. Atrocious is too kind a word for it). It had a good number of contenders:

And the Children Shall Lead, Specter of the Gun, Plato's Stepchildren, The Mark of Gideon, The Paradise Syndrome, The Lights of Zetar, The Cloud Minders, The Savage Curtain, and All Our Yesterdays are often included in the "worst ever" lists, with only *The Alternate Factor* from Season 1 and *Gamesters of Tresskellion* from Season 2 ever descending to those gloomy depths. Even though many of the other episodes from the third season aren't nearly as bad, many are quite mediocre, suffering from story flaws that the original producers and creative staff might've been able to fix.

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In some ways, then, it's oddly fitting that the very last episode of *TOS*, the *Turnabout Intruder*, is—in my opinion—the absolute worst of the lot (though it's often not included in others' lists). In the episode, an old flame of Captain Kirk's, Janice Lester, is bitter about her inability to achieve the rank of captain, and blames Kirk, because, evidently the good captain doesn't believe women are capable (because they're too emotional, apparently). So Lester uses some alien technology to swap bodies with Kirk and attempts to take his place. However Lester, in Kirk's body, winds up proving his point, and defeats her own attempt by acting so reactionary and draconian (even calling for the execution of the other senior officers who suspect a plot).

Even in the late 1960s, this storyline is unbelievably sexist. To make matters worse, Lester shows all the signs of Borderline Personality Disorder, and some expository dialog uttered by Lester's co-conspirator, Dr Arthur Coleman, indicates that she has struggled with mental issues, thus making the overall story ablist as well. Thus the viewer is left with the notion that Kirk's certainly sexist and ablist views about women in command of starships are entirely justified! (Even William Shatner—who's not known to be the most enlightened individual about this sort of thing—has reportedly expressed regrets about this horrific messaging.)

According an episode note in *Star Trek Memory Alpha*:

Cultural theorist Cassandra Amesley states that this episode is “agreed to be one of the worst *Star Trek* episodes ever shown” by *Star Trek* fans. Brenton J. Malin sees the episode as a reactionary response to the radical feminism of the late 1960s. Dr. Lester is a “caricature and condemnation of the feminism of the late '60s, evoking a fear of powerful, power-hungry women... The message seems clear: women want to kill men and take their jobs, but ultimately they can't handle them.”

This is quite a fall from Number One being second in command. And for at least three years, this was the sad end to an aborted five year mission that began with such promise.

Fortunately, reports of *Star Trek*'s demise turned out to have been greatly exaggerated. In time, *Star Trek* would more than atone for the horridness of its final season.

Though unavailable for years since their first broadcast in the early 1970s, *the Animated Series* episodes are generally

as good as any of the original live episodes, and while there was some debate over whether they were officially part of *Star Trek* canon (due to the rather presumptive declarations by one of Roddenberry's associates after the latter's death that they weren't), the debate has since been resolved in their favor as being the “fourth season” of *TOS* as well as the fourth (and maybe fifth) year of Captain Kirk's original “five year mission”.

That and the syndication of *TOS* led to *Star Trek*'s revival which by the time of this writing now spans eleven series (including three new series that are in production) over a cumulative three dozen “seasons” as well as thirteen feature films, which, with rare exception, have remained as high quality and generally progressive as the best episodes of *the Original Series*. *Star Trek Discovery*, in particular, has pushed those limits much further, including the prominent roles of Black women in leading roles, gay couples, as well as trans and non-binary characters, and while such things wouldn't have been possible in the 1960s, where *TOS* pushed the envelope, the later series could expand upon the earlier series' efforts, and often did (and still does).

In the 1960s nobody could reliably predict the future. Indeed, most science fiction commonly made wildly *inaccurate* prognostications of what the future would look like. Who could've predicted that some technology commonly available in the 2020s, like the smartphone, would make the hand held devices that were predicted to be common in the 23rd Century look like stone knives and bearskins? The social values of the times cannot really be held to a higher standard.

It's natural for those who didn't experience the time in which a fictional series is produced to look upon it with contemporary eyes and find it wanting. Certainly, were one to try and produce *Star Trek TOS* today, they'd no doubt *not* try to push the envelope of 1960s values; they'd try to push the envelope of /2020s/ values, and that they do, as the currently produced series all demonstrate.

However, it's not especially fair to try and expect *the Original Series* to rewrite itself, and for this reason I absolutely *hated* the *Star Trek* reboot movie (and haven't seen the two sequels), because I felt, personally, that this represented an effort by JJ Abrams et. al. to do exactly that. Certainly, if the characters from *TOS* were contemporary, Captain Kirk *would* be regarded as an arrogant womanizer and a presumptuous jerk as he is in the reboot movie, because times have changed (and perhaps that's the message that's intended by having the reboot series represent an “alternate timeline”, and having an elderly prime universe

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Spock, played one last time by Leonard Nimoy tell the brash young Alt-Kirk that in his universe, “James Kirk is a hero”). For me that just doesn’t work (plus, I can’t help thinking that the primary motivation was the money). And (in this case at least), I cringe when some critic argues that Abrams & Co “give the franchise a fresh, new look” which, frankly, is a vastly overused trope.

How Tough are Scotsmen?



Laddie, you’re speaking to the only guy in a red shirt who isn’t dead.



“Only guy...”

Sometimes you don’t mess with a classic, flawed though it may be (though other times one might, for example in the case of the remastered versions of the *TOS* episodes).

But no production, no matter how hard its creators try, is perfect, and there are some flaws that cannot be excused as “just being a product of their time”. One particu-

lar example that shouldn’t be ignored is the horribly unfair treatment of the late Grace Lee Whitney (who played Janice Rand).

For years, the official reason for her being written out of the series a mere dozen episodes into the first season of *TOS* was that the creators “wanted Captain Kirk to have a variety of love interests” for storytelling purposes. The actual reason was a lot more complex and unfortunate:

According to an entry at the Memory Alpha site:

In The Longest Trek: My Tour of the Galaxy, published several years before her death, Grace Lee Whitney admitted to her ghost-writer that she had endured sexual assaults, and that these had awakened her latent chemical dependencies and behavioral compulsions, which she had needed years to force into remission. They had also led to her dismissal from the cast of *TOS*.

In another account, Grace Lee Whitney states that she was sexually assaulted by an unnamed studio executive. This makes the final scene in the early first season episode *The Enemy Within*, in which Spock (of all characters) teases Rand about almost being raped by the evil half of Captain Kirk especially cringeworthy and painful to watch (no doubt Nimoy would’ve refused to play it later on).

Kate Mulgrew has stated on multiple accounts that during the making of the first episodes of *Star Trek: Voyager* in 1994, studio executives would stand at the edge of the sets waiting for her to fail, because while the *Star Trek* creative staff were fully invested in having a woman as a starship captain, the executives evidently weren’t (Mulgrew stubbornly refused to let them. intimidate her, and their presence only steeled her resolve, but she shouldn’t have had to go through this in the first place!)

As the #MeToo movement revealed, such incidents were far more common than most realized or cared to admit, and Whitney suffered for acts that really weren’t her fault. Fortunately, she was at least given a second chance, and had small parts in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (as the transporter chief), *The Search for Spock* (she’s the woman staring in horror as the battle damaged *Enterprise* returns to space dock), and *The Voyage Home* (as one of the officers at Starfleet Command dealing with the damage induced by the alien cetacean probe). And, above all else, she was a welcome site in the final installment of *TOS* as Sulu’s second in command on the *USS Excelsior* in *Star Trek VI, the Undiscovered Country*, but one couldn’t be faulted for thinking “too little, too late,” especially since Roddenberry had

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tried for a woman exec from the get go. *Star Trek* did finally address the horrors of rape in the first season of *Enterprise*, *Fusion*, but by then that issue had already been addressed in countless other television shows.

For all of its progressive achievements, even *Star Trek* has flaws that most certainly deserve scrutiny.

In my estimation, however, *Star Trek's* many good points outweigh the few bad ones, but one must take it as a whole and judge it fairly.

Anything else would be...totally...illogical.

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2264 AD (The Original Series, Second Pilot)

182. TOS 2: Where No Man Has Gone Before (3) (50m)

2265 AD

- 183. VAL: Crosses to Bear
- 184. The Paradise Makers, Part 1
- 185. The Paradise Makers, Part 2

2266-67 (The Original Series, Season 1)¹⁰

- 186. TOS 3: The Corbomite Maneuver (10)
- 187. TOS 4: Mudd's Women (6)
- 188. TOS 5: The Enemy Within (5)
- 189. TOS 6: The Man Trap (1)
- 190. TOS 7: The Naked Time (4)
- 191. TOS 8: Charlie X (2)
- 192. TOS 9: Balance of Terror (14)
- 193. TOS 10: What Are Little Girls Made Of? (7)
- 194. TOS 11: Dagger of the Mind (9)
- 195. TOS 12: Miri (8)
- 196. TOS 13: The Conscience of the King (13)
- 197. TOS 14: The Galileo Seven (16)
- 198. TOS 15: Court Martial (20)
- 199. TOS 16: The Menagerie, Part 1 (11)
- 200. TOS 17: The Menagerie, Part 2 (12)
- 201. TOS 18: Shore Leave (15)
- 202. TOS 19: The Squire of Gothos (17)
- 203. TOS 20: Arena (18)
- 204. TOS 21: The Alternative Factor (27)
- 205. TOS 22: Tomorrow is Yesterday (19)
- 206. TOS 23: The Return of the Archons (21)
- 207. TOS 24: A Taste of Armageddon (23)
- 208. TOS 25: Space Seed (22)
- 209. ShortTrek 8: Ephraim and Dot (766)
- 210. TOS 26: This Side of Paradise (24)
- 211. TOS 27: The Devil in the Dark (25)
- 212. TOS 28: Errand of Mercy (26)
- 213. TOS 29: The City on the Edge of Forever (28)
- 214. TOS 30: Operation: Annihilate! (29)

2267-68 (The Original Series, Season 2)

- 215. TOS 31: Catspaw (36)
- 216. TOS 32: Metamorphosis (38)
- 217. TOS 33: Friday's Child (40)

- 218. TOS 34: Who Mourns for Adonais? (31)
- 219. TOS 35: Amok Time (30)
- 220. TNZ 1: Doomsday [runtime 13:31]
- 221. TOS 36: The Doomsday Machine (35)
- 222. TOS 37: Wolf in the Fold (43)
- 223. TOS 38: The Changeling (32)
- 224. TOS 39: The Apple (34)
- 225. TOS 40: Mirror, Mirror (33)
- 226. STC 2: The Fairest of them All
- 227. TOS 41: The Deadly Years (41)
- 228. TOS 42: I, Mudd (37)
- 229. ShortTrek 4: The Escape Artist (748) (15m)
- 230. TOS 43: The Trouble with Tribbles (44)
- 231. TOS 44: Bread and Circuses (54)
- 232. TOS 45: Journey to Babel (39)
- 233. TOS 46: A Private Little War (48)
- 234. TOS 47: The Gamesters of Triskellion (45)
- 235. TOS 48: Obsession (42)
- 236. TOS 49: The Immunity Syndrome (47)
- 237. TOS 50: A Piece of the Action (46)
- 238. TOS 51: By Any Other Name (51)
- 239. TOS 52: Return to Tomorrow (49)
- 240. TOS 53: Patterns of Force (50)
- 241. TOS 54: The Ultimate Computer (53)
- 242. TOS 55: The Omega Glory (52)
- 243. TOS 56: Assignment Earth (55)

2268¹¹ (Star Trek Avalon Universe)

- 244. AvU 1: Ghost Ship, Part 1
- 245. AvU 2: Ghost Ship, Part 2

2268-69 (The Original Series, Season 3)

- 246. TOS 57: Spectre of the Gun (61)
- 247. TOS 58: Elaan of Troyius (68)
- 248. TOS 59: The Paradise Syndrome (58)
- 249. TOS 60: The Enterprise Incident (57)
- 250. TOS 61: And the Children Shall Lead (59)
- 251. TOS 62: Spock's Brain (56)
- 252. TOS 63: Is There in Truth No Beauty? (60)
- 253. TOS 64: The Empath (67)
- 254. TOS 65: The Tholian Web (64)
- 255. TOS 66: For the World Is Hollow and I Have Touched the Sky (63)
- 256. TOS 67: Day of the Dove (62)

¹⁰ All episodes are 50 minutes in length, unless otherwise indicated.

¹¹ Purportedly set in an independent timeline from the Prime universe, but no contradictory canonical elements exist.

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- 257. TOS 68: Plato's Stepchildren (65)
- 258. TOS 69: Wink of an Eye (66)
- 259. TOS 70: That Which Survives (72)
- 260. TOS 71: Let That Be Your Last Battlefield (69)
- 261. TOS 72: Whom Gods Destroy (70)
- 262. TOS 73: The Mark of Gideon (71)
- 263. TOS 74: The Lights of Zetar (73)
- 264. TOS 75: The Cloud Minders (76)
- 265. TOS 76: The Way to Eden (75)
- 266. TOS 77: Requiem for Methuselah (74)
- 267. TOS 78: The Savage Curtain (77)
- 268. TOS 79: All Our Yesterdays (78)
- 269. TOS 60: Turnabout Intruder (79)

- 298. CI STOSS 5: The Tholian Problem
- 299. CI STOSS 6: The Final Stand

2269-70 (The Animated Series)¹²

- 270. TAS 1: Beyond the Farthest Star (80)
- 271. TAS 2: Yesteryear (81)
- 272. TAS 3: One of Our Planets is Missing (82)
- 273. TAS 4: The Lorelei Signal (83)
- 274. TAS 5: More Tribbles, More Troubles (84)
- 275. TAS 6: The Survivor (85)
- 276. TAS 7: The Infinite Vulcan (86)
- 277. TAS 8: The Magicks of Megas-tu (87)
- 278. TAS 9: Once Upon a Planet (88)
- 279. TAS 10: Mudd's Passion (89)
- 280. TAS 11: The Terratin Incident (90)
- 281. TAS 12: The Time Trap (91)
- 282. TAS 13: The Ambergris Element (92)
- 283. TAS 14: The Slaver Weapon (93)
- 284. TAS 15: The Eye of the Beholder (94)
- 285. TAS 16: The Jihad (95)
- 286. TAS 17: The Pirates of Orion (96)
- 287. TAS 18: Bem (97)
- 288. TAS 19: The Practical Joker (98)
- 289. TAS 20: Albatross (99)
- 290. TAS 21: How Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth (100)
- 291. TAS X1: The Quintain
- 292. TAS X2: May the Heavens Fall
- 293. TAS X3: Ptolemy Wept

Ca 2270-71 (STOSS, Part 1A: Temporal Agent)

- 294. CI STOSS 1: Taurus II, A Familiar Situation
- 295. CI STOSS 2: The Gorn Return
- 296. CI STOSS 3: The Neural Parasites
- 297. CI STOSS 4: The Babel Conference

¹² All episodes are 23-24minutes in length unless indicated.

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Placing the Fan Produced Episodes in Chronological Order:

Following the cancellation of *Star Trek Enterprise* in 2005, other than the Kelvin reboot movies, there were no official Star Trek series produced until *Star Trek Discovery* revived the franchise on streaming networks, and fans had to endure the longest “drought” since the cancellation of TOS in 1969. On their own initiative—with some assistance from veteran Star Trek actors (including Majel Barrett-Roddenberry, Walter Koenig, George Takei, Nichelle Nichols, Grace Lee Whitney, Barbara Luna, Eddie Paskey, William Windom, John Winston, Denise Crosby, Micheal Dorn, Chase Masterson, Ethan Phillips, Tim Russ, Marina Sirtis, and Garrett Wang) and show creators, and the blessing of Gene Roddenberry’s son, Eugene—avid Trekkies began producing their own series, many of them in the spirit of the canonical shows.

A major portion of these were set in the era following the last TNG era movie, *Nemesis*, and are part of the sprawling and interconnected *Hidden Frontier* saga (discussed later in this guide). Of the remainder, the bulk of these are set in the TOS era, mostly in what would have been the fifth and last year of Captain James T Kirk’s original “five year mission”. It is the latter that are discussed here.

While the quality of these series and episodes, both in production value and the acting itself, varies, sometimes even within the individual series themselves, they’re overall mostly worth watching in my opinion. In most cases, especially the two series intended as “continuations” of TOS—Star Trek Phase II and Star Trek Continues (STC), the starship sets *precisely* duplicate the TOS era *Enterprise* (and other *Constitution Class*) equivalents used in the actual series. No doubt that has much to do with the obsessiveness of Trekkies who notice every detail down to the last “button”, “dial”, or “combination” on Captain Kirk’s personal “safe” in his cabin. In the two series that continue the TOS “five year mission”, most of the later episodes reuse the actual music from TOS. The use of the “Horizon” typeface completes the illusion that these are just additional, new episodes from TOS!

Star Trek Phase II (STPII) aka *Star Trek: The New Voyages* was produced first, and is largely the creation of James Cawley (who plays the part of Captain Kirk in all but three of the dozen or so episodes and vignettes). Some of the initial episodes are of somewhat lesser quality (the “pilot”, *Come What May*, is particularly low in production value—

though this isn’t accidental; it was produced solely as a “proof of concept” and never intended as a serious effort) and a handful don’t exactly fit into the timeline well at all, particularly the Chekov-centric episode, *To Serve All My Days*, which is why I excluded it from the list. The latter episodes are quite excellent, however (if one can overlook Cawley’s clumsy and overweening attempts to mimic Shatner’s exaggerated annunciation style, to say nothing of his Elvis Presley-esque pompadour, the latter of which earned him the moniker, “Elvis Kirk”, and even became a running gag among some of the other fan produced series).

Interestingly, many of the episodes produced for this series are actually unused scripts from the official “Phase II” era of Star Trek (which was ultimately scrapped in favor of STTMP¹³), including *The Child* (before it was hastily rehashed and feasted into a TNG episode during the early second season writers’ strike), *Kitumba* (written by veteran Trek writer and producer, John Meredyth Lucas), and *Mind Sifter* (which was based on a short story that was part of an anthology of similar stories. I actually recall reading that one as an adolescent thinking it’d make an *excellent* episode!).

Meanwhile, the two parter, *Blood and Fire*, is actually an unused TNG script, written by TOS: *The Trouble With Tribbles* author, David Gerrold, but quashed (for very questionable motives) at the urging of Gene Roddenberry’s lawyer, Leonard Maizlish, ostensibly because the allegory of the AIDS epidemic might be “too controversial” for late 1980s viewers, though many of Maizlish’s detractors (including Gerrold) are convinced—with some justification—that the lawyer was deeply homophobic. It’s probably no coincidence that throughout the TNG-DS9-VOY-ENT era, relationships rarely deviated from heteronormative, and Maizlish is probably a major factor in that choice, sadly. Gerrold’s story finally gets the airing it deserves, and he makes James Kirk’s nephew, Peter (introduced in TOS: *Operation Annihilate!*) bisexual, to boot!

This series features a good number of TOS and TNG actors in various roles, sometimes playing older versions of their original characters, and in other instances playing their fathers or ancestors, including Majel Barrett-Roddenberry (the computer voice and episode voiceovers), Grace Lee-Whitney (Janice Rand), Walter Koenig (Chekov), George Takei (Sulu), William Windom (Matt Decker in *In Harm’s Way*), Barbara Luna (multiple characters in various

¹³ Because this episode (The Child) was repurposed into a TNG episode, with Deana Troi taking the place of Ilia—which essentially what

her character was overall—I have elected to not include it in the chronology.

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episodes, Eddie Paskey (this time playing Leslie's father, Admiral Leslie), and John Winston (playing the part of a freighter captain). Denise Crosby plays the part of Tasha and Ishara Yar's great-grandmother in *Blood and Fire*, and Gil Gerrard, aka "Buck Rodgers" from the eponymously named 1980 sci-fi series plays a commodore in *Kitumba*. Vic Mignogna and Michele Specht play numerous guest characters throughout as well.

STC, by contrast, consists of all *new* scripts, most of them written by that production's producers and creators, including James Kirk actor, Vic Mignogna (more about him and the controversy surrounding him later), and Kipleigh Brown (who plays the character of Barbara Smith, seen only once as a yeoman in TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, but given a much more prominent role here, as well as a very bittersweet and fitting send off in the finale). Joining the creative team was Michele Specht, playing the part of a new, very impactful character of ship's counselor, Elise McKennah. Like Smith, she has a significant character arc. Kirk is initially very skeptical of the experimental role of ship loop's counselor, but is ultimately won over by her wisdom and counsel. Meanwhile, she and Spock's initially platonic relationship blossoms into an almost romance, albeit largely on an intellectual, quite "Vulcan" level, but its and McKennah's ultimately tragic ending (in which the counselor must sacrifice herself "for the good of the many"), is revealed as the catalyst that ultimately leads Spock to undergo Kolinahr at the beginning of STTMP.

One of the most notable guest actors appearing in STC is Michael Forrest, reprising the role of "Apollo" (TOS: *Who Mourns for Adonis*) in a direct sequel titled *Pilgrim of Eternity*. Although, unlike ST phase II, no other veteran TOS era actors play any guest roles, Marina Sirtis provides the voice of the computer (and the actor herself noted the appropriateness of this, since, the by-then-late, Majel Barrett-Roddenberry played the role of her mother in TNG), except in *The Fairest of them All*, in which Michael Dorn voices the computer in the Mirror Universe. Whereas Buck Rodgers veteran actor, Gil Gerrard, plays a commodore in Star Trek Phase II, here, his fellow alum, Erin Grey plays the part of "Commodore Grey" in two episodes herself. Amy Ryder, the daughter of Joanne Linville who played the part of the Romulan Commander in TOS: *The Enterprise Incident*, reprises her mother's role in the two-part finale quite well. John DeLancie plays a guest villain in *What Are Ships For?*, though the character isn't and has no relationship to Q. Anne Lockhart ("Sheeba" from the 1970s TV series version of *Battlestar Galactica*) plays his character's unfortunate wife. Rounding out the cast, James Doohan's son, Chris, plays the part of Scotty

quite expertly (he also voices the character in *Star Trek Online*. As for overall story and production quality, there is no better fan product series than this one, and the two-part conclusion, *To Boldly Go...* (whose set up, throughout the previous episodes in the series is so subtle, it's very easy to miss) is a far more satisfying end to Kirk's original "five year mission" than either TOS: *Turnabout Intruder* or TAS: *The Counterclock Incident*.

Indeed, *many* of the ST Phase II and STC episodes are sequels to TOS stories. In the case of ST Phase II, these include: *In Harm's Way* (TOS: *The Doomsday Machine* with elements of *The Menagerie*, *City on the Edge of Forever*, and TAS: *Yesteryear* included as well) and the never completed *Torment of Destiny* (TOS: *For the World is Hollow*, and *I Have Touched the Sky*). The STC episodes meeting those qualifications include *Pilgrim of Eternity* (TOS: *Who Mourns for Adonis*); *The Fairest of them All* (TOS: *Mirror, Mirror*); *Still Treads the Shadow* (TOS: *The Tholian Web*) and *To Boldly Go...*, *Parts 1 & 2* (TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before* and *The Enterprise Incident*). As one might surmise from the title, this last episode serves not only as a sequel, but as a TOS series *bookend*.

That said, I would be remiss in not pointing out that Vic Mignogna's career has come to an ignoble end. Following the #MeToo movement, it was revealed that Mignogna had engaged sexual harassment towards underage women and also made homophobic comments. This is detailed on his Wikipedia page - https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vic_Mignogna. Since the allegations came to light (and Mignogna's attempt at defamation lawsuits against some of his accusers failed), he has dropped out of the *Star Trek* fan community (and his voice acting contributions to *Star Trek Online* re-recorded by other voice actors, which is a fairly strong indicator that he is indeed guilty of perpetrating the actions of which he is accused).

However, I still think, in spite of these detestable actions, STC is still a highly worthy series. While Mignogna *did* coproduce it, star in it, and write many of the episodes (including the very anti-sexist *Embrace the Winds*, ironically enough), his ex-partner Michele Specht (McKennah) and Kipleigh Brown (Barbara Smith) did as well. The latter two contributed *at least* as much to the effort, they supported the women that were sued by Mignogna, and they've since distanced themselves from him (they also continue to voice major guest characters in *Star Trek Online*. Specht voices the Romulan daughter of Admiral Jerok mentioned in TNG: *The Defector*, and Brown plays the part of the very enthusiastic and "ne plus ultra" quick study, Kumaerke). I leave it up to you to decide for yourself whether to watch STC or not, but given Specht's and Brown's es-

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sential contributions, I choose to continue to include them in the list.

There are three or four fan produced *TAS* style episodes *as well* that also perfectly mimic the animation style, feel, and music of the official *TAS* series. Most of these are produced (and voiced) by a single individual (albeit with a little help from his friends), so the voice acting is rather rough. However, the stories *themselves* are excellent and a very true to the feel and values of *Trek*. It helps that some of them are longer than the 23 minutes usually afforded the canonical animated versions. The best of these, in my opinion, is *Ptolemy Wept* which serves mainly as a sequel to *TOS: Requiem for Methuselah* (including a return of “Flint”) with a nod to *TOS: Spock’s Brain*.

While *Starship Exeter* (*EXT*) takes place on a different ship, with different characters (who, including especially the captain, are more jaded than the *Enterprise* crew), it’s clearly intended as a complimentary series and mission. Captain John Quincy “Quince” Garrovik (series coproducer, Jimm Johnson, acting under the pseudonym “James Culhane”) is the nephew of the late Captain John Garrovik, James T Kirk’s mentor on the *USS Farragut*. Unlike Kirk, “Quince” is far less idealistic and brash. In spite of his being just a bit older than Kirk, Garrovik has experienced some deep traumatic experiences directly related to his Starfleet career (explained in detail in the second episode of the series). As a result, (and as they joke about in the vignette) he has a reputation for being “grim”, and sometimes has a cynical view of powers known to be hostile to the Federation. He’s also rather adverse to being elevated to the status of being a “hero”. Science Officer & First Officer Jo Harris (Holly Guess) is brilliant and strong willed. She’s also a competent exec, often keeping the jaded Quince from jumping to wrongful, overly cynical conclusions. Tactical/Security Officer Cutty (Michael Buford). Cutty is Captain Garrovik’s longtime friend and comrade, and although he’s a firm believer in strong defense, he’s somewhat skeptical of his captain’s cynicism. Communications Officer B’fuselek (series coproducer John Johnson, acting undersecretary the pseudonym “Joshua Caleb”). B’fuselek is an eager and always loyal Andorian starfleet officer with many skills which are often essential in a pinch. He also has a huge crush on First Officer Harris.

The opening theme to the final episode, *The Tressaurian Intersection*, is actually a never-before heard anthemic rendition of Fred Steiner’s “Mudd’s Women” theme (which itself had three different versions (or moods): the “mysterious” version (later reused in *TOS: Arena* at the episode’s conclusion when Kirk finally meets the Metron following his successful battle against the Gorn captain); the “beguil-

ing” version (often reused in later Season 1 episodes involving scenes with beautiful women); and the “dark” version (used when the “Venus Drug” wears off, but usually used in later episodes when someone was skulking around, such as Kirk and Sulu on the air force base in *Tomorrow is Yesterday*). Completing the package, *EXT*’s title font is shown in dark emerald green as opposed to gold or blue. The creators paid close attention to detail, even making sure that the *USS Exeter* uniform logo, a rectangle instead of the standard delta, matched those seen on the uniforms in *TOS: The Omega Glory*, where that starship makes its canonical, albeit tragic, debut. Unfortunately only three episodes (one a humorous vignette, which anticipated the irreverent humor of *LDS* by several years) of this promising series were made.

Starship Farragut (*FGT*) is the creation of John Broughton, Holly Bednar, and Micheal Bednar (playing the principal characters of Captain John “Jack” Carter, Engineer Michelle “Mike” Smithfield, and Science Officer, Richard Tackett—or “RT” for short). Rounding out the principal cast is the ultra by-the-book Security Chief, Henry Prescott (Paul Seiber). Notable veteran *Trek* guest stars include Chris Doohan, Chase Masterson, and Tim Russ. Broughton also cast his father and wife in various roles, but the marquee guest star is none other than the legendary Stan Lee (himself a *huge* *Trek*kie) in the final episode, *Homecoming*.

Unlike the others, this series uses different music and fonts entirely, but it uses the familiar uniform colors (though it uses distinct “oval” uniform insignia instead of the *Enterprise* “deltas”, as is consistent with *TOS* era insignia) and *Constitution Class* sets and ship models (though it’s been established canonically in *SNW* that the *Farragut* is a lighter frigate rather than a heavy cruiser—though it wouldn’t have been impossible to upgrade it from one to the other by swapping out its star drive section), so it, too, functions as an “expanded universe” *TOS* era series. The multiple cameos involving Captain Kirk (including both the *ST Phase II* (Cawley) and *STC* (Mignogna) iterations) connect it to the original. That said, in addition to approximately eight live action episodes and short *trek* vignettes, the creators of this series produced a pair of *animated* episodes that *perfectly* mimic the animation style and use the incidental music of the *TAS* era episodes. As an added bonus, the helmsman in these two episodes is an Andorian named “They’len” (who has Aenar blood as well). It’s an easy thing to miss, but this is actually a huge “Easter egg”, because this is actually the return of a character first seen canonically in *TAS: Yesteryear* (he was Kirk’s first officer, voiced by James Doohan, in the alternate timeline in which Spock had perished as a youth). It’s not coincidence, ei-

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ther, that *Chris* Doohan voices him here (and also appears in one of the two episodes as Montgomery Scott).

Starship Valiant (VAL) is of similarly decent quality though, like EXT, few episodes were made. Those that were made are worth a look, though the protagonist in *Animals* is a shrill and unconvincing character. He starts out deeply racist—to the point that he likely wouldn't have made it into Starfleet, and likely would have joined "Terra Prime" back in Jonathan Archer's day. Though he's *supposed* to have an epiphany after having been saved from death by the enemy he despises (the point of the story), the actor who plays a jaded, war weary and bigoted security chief convincingly enough, doesn't quite sell the audience on his having a "come to Surak" moment, in my opinion. The antagonists in these episodes, the "Draygon" are not especially convincing either (looking like cheap, hastily thrown-together costume shop "aliens"), and the episodes' standalone stories make them borderline for consideration. Nevertheless, the main character, Captain Bishop, is compelling enough to give this brief series a look.

Dreadnaught Dominion (DND), unfortunately, has poor production value, wooden and sloppy acting, and mostly uninteresting storylines. While the idea of a pre-TNG "Q Continuum" member disguising himself as a human Starfleet officer is an entertaining notion, it doesn't quite work given this series' limitations. The one episode worth watching, in my opinion, is a short vignette involving the ship's hearing impaired communications officer (played by an actually deaf actor), which builds upon the idea of overcoming adversity to excel in a role that contemporary humanity might think impossible a'la Giordi La-Forge or Hemmer.

By contrast, the parallel Avalon Universe (AVU) and Tales from the Neutral Zone (TNZ) series have top notch production value, excellent storytelling, and skilled actors filling the roles to boot (and it is somewhat linked to VAL and DND with the presence of the character of engineer, Eric Minard. It's a bit complicated by the fact that the AVU stories take place in a *slightly* parallel universe to the Prime Universe (called the "Avalon Universe" by the production team), whereas the TNZ stories largely take place in the Prime Universe. In both series, the *USS Excalibur*, rebuilt following the M5 disaster in TOS: *The Ultimate Computer*, serves as the "hero ship", but the Avalon Universe (conveniently reflecting the fact that in the real world most modern audio-visual technology makes TOS era production quality seem primitive) the technology is more advanced.

Most of the characters exist in both universes, including Jamie Archer (the equally brilliant and gorgeous great granddaughter of Jonathan Archer, played by series co-cre-

ator and coincidentally named, Victoria Archer) and Mikaela Allenby (though she's played by multiple actors for unknown reasons). At least one character, however, has different genders. In the Avalon Universe, Derek Mason is a male, but in the prime universe Mason is *female*, and named "DeeDee". (It's never made clear if this was simply a case of different by circumstance of birth or some other cause). If there's one criticism to be made, it's that the characters keep rotating from story to story as some are killed off, only to be replaced by others, while some of those believed dead (Archer and Mason) are revived through SciFi trickery. It's not a fatal flaw, but it *does* occasionally make it very hard to follow. This is especially true of some TNZ episodes, where the characters and stories are one-offs. *The Death of War* is an absolute gem, depicting a precursor to the "Tomed Incident" name dropped by Riker in TNG: *The Pegasus*.

The fan (and veteran Trek actor) produced movie, *Of Gods and Men* is easy to place chronologically (taking place just after the events of the 23rd Century prologue in the movie *Star Trek Generations*). In my opinion, this production is a very mixed bag, to say the least. Serving essentially as a sequel to both TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before* and TOS: *Charlie X*, it gives "Charlie" a rather poignant second chance, but it suffers deeply from a dull, very derivative plot (which rehashes far too many now cliched Star Trek tropes), and it ultimately constitutes blatant (and fairly unapologetic) fan service. Its production value isn't especially high quality either (with the climactic battle—involving everything but the kitchen sink, but *including* the *Fesarius* for no particular reason other than the likely explanation that "it looks cool"—being a horribly confusing mess, because it's extremely difficult to tell who's on whose side!)

That said, this movie, in spite of it being blatant fan service, should be at least considered, because of just who *gets* the fan service, which, in this case, is predominantly Nyota Uhura, played beautifully (and gracefully) for one last time by Nichelle Nichols (including her singing a long awaited reprise to "Charlie's Our New Darling", albeit this time in an attempt to inspire a broken and disheartened Charlie in the climactic scenes, rather than poking fun at the fact that Charlie's obsession with Janice Rand was obvious for everyone to see in the original episode). This production also includes the only actual instance where Pavel Chekov (played by Walter Koenig) and Janice Rand (played by Grace Lee Whitney) trade dialogue (though the "joke" involving her giving him a tribble for a present falls particularly flat).

Beyond the aforementioned, the following characters and actors appear in the production:

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Actors reprising their established character roles:

- Nichelle Nichols as Nyota Uhura
- Walter Koenig as Pavel Chekov
- Grace Lee Whitney as Janice Rand
- Alan Ruck as Captain John Harriman (Captain of the Enterprise 1701-B from ST Generations)
- Tim Russ as Tuvok (albeit a much younger Tuvok than in ST Voyager)
- Lawrence Montaigne as Stonn

Veteran ST actors playing new roles:

- Garrett Wang as Garan (a mercenary in the alternate timeline)
- Gary Graham as Ragnar (a shapeshifter—though not one of Odo’s kind, seen in the alternate timeline)
- Cirroc Lofton as Sevar (a Vulcan)
- Ethan Phillips as an unnamed data clerk;
- Chase Masterson as Xela (an Orion, seen in the alternate timeline)
- J G Hertzler as Koval (a Klingon mercenary);

Canonical characters played by different actors than in their original appearance:

- Peter Kirk (James T Kirk’s nephew) - James Cawley; originally played by Billy Mumy;
- Gary Mitchel - Daamen Krall; originally played by Gary Lockwood;
- Charlie Evans - William Wellman Jr.; originally played by Robert Walker.

Tim Russ was the principal mover and shaker behind this attempt, and though I have deeply mixed feelings about it, it deserves consideration simply because of the acumen of those involved (and the fact that in no other instance does one get to see these veterans of Trek interact dramatically, even if the production and story leave a little something to be desired.

It is my firm opinion, in fact, that (most of) these fan-produced episodes nicely complement canonical TOS and TAS era stories and are worthy of inclusion. One could just watch each series in production order, of course, but I think it’s more rewarding to assemble them into a coherent whole, even though it’s like a jigsaw puzzle with only a bare hint of a design. Keep in mind that though the series and their creators somewhat overlap, there was no grand master plan that they followed—though there are some clues that they *did* at least attempt to maintain continuity

on a voluntary and organic basis. Given that, while the task of ordering them might seem impossible, it mostly wasn’t! So, how did I extrapolate the placement of the fan produced Star Trek TOS era episodes in chronological order?

For starters, by their producers’ own descriptions, a great deal of the fan produced series take place in the fictional years 2270-72 (though there are a few notable exceptions) placing them in what would’ve been TOS’s 4th and 5th seasons, had they existed. Certainly ST Phase II and STC attempted this. To some extent EXT, FGT, VAL, and even AVU attempt to further flesh them out.

Due to these producers being the loyal Trekkies they are, and due to the latter’s widespread fanatical insistence on continuity, it’s almost possible to string together all of these episodes as a coherent “season” or even a pair of “seasons” of an unofficial TOS “expanded universe” without too much difficulty.

The simplest way to do this would be to watch each series independently of each other, based on their production dates, starting with the date of their earliest produced episode, in which case, the proper order would be Starship Exeter (EXT), ST Phase II, Starship Farragut (FGT), followed by Star Trek Continues (STC), then Starship Valiant (VAL), and then, lastly, the parallel Avalon Universe (AVU) and Tales from the Neutral Zone (TNZ) series.

However, this doesn’t really work, because many series and episodes were produced concurrently, and as a result numerous temporally specific continuity errors creep in (such as specific characters, starships, and or starbases used in multiple series dying / being destroyed later being seen alive and well / fully intact later on. Two very specific examples are the appearance of Starbase 16 on Corinth IV, which appears in one episode each of STC and EXT, or the part of security/tactical guru Henry Prescott in both ST Phase II and FGT (played by Paul Sieber in both series).

Adding to the confusion, there’s the matter of TAS, as well as the fan produced animated episodes to factor in as well. While fans of TOS—who were lucky enough to have watched TAS when it was initially broadcast and available for viewing in syndication—generally accepted those episodes as the “4th” season of TOS, the Great Bird of the Galaxy, himself kept mum about them, and after his death, one of Roddenberry’s assistants flippantly suggested that they weren’t canonical. That sparked off a vigorous debate, but one which has since been (mostly) settled in favor of TAS being officially (re)established as canon, and accepted as the *fourth* year of Captain Kirk’s original five year mission.

That being the case, there have been a handful of fan produced animated episodes (including the two aforementioned

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tioned examples by the FGT producers) which painstakingly and precisely mimic the style, music, and feel of the official animated episodes, so it's not necessarily obvious that TAS represents solely the fourth year of Kirk's five year mission, and the live action fan produced episodes the fifth, but there's no compelling argument *against* that assumption, either. The final episode of TAS, *The Counter-clock Incident*, has nothing in particular to suggest closure or finality to Kirk's five year mission (and frankly, it's an otherwise unremarkable episode—that rehashes a rather over-used sci-fi cliché of an “anti-Prime-universe” (not to be confused with the *Mirror* (Teran) Universe) with black stars “shining” in a white void, as well as “anti-time”—except for the earliest real world appearance of Robert and Sarah April—though in much later created SNW episodes, Robert April is a reoccurring guest character—albeit with a higher rank and different skin color) so it could really go just about anywhere in the “fourth” or “fifth” season. We *definitely* know that it takes place after TOS's *third* season, because the Beta Niobi supernova (which occurs at the end of TOS: *All Our Yesterdays*) serves as the “doorway” back to the Prime Universe at the episode's conclusion.

Finally, there are fan produced episodes that refer to canonical events, such as the M5 debacle in the canonical 2nd Season TOS episode *The Ultimate Computer*, which is a significant watershed moment for AVU and TNZ, or Dr McCoy's pre-*Starship Enterprise* TOS appearance in one (early!) episode of VAL to contend with.

For the most part—with the exception of a few early episodes of ST Phase II, plus several of that series's vignettes, which seem to exist outside of canon chronologically, it's obvious that the episodes of each series were produced, more or less, in chronological order (and dialogue in later episodes of each series often references events in earlier episodes). The one exception I make in this is juxtaposing the two ST Phase II episodes *Mind Sifter* and *Kitumba*, because the former ends at Space Station K7, and the latter begins there. Plus, the (temporary) resolution of hostilities between the Federation and Klingons that occurs in the latter episode would seem to preclude their kidnapping of Captain Kirk in the former.

Also, the STC episode *The Fairest of Them All* is a direct and immediate sequel to the canonical 2nd Season TOS episode *Mirror Mirror* (and the recreation of Kirk's rousing “in every revolution there's one man with a vision!” speech is *fantastically* close to the original—so much so that a YouTube video exists showing both scenes side-by-side simultaneously to emphasize the point), so it logically

should be watched right after *Mirror Mirror* (just ignore the fact that neither Elise McKennah nor Barbara Smith were in the original).

Conversely, TNZ: *Doomsday* is a “Short Trek” *prequel* to TOS: *The Doomsday Machine*, so it properly should go before the canonical second season episode.

Some episodes, particularly those in the TNZ and VAL series are either one-offs or so far removed from the continuity covered in the other series, placing them in the chronological order is almost impossible (though, it's likewise the case that one could easily argue that they're impossible to get *wrong* for exactly the same reason!).

There are some small details that *do* provide clues, though. VAL: *Legacy* has dates of Captain Bishop's father's death on his gravestone, that more or less place the events of the episode ca late 4th or early 5th season of TOS (if the latter actually existed). The other episodes can be sprinkled into the timeline later at the viewer's discretion, as the events shown in them don't especially have any bearing on the overall arcs of ST Phase II, EXT, FAR, and STC.

In the case of TNZ, these are mostly “one-off” stories, though there *are* some logical places these stories can go. TNZ: *The Test of Time* involves the *USS Constitution NCC 1700*. Since Captain Chandler likely preceded Richard Tackett—seen assuming command of that same ship in FAR: *The Crossing* it's logical to place the TNZ episode earlier in the running order. TNZ: *The Lost Starship* could go just about anywhere, though it would seem to follow the events of ST Phase II: *Kitumba*, because though the Klingons try to provoke a war between the Romulans and Federation (just as the Romulans try to provoke a war between the Federation and Klingons), the implication is that the Federation and Klingons are at detente. TNZ: *The Death of War* almost certainly takes place near the running, but not after the events of STC: *To Boldly Go...* for the obvious reason that the *Enterprise* ultimately winds up being the sole surviving Mark I *Constitution Class* starship to (barely) survive when all is said and done (more about that below).

Beyond that, one can look for commonly related incidents of canon (even if it's merely beta canon) in each series to link them together:

The easiest series to place in this context is FGT, because its creators left us a number of clues to its chronological position.¹⁴

For example: in the first episode *The Captaincy*, the “crew of the *Enterprise*”, or at least Kirk, Spock, and

¹⁴ Other than just stardates, which are admittedly a somewhat unreliable metric, given the fact that they're not especially perfectly consistent *even in alpha canon*—which is why I generally ignore them, except for vaguely

noting the first two or three digits—for example, stardates beginning with “6-x” place the episode within the putative fifth year of Captain Kirk & Co's “five year mission”.

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McCoy—here played by James Cawley, Jeffrey Quinn, and John Kelley, respectively, from ST Phase II—make a cameo appearance at the end of the episode.

Throughout many of the later episodes, Vic Mignogna makes several appearances playing different characters, including Captain Kirk in the episode *The Price of Anything*. Chris Doohan, who reprised his father's role of Scotty in STC, also voices the part of Montgomery Scott in the animated episode *The Needs of the Many*.

Since ST Phase II features Henry Prescott (as a Lieutenant Commander) playing the part of Kirk's "weapons officer" in the later episode *Kitumba*, clearly must take place in *after* the FGT episode *The Captains* in which Prescott was merely a lieutenant until Captain Carter decides to promote him in rank at the episode's conclusion). And eventually (spoiler alert!) Prescott sacrifices himself in FGT: *The Crossing*, after having served as a Starfleet security expert on Starbase 6 for a time, so he left the Farragut some time after the events in the animated episode *Power Source*, which was his final appearance until *The Crossing* (and this can be further demonstrated by the appearance of his replacement, Weston (Gene Collis) in the episode *The Conspiracy of Innocence* as well as *The Crossing*). Therefore, one can credibly place the events of the episode *Kitumba* squarely within the time *between* the events of *Power Source* and *The Crossing*.¹⁵

Further, one can place STC: *Embrace the Winds* after FGT: *Homecoming*, in which the Farragut is decommissioned, because Commodore Grey tells Kirk this is happening. Also, there's reference to the loss of the *USS Constitution* and its (in this episode) unnamed captain at Nimbus III, but in FGT: *The Crossing*, it's revealed that RT assumes command of the *Constitution* at the episode's conclusion. Since we later learn, in the *Starship Farragut* "long trek" *Farragut Forward* (set some time just before the events of *Star Trek VI: the Undiscovered Country*, based on the "monster maroon" uniforms and the still hostile Klingons) that RT was captured by the Klingons and Mirror-Prescott (introduced in *The Crossing*), then it's logical to assume that RT *was* the unnamed *Constitution* captain. FGT and STC were produced by two somewhat different groups, but individuals from each group (particularly Mignogna, Broughton, and the Bednars) were friends and collaborated on each. For that matter, Mignogna and Specht were frequent contributors to ST Phase II, so the attempts at consistent continuity were deliberate, if not always perfect.

A particularly geeky example of this is the use of *Constitution Class* Starships both in starring and supporting roles (and the general, if not entirely consistent retention of identifying NCC registry numbers—though sometimes the numbers assigned to specific starships differed with those assigned in canonical episodes, whereas with other starships they didn't).

For example: the *USS Kongo* appears in both the EXT: *The Tressaurian Intersection* and STC: *To Boldly Go...* bearing the NCC registry "1710" (though, unfortunately there are other inconsistencies associated with its use in both, but more about that later). The *USS Lexington*, seen in both ST Phase II and EXT, consistently bears the registry "1709" as it does canonically. Although never canonically established to be a *Constitution Class* starship, the Farragut appears as such in *both* its titular series as well as an early episode of ST Phase II with the number "1647" as it did in SNW (so we can reasonably surmise that this *is* the same ship upon which a young James Kirk served even though it had a frigate star drive as opposed to a heavy cruiser configuration then). Whether intended or not, the (almost) consistent continuity of *Constitution Class* starships and their accompanying NCC registry numbers serves to tie these series together.¹⁶

That said, there are two notable inconsistencies (one an oversight, the other a deliberate choice) between the canonically established NCC registry numbers and their fan produced counterparts.

In canon, the *USS Exeter* bears the registry number "1672", but in EXT it inexplicably bears the number "1706". This is likely just an oversight, just as placing Andoria at Epsilon Indi rather than Procyon. On the other hand, the creators of AVU and TNZ deliberately distinguish the hero ship, in this case, the rebuilt *USS Excalibur* the distinct registry number "NCC 1705" in the Avalon Universe, whereas it retains its familiar "NCC 1664" in the Prime Universe. It is unlikely, however, that the makers of EXT had similar intentions, because there is no evidence or dialogue that places that series in anything but the Prime Universe (Tholian interdimensional monkey business notwithstanding).

However, even in alpha canon, such inconsistencies arise, such as the case of the *USS Yamato* in TNG which changed registry numbers between the episodes *Where Silence Has Lease* and *Contagion*, though in the case of the for-

¹⁵ Prescott is, himself, something of an Easter Egg. His father was one of the "esper" crewmen serving under Captain Kirk who was killed when the *Enterprise* attempted to traverse the Galactic Barrier in TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before*.

¹⁶ Examples of *Constitution Class* ships that remained true to established (or almost established, in the case of the *USS Constitution*) canon include: *USS Enterprise* (1701), *USS Constitution* (1700), *USS Farragut* (1647), *USS/ISS Potemkin* (1657), *USS Hood* (1703), *USS Lexington* (1709), and *USS Kongo* (1710).

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mer, since the “Yamato” was actually an illusion, a ready-made excuse exists.

Although there are only two (released) episodes of Starship Exeter, plus one vignette, they’re clearly intended to take place after the canonical events shown in the 2nd Season TOS: *The Omega Glory*, in which the Exeter is shown canonically with its entire crew (other than Captain Ron Tracy) killed by a biological pathogen. And Captain John Quincy (“Quince”) Garrovik is the (likely older) cousin of the Ensign Garrovik seen in the canonical 2nd Season TOS episode, *Obsession*, as established by a line of dialogue in *The Tressaurian Intersection*.

The first episode of the series, *The Savage Empire* probably takes place between the beginning of ST Phase II’s beginning and before that series’s episode *Kitumba*, because in *The Savage Empire*, Chang (yes, the very same Klingon from *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*) tries to induce a coup on Andoria (or perhaps an Andorian colony world, because it’s been semi-officially established canonically that Andoria orbits Procyon, rather than Epsilon Indi) but is thwarted by Captain Garrovik and B’fuselek (and Chang can thank Quince for the eyepatch!) It’s no stretch to infer that this botched attempt at subterfuge by the Klingons leads to the war seen at the beginning of the ST Phase II episode *Blood and Fire*.

Likewise, the Klingons feature prominently throughout ST Phase II and are also seen in the early episodes of FGT, but are not seen *at all* in STC. This adds further weight to the argument that ST Phase II *mostly* takes place prior to STC, with one exception (see below).

EXT: *The Tressaurian Intersection* clearly takes place after the canonical 3rd Season TOS: *The Tholian Web*, but it also likely takes place after STC: *Embrace the Winds* since Starbase 16 on Corinth IV, seen intact in the latter, winds up being completely, albeit inadvertently, obliterated (and the planet’s ecosystem catastrophically damaged) by the Tressaurians’ careless use of stolen Tholian technology at the episode’s onset. Also, on Commodore Grey’s list of active *Constitution Class* Starships shown in *Embrace the Winds* the *Exeter* is shown to still be active.

Unfortunately, the use of the *USS Kongo* in both EXT: *The Tressaurian Intersection* (where Quince Garrovik orders the destruction of its damaged star drive section to prevent its capture) and its subsequent reappearance albeit fully intact in STC: *To Boldly Go...* creates something of a quandary. One could argue that the Gary Mitchell-like espers recreate the stardrive section (since its damaged saucer section crash landed on Corinth IV in the previously mentioned *Exeter* episode), but then if they had *that* much power, they could’ve just willed an endless supply of faux *Constitution Class* starships into existence on their own! (A

better, simpler, more logical explanation is that Starfleet salvaged the saucer section and attached it to a previously existing saucerless star drive, or simply constructed another one).

Another inconsistency that’s far more difficult to reconcile between ST Phase II and STC are the rank of Scotty, Sulu, and Chekov. Although, based on the above, the majority of ST Phase II episodes are generally accepted as taking place prior to the STC episodes (and it’s no small point that the finale of the latter (*To Boldly Go...*) is clearly intended as both the completion of Kirk’s five year mission as well as a “bookend” to its beginning (*Where No Man Has Gone Before*), Scotty retains the rank of “lieutenant commander” and Sulu the rank of “lieutenant” throughout the latter series, while both had been promoted to “commander” and “lieutenant commander” in the earlier series (and to be fair, Scotty, at least, had been promoted thusly in TAS to that rank, and it’s entirely unlikely that either officer would do anything egregious enough to be subsequently *demoted*). Meanwhile, Chekov gets promoted to lieutenant in *both* series in separate episodes encompassing entirely *different* storylines, and in the case of ST Phase II (at the conclusion of the episode *Enemy Starfleet*) it’s at *that* point Captain Kirk promotes Chekov to security chief, from which point on the latter dons a red uniform for the remainder of the series. However, in STC: *Embrace the Winds*, it’s *Scotty* who delivers the news of the promotion—in this case to “lieutenant junior grade” only, *without* an appointment to Chief of Security, and he retains his gold uniform.

Now, one could argue that STC: *Embrace the Winds* takes place *before* ST Phase II: *Enemy Starfleet* and *Kitumba*, but then Henry Prescott couldn’t still be alive for the events in *Kitumba*, because he’d *already died* in the FGT: *The Crossing* which happens before STC: *Embrace the Winds*! And, in any case, STC: *To Boldly Go...* is intended to be *the* final chapter, bar none, of the TOS era (emphasized by the fact that the *Enterprise* becomes the last surviving *Constitution Class* starship, Kirk accepts a promotion to vice admiral, and he dons his STTMP era uniform), and in that episode, Scotty, Sulu, and Chekov don’t possess the ranks established at the end of ST Phase II.

STC: *To Boldly Go...* offers an answer to the ultimate fate of Quince Garrovik, Jo Harris, Cuddy, B’fuselek, and the *USS Exeter*; it, along with the *USS Potemkin* accidentally destroy each other after being tricked into doing so by the espers. It’s an unfortunate ending for the good—if jaded—Exeter Crew. Unfortunately it creates yet another inconsistency in the case of the *USS Potemkin*, because—according to the story arc of FGT, the principal officers (Carter, RT, and Smithfield) all served under Captain Wil-

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cox on the *USS Potemkin*, until the latter was destroyed. One could easily fix this by having the *USS Excalibur* take its place (thus, unfortunately, giving Mikaela Allenby & crew a tragic ending as well as Quince Garrovik & Co, but then, we never see or hear from them again, so...), but that isn't what happened on screen.

There are other inconsistencies as well, such as the fact that secondary and tertiary characters seen in the earlier series (Xon, Peter Kirk, Walking Bear, and DeSalle) are not seen in the latter, nor are the secondary and tertiary characters from the latter (McKennah, Smith, M'Benga, and Drake) seen in the former (though DeSalle is at least mentioned in an episode of STC, and Leslie Palmer appears in both), but those could at least credibly be chalked up to similar periodic absences of secondary and tertiary characters in canonical TOS episodes.¹⁷

Lastly, inconsistencies in the configuration of the classic USS Enterprise, itself, near the end of both ST Phase II and STC, present some continuity errors. Near the end of its run, the producers of ST Phase II created a vignette called *Going Boldly* which actually shows the Enterprise's original star drive section being replaced by the upgraded movie version (complete with diagonal nacelle pylons) while retaining the TOS era saucer section.^{18,19}

However, the STC finale shows the original Enterprise, classic star drive and saucer section in situ, limping back to Earth Spacedock, after which Admiral Nogura—shown onscreen for the first time— informs Kirk “that the Enterprise will be rebuilt”, and a new fleet of *Constitution Class* sister ships constructed alongside, thus setting up the events seen in *Star Trek I: The Motion Picture*.

For those reasons, my advice would simply be to ignore those inconsistencies (and the star dates) as I have done, because they (mostly, except in the case of Chekov, and even in his case it's essentially minor) don't effect the

overall arc of the TOS epic, and the addition of these fan made episodes so far more to beautifully flesh it out, thus bringing the long missing closure to the first installment of the ST epic which was rudely and unceremoniously quashed by the Network and Studio.

Next, I propose that all of the episodes of TAS (minus *The Counterclock Incident*, which is moved next to the two animated FGT episodes mainly just for fun, so viewers can see for themselves just how expertly and honorifically the “Farragut” actors and/or producers matched the original) go first.

Without any clues to the placement of most of the fan produced animated episodes (other than the aforementioned FGT episodes), it's simply easier to place them immediately following the penultimate TAS episode *How Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth*, because the latter features Ensign Walking-Bear for the first time (and only time canonically), and he—being a fan favorite—frequently appears in many of the fan produced animated episodes as well as some of the live ones.²⁰

The FGT “long Trek” *Farragut Forward* clearly belongs somewhere between *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* and *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*. For convenience sake, I place it between *Star Trek V* and *VI*. Meanwhile, the fan produced “movie” *Of Gods and Men* takes place after the prologue in *Star Trek Generations*. One could opt to watch just the prologue of that film (up until Kirk's presumed death), then watch the animated fan made short trek, *For an Absent Friend* and *Of Gods and Men* before moving on to the *Section 31* long Trek, and then TNG: *Encounter at Farpoint*, and then watch *Star Trek Generations* in its entirety in its proper order later.

I think most uninitiated fans will be pleasantly surprised, or at least, quite satisfied with the results. Now, combined with all of TOS, Captain Kirk's five year mis-

¹⁷In fact, throughout Season 1 of TOS, Scotty is actually absent in more episodes than not, quite possibly because his character hadn't yet been established as “essential”, though it's now inconceivable to imagine TOS without him! There are also two Season 1 TOS episodes (that take place after the events of TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before*) where McCoy is absent: *What are Little Girls Made Of* and *Errand of Mercy*.

¹⁸This, incidentally, directly contradicts the sequence described in some beta canon Star Trek novels in which the saucer section was upgraded while the original star drive remained in situ, however—even based on my limited exposure to them—resolving the lack of continuity extant throughout the literally hundreds of Star Trek novels and comics would be an utter impossibility, but good luck to anyone wishing to take a stab at that unenviable task!

¹⁹The modified Enterprise is seen in one full length ST Phase II episode as well *The Holiest Thing*, which is notable for depicting the unseen part of Captain Kirk's romance to Carol Marcus, including the conception of their son, David. I hitherto included this episode in the sequence of episodes, but have subsequently deleted it, because dialogue between Jim Kirk and La'an Noonian Singh in SNW: *Subspace Rhapsody* finally establishes Kirk's and Carol's relationship (as well as her being pregnant with David) a full decade before the timeline of *The Holiest Thing*. That's a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it's a pity because the actor they hired to play Carol Marcus does an outstanding job of cosplaying a young Bibi Besch, but the timeline doesn't work out (David would be barely sixteen in *Star Trek II: TWOK*), and do we really need yet another almost “first contact” with the Ferengi story?

²⁰Fans of the TAS character, Arax, can actually see a live version of the Edosian navigator in *Going Boldly*.

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sion (with some brief glances at the five year missions of his fellow Constitution Class starship contemporaries) is fully fleshed out in all of its intended glory. As an added bonus, rather than ending on the extremely horrid and bitterly reactionary note sounded in TOS: *Turnabout Intruder*, the “series” ends with the far superior bookend, STC: *To Boldly Go...*, which is to TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before* as TNG: *All Good Things* is to TNG: *Encounter at Farpoint*. It’s a much better conceived and deserved closure.

With all that in mind, here is the proposed order:

2270-71 (Concluding Kirk’s Five-Year Mission)²¹

300. Ph2 1: In Harm’s Way
301. AvU 9: The Truth Within
302. VAL 2: Legacy
303. FGT V1: Just Passing Through (vignette)
304. FGT 1: The Captaincy
305. AvU 2: Avalon Lost
306. Ph2 3: World Enough and Time
307. AvU V1: FTL NanoEcabulator [runtime: 5:16]
308. AvU 3: Demons
309. AvU 4: Air and Darkness
310. EXT 1: The Savage Empire
311. Ph2 4a: Blood and Fire, Part 1
312. Ph2 4b: Blood and Fire, Part 2
313. AvU 5: New Orders
314. FGT 2: For Want of a Nail
315. Ph2 5: Enemy Starfleet
316. FGT 3: The Price of Anything
317. FGT 2: Rock and a Hard Place
318. TNZ 3: Test of Time [runtime 23:38]
319. STC 1: Pilgrim of Eternity
320. STC 3: Lelani
321. STC 4: The White Iris
322. TAS 22: The Counterclock Incident (101)
323. FGT 4: The Needs of the Many (animated)
324. FGT 5: Power Source (animated)
325. VAL 3: Animals
326. Ph2 9: Mind Sifter
327. Ph2 8: Kitumba
328. STC 5: Divided We Stand
329. FGT 6: Conspiracy of Innocence
330. AVU 7: Agent of New Worlds
331. FGT 7: The Crossing
332. STC 6: Come Not Between the Dragons
333. AvU 11: Crisis on Infinite Excaliburs [runtime 41:59]
334. STC 7: Still Treads the Shadow
335. FGT V3: The Night Shift
336. FGT 8: Homecoming
337. DrD: Silent Acknowledgement
338. STC V1: You Have the Conn
339. EXT V1: The Night Watch
340. STC V2: Happy Birthday Scotty
341. STC 8: Embrace the Winds
342. STC 9: What are Ships For?
343. TNZ 2: The Lost Starship [runtime 23:02]
344. AvU 6: Cosmic Stream
345. AvU 10: Knights of the Void
346. EXT 2: The Tressaurian Intersection
347. TNZ 12: The Death of War
348. STC 10: To Boldly Go... (Part 1)
349. STC 11: To Boldly Go... (Part 2)

²¹ Unfortunately, I haven’t yet had time to compile the running times for most of the fan produced material or Star Trek Online Story Series; I hope to add those in future editions of this guide.

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Star Trek: Moving (and Evolving) Pictures: The Various Movie Release Variations

I've watched many movies, including all but the last two "Kelvin Universe" *Star Trek* films. Anyone who has watched enough movies knows that sometimes alternate versions of them exist, and that's true for *Star Trek* as well. My own experience in discovering this might help illustrate how that can affect one's movie watching experience:

One of my more vivid memories as an adolescent was watching the 1978 version of *Superman: The Movie* (starring Christopher Reeve in the title role). I watched it at a neighbor's house on a home VHS tape of an HBO broadcast of the movie. Our family didn't yet have cable television or a VCR (not everyone did in the early 1980s), so I could only watch such movies at home if they happened to be featured on one of the three commercial networks (ABC, CBS, or NBC) at the time.

When ABC (Channel 7, KGO in the San Francisco Bay Area) featured *Superman*, I watched it again (having really enjoyed it the first time). I was quite astonished to discover that the ABC broadcast version included several *dozen* scenes (including a substantial number during the "earthquake" sequence) that *weren't* included in the HBO release.

My initial assumption was that HBO had shown a *shortened* version of the theatrical release. However, I would soon discover that ABC had *lengthened* the movie by reincorporating deleted scenes²² to fill out two successive nights of two-hour movie time slots. ABC wasn't the only network that did this, but they typically did it far more frequently than the other two (or the independent stations). As it turns out, it was ABC which first broadcast *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* on network television, and as one might've expected, the version they broadcast was 12 minutes *longer* than the original theatrical release.

What's more, the theatrical release had been something of a disappointment, focusing mainly on special effects and downplaying character moments. The pacing was

glacially slow, to boot. The extended version didn't help with the pacing, but most of the restored scenes were character driven. Fans of the franchise mostly preferred the longer version, so much so, that *both* were commercially available to rent in movie rental shops or to purchase (if one could afford a VCR or Betamax).

However, the film's director, Ray Wise liked *neither* version, so when he had an opportunity to offer his input on the rerelease, a *third* version (sort of a happy medium between the two) was created.

As luck would have it, significant variations of some of the sequels *also* exist. Therefore, I believe it necessary to offer a guide for anyone not familiar with the variations of each.

Star Trek: The Motion Picture

Star Trek the Motion Picture (essentially Star Trek I, but never actually called this) has been released multiple times. The various versions of this movie are different enough to warrant a lengthy description of each.

Version 1: The Original Theatrical Release (1979: 132 minutes) was considered by many to be underwhelming. In this version, several scenes that were left on the cutting room floor—including Spock "weeping for V'ger as (he) would a brother"—would have vastly improved the story. Vulcan isn't supposed to have a moon (as per dialogue established in TOS: *The Man Trap*), but the Kolinar scene on Vulcan shows a *huge* moon in the sky. The TOS "Red" (and other) "Alert" siren are replaced by an annoying buzzer-klaxon and male computer voice describing what the alert is.

Version 2: The ABC Television / Special Longer Version (1980: 144 minutes). In order to fill two, three, or four hours of programming time slots with movies of var-

contractual agreements for commercial time during an occasional odd-hour "filler" slot), or come up with as much as 75 minutes of filler material (though this would, again, be difficult due to the contracts with the advertisers). The solution was to make an agreement with the movie's studio to reincorporate (mostly) fully produced and filmed but deleted scenes to sufficiently fill out the full four hours, including the allotted commercials. In the case of *Superman*, there are a *lot* of deleted scenes—enough to make an "extended edition" a la Peter Jackson and *Lord of the Rings* or *The Hobbit*.

²² This was mainly done to fill out enough allotted time to fill the fixed time-slot for their standard weeknight movie, in this case: two hours, including commercials. However, since the *theatrical* version of this movie's runtime was 127 minutes (two hours and seven minutes), they had to split the movie into two nights, i.e. *two* two-hour slots. However, 240 minutes minus 127 minutes equals 113, and that would be a *lot* of commercials (even by today's far more monetized for-profit media standards). ABC would either have to cut the movie substantially, modify their broadcast schedule (no easy task, especially because that would preempt contracted time slots for other shows, or even violate

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ying lengths and enough required commercials, network television stations would either cut *or add* scenes to make the length come out right (they'd also cut or censor anything that would take a movie out of a "PG" rating into a more restricted one). ABC typically would acquire the deleted scenes of many movies and splice as much of them as would be necessary to fill the time slot. In the case of *STTMP*, this resulted in the re-inclusion of 12 minutes of cut material, including the aforementioned scenes, plus a *lot* more dialogue from every character (particularly McCoy, Uhura, and Sulu). A few of these scenes are unnecessary (such as Sulu commenting on the yaw and pitch of the *Enterprise*), though a really funny bit of banter between Uhura and McCoy about the size of V'ger is hilariously funny, and very TOS-like:

Uhura (with awe and astonishment): "It could hold a crew of tens of thousands."

McCoy: "or a crew of a thousand ten miles tall!"

Unfortunately, one restored scene (of Kirk beginning his EVA to follow after Spock) is clearly unfinished, because if one looks at the top of the frame, one can see the wooden rigging holding up the exterior *Enterprise* dorsal saucer section. This scene is both extraneous and cringey as a result.

Version 3A: The Director's Cut (2001: 136 minutes).

This version retains some of the better restored scenes (including Spock weeping for V'Ger), omits mostly extraneous scenes (but unfortunately cuts the aforementioned Uhura / McCoy scene, though those can be seen in the "special features" in DVD / BlueRay versions), but has substantially improved FX. It also replaces the annoying buzzer-klaxon with the more traditional sounding "Red Alert" siren and removes the enormous "moon" from Vulcan's sky.

Version 3B: The 4K Anniversary Edition (2021: 136 Minutes). This version is the same as the previous, but with vastly improved visuals.²³

Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan

Version 1: The Original Theatrical Release (1982: 113 minutes). This is still usually considered the best of all 11 *Star Trek* movies (so far), however there are alternate variations of *this* film as well:

Version 2: The Broadcast Television Release (1983: 116 minutes). There were a few minor instances of censorship (McCoy's "goddamns" were edited down to mere "damns", and the scenes involving the Ceti Eels entering Chekov's and Terrell's ears were substantially cut, evidently to make them less graphic). Additionally, due to the unfortunate necessity of refitting a 70mm film aspect ratio into a 4:3 television screen format (as this was before the age of widescreen television), two alternate versions of filmed scenes (with different camera angles than the theatrical release scenes) were substituted:

1. The scene in the turbolift where Saavik discusses the *Kobyashi Maru* test;
2. The scene in *Space Station Regula 1* where Dr Carol Marcus, David, and the science staff discuss their next move after being (mis)informed by Chekov that Starfleet is militarizing the Genesis project.

The alternate takes are noticeably weaker than the theatrical releases.

On the more positive side, once again, the ABC network restored some cut scenes to the movie, including the following:

- A lengthier version of McCoy's visit to Kirk's San Francisco apartment, where he explained what the eye-glasses were and that they were antiques (the added dialogue is *entirely* consistent with the scene in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* where Kirk sells them to the antique dealer);
- A lengthier version of the "inspection scene" in the *Enterprise* Engine Room where Peter Preston banter with Kirk, followed by Scotty explaining, on screen, that the cadet is his nephew;
- The aforementioned scene on *Space Station Regula 1* was extended in two places: first, Carol Marcus asks who gave the order, to which Chekov replies "Starfleet Command", before David presses him to clarify (dishonestly, of course) that it came from Admiral Kirk;

²³ For a more detailed discussion of these alternate versions, see - <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0079945/alternateversions/> and <https://www.denofgeek.com/movies/comparing-the-three-versions-of-star-trek-the-motion-picture/>

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secondly, there's an extended ending where Carol Marcus tells the staff to "get their gear where it's handy". When asked by one of the staff where they're going, she responds, "that's for us to know and (the crew of the USS) *Reliant* to find out.

- An extended version of the argument between McCoy and Spock over the ethical questions surrounding the technology (Spock acknowledges that in the wrong hands, it could be dangerously weaponized, to which McCoy asks "who's hands are the *right* hands?) in Kirk's guest quarters;
- A longer version of the scene involving Peter Preston's death, beginning with Scotty, in tears, asking Kirk, "Why?", with Kirk explaining that Khan wants revenge. He then apologetically and gently prods Scotty about "getting the mains back on line", to which Scotty says, "I'll do my best, Sir". Additionally, after Scotty exits the sickbay, McCoy asks Kirk how Khan could've found out about Genesis. Kirk responds by explaining that he doesn't know, but acknowledges that it's an extremely dangerous development, by saying that "you said it yourself; it's a 'bang' that could rearrange the universe."
- After returning to the *Enterprise* after being rescued from the Genesis Cave buried deep inside the Regula 1 planetoid, Kirk, Spock, and Saavik ascend to the bridge using the same ladders and Jeffries Tubes that Spock later uses to get to Engineering in the climax. While lifting a hatch, Kirk says, "that young man; he's my son!" to which Spock replies, "fascinating.";
- Finally, just before the *Enterprise* enters the Mutara Nebula, Saavik asks Kirk how he knows Khan will follow him in, to which Spock replies, "I think we can guarantee he will; remind me to discuss with you, 'the human ego.'"

Every one of these scenes enhances and fleshes out the story without adversely disrupting the pacing of the story, and many felt that they adequately compensated for the weaker alternate takes and minor censorship.

Unfortunately, in preparing the sound mix for (almost exclusively mono) television sets, the audio remixing is atrocious, *especially* during action scenes with multilayered sound. The most painfully obvious examples both happen

in Engineering. The first instance happens during the first battle with *The Reliant* where Scotty's dialogue (which was substantially buried under all the other sounds, as well as screams from injured cadets, in the theatrical version) is so overweening that it drowns everything else out!²⁴ A similar bad remix—again over modulating Scotty's dialogue—happens when McCoy and Scotty are desperately pleading with Spock to get out of the lethally irradiated reaction chamber during the climax. There are several other examples, but those two are the worst.

Version 3A: The Directors' Cut: (116 minutes). This version represents—if the reader will pardon the expression—the best of both worlds. This version includes *all* of the restored footage, but retains the *original* theatrical versions of the two scenes that were substituted by weaker versions in the television version, with no censored dialogue or scenes, full movie screen ratio, and a far superior sound mix, to boot! The producers even boosted Scotty's admonishments to "Get back to your posts!" and "Use your respirators, lads!" just enough so that while the viewer gets the proper mix of sounds, Scotty's dialogue is just boosted enough to be discernible. This is how a "bonus" version *should* be done, frankly!

Version 3B: The Directors' Cut Anniversary Edition (2021: 116 minutes). This is mostly identical to the previous version, with greatly improved visuals and cinematography. The one noticeable downside is that while the *scene* where Kirk tells Spock that David is his son is retained, the looped dialogue is inexplicably omitted. Whether that's intentional (perhaps the producers reasoned that Spock would already know), accidental. Other than that, it's excellent.

It should be noted that there is an *additional* deleted scene, in which Kirk comments (to Spock) that Saavik is quite the hothead for a Vulcan. Spock responds by revealing that she's half-Romulan. This scene has never been restored in any edition, likely because Saavik being half-Romulan was written out of her character by the next movie (which is why Robin Curtis—who replaced Kirstie Alley in the role—played her much less emotional in the next movie. This deleted scene is available in the "deleted scenes" feature on DVD releases of the movie.

²⁴ The bad remix misled a reviewer from the TOS era fan magazine *Trek* to count Scotty admonishing the cadets, "Get back to your posts!", and "USE your respirators, lads!" as a restored scene, though in fact

that dialogue was already present in the theatrical version, just buried in the mix. A keen ear like mine could discern it, though.

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Star Trek III and IV

As far as anyone knows, there have never been any (re-leased) variants of these three movies, and the anniversary editions don't include any bonus scenes (either restored to the movie itself, or included as cut scenes). However, this doesn't mean that unseen footage doesn't exist. For example, there are scenes that either are known to exist, or are at least *rumored* to exist. The evidence for them is derived from comparisons of novelized versions of the movie with comic book adaptations of them.

That said, one cannot rely on novelized versions alone, because they tend to include many additional story elements (many of which *can* be traced to the movie's initial story concepts that are excised for reasons of pacing and timing, but also many added elements introduced by the novelizing author—usually Vonda McIntyre, in the case of *Star Trek*—that work in the context of a paperback novel, which has a different pacing than that of a movie) that were never intended to be filmed or were rejected early on for various reasons.

For example, the novelized version of *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* includes a major plot line that was ultimately never filmed involving the rescue of the *USS Reliant's* crew from Ceti Alpha V, an in universe explanation for Carol Marcus's "disappearance", and a short lived romance between David Marcus and Saavik (which was subtly hinted at in *The Wrath of Khan*, but seems to have gone a bit sour by the *filmed* version of *The Search for Spock*.) However, it's known that none of this was ever filmed, and it's likely it was never seriously considered, because it would have added almost an hour of story that offers little plot development beyond tying up some loose ends.

Graphic novel / comic book adaptations, however, tend to be much *closer* to theatrical movie releases, because they have a similar—if not even quicker—pacing. Scenes that appear in these that *don't* appear in theatrical releases are almost always the result of last-minute cuts to the movie, and if they *also* appear in novelized versions of the

same movie, then those are dead giveaways that the scene probably *does* exist, even if it hasn't been seen publicly.

Based on these criteria, going by the DC Comics²⁵ adaptation, there are at least *three* such scenes from *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* that possibly exist:

(1) After Kirk tells the *Enterprise* bridge crew he'll be in his quarters, the scene doesn't end with him quietly contemplating in the turbolift. It continues with him noticing that a rather disheveled McCoy is in there with him. The dialogue (if I recall correctly) proceeds as follows:

Kirk (slightly startled): "Well, Bones, did you forget to shave again today?"

McCoy (almost catatonic): "Quo Vadis, Admiral?"

Kirk: "What?"

McCoy: "Where are we going? What's our destination?"

Kirk: "Earth, Bones...we've been ordered home to Earth."

McCoy: "Then we're headed in the wrong direction; we need to be bound for Vulcan."

Kirk: "I know we all miss him Bones, even you, but orders are orders. We'll just have to bury our dead later."

McCoy: "Rememmmber..." (end scene)

(2) After McCoy is caught by Federation Security in the bar on Earth, and he asks, "where's the LOGIC in offering me a ride home, you idiot? If you think I wanted a ride home I'd be trying to charter a space flight?!?", the alien, after growling in exasperation, following McCoy's unsuccessful attempt at a Vulcan neck pinch actually starts a bar fight to avoid being arrested. He begins this action by yelling at McCoy, "Come in here and pinch people would you?!?" The fight breaks out, and the scene ends with the security guard arresting McCoy after futilely trying to pursue the alien.

As a result, there was no comic adaptation of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, but due to that film's overwhelming success and popularity, DC Comics launched a *third* attempt at a *Star Trek* comic, and the third time proved the proverbial charm. The comic series remained much truer to the franchise, characters, and concepts, essentially creating stories that happened between the movies, beginning with *Star Trek II*, albeit non canon stories. They also adapted all of the movies that followed.

²⁵ *Star Trek the Motion Picture* was adapted by Marvel Comics (appropriately enough, given the fact that Stan Lee was a huge fan of the franchise), and it launched the *second* attempt at a comic book adaptation of the franchise (the first being attempted by the now defunct Gold Key comics during the original run of TOS, which was mediocre at best and often seemed quite disconnected from the show concept or character outlines in the show's writers' guide), but the attempt fell flat.

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(3) Near the end of the movie, while Spock is being carried up the steps of Mount Seleya, a female Vulcan child standing in the row of priestesses offers a Vulcan hand salute and says, “Live long and prosper, Spock.” This, incidentally, is the “Vulcan Child” played by Katherine Blum whose name mysteriously appears in the movie’s end credits.

Why these scenes were cut has never been officially explained, but they almost certainly exist. There are also known to be longer flashbacks to Spock’s funeral, various scenes of the Klingons, and a scene where Kirk eulogizes David, some of which can be found on YouTube. These were removed for clarity and pacing. Hopefully, someday, there will be a version of the movie that includes them.

As for *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, the novelized version mostly fleshes out the scenes and character arcs in the movie. For example, the two sanitation workers who get spooked by the cloaked “*HMS Bounty*” (the captured Klingon bird-of-prey) have a lengthy story arc in which they attempt to solve the mystery, come close to the truth (based on second hand reports and rumors of the odd behavior of Kirk’s crew that filter through the news media), but ultimately decide that nobody would believe their story. There’s a character arc involving Sulu, having mixed feelings about continuing to risk his career, because he was being considered for captain of the *USS Excelsior*. Finally, Scotty further clarifies decision to give Dr Nichols the formula for transparent aluminum to McCoy, stating that he checked the history files and learning that the technology *was in fact invented by him*.

None of these details were included in the DC Comics adaptation of the film, however. The only common scene that I remember was a quip by Jillian Taylor in response to the revived, albeit drugged, Chekov humorously giving his rank as “admiral”, in which she asked, “Admiral? Don’t you have any enlisted types?”. If this scene (or any others that didn’t make the final print) was filmed, it remains a mystery.

There are also said to have been the following:

- A scene where Sulu meets a young boy in 20th Century San Francisco named “Akira”, who turns out to be one of his ancestors;
- Some minor establishing scenes at the Cetacean Institute featuring a background character named “Joe”;
- A longer scene of Chekov’s interrogation by the FBI; and

- Some exterior visual shots.

By the time these movies were being released for home viewing, VCRs and cable television had become standard, thus making the post-prime time movie slot on network television far less popular (to the point of being mostly phased out by the time TNG debuted in 1987). This *probably* explains why neither ABC (nor any other network) chose to air extended editions of either.

Of course, by the end of the 1990s, DVD players (which, being digital media—as opposed to analog, as was the case with VHS tapes—allowed for extra features and alternative “layers”) often included deleted scenes as standalone features. Interestingly, however, none of the DVD releases of either films—even the deluxe and/or anniversary editions—to my knowledge, feature any deleted scenes, even as standalone features.

Star Trek V: The Final Frontier

As the reader might surmise from my comments throughout this compendium, I have an incredibly dim view of this movie (in fact, I consider it among the most unwatchable of all of *Star Trek*). That said, those are my opinions *only*, and it is up to you, the viewer, to choose whether or not to heed my recommendations.

There is (thus far) only one version of the movie publicly available, and that is the 107 minute theatrical release. A longer director’s cut that William Shatner is said to prefer, exists, but little is known about the details or length.

However, there are “deleted scenes” available on some DVD releases of the movie.

Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country

The runtime of the theatrical release of this film clocked in at 110 minutes, however almost every home release of this movie included three additional minutes that included the following scenes:

- An extended scene in the Federation President’s office, following the arrest of Kirk and McCoy (after the Klingon ambassador and his aides leave) where Colonel West (played by Rene Auberjonois, interestingly enough) proposes a rescue operation (in front of the Romulan Ambassador, no less!)
- A later scene revealing that the Klingon assassin that Scotty phasers during the climactic scene (who then

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crashes through the window and falls to the main conference room below) is Colonel West in a mask. Colonel Worf (also played by Michael Dorn, of course) notices that his blood is *red* rather than magenta, and says “this is not Klingon blood!” before he’s unmasked like a Scooby Doo villain.

- The home release *also* includes image overlays of each conspirator as Valeris names them during her involuntary mind meld with Spock, though these don’t add much in the way of length beyond a second or two.

Apparently the first two scenes were cut because Gene Roddenberry strenuously objected to the very idea that Starfleet would *have* such a character as West²⁶, though everyone else seemed to think that gave the plot (to disrupt the peace process—not necessarily the movie, which is excellent enough already) more depth. Since Roddenberry passed away in between the time of the theatrical and home releases, it was an easy decision to restore them.

Star Trek Generations and Beyond

While DVD players wouldn’t become easily available and affordable to most viewers for another decade, by 1994, when *Generations* debuted, the days of alternate versions of movies had largely fallen out of favor (it would return quickly enough as a result of George Lucas releasing “updated” albeit controversial versions of his original *Star Wars* trilogy—with that only to be quickly one-upped by Peter Jackson producing “extended editions” of the theatrical versions of his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, each of which contain *at least* 30 minutes of additional material as a nice bonus for deeply devoted fans of JRR Tolkien’s work).

As a result, while there exist deleted scenes for just about every *Star Trek* film from *Generations* onward, these are only available as stand alone bonus features in home release media (such as DVDs and BluRay).

As someone who actually likes those scenes reintegrated into the main feature, it’s a bit of a disappointment for me, but most fans seem to be content with their being relegated to “footnotes” or “appendices”.

Here, then, are the movies, listed in (continuing) chronological order:

2273 AD²⁷

350. Star Trek: The Motion Picture (102)

2285-87 AD

- 351. Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (103)
- 352. Star Trek III: The Search for Spock (104)
- 353. Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home (105)
- 354. FGT 9A: Farragut Forward (Prologue)
- 355. FGT 9: Farragut Forward
- 356. Star Trek V: The Final Frontier (150)

2293 AD

357. Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country (216)

2299 AD (Star Trek Khan Audio Drama)

- 358. KHA 1: Paradise (40m)
- 359. KHA 2: Scheherazade (30m)
- 360. KHA 3: Do Your Worst (35m)
- 361. KHA 4: Magical Thinking (37m)
- 362. KHA 5: Imagination’s Limits (34m)
- 363. KHA 6: The Good of All (33m)

Ca 2300 AD

364. Star Trek: Of Gods and Men

²⁶ I prefer the restoration of the scenes myself, *especially* because they cement the fact that Col Worf is on the side of peace, but *definitely* believe the first of the two was sloppily written. That sort of subterfuge is not something one would discuss in front of the Romulans!

²⁷ I will add the movies’ running times later, since I am developing a piece on the variations in various releases of each, since there are more than one of some of the movies.

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24th Century

2364 AD (the “Lost” Era)

365. S311: Section 31 (streaming movie) (949) (95m)

2364 AD (The Next Generation, Season 1)²⁸

- 366. TNG 1: Encounter at Farpoint (106) (91m)
- 367. TNG 2: The Naked Now (107)
- 368. TNG 3: Code of Honor (108)
- 369. TNG 4: The Last Outpost (109)
- 370. TNG 5: Where No One Has Gone Before (110)
- 371. TNG 6: Lonely Among Us (111)
- 372. TNG 7: Justice (112)
- 373. TNG 8: The Battle (113)
- 374. TNG 9: Hide and Q (114)
- 375. TNG 10: Haven (115)
- 376. TNG 11: The Big Goodbye (116)
- 377. TNG 12: Datalore (117)
- 378. TNG 13: Angel One (118)
- 379. TNG 14: 11001001 (119)
- 380. TNG 15: Too Short a Season (120)
- 381. TNG 16: When the Bough Breaks (121)
- 382. TNG 17: Home Soil (122)
- 383. TNG 18: Coming of Age (123)
- 384. TNG 19: Heart of Glory (124)
- 385. TNG 20: The Arsenal of Freedom (125)
- 386. TNG 21: Symbiosis (126)
- 387. TNG 22: Skin of Evil (127)
- 388. TNG 23: We’ll Always Have Paris (128)
- 389. TNG 25: The Neutral Zone (130)²⁹
- 390. TNG 24: Conspiracy (129)

2365 AD (The Next Generation, Season 2)

- 391. TNG 26: The Child (132)
- 392. TNG 27: Where Silence Has Lease (133)
- 393. TNG 28: Elementary, Dear Data (134)
- 394. TNG 29: The Outrageous Okona (135)
- 395. TNG 30: Loud as a Whisper (136)
- 396. TNG 31: The Schizoid Man (137)
- 397. TNG 32: Unnatural Selection (138)

- 398. TNG 33: A Matter of Honor (139)
- 399. TNG 34: The Measure of a Man (140)³⁰
- 400. TNG 35: The Dauphin (141)
- 401. TNG 36: Contagion (142)
- 402. TNG 37: The Royale (143)
- 403. TNG 38: Time Squared (144)
- 404. TNG 39: The Icarus Factor (145)
- 405. TNG 40: Pen Pals (146)
- 406. TNG 41: Q Who (147)
- 407. TNG 42: Samaritan Snare (148)
- 408. TNG 43: Up the Long Ladder (149)
- 409. TNG 44: Manhunt (151)
- 410. TNG 45: The Emissary (152)
- 411. TNG 46: Peak Performance (153)
- 412. TNG 47: Shades of Gray (154)

2366 AD (The Next Generation, Season 3)

- 413. TNG 48: Evolution (155)
- 414. TNG 49: The Ensigns of Command (156)
- 415. TNG 50: The Survivors (157)
- 416. TNG 51: Who Watches the Watchers (158)
- 417. TNG 52: The Bonding (159)
- 418. TNG 53: Booby Trap (160)
- 419. TNG 54: The Enemy (161)
- 420. TNG 55: The Price (162)
- 421. TNG 56: The Vengeance Factor (163)
- 422. TNG 57: The Defector (164)
- 423. TNG 58: The Hunted (165)
- 424. TNG 59: The High Ground (166)
- 425. TNG 60: Déjà Q (167)
- 426. TNG 61: A Matter of Perspective (168)
- 427. TNG 62: Yesterday’s Enterprise (169)
- 428. TNG 63: The Offspring (170)
- 429. TNG 64: Sins of the Father (171)
- 430. TNG 65: Allegiance (172)
- 431. TNG 66: Captain’s Holiday (173)
- 432. TNG 67: Tin Man (174)
- 433. TNG 68: Hollow Pursuits (176)
- 434. TNG 69: The Most Toys (176)
- 435. TNG 70: Sarek (177)

²⁸ All TNG, DS9, and VOY episodes are 43-44 minutes in length, unless otherwise indicated.

²⁹ Episodes 25 and 24 are juxtaposed, because initially they were meant to be the initial parts of the Borg story-arc, but this was shelved due to the reconfiguring of the latter from an insectoid species to a cyborg race

combined with the writers’ strike. The juxtaposition still suggests that the two are connected, even if they ultimately aren’t.

³⁰ There is a special, extended version of this episode available on the BluRay disc set which includes several minutes of restored footage.

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- 436. TNG 71: Ménage à Troi (178)
- 437. TNG 72: Transfigurations (179)
- 438. TNG 73: The Best of Both Worlds, Part 1 (180)

2367 AD (The Next Generation, Season 4)

- 439. TNG 74: The Best of Both Worlds, Part 2 (181)
- 440. TNG 75: Family (182)
- 441. TNG 76: Brothers (183)
- 442. TNG 77: Suddenly Human (184)
- 443. TNG 78: Remember Me (185)
- 444. TNG 79: Legacy (186)
- 445. TNG 80: Reunion (187)
- 446. TNG 81: Future Imperfect (188)
- 447. TNG 82: Final Mission (189)
- 448. TNG 83: The Loss (190)
- 449. TNG 84: Data's Day (191)
- 450. TNG 85: The Wounded (192)
- 451. TNG 86: Devil's Due (193)
- 452. TNG 87: Clues (194)
- 453. TNG 88: First Contact (195)
- 454. TNG 89: Galaxy's Child (196)
- 455. TNG 90: Night Terrors (197)
- 456. TNG 91: Identity Crisis (198)
- 457. TNG 92: The Nth Degree (199)
- 458. TNG 93: Qpid (200)
- 459. TNG 94: The Drumhead (201)
- 460. TNG 95: Half a Life (202)
- 461. TNG 96: The Host (203)
- 462. TNG 97: The Mind's Eye (204)
- 463. TNG 98: In Theory (205)
- 464. TNG 99: Redemption, Part 1 (206)

2368 AD (The Next Generation, Season 5)

- 465. TNG 100: Redemption, Part 2 (207)
- 466. TNG 101: Darmok (208)
- 467. TNG 102: Ensign Ro (209)
- 468. TNG 103: Silicon Avatar (210)
- 469. TNG 104: Disaster (211)
- 470. TNG 105: The Game (212)
- 471. TNG 106: Unification, Part 1 (213)
- 472. TNG 107: Unification, Part 2 (214)
- 473. TNG 108: A Matter of Time (215)
- 474. TNG 109: New Ground (217)
- 475. TNG 110: Hero Worship (218)
- 476. TNG 111: Violations (219)
- 477. TNG 112: The Masterpiece Society (220)
- 478. TNG 113: Conundrum (221)

- 479. TNG 114: Power Play (222)
- 480. TNG 115: Ethics (223)
- 481. TNG 116: The Outcast (224)
- 482. TNG 117: Cause and Effect (225)
- 483. TNG 118: The First Duty (226)
- 484. TNG 119: Cost of Living (227)
- 485. TNG 120: The Perfect Mate (228)
- 486. TNG 121: Imaginary Friend (229)
- 487. TNG 122: I, Borg (230)
- 488. TNG 123: The Next Phase (231)
- 489. TNG 124: The Inner Light (232)
- 490. TNG 125: Time's Arrow, Part 1 (233)

2369 AD (TNG, Season 6; DS9 Season 1)

- 491. TNG 126: Time's Arrow, Part 2 (234)
- 492. TNG 127: Realm of Fear (235)
- 493. TNG 128: Man of the People (236)
- 494. TNG 129: Relics (237)
- 495. TNG 130: Schisms (238)
- 496. TNG 131: True Q (239)
- 497. TNG 132: Rascals (240)
- 498. TNG 133: A Fistful of Datas (241)
- 499. TNG 134: The Quality of Life (242)
- 500. TNG 135: Chain of Command, Part 1 (243)
- 501. TNG 136: Chain of Command, Part 2 (244)
- 502. DS9 1: Emissary (245) (91m)
- 503. DS9 2: Past Prologue (246)
- 504. DS9 3: A Man Alone (247)
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³¹ Some episodes are listed slightly out of broadcast sequence, because of the numerous two and three-part episodes sprinkled throughout this "year" for story-flow.

³² Insert this episode into the previous in between the scenes where Picard confronts Riker in the captain's quarters and Picard's conference with the admiral in his ready room.

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³³ The length of these two episodes combined is 93 minutes.

³⁴ This is placed at the end of the list for the obvious reason that it is a season-ending cliffhanger.

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- 999. LDS 20: First First Contact (811)
- 1000. LDS 21: Grounded (854)
- 1001. LDS 22: The Least Dangerous Game (855)
- 1002. LDS 23: Mining the Mind's Mines (856)
- 1003. LDS 24: Room for Growth (857)
- 1004. LDS 25: Reflections (858)
- 1005. LDS 26: Hear All, Trust Nothing (859)
- 1006. LDS 27: A Mathematically Perfect Redemption (860)
- 1007. LDS 28: Crisis Point 2 (861)
- 1008. LDS 29: Trusted Sources (862)
- 1009. LDS 30: The Stars at Night (863)
- 1010. LDS 31: Twovix (894)
- 1011. LDS 32: I Have No Bones Yet I Must Flee (895)
- 1012. LDS 33: In the Cradle of Vexilon (898)
- 1013. LDS 34: Something Borrowed, Something Green (900)
- 1014. LDS 35: Empathological Fallacies (902)
- 1015. LDS 36: Parth Ferengi's Heart Place (904)
- 1016. LDS 37: A Few Badgeys More (905)
- 1017. LDS 38: Caves (906)
- 1018. LDS 39: The Inner Fight (907)
- 1019. LDS 40: Old Friends, New Planets (908)

³⁵ Most episodes are 23-28 minutes in length, with a few notable exceptions.

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2381 AD (Lower Decks, Seasons 5)

- 1020. LDS 41: Dos Cerritos (939) (30m)
- 1021. LDS 42: Shades of Green (941)
- 1022. LDS 43: The Best Exotic Nanite Hotel (942)
- 1023. LDS 44: A Farewell To Farms (943)
- 1024. LDS 45: Starbase 80?! (944)
- 1025. LDS 46: Of Gods and Angles (945)
- 1026. LDS 47: Fully Dilated (946)
- 1027. LDS 48: Upper Decks (947)
- 1028. LDS 49: Fissure Quest (948)
- 1029. LDS 50: The New Next Generation (949) (33m)

Very Short Treks (not canonical)

- A. VST 1: Skin a Cat (23rd Century) (896)
- B. VST 2: Holiday Party (April 5, 2259) (897)
- C. VST 3: Worst Contact (24th Century) (899)
- D. VST 4: Holograms All The Way Down (NA) (901)
- E. VST 5: Walk, Don't Run (NA) (903)

2383 AD (Prodigy, Season 1)³⁶

- 1030. PROD 1&2: Lost & Found (812)
- 1031. PROD 2: Starstruck (813)
- 1032. PROD 3: Dream Catcher (814)
- 1033. PROD 4: Terror Firma (815)
- 1034. PROD 5: Kobayashi (823)
- 1035. PROD 6: First Con-tact (824)
- 1036. PROD 7: Time Amok (825)
- 1037. PROD 8: A Moral Star, Part 1 (826)
- 1038. PROD 9: A Moral Star, Part 2 (827)
- 1039. PROD 10: Asylum (864)
- 1040. PROD 11: Let Sleeping Borg Lie (865)
- 1041. PROD 12: All the World's a Stage (866)
- 1042. PROD 13: Crossroads (867)
- 1043. PROD 14: Masquerade (868)
- 1044. PROD 15: Preludes (869)
- 1045. PROD 16: Ghost in the Machine (870)
- 1046. PROD 17: Mindwalk (871)
- 1047. PROD 18: Supernova, Part 1 (872)
- 1048. PROD 19: Supernova, Part 2 (873)

2385 AD (Prodigy, Season 2)

- 1049. PROD 20: Into the Breach, Part I (919)
- 1050. PROD 21: Into the Breach, Part II (920)

- 1051. PROD 22: Who Saves the Saviors (921)
- 1052. PROD 23: Temporal Mechanics 101 (922)
- 1053. PROD 24: Observer's Paradox (923)
- 1054. PROD 25: Imposter Syndrome (924)
- 1055. PROD 26: The Fast and the Curious (925)
- 1056. PROD 27: Is There in Beauty No Truth? (926)
- 1057. PROD 28: The Devourer of All Things, Part I (927)
- 1058. PROD 29: The Devourer of All Things, Part II (928)
- 1059. PROD 30: Last Flight of the Protostar, Part I (929)
- 1060. PROD 31: Last Flight of the Protostar, Part II (930)
- 1061. PROD 32: A Tribble Called Quest (931)
- 1062. PROD 33: Cracked Mirror (932)
- 1063. PROD 34: Ascension, Part I (933)
- 1064. PROD 35: Ascension, Part II (934)
- 1065. PROD 36: Brink (935)
- 1066. PROD 37: Touch of Grey (936)
- 1067. Short Trek 10: Children of Mars (768)
- 1068. PROD 38: Ouroboros, Part I (937)
- 1069. PROD 39: Ouroboros, Part II (938)

The Kelvin Timeline (alternate 23rd Century timeline branch-off from 2387 AD Prime Universe)

- 2385 Star Trek XI: Star Trek (2233-2255 AD, Kelvin) (727)
- 2386 Star Trek XII: Into Darkness (2259 AD, Kelvin) (728)
- 2387 Star Trek XIII: Beyond (2263 AD, Kelvin) (729)

³⁶ The running times for these episodes is not yet available. I will add it in future editions.

Star Trek Stellar Cartography: Where Is Everything In the Star Trek Universe?

Where does the *Star Trek* universe exist, and where is everything in it located relative to Earth? This is actually a more intriguing question than many think.

With rare exception, *Star Trek* takes place in our own Milky Way Galaxy. Although most of the locations and star names are fictional, a few of them are actually existing stars (though sometimes the various episode writers are a little careless with the stellar geography, or “astrography”, as I will illustrate).

First of all, it’s important to remember two crucially important things:

1. Even Though it’s Mostly Empty, Space is Big
2. Space has Three Dimensions

Space Is Big

First, space is big, in fact *immensely* big. Quoting from Douglas Adams in *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*,

Space is big. You just won’t believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it’s a long way down the road to the chemist’s, but that’s just peanuts to space.

Although that statement is meant to be at least partially irreverently tongue-in-cheek, typically Monty-Pythesque British humor, it is nevertheless absolutely true (at least as perceived by us puny humans).

Consider the following thought experiment: if you could take a road-trip from Earth to the Sun (ignoring all of the real-world impossibilities of such a journey), averaging 500 miles per day (after all, we all need to periodically eat, sleep, and relieve ourselves), how long would it take? On average, the Earth orbits the Sun at 93,000,000 miles (or one “AU”, ie “Astronomical Unit”) distant³⁷. Doing the math, it would take 186,000 days, ie just over 509½ years!

Nevertheless, this is a distance of a mere 8 light *minutes*, though, meaning that at light speed, the journey takes eight minutes for the light from the Sun to reach the Earth. If you were to stare at the Sun (*please* don’t stare at the Sun; unlike Spock, you don’t have inner eyelids) you’re seeing what it looked like approximately 8 minutes ago). In the universe of *Star Trek*, Warp 1 is the equivalent of Light

Speed. That means if you were Captain Kirk, and ordered the *USS Enterprise* to fly from Earth Space Dock (ESD) make a quick close elliptical orbit of the Sun, and return to Earth, all at Warp 1 (once safely away from ESD), you’d have almost enough time to listen to Iron Butterfly’s classic song *Ina Gotta Divita* (or one of approximately a dozen of Yes’s longer progressive rock epics) in its entirety.

Now consider a similar trip from Earth to Jupiter. The latter orbits the Sun at approximately 5 AUs distant. One could argue that this means the journey would take four times as long (after all, $5-1 = 4$) but remember also that Earth and Jupiter orbit the Sun at different speeds, so closest approach happens rarely (plus, considering our limited speed of 500 miles per day, both planets will make hundreds of orbits during the course of our slow traverse, so it could take anywhere from 4-6 times as long, ie anywhere from 2,000-3,000 years. At Warp 1, you could *still* watch an entire TOS era *Star Trek* episode with almost a dozen minutes to spare (64 minutes overall).

Of course, humans have achieved space flight and much greater speeds than driving an automobile—though nothing close to light speed. It took a mere two years for Voyager 1 to reach Jupiter. Other probes have taken longer, but not much. Still, that distance is a far cry from that to the nearest star system, Alpha Centauri, at approximately 4.3 light years (LY) away. One LY = 5,879,000,000,000 miles, ie a journey of over 32 *million* years at 500 miles per day.

The point is, space is mind-bogglingly big! What’s more, in being so, it takes a *lot* of time to explore it.

How much of our Galaxy has been explored in TOS is never firmly established, though certainly *some* of it remains “astra incognito” to the Federation, or else there’d be no “strange new worlds” to explore. That said, some of the dialogue, if taken literally, implies that the Federation spans all four of the galactic quadrants, but as is later established in the first season of TNG, the Federation has only explored between 11-19% of the Galaxy (and a good portion of that might have been limited to unmanned probes), and this is limited to the very near regions of the so-called “Alpha” and “Beta” Quadrants (more about them later).

This makes sense, because even warp speed has limits, although a bit of a digressive explanation is necessary to explain that as well. In TOS, the warp scale seems to be

³⁷ Earth’s orbit of the sun is ever so slightly elliptical, and its eccentricity varies over millions of years ranging from as little as almost zero (perfectly circular) to 0.067.

based on the cube of light speed. Therefore, in TOS, TAS, and the associated movies, this produces the following speed scale:

- Warp 1 = Speed of Light
- Warp 2 = 8x Light Speed
- Warp 3 = 27x Light Speed
- Warp 4 = 64x Light Speed
- Warp 5 = 125x Light Speed
- Warp 10 = 1000x Light Speed

...and so forth. In the TOS era (2265-69 AD) the maximum safe speed for a *Constitution Class* starship, like the OG *Enterprise* is Warp 9 (but only for extreme emergencies), or 729x Light Speed. Its top standard cruising velocity is Warp 6 with speeds at 7 or 8 to be used in urgent situations for limited durations. Remember that this means that at Warp 9, it would take the *USS Enterprise NCC 1701* an entire *year* to travel 729 LY. It would take considerably longer to travel that distance at Warp 6.

And, as is indicated by dialogue throughout TOS era *Trek* the warp scale goes well above factor 10. The counterclock starship in TAS: *The Counterclock Incident* achieves Warp 36, ie 46656x Light Speed! At one time, due to unsolicited tinkering by “Losira” in TOS: *That Which Survives* the *Enterprise* nearly achieves Warp 15. Although it’s not stated on screen, various technical specifications state that the refitted *Enterprise* (following the retrofit seen in *Star Trek the Motion Picture*) has a top speed of Warp 12. Had the *USS Excelsior’s* trans warp drive (*Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*) worked as hoped, it theoretically could achieve Warp 99 (it’s never established that it ever achieved that speed, and the dialogue in *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* seems to indicate that it never achieved speeds greater than that of the *Enterprise*).

By the 24th Century, the warp scale appears to have been redefined such that, by the year VOY: *Threshold* takes place, it’s become a *logarithmic* scale with Warp 1 still representing Light Speed, and Warp 10 being infinitely fast. This wasn’t *quite* the case in TNG, however, because Warp 10 was a speed that *could* be exceeded, as was done by the *Enterprise-D* in the first season episode, *Where No One Has Gone Before*, with the aid of the Traveler, and in the alternate future timeline in the finale, *All Good Things*, where it achieves Warp 13.

It’s not likely that the TNG warp scale was the same as TOS, though. It was likely meant as logarithmic, but with Warp 10 being a near impossible speed to reach. The actual scale is never fully explained, but what *is* established

is that *USS Voyager NCC 74856* would require approximately 70 years to travel approximately 70,000 LY, ie 1000 LY per year, at a top cruising speed of Warp ~9.75.

Given all of that, the 11-19% figure seems entirely believable.

“Wait a minute!” I can hear you protesting, “didn’t Captain Kirk order the *Enterprise* to leave the Galaxy in his very first episode, *Where No Man Has Gone Before?*” Well, yes, but remember, there are many places from which one can exit our Galaxy, which leads to the second crucial point:

Space has Three Dimensions

Therefore, Captain Kirk could simply fly straight “up” or “down” from his location and cross the Galactic Barrier only a few hundred LY from the heart of Federation Space if necessary. Of course, Space having volume as well as area makes it much less likely that the Federation would reach the Galaxy’s far edge any time soon. Three-dimensional Space is *especially* time consuming to traverse, let alone explore, *even though space is mostly empty*. Another thought experiment can help illustrate this.

Let’s say you were conducting a nature survey in a particular location, cataloging flora, fauna, meteorology, climate, geology, hydrography, etc. Let’s assume that our survey covers a one-mile radius from our location. Add people to the location, and your survey would require much more time, especially if you wanted to engage in thorough anthropological research. This might be analogous to studying a planet in the service of Starfleet. If you’re on a “first contact” mission, like the *USS Enterprise NCC 1701-**, the exploration might last a few days before moving on to the next planet. If, on the other hand, you were on a science mission, such as the ill-fated *USS Grissom*, your mission might take a good deal longer, perhaps weeks, months, or even *years*. In case the reader hasn’t surmised this yet, what I have just described is essentially (though not perfectly) described a single point in space, or “Dimension Zero”.³⁸

Now, consider conducting such a survey along a ten-mile road, ie a straight line. Even in a mostly barren, desert environment, with a team of a few dozen surveyors, that would be fairly time consuming. We’re now surveying ten times as much as before. Yet, we’re only considering one dimension of space here, the “x” axis.

Now, let’s consider a plot of land ten miles square. Now we’re surveying *one hundred* times as much ground as our initial survey, because ten to the power of two, or 10x10 equals one hundred. Now we have “x” and “y” di-

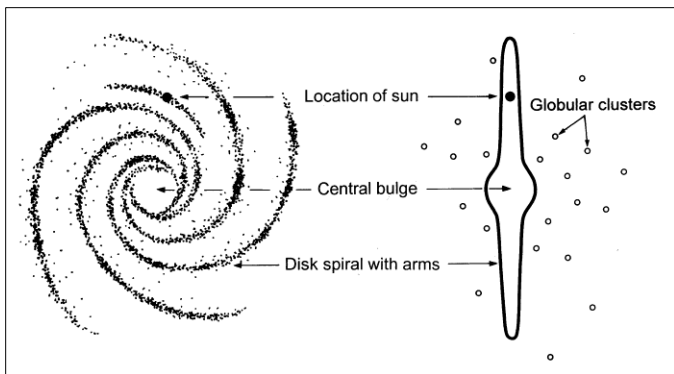
³⁸ It’s not, strictly speaking, a truly “zero dimensional” space if you can see a mile in each direction, of course, or even if you can survey an en-

tire planet (but only the planet), but considering the vastness of space, it’s damn near *close* to zero dimensions.

mensions. Yet, even this isn't yet analogous to space exploration, because this constitutes merely *two* of three spatial dimensions.

No, to imagine exploring space, imagine that you had to explore every bit of airspace above your ten-mile square for ten miles upwards (or every bit of subterranean volume ten miles downwards). That's 10x10x10 or ten to the power of three, ie *one-thousand times as much volume as your initial survey*. Now we've added the "z" axis, and *that* is what exploring (three dimensional) Space is like.

"Ah!" You might respond, "but our galaxy is mostly flat, like a pancake." That's true, except that it's a substantially *thick* pancake. In fact it's thicker the closer you get to the center. It's actually more like a pastry, with a bulging middle than a pancake. Estimates vary (partly due to debate over what interstellar "stuff" is included in what constitutes it), but our galaxy is believed to be between 100,000-140,000 LY across (x and y dimensions) and anywhere from 1,000-40,000 LY "thick", depending on your distance from the galactic core (z dimension).



(Note: in this diagram, the Sun is positioned above the galactic central disc in the overhead view, but for the balance of this explanation, the Sun will be shown *below* it.)

In late 24th Century *Star Trek* (for which there is the greatest amount of canonical information), the greatest possible extent of the United Federation of Planets is said to be approximately 3,000 LY. As I will elaborate later, however, the "shape" of this extent is neither circular nor spherical, but rather an irregular, amorphous, amoeba-like splotch with very wide and very narrow sections (due to the preexisting claims to spatial territory by interstellar civilizations that predate the Federation, which, even in the TOS era, is a recent upstart) depending on the case.

Unfortunately, most canonical "maps" render it in two-dimensions, or more accurately, a flattened projection of three-dimensional space in two dimensions. For this reason, these maps might make some locations (e.g. Sol and Bajor / DS9) appear to be much closer together than they probably are. Sol lies approximately 55 LY distant from the central galactic "plane". By contrast, Bajor *could* be ~1200 LY (for example) higher or lower than the plane,

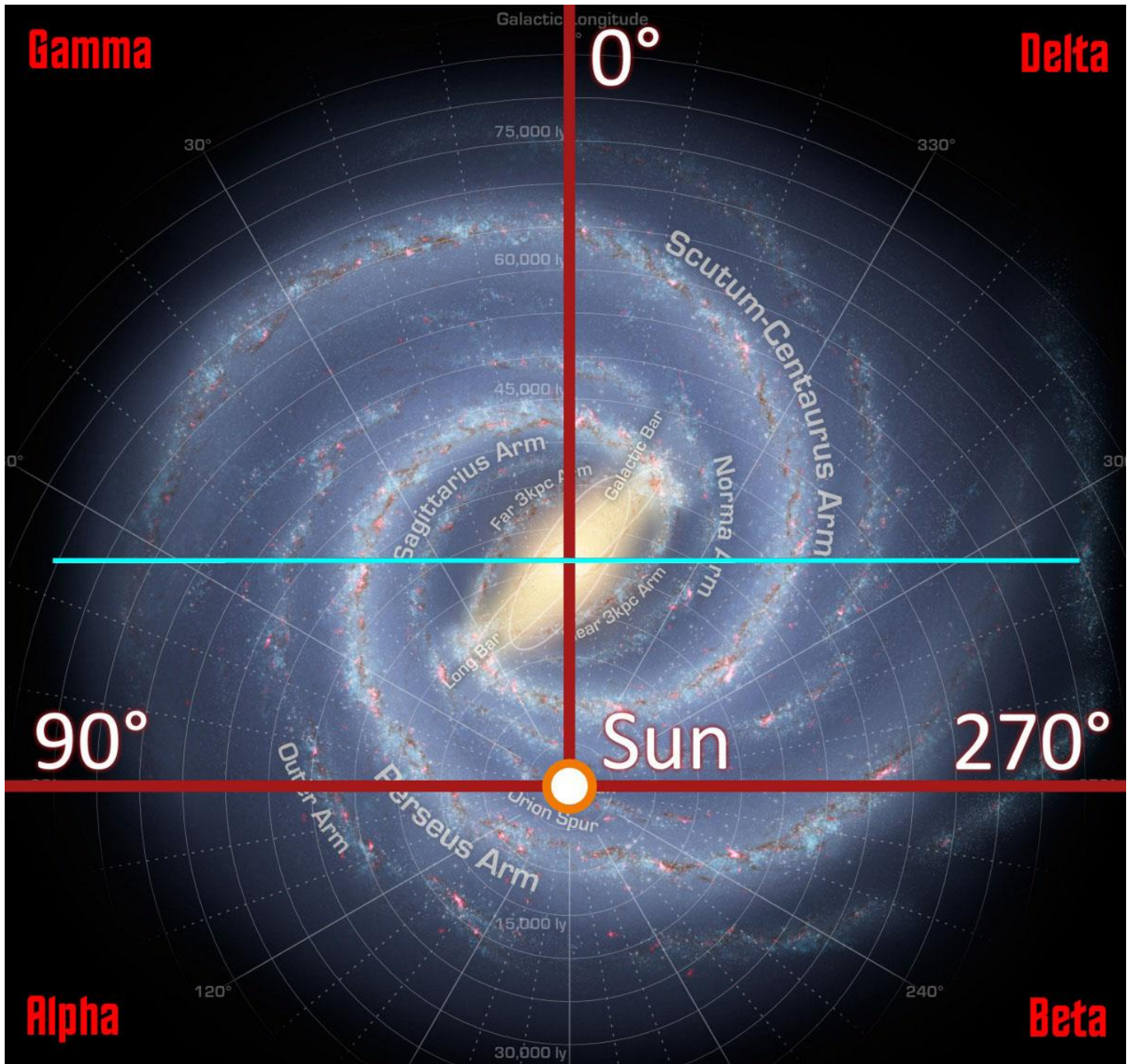
though some maps suggest a distance of only ~100 LY. In reality, however, the *actual* distance in this hypothetical scenario *could* be anywhere from 1245-1355 LY distant. (Remember, space is mind bogglingly big.)

This fact that doesn't come across especially well in the medium of television, and many of the writers don't do the audience any favors in glossing over these concepts. To be fair, it's not an easy matter to convey. It's made worse by the fact that *usually* the onscreen exterior shots of hero ships—particularly in older series—generally show the starboard side, with the ships transiting from left to right (enemy ships often transit the opposite way, though not always, especially if they're being pursued, such as the Romulan ship in TOS: *Balance of Terror*). There are numerous reasons for this convention, including budgetary limitations (exterior spaceship shots cost money), cultural norms (Westerners read from left to right), and psychological (entering from audience-left is considered a sign of strength, and yes, there are studies devoted to this phenomenon. Don't ask me why).

There are a few notable welcome exceptions, such as the climactic battle in *Star Trek II: the Wrath of Khan* or the arrival of the *Galaxy Class USS Enterprise-D* in the alternate future timeline where three-dimensional travel is used in dramatic and satisfying fashion.

On the other hand, the location of the planet, Cheron (not to be confused with Pluto's largest satellite, *Charon*, which was discovered a decade later) in "the extreme southern part of the Galaxy" in TOS: *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield*, is probably meant to be a less than subtle dig (no matter how well deserved) at the "Jim Crow South", since this episode was intended as a political statement against racial bigotry, especially given that it was produced in 1969. If one were to interpret that dialogue literally, "extreme southern part" is difficult to map, because the Galaxy has no "north" or "south" per se, unless its relative to a planetary north or south, such as Earth, and it's not clear if Captain Kirk—who utters that dialogue—is referring to Earth (and to make it more complicated, Earth's orbit is inclined 60 *degrees* relative to the galactic plane!)

Indeed, conceptualizing where *anything* outside of the Solar System actually "is" in the *Star Trek* universe relative to Earth is challenging, particularly in TOS, when a good deal of those details were vague (and often fluid) and, frankly, still being worked out.



Schematic of the Milky Way Galaxy, seen from “above”. Note that the blue horizontal line demarcates the boundary between the Alpha and Gamma Quadrants and between the Delta and Beta Quadrants.

The Four Galactic Quadrants

Frequently the viewer will hear references made to the “Alpha”, “Beta”, “Gamma” and “Delta” Quadrants, at least in every series except TOS, TAS, and the first two seasons of TNG. In truth, this galactic naming convention was a retcon, first adapted in the early 3rd season TNG episode, *The Price*. Although that particular episode mostly focuses on the fleeting romantic relationship between Deanna Troi and the rather creepy and sociopathic, part Betazed negoti-

ator, Devinani Ral, it actually foreshadows both DS9 (the supposedly stable Barzan wormhole to the Gamma Quadrant echoes the *actually* stable Bajoran wormhole to that same quadrant) and VOY (the two Ferengi, Arridor and Kol get stranded in the Delta Quadrant, just as *Voyager* would be six or seven years later—and, in fact, *Voyager* and its crew later *encounter* these same two Ferengi).

Prior to that episode, the terms “quadrant” and “sector” are used quite casually, almost as if they’re the same thing (they aren’t actually. A “sector” is an approximately 10-cubic light year “block” of space, much smaller in fact,

than a “quadrant”).³⁹ Frequently dialogue in TOS and TNG will refer to “the” or “this” “quadrant” as if it’s some regional area, but *not* an actual *quarter* of the galactic disc. In at least two successive second-season episodes of TNG (*The Child* and *Where Silence Has Lease*) Captain Picard refers to “the Morgana Quadrant” by name, though in actual fact, he is likely referring to the Morgana *Sector* (or a group of so-named sectors).

Where are the Four Quadrants and Federation Space?

It’s helpful to imagine the barred-spiral of our galaxy as the face of a giant clock, seen from directly “above”, though since space has no “up” and “down”, merely three different axes (x, y, and z) of direction, the position of “up” is somewhat arbitrary.⁴⁰

For the purposes of the *Star Trek* universe, “up” is the direction from which an overhead view of the Milky Way Galaxy’s spiral appears to show a *clockwise* motion. The Galaxy’s spiral arms appear to be “pulled in” towards the center, as they rotate and spiral *inwards* and clockwise towards the center. “Down”, therefore, would be at the opposite perspective, ie where the Galaxy appears to rotate *counterclockwise*. For the remainder of this guide, the assumption is that the Galaxy is being viewed from the “up” (clockwise) perspective.

As established in the books *Star Trek Star Charts* and *Star Trek Stellar Cartography*—both of which are now considered (mostly) canonical—the Alpha Quadrant is located from “6-9 O’clock”. “Beta stretches from “3-6 O’clock”. Gamma exists between “9-12 O’clock” and Delta from “12-3”. The Solar System is located at *precisely* “six o’clock” (about 3/5ths outward from the center). Here are some of the notable features of each:

- Alpha Quadrant - includes approximately 60% of the Federation (by the conclusion of VOY), the Cardassian Union, the Breen Confederacy, the Tholians, Ferengi, Bajor, the First Federation (Balok’s people), Talos, and Starbase 11.
- Beta Quadrant - includes approximately 40% of the Federation (by the conclusion of VOY) the Romulan Star Empire, the Klingon Empire, The Gorn Hegemony, and the Metron Consortium. The Kzinti *might* also be centered here.
- Gamma Quadrant - is home to the Dominion and all of its satellites
- Delta Quadrant - is where the Borg are predominantly located (though they are also sprinkled throughout the

other quadrants, particularly the far Beta Quadrant), as well as the Kazon, Viidians, Ocampa, Talaxians, Krenim, Malon, and Vaudwaur (and numerous others encountered by the crew of *Voyager* on its journey back to Federation space).

This convention was established organically, and mostly retroactively, through subtle retcons, as *Star Trek* evolved.

However, this might not have been the original thinking when the four quadrants were initially conceived. Based on much of the dialogue in the TNG, DS9, and VOY era of the franchise, the initial conception *might* have been that rather than Sol being on the Alpha/Beta “prime meridian”, it was *instead* located at the exact *middle* of the quadrant, at least relative to its radial boundaries.

In *that* convention, the Alpha Quadrant would have spanned the “clock” face from 4:30 - 7:30, and Delta would have spanned 10:30 - 1:30. The locations of Beta and Gamma could have been on either the left or right side, though likely Beta was always meant to be on the right and Gamma on the left (if looking from the same vertical “bird’s eye view” as the now accepted convention—knowing, of course that one could look at the galaxy from the *opposite* direction and visualize the “clock” from the reverse angle).

This alternative convention, with 6 O’clock running through the *center* of Alpha would seem to make more sense based on some of the dialogue, especially in DS9 and VOY where the Federation is often described solely as an *Alpha* Quadrant power (and the Klingons and Romulans are as well), and not to mention that *Voyager* seeks to return there, especially since the Beta Quadrant is rarely mentioned in dialogue. Unfortunately there are two problems with that theory:

First of all, dialogue in *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* essentially establishes the location of much of Klingon space being in the *Beta* Quadrant, by virtue of Khitomer being there—as inferred by Sulu’s dialogue. And, if The Klingon Empire exists primarily in the Beta Quadrant, the Romulan Empire—which lies adjacent to parts of Klingon space further inwards towards the galactic core—must as well.

More importantly, by the “Kurtzman” era of *Star Trek* (DISCO and beyond), the maps shown in *Star Trek Star Charts* and *Star Trek Stellar Cartography* had essentially been adopted as canon; or, at least, the overall conception of the four quadrants and the general locations of the galactic powers were. A few of the fictional stars might not have

³⁹ In fact, the easiest down and dirty explanation is that prior to TNG: *The Price*, the term “quadrant” merely referred to a group of sectors.

⁴⁰ Falling back on an essentially Eurocentric convention, one *could* assign “up” to celestial north—ie from Earth—but that doesn’t especially

work, because the solar system’s ecliptic is inclined appropriately 60 degrees from the galactic plane.

been (and, to be certain, there are some discrepancies between *Star Trek Star Charts* and *Star Trek Stellar Cartography*).

This—as I explain in greater detail in **“NuTrek”, Continuity, and Canon**—is an inevitable evolution that takes place in just about *every* expansive fictional universe: rough sketches are made at the outset, and much detail is filled in later. As more details are added, some of the newer information reworks vaguer conceptions that previously existed. This is as true for actual maps as it is for characters and historical information. This phenomenon is *especially* apparent in matters and areas of the fictional universe that are infrequently featured, and one of the most frustratingly inconsistent places in terms of the franchise’s continuity, is the Milky Way’s central regions, known as the “Galactic Core”, a region only visited thrice in the entirety of *Star Trek*.

Star Trek’s Inconsistent Core Problem

In real life, it is now known that the Milky Way’s galactic core contains a super massive black hole, likely the stellar remnant of a primordial quasar millions of solar masses large, but likely no larger than our Solar System in diameter (if that). It’s surrounded by a large accretion disk of stellar material ripped from numerous nearby stars, densely clustered about the core. However, in *Star Trek* even though this (general) region is seen just three times in the entire franchise, each time this region looks entirely different!

The earliest visit to the Galactic Core happens in TAS: *The Magicks of Megas-Tu*, in which the original *Constitution Class USS Enterprise NCC 1701* under the command of Captain Kirk visits this region on a scientific mission. How this approximately 26 year journey (in Captain Janeway’s time, 100 years in the future from Kirk’s perspective) is accomplished is completely ignored, and the region is described as a place where “new matter is created”. This is virtually impossible to reconcile with scientific fact, especially since it seems based on the now disproven “Steady State Theory” of cosmology. Even in 1973, when this episode was produced, the Steady State Theory was falling out of favor by most cosmologists, but TAS was not known for being as scientifically accurate as the other series in the franchise.

The second instance takes place in *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* which, to put it charitably, throws a lot of continuity out of the proverbial window, and is considered one of the *worst Star Trek* productions ever made—bad enough, in fact, for Gene Roddenberry to consider declaring it not canonical (clearly it has since been accepted as canon, as elements from it, including Spock’s illegitimate half-brother, “Sybok”, have shown up elsewhere).

In this case, the presumed “mythical” planet, Sha-Ka-Re (named after Sean Connery, who was initially considered for the role of Sybok), is located near the Galactic Core, beyond “The Great Barrier”, a similar but distinct energy barrier to the “Galactic Barrier” (the later is composed of negative energy which glows pink, whereas the former is positive energy which glows blue and green). Whether the planet orbits the central black hole or a nearby star isn’t made clear.

The final visit to the “center” of our galaxy happens in TNG: *The Nth Degree*, though it’s not established just *how* close the journey takes the *Galaxy Class USS Enterprise NCC 1701-D*. The region seen in this episode looks nothing like the Great Barrier, though. It *is*, however, clearly established that only through the intervention of super advanced mathematical knowledge (imparted to Reginald Barclay), provided by super intelligent aliens, the Cyrythians, seeking to make First Contact, is the starship able to traverse this vast distance so quickly. The Cyrythians *do* resemble the putative “God” seen in *Star Trek V*, and it’s entirely possible that the latter is a rogue Cyrythian, but this is never established. The Megans, from the first instance, are never mentioned again.

This is very frustrating if one insists that the *exact center* is the region visited each time, but in truth, the “center” could merely be a zone approximately 10,000-20,000 LY in diameter, thus making some of the earlier journeys more plausible. Given that neither of the two earlier instances represented particularly good quality examples of *Star Trek*, it’s best to pay them little attention in any case.

It’s also likely that future iterations of *Star Trek* will simply ignore this region of the Galaxy (and explain away the aforementioned examples as not taking place *at* the exact core, but *relatively near it*, perhaps approximately 10,000 LY out from precise center), because astrophysicists have determined that life near the galaxy’s core would be near impossible due to the excessive radiation generated from the central black hole’s massive accretion disk. As scientific knowledge has evolved and progressed since the days of TOS, *Star Trek* has—for the most part—tried to evolve with it.

The Alpha Quadrant: where it all began ...or was it?

It’s tempting to assume that much of TOS, TAS, and TNG (at least), as well as most of the United Federation of Planets takes place and exists in the Alpha Quadrant. Certainly dialogue in DS9 and VOY tend to reinforce that perception (because the Beta Quadrant is rarely mentioned), but this would be erroneous. For reasons which aren’t ex-

plained, but are actually quite logical, the “Prime Meridian” runs through the Sol System, which means that Earth is in either the Alpha *or* Beta Quadrants, depending upon its position in its orbit around the Sun.

The logic behind this convention, as homo-sapiens-centric as it may be, is that since Starfleet was established pre-Federation, and most Federation members, including its four founders (Earth, Vulcan, Andoria, and Tellar Prime) accepted Earth taking the lead, as it was Jonathan Archer (albeit with T’Pol’s and Thy’lek Shran’s encouragement) that essentially planted the seed of the idea (as much as I remain skeptical of “Great Man” historical narratives). It could even be argued that placing Earth on the *border* of two quadrants, rather than in the *center* of one quadrant—one which is designated with the first letter in the Greek alphabet at that—could also be one way of stepping *back from*, rather than leaning into, geocentrism. It is also possibly the case that the exploration minded precocious Earthlings no doubt romanticized the idea of being able to explore multiple quadrants from the beginning. That notion is reinforced by the knowledge that our Solar System is in “Sector 001”.

One potential and logical explanation that would make sense is that since the Romulans, Klingons, and (possibly) the Xindi are located in the *Beta* Quadrant, that the designation of “Alpha” as the quadrant that expands in the direction that curves *away from* those, at first at least, adversarial powers, hence, offering Earth its primary *colonization potential*, is the reason. There are a few problems with this theory, however. First, in ENT: *Regeneration*, Archer informs T’Pol that the cybernetic aliens (whom the audience knows—though Archer & crew do *not*—are the Borg) sent their subspace signal “somewhere deep in(to) the Delta Quadrant”. Since this takes place in Season Two, and the extent of the Romulan Empire not yet known (or the Neutral Zone established), that seems a bit of a reach. It’s also the case that the furthest extent of the Romulan and Klingon “borders” (so-to-speak) are approximately 10-20 light years distant from the Alpha-Beta “meridian”, rather than on the edge of that demarcation itself.

It’s not even the case that the *USS Enterprise NX-01*’s first missions took place in the Alpha Quadrant (they, in fact, took place in Beta). However it *is* possible that the bulk of the early explorations that *preceded* ENT (which are obviously not yet established in canon) *did*. Whatever the case, the Alpha Quadrant is now canonically established as that which curves *away from* Klingon and Romulan space. One final possibility exists: since Earth’s first contact was

with the Vulcans, the thinking may have been that Sol is on the “Alpha” side and Vulcan on “Beta”, but to make it clear that this isn’t intended as a hostile demarcation, Sol was placed on the boundary line.

A good deal of TOS, though obviously not most of it—especially episodes that involve the Romulans, Klingons, and Gorn—takes place in the Alpha Quadrant, much of it involving areas of the Galaxy outwards from the Galactic Core, as well as a bit inwards. Essentially much of TOS takes place between 5:45 and 6:30 O’clock, relatively speaking. Fittingly, Talos IV, where the very first conceived adventure (though obviously not the earliest chronologically in canon), takes place there, as established by a line of dialogue spoken by Joanne Owosekun in DISCO: *If Memory Serves*.

The *USS Enterprise* first contact with the “First Federation” (TOS: *The Corbomite Maneuver*)⁴¹ and their various uses of “The Guardian of Forever” (TOS: *City on the Edge of Forever* and TAS: *Yesteryear*) take place in the Alpha Quadrant. Presumably their encounter with the Tholians in TOS: *The Tholian Web* does as well. As for the lack of any mention of the Cardassians or Breen, it’s possible that the former were known, but relations with them relatively peaceful in the 23rd Century (perhaps they’d not yet degenerated into the fascistic dictatorship they became in the 24th Century), and certainly they’re mentioned in SNW. As for the Breen, dialogue in TNG indicates that they’re not well known to the Federation. That the Romulans and Klingons know of them, but the Federation (well, at least Earth) doesn’t can be attributed to the fact that the two Beta Quadrant powers have had spacefaring abilities for well over a thousand years longer than Earth, and likely crossed what became “Federation Space” much more frequently prior to the 22nd Century. It’s important to remember that the Federation was primarily initiated by the upstart Earthers, ie the “new kids on the block”, so to speak.

Explaining the lack of contact with the Ferengi in the TOS era is easy: the results of their initial encounter with an Earth ship (ENT: *Acquisition*) scared the piss out of them enough to leave Federation ships and installations alone for a good two centuries! What’s harder to explain is their frequent presence in the Beta Quadrant in many TOS episodes, which could theoretically be reasoned away with the explanation that the Ferengi were capitalistic traders who were primarily interested in *profit* rather than territorial acquisition. The problem with that argument is that in practice, capitalism and imperialism are thoroughly intertwined (at least in human history). Perhaps the Ferengi dis-

⁴¹ The location of “The First Federation” is placed in the direction of 11 O’clock, relative to Sol (though barely past 6 O’Clock relative to Galactic Central Point), inwards towards the core. Since Balok is the only representative ever met, and they never appear again (except in the alter-

nate timeline in the fan produced *Of Gods and Men*—and even then, frustratingly devoid of context), the size and location of their space is somewhat arbitrary, though, interestingly, they serve as something of a buffer between core Federation space and the Breen.

covered a disentangled form of capitalism. In any case, it's much more easily explained as yet another case of the canon still evolving. The Ferengi were not particularly well established in TNG. That would have to wait for DS9.

As one would properly surmise, DS9 is set predominantly in the Alpha Quadrant (and at least 90% of the Dominion War happens there) with the station and Bajor itself being at approximately "6:30", though likely somewhere either significantly above or below the galactic plane, as opposed to the relative closeness of Sol to it, hence DS9's "depth" in Space. As for the Romulans and Klingons having access to it, as well as being referenced throughout DS9 and VOY as being "Alpha Quadrant" powers, that's a bit more complicated, and no adequate canonical explanation exists.⁴²

The best explanation is that *originally* the creators probably conceived of DS9, Cardassia, Bajor, and Ferenginar being somewhere around 4 O'clock, ie on the "backside" of Romulan space—and that *would* make a lot of sense based on the dialogue—but that would place all of this in the *Beta* Quadrant, so that's not plausible. Another possibility is that the Klingons had access by virtue of being Federation allies, and the Romulans *gained* access in exchange for the Federation's use of the cloaking device on the *USS Defiant*. It's also possible—since space is three dimensional—that the Klingons and Romulus had "corridors" outside of Federation space they could each use. I've created conjectural maps, based on the *Star Trek Star Charts* showing how these might look, through the magic of photoshop. None of that, however, addresses the inconsistently vague use of "Alpha" Quadrant to describe locations in both Alpha and Beta.

It's easiest to simply assume that the term "Alpha Quadrant" was casually and carelessly used to refer to "the core of Federation space" (with the Romulans and Klingons being adjacent to it in near Beta), rather than the cumbersome "near-Alpha-Beta-Quadrant-region-that-exists-approximately-two-thirds-outward-from-galactic-center", which is more accurate and precise, and that's the ex-

planation I tend to accept. It's just as likely, however, that the DS9 and VOY creative staff intended that cumbersome descriptor to *actually* comprise the *core* of the Alpha Quadrant, and to have Beta and Gamma be the adjacent quadrants that were off in the distance (though evidently Beta was closer than Gamma, by some undefined amount). Unfortunately, that doesn't work either, because the aforementioned books, now accepted as canon, establish the Alpha-Beta meridian as precisely bifurcating Sol, and the dialogue in TNG: *The Price* implicitly suggests that access to these quadrants is routine, hence they're not being mentioned in dialogue there at all.

That said, in the 24th Century at least, much—if not the majority—of the Alpha Quadrant, particularly that on the far side of Cardassian, Breen, and Tholian space, remains either unexplored or outside of Federation territory, even though the majority of the Federation lies within it.

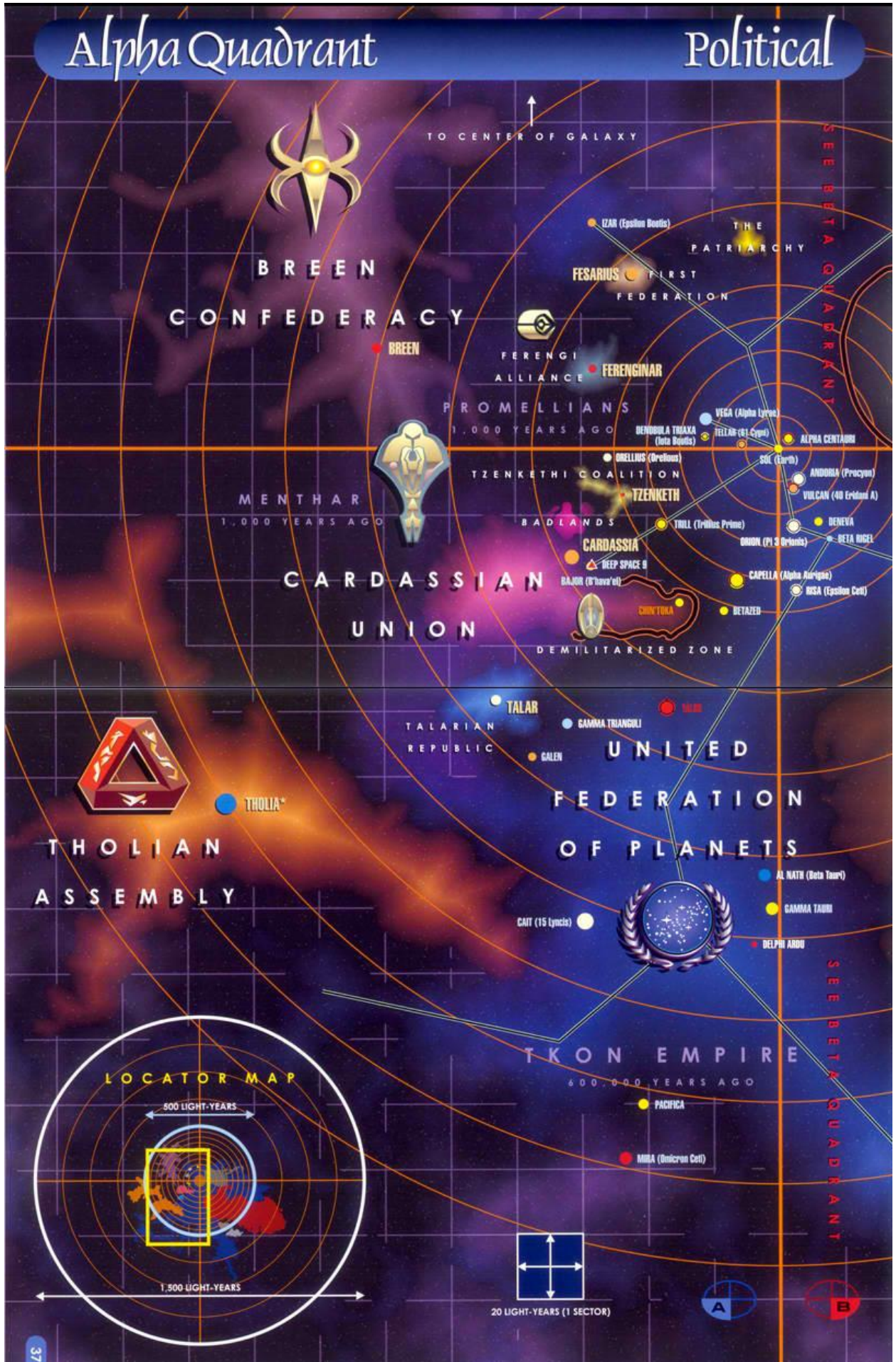


⁴² If the Romulan and Klingon territories extend mostly *below* the Galactic Plane, then it is a reasonable deduction that DS9, Bajor, and Car-

dassia do so as well. In a way, this provides another layer of dimension (pun not intended) to the name "Deep"!

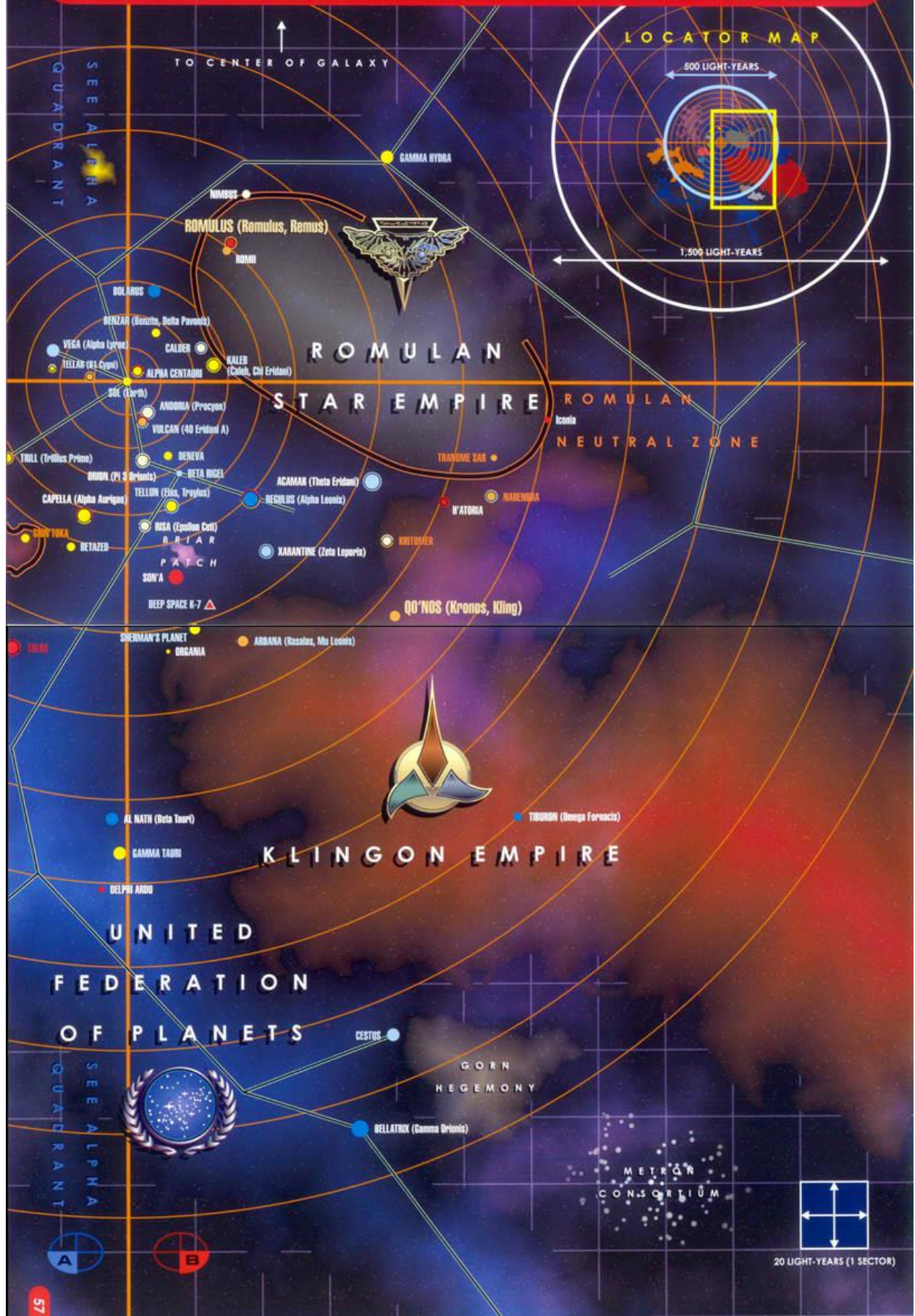
Alpha Quadrant

Political



Beta Quadrant

Political



The Beta Quadrant: Far More Prominent Than You Probably Think

Although it's not discussed very openly in onscreen dialogue, much of TNG takes place in the Beta Quadrant, particularly in the regions on the “backside” of the Romulan Empire (relative to the Alpha/Beta “meridian” that bisects the Sol System, and Sector 001), and in the regions “inwards” (ie towards the Galactic center) from the same. There *are* some exceptions, notably the various times when the *Enterprise* returns to Earth, and in the pilot episode, *Encounter at Farpoint* (which takes place in the then furthest known reaches of the *Alpha* Quadrant).

The Romulan and Klingon Empires (and likely much of the artificially generated Delphic Expanse, until it was deactivated by the crew of the *NX-01*) are located here.

The Romulan Empire is located slightly more “inwards” (ie towards the Galactic core) than Sol, and—as explained in this excellent YouTube video by user **Resurrected Starships** (Star Trek Locations vs REAL LIFE - An ACCURATE 3D ANALYSIS Using Realistic Star Maps - <https://youtu.be/N8CPpywk9WM?si=O1daFbQCjs2MyYQD>)—extends mostly “below” the galactic plane relative to Sol, whereas the Federation sphere (or “splotch” to be more precise) of influence lies more centered and upwards on the “Z” axis, which is *one* explanation for how the Federation is able to explore large regions of space *beyond* its “backside” relative to Sol.



(Hypothetical) three-dimensional rendering of Federation (blue), Klingon (red), Romulan (green), and Cardassian (yellow) space within the near Alpha and Beta Quadrants, looking from the Beta Quadrant outwards in the direction of “7 O’Clock”. This shows how Federation space can exist beyond the Romulan Star Empire without being “bisected” by it, simply by having territory “above” it.

This is, unfortunately, *not* what a lot of the established dialog—particularly in earlier iterations of the franchise—would suggest, and this raises the specter of one of *Star Trek*’s biggest—albeit rarely noticed—failures in my opinion, and that’s the tendency to treat space as *two dimensional*. Indeed, the very notion of the Federation-Romulan “Neutral Zone” (usually just called the “Romulan Neutral Zone” for brevity’s sake) established a mere nine episodes into the series—while one of the most iconic, not to mention story-rich, concepts in the entire franchise—is so problematic. The idea that the Romulans (or the Klingons, for that matter) could conspire to “block” the Federation from exploring deeper into the Beta Quadrant (or, for that

matter, that the Federation could effectively block either of them from incursions into the Alpha Quadrant) is based on this thinking (the graphic showing the Neutral Zone in TOS: *Balance of Terror* further reinforces this misconception).

The very idea of a “neutral zone” is based on actually existing demilitarized zones on Earth, a common feature in geopolitical conflicts that raged in the time in which *Star Trek* was first created, but they don’t really translate into space. In truth, it’s a *lot* harder to demarcate “boundaries”

in three dimensions than two.⁴³ Nevertheless, the concept was a major story element in the introduction of the Romulans in the first place, and how the Federation was able to somehow “guard” an egg-shaped boundary with a mere eight outposts—four of which the Romulans destroyed in *Balance of Terror* requires a leap of faith to be sure.

One possible, albeit crude, explanation is that the eight original outposts date from the 22nd Century and are located in a direct line between Romulus and the core, early Federation worlds, and those are augmented by a much larger network of automated monitoring stations.

The question “why is the Neutral Zone ellipsoid?” is never answered either, but *that* particular detail makes more sense. Although Scotty’s dialogue that the Romulan warbirds lack warp capability is a tad unbelievable (unless one accepts the premise that impulse drive can achieve limited warp speeds—a possibility that would *actually* clear up a fair number of continuity errors throughout *Star Trek*), it’s sufficient to explain that Federation and Klingon ships possessed much greater speed capabilities until the 24th Century, by which time the Romulans finally caught up. Such an imbalance, combined with the fact that the Romulans were thoroughly trounced by the proto-Federation at the Battle of Cheron (also not to be confused with the “Cheron” featured in TOS: *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield*) in Jonathan Archer’s time (mid-22nd Century), and that explains the shape.

It’s also fair to say this explanation partially answers the question “how could the Romulans claim an area of space in the deeper regions of the Beta Quadrant near Beta Stromgren (TNG: *Tin Man*). The explanation is that the “backside” of the “egg” wasn’t enclosed within the zone, because the Federation hadn’t explored the deeper Beta Quadrant regions beyond its frontside yet. The fact that Romulan space lies primarily below the galactic plane, and the Neutral Zone primarily covers the region where said space extends above it (a smaller, “hill like” area, above and behind which late 23rd, and especially 24th Century Federation space exists) completes the picture.

In a way, this makes the existence of the Wrongovians (a Marx Brothersesque inspired comedic name if there ever was one) rather superfluous. While the serious “B plot” in the wonderful and comedic first season SNW episode, *Spock Amok*, offers a neat explanation for the extension of

Federation space into deeper Beta Quadrant regions in a *two-dimensional* geography (or astrography), it’s quite unnecessary in a *three-dimensional* universe, *even though the explanation further canonizes the aforementioned maps*. Of course, the importance of these potential new Federation members as a buffer between the Romulans and Klingons (who are usually mortal enemies in most cases anyway), even in a three-dimensional universe is more believable, especially given the location of Klingon space.

Klingon space extends roughly parallel to Romulan space (as seen from above or below) albeit further away from the Galactic Core. Like Romulan space, it also extends into the regions below the Galactic plane, though not as much. It, like Federation space, extends some distance above it, too. Klingon space is also substantially more voluminous than their Romulan adversaries, no doubt because the Klingon ships are faster, like those of the Federation.

A “Neutral Zone” (of sorts) exists between the Klingon Empire and Federation in the TOS era, probably due to the Organian Peace Treaty (TOS: *Errand of Mercy*), though it’s initially described as “the disputed area” (TOS: *The Trouble With Tribbles*). One should, however, disregard the ellipsoidal shape seen during the “Kobyashi Maru” sequence shown at the opening to *The Wrath of Khan*, because all along, the initial conception was that the Romulans were the intended faux foe. It was only budgetary constraints that forced the creators to reuse footage of the Klingon D7s from the opening of *Star Trek the Motion Picture*, and hastily rewrite the dialogue at the very last moment. Careful observers will note the name dropping of “Gamma Hydra” (a star system located along the Romulan Neutral Zone, as established in TOS: *The Deadly Years*). All of the other dialogue there is consistent with the Romulans, rather than the Klingons. One could, of course, argue that since it was a *simulation* it didn’t need to make perfect sense.

The expanse of the Klingon empire into the regions of the Beta Quadrant that lie farthest from Sol have never been defined or explored. Most episodes that show Klingon territory at all, including Q’on’os (pronounced “CRO-nos”, like in “the Kronos Quartet”), take place quite near to Federation space. Some of this region actually crosses the Alpha / Beta Quadrant meridian (particularly as one moved outward toward the Galactic rim from Sol).

⁴³ There are other conundrums created in that episode, such as explaining why it takes so long for subspace communications between the *USS Enterprise NCC 1701* and the nearest starbase if Romulan space is as close to Sol as it must be—which is later established as canonical by the aforementioned map books, as well as implied by the expository historical dialogue given by Spock of the original Romulan war, which we later learn was fought by Archer, T’Pol, Shran, et. al. It *could* be argued that

the *Enterprise* and the outposts were on a side of the Romulan Empire located *away from* Sol (such as on the core-ward edge, but none of the dialogue suggests this. If there were only eight, they’d most logically be located *closest* to the core of Federation space, ie towards Sol, Vulcan, Andoria, and so forth. This, unfortunately, is a rather unfortunate case of loosey-goosey proto-canon that is hard to adequately retcon, so we have to just go with it.

How deep into the Beta Quadrant Klingon space extends in the 23rd and 24th centuries has never been conclusively established (the canonical maps even hint that this isn't fully known to the Federation, as the red color demarcating this nether region "fades" rather than terminates at some hard boundary).

Finally, the core of Gorn territory as well as the mysterious Metrons (as established in TOS: *Arena*, and more or less reinforced in SNW) lie outward from Klingon territory in the near Beta Quadrant. What lies further outward or counterclockwise from there also remains undefined as of now.

Strictly speaking, of course, even these far reaches lie within the *near* Beta Quadrant, almost certainly never crossing the radiant that would represent "5 O'clock", and therefore much of that Quadrant hasn't been explored in *Star Trek*. TNG's occasional deep penetrations into this region take place in the following instances:

1. *Q-Who* - To teach Picard a lesson and disabuse him of a bit of naive hubris, Q uses his powers to magically propel the *USS Enterprise NCC 1701-D* approximately 2,700 LY beyond the furthest known regions of Federation space. This places them much deeper into the Beta Quadrant, curving counterclockwise towards the Delta Quadrant (well beyond Beta Stromgren, discussed immediately below);
2. *Tin Man* - The *USS Enterprise NCC 1701-D* is secretly ordered to the Beta Stromgren system to make contact with the living entity ship, *Gumtu* (aka *Tin Man*). This star system lies beyond the aforementioned extent of explored Federation space as well as on the back side (relative to the side approximate to Sol) of Romulan space. That, of course, lies in roughly the same direction which Q hurled the *Enterprise* in *Q-Who*; and
3. *Generations* - The *Veridian* system, where Soren attempts to destroy the star in order to return to the Nexus is located several sectors beyond explored space in the "Shackleton Expanse", again, located deeper into the Beta Quadrant.

Where was the Delphic Expanse and Xindi Space?

As for the Delphic Expanse, and the majority of Xindi space, it's never been conclusively established precisely where this is. A variety of conjectured maps place it in any number of locations in the near Alpha and Beta Quadrants. More recent maps place *Azati Prime* within the Alpha Quadrant near *Xabea* and *Kiley 179* (as established by a map depicted in SNW: *Strange New Worlds* which more or

less expands upon the maps created for *Star Trek Star Charts* and *Star Trek Stellar Cartography*).

To be honest, I find this a bit unsatisfying. Given the fact that it only took the *NX-01* a week at warp ~4.75 to get to Q'on'os (the Klingon home world), which more or less tracks with the aforementioned references), it doesn't seem likely that *Azati Prime* should be not much more distant from Earth, given that it took *two months* for the *NX 01* just to reach its boundary. One could, of course, apply the same logic I use to explain the "depth" of DS9 relative to Sector 001, ie that the Delphic Expanse primarily exists several 100 LY above or below the Galactic Plane, and I would agree with that notion, but I don't think that's quite enough of an explanation.

Recall Ambassador Soval's warning to Captain Archer that the Delphic Expanse (was) "huge, spanning over 2,000 LY across". While that *could* be all located significantly above or below the Galactic Plane (and I would think a lot of it likely is), it's also likely that it's located somewhat further away than either Romulan or Klingon space.

If I were to have been able to offer a suggestion, a logical place for the regions contained in the Expanse is the region located towards the Galactic core, from approximately 6:10 (in the Alpha Quadrant) to about 5:15 (in the Beta Quadrant), beyond the edge of Federation space innermost towards the galactic core. This would offer an explanation for why Starfleet chose to direct its exploration along the edge of Romulan space, curving around counterclockwise from Sector 001, instead (which could theoretically antagonize the Romulans—the Neutral Zone notwithstanding—and required longer distance travel. Although the aforementioned maps show that region as "unexplored" space, it *could* instead be where the Expanse once existed. Even though Earth and the Xindi settled their dispute (upon learning that the Sphere Builders were the true antagonists), there may have been an accord that included provisions that both sides would respect the other's space. This makes sense on several levels, because the Xindi join the Federation sometime in the 25th Century.

All this speculation aside, it's likely that the Xindi are likely mostly a Beta Quadrant civilization.

As for deep Beta Quadrant locations, ie those far beyond space known to the Federation in the 24th and early 25th Century, we know (from Seasons 3-5 of DISCO) of Kwejian, Hima, "Sanctuary Four", and Terralysium. Kwejian, of course, was Cleveland Booker's home planet, which is inadvertently destroyed by Species 10-C in the 32nd Century. Hima is the planet Michael Burnham finds herself on (and where she meets Book), after transporting herself to the 32nd Century after leaving the 23rd at the

conclusion of DISCO's second season. We can infer that these aforementioned planets are located in the far reaches

of the Beta Quadrant, because they're likely not far from Terralysium, where Burnham was attempting to go.



(Hypothetical) possible location of the Delphic Expanse (at the top and slightly left, meaning inwards toward the Galactic Core) from the 22nd Century superimposed on a cross section of the Alpha and Beta Quadrant political volumes of influence from the late 24th Century

Terralysium's location is established, more or less, in DISCO: *New Eden* as being *deep* in the Beta Quadrant, approximately 51,000 LY distant from Earth, which would have to place it somewhere near the Beta / Delta boundary (keep in mind that the Caretaker moved *USS Voyager* approximately 70,000 LY away from the Badlands and DS9 in VOY: *Caretaker* for comparison). Captain Pike notes that traveling at Warp 7 (the top safe cruising speed of 23rd Century Federation starships) it would be 150 year journey. Clearly, lacking a Spore Drive or Red Angel Suit, these far regions of the Beta Quadrant would be impossible to reach in the 23rd and 24th Century by conventional

means (and to be certain, there are deep *Alpha* Quadrant regions that are just as inaccessible in that time).

The only other deep Beta Quadrant presence would likely be the "Fendomar", an adversarial species mentioned by "Future (Admiral) Janeway" in VOY: *Endgame*. Although Future Janeway doesn't tell (Present) Captain Janeway precisely where this species would be encountered along the remaining journey in the unaltered timeline, it supposedly happens sometime within 16 years after the conversation the two Janeways are having. Had *Voyager* taken that journey, rather than the Borg trans warp hub as they did, they'd have crossed from the Delta to the Beta Quadrant (and based on the rough math and all of the

shortcuts they'd luckily found during the first seven years of their journey, they were likely within approximately five years of crossing it already). We have yet to meet this species, for what it's worth. Perhaps some future iteration of *Star Trek* will establish their precise location).

The Gamma Quadrant: Home to the Dominion and the Founders

The Gamma Quadrant is first mentioned (but not actually seen) in TNG: *The Price*. It's, of course, heavily featured in DS9, as it is home to the Dominion and its shapeshifter Founders. As it is revealed in the pilot episode, *Emissary*, the Bajorans' "Celestial Temple" is actually an artificial wormhole between the Alpha and Gamma Quadrants, created and maintained by the "Prophets", a race of nontemporal beings who're *also* somehow indigenous to Bajor. The Prophets "live" in the "Temple", though the reason for why they chose to connect it to the Gamma Quadrant is never revealed (though that's could conceivably be addressed in a later iteration of the franchise).

There are, of course, many non-Dominion aligned worlds in this quadrant, including many located near the Gamma Quadrant terminus of the Bajoran Wormhole. Based on how the Dominion slowly enter the story, it's logical to assume that the Wormhole is located either on the fringes or a backwater of its territory (though this is never firmly established in canon). It's also inferred (though also never established) that the Dominion's volume of influence in the Gamma Quadrant is substantial, at least as vast, if not significantly more so, than the Federation (or even all of the canonically established Alpha and Beta Quadrant powers combined).⁴⁴

Beyond that, however, it (as of yet) rarely features in other iterations of *Star Trek* (where, outside of VOY and PROD—which are both Delta Quadrant centric shows—it's actually rarely seen or mentioned). This is logical, because for all of its many series, *Star Trek* is mainly focused on the near Alpha and Beta Quadrants.

Here are the few instances outside of DS9 where the series has (thus far) visited the Gamma Quadrant:

- PROD - in Season 1, the *USS Protostar* briefly visits the Gamma Quadrant near the border of the Delta Quadrant, but substantially distant from either the Gamma Quadrant terminus of the Bajoran Wormhole or the

⁴⁴ In a sense, the Wormhole creates a *fourth* dimension of space, because the single point of entry in the Alpha Quadrant provides access to three entire spatial dimensions of space *elsewhere*. If you were curious about

Ocampan home world, where the Caretaker brings *USS Voyager*;

- *Star Trek Online* - while not officially canon, there is a significant part of the game that functions as a "sequel" to DS9, featuring Kira, Odo, Bashir, Garak, Quark, Rom, Weyoun, and the Female Changeling (all voiced by their original actors), that occurs in the Gamma Quadrant (where we also learn that the ancient Klingon enemy, the Hurq, are from there);
- DISCO - late in Season 3, in order to try and save an ailing Emperor Philippa Georgiou, the crew of the *USS Discovery* uses the Spore Drive to jump to *Dannus V*, which is located at approximately "9 O'clock", ie the Alpha-Gamma Quadrant boundary, where they encounter "Carl", whom we soon learn is actually *The Guardian of Forever*, who has gone into hiding in order to avoid being weaponized by the rival factions in the Temporal Wars. This planet, by the way, is almost directly across the Galaxy from Terralysium.

Beyond this, there haven't yet been any other instances where the franchise visits this Quadrant, thus making it the still, as of now, the least visited region in the *Star Trek* universe within the Milky Way Galaxy.

The Delta Quadrant: Kathryn Janeway's Odyssey

Fans of the franchise are first briefly introduced to the Delta Quadrant in TNG: *The Price*, and then ultimately thrown into its deepest reaches in *Star Trek Voyager* which—with rare exceptions—entirely takes place there, since the series is essentially, albeit vaguely, inspired by *Homer's Odyssey*.

As one might expect, *USS Voyager's* "voyage" involves a lengthy, albeit not always linearly, journey back to Federation space, usually referred to as "The Alpha Quadrant". Confusingly, that is a somewhat sloppy use of the term, because what Captain Janeway and her intrepid (pun not intended) crew *actually* mean is a return to Federation space, which only includes a *small portion* of the Alpha and Beta Quadrants, as I've described, although it would've been more cumbersome to constantly say it that way. No doubt one consideration was that writers wanted to illustrate just how far *Voyager* would need to travel, and con-

what four dimensional experience is like, this offers a taste of it. That said, in *actual* four dimensional experience, you'd have this axis from a *range* of points along a fourth axis apart from "x", "y", and "z".

trasting “Alpha” with “Delta” was one way to do so (and to be certain, those quadrants *are* diametrically opposite each other).

That journey, as frequently discussed, was a distance of 70,000 LY. To put this into context, Sol is (currently) located approximately 26,000 LY from galactic central point. The “Caretaker” Array whisks *Voyager* to the Ocampa home-world, which is approximately 70,000 LY from where they started, near DS9, which is approximately 100-1000 LY from Sol (recall what I said about three-dimensional space—though considering Ocampa’s distance on the XY plane, the difference in “Z” makes little difference, therefore 100 LY is essentially accurate). This would place Ocampa approximately 44,000 LY (give or take 1000 LY) from the center of the Milky Way. This means that Ocampa is 59% further *away* from there than Earth.

One frequently asked question is, “Why didn’t Captain Janeway simply order that the crew of *Voyager* set a course for the *Gamma* Quadrant terminus of the Bajoran Wormhole?” The answer is actually pretty simple: Ocampa is located somewhere between 2 and 3 O’clock (figuratively, of course), and the aforementioned Wormhole terminus is located somewhere between 10-11 O’clock. The distance would be roughly the same as simply setting a direct course for Earth.⁴⁵

Fortunately for Kathryn Janeway & crew, the *Intrepid Class* starship *USS Voyager NCC 74656* is designed for long duration travel at high warp, ie velocities exceeding Warp 9 (Warp 9.75 to be precise, which allows *Voyager* to travel approximately 1000 LY each year, thus explaining the expected 70-year duration). The vessel is even designed to eliminate the adverse effects to subspace revealed in TNG: *Force of Nature*: although never mentioned on screen (but discussed in the show’s “Writer’s Guide”), the inward “folding” of the starship’s warp nacelles when it enters warp is for that express purpose (not just because “it looks cool”). Of course, as the viewers see throughout the series, the crew finds shortcuts that ultimately reduce the time by a factor of ten.

All of these considerations are credible and logical within the canonically established parameters of the *Star Trek* franchise. Unfortunately, the demand of dramatic television *does* result in some fairly and egregiously difficult to explain conundrums that, frankly, I’m surprised many fans

overlook, considering their devotion to details. I’m thinking mainly about the fact that, in spite of their more or less steady progress back to Federation Space, the crew of *Voyager* find themselves constantly harassed by the Kazons or the Vidians—though never *both* simultaneously. This would imply that their course either luckily runs along the border between the space of either civilization, or the two are in league. Neither possibility is ever discussed.

It seems unlikely to me that *Voyager* would be that lucky, and a little bit of thought could have made Seasons 1 and 2 more compelling by doing the following:

1. Having the Kazon and Vidians being at war with each other (and perhaps this could have been a result of further duplicity by the Traib;
2. Having the Vidian phage be somehow related to the Caretaker’s search for “comparable DNA;”
3. Having *Voyager* having the *extra* challenge of having to find safe passage *between* the borders of the two powers, thus heightening the danger.

This last challenge was explored to an extent when *Voyager* enters Borg space at the beginning of Season 4.

Since the Borg are based in the Delta Quadrant, it makes sense that they become the major adversarial power that *Voyager* must overcome, or at least, outwit, since their territory is vast and sprawling. However, it strikes me as far-fetched that *other* adversarial powers would have long phalanx like territorial regions that conveniently parallel *Voyager*’s journey. Yet, *Voyager* encounters the Malon, Hierarchy, and Hierarchy numerous times throughout seasons 4-7 of its run. This is, unfortunately, the results of the dictates of storytelling mixed with production deadlines and budgetary constraints. Oddly, as I have stated, most fans don’t seem to mind this odd consistency.

Star Trek: Prodigy good deal of time in the Delta Quadrant, and *Star Trek Online* features a whole sequence that serves as a “sequel” of sorts to *Voyager*, heavily featuring the Voth, Kobali, Krenim, and Vaudwaur. The Krenim, as one might expect, are shown to be major players in the Temporal Cold War, too.

Beyond that, there are no other journeys (yet) to the Delta Quadrant, but since it’s so prominently featured in VOY, it’s fair to say it’s gotten plenty of attention!

⁴⁵ There was a production level reason as well: DS9 and VOY were intended as distinct entities with their own identities, thus the former would focus on the Gamma Quadrant while the later took place in the

Delta Quadrant. As it was, the phrase “Delta Quadrant” is *never* uttered in DS9, and “Gamma Quadrant” is only uttered twice in VOY. The phrase “Beta Quadrant” is mentioned in both, but rarely.



Schematic of the Delta Quadrant (left) and Gamma Quadrant (right) showing the vast distance between Ocampa (in the Delta Quadrant) and the Gamma Quadrant end of the Bajoran Wormhole, revealing why it would *not* have been useful for *USS Voyager* to attempt to use the latter (in short, it would have taken just as long, if not longer).

Beyond the Galaxy: Where Someone Has Gone Before... but Not Very Often

There are very few canonical instances of adventures that take place outside the “confines” of the Milky Way Galaxy. Most of these involve short journeys beyond it. My use of quotation marks is intended, because in real life, there is no easily defined galactic boundary. Not so in *Star Trek*.

For the purposes of storytelling, for the second TOS pilot, *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, Samuel L. Peeples conceived of the “Galactic Barrier”, a nebulous and neb-

ula-like region of “negative” energy that disrupts warp fields and other conventional starship operations making traversing it by conventional 22nd and 23rd Century Starfleet technology means virtually impossible. In 1965, when the story was conceived, astronomical knowledge of galaxies was still very much in its infancy, so such a concept wasn’t especially as far-fetched as it now seems.⁴⁶ However, in creating this barrier, it locked the series into being largely “locked” within the Milky Way.

Therefore, the canonical instances of extra-galactic voyages can be counted on one hand: thrice in TOS (*Where No Man Has Gone Before*, *By Any Other Name*, and *Is There, in Truth, No Beauty?*), once in TNG (*Where No One Has Gone*

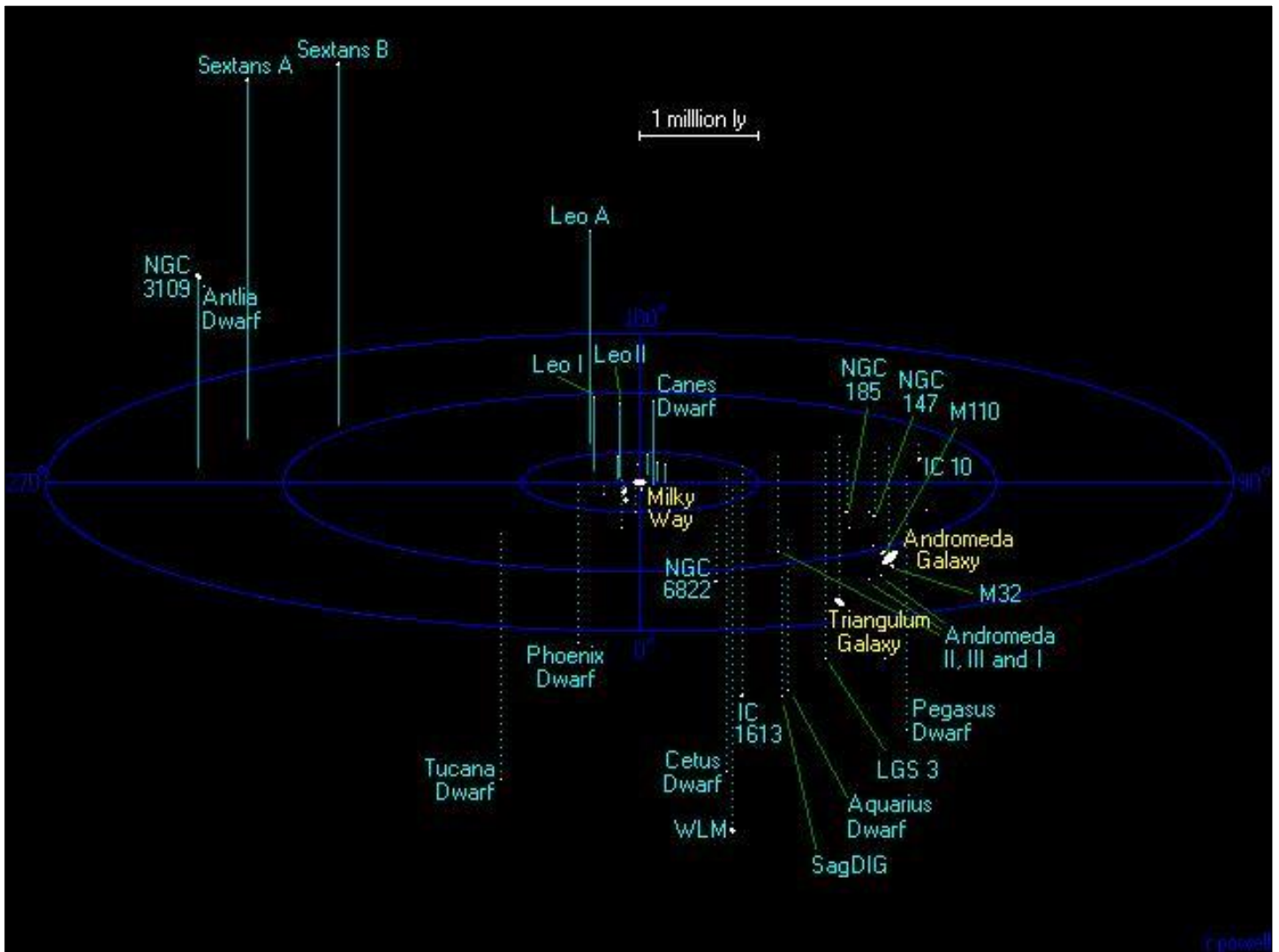
⁴⁶ In matters of real-world context, it wasn’t until the 1920s, a mere four decades previously (ie less time than it has been at the time of this writing, six decades since *Star Trek* first broadcast), that galaxies were identified as “island universes” apart from our own galaxy. Previously they were believed to be nebulae within our *own* galaxy. In fact, older

textbooks and astronomy books *still* continued to use the archaic terms, “spiral nebula” or “galactic nebula” to describe them. Log entries voiced by William Shatner in deleted scenes from TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before* even refer to the “galactic nebula of the Milky Way Galaxy.”

Before), and the final episodes of *Discovery's* fourth season. With the exception of the TNG episode, which I will address further on, all of those journeys have barely strayed far beyond the Galaxy.

Of course, given the limits of warp technology, even if the Federation attempted an intergalactic voyage with an *Intrepid* class starship, like *USS Voyager* or *Bellerophon* traveling at high warp speed, at a cruising speed of 1000Ly / year, a one-way journey to the Andromeda Galaxy (M31), at 2.5 million LY distant would require approximately 2500 years to complete. The Kelvans (TOS: *By Any Other Name*) could apparently accomplish that in less than 1/8th the time, but even 300 years is an eternity.

Therefore, even though TOS: *A Taste of Armageddon* is supposed to take place in NGC-321, a dwarf galaxy that, in the real universe at any rate, is located some 15.4 million LY distant, we must rule out the possibility that this is the same star cluster. If the *Enterprise* needed 300 years with the Kelvans' modifications to reach Andromeda, they'd need approximately 1848 years to reach NGC-321. In any case, the *Star Trek Star Charts* place the location visited by Kirk & crew much closer to home within the confines of the Alpha Quadrant or our own galaxy. Therefore, it's not the same star cluster.



Schematic of the "Local Group".

The only canonical example of *Star Trek* venturing more than a few hundred LYs beyond the Milky Way is TNG: *Where No One Has Gone Before*, where the *USS Enterprise NCC 1701-D* manages to achieve speeds surpassing maximum warp factors with the help of the Tau Alpha C Traveler. In this episode they first make the jump to Triangulum (M33) a dwarf galaxy located slightly beyond Andromeda. No contacts are made with any of its denizens before the Traveler inadvertently whisks the *Enterprise* to the “edge” of the known Universe (or perhaps beyond it), before—with Wesley Crusher’s assistance, the Traveler returns them to Federation space. There is absolutely no way to precisely plot this journey. Even M33 is a massive place on human scales, so it could’ve been practically anywhere.

There have been a few noncanonical and quasi-canonical journeys to Andromeda, including the fan produced movie *Star Trek Horizon* and *Star Trek Online*, both of them courtesy of Iconian technology. In both instances, the journeys were brief and involved no contacts with that galaxy’s denizens. Additionally, the fan produced “Hidden Frontier” multi-series essentially one-ups VOY, in *Odyssey* and *The Helena Chronicles*, and these involved extensive contacts, including with the Kelvans.

If the franchise ever *does* attempt extended extragalactic stories, they’re most likely to occur in globular clusters and dwarf galaxies (such as the Magellanic Clouds). Many of them are within 100,000 LYs distant, ie not much further than then the farthest distances within the Gamma and Delta Quadrants. Some beta canon material even features Riker, as captain of the *Titan* exploring the Magellanic Clouds.

Real versus Imaginary Locations

Because the *Star Trek* franchise takes place in our own Galaxy, and is largely an epic saga depicting a utopian future for humanity, it’s logical that many familiar sounding stellar names are used, along with others made to sound similar. Occasionally, these are actually real locations on our galaxy that actually exist in the real world. For example, Vulcan orbits the star 40 Eridani (a really existing K type orange dwarf located approximately 16 Ly from Sol), and Andoria’s sun is the nearby Alpha Canis Minoris, aka “Procyon”, a type F yellow dwarf, at 11½ Ly from Earth).

Most of the stars and stellar formations in the franchise are fictional, however, or have been retconned to not actually correspond to the real stars that bear their names, because the distances to them simply don’t work out.

There’s even one location that the series creators used twice, without realizing it evidently, that creates an ironic and interesting continuity error, which is rather hilarious if one knows anything about astronomy.

One matter that is readily apparent is that the TOS creators imagined that Starfleet had explored most of the Alpha and Beta Quadrants, and perhaps a good deal of Gamma and Delta as well by the mid-23rd Century, only to discard that notion by the very beginning of TNG, where it’s then explicitly stated that the Federation has only charted a mere 11% of it. In fact, “Far Point Station”, is supposedly near the Deneb, approximately 2600 Ly from Earth, in the furthers reaches of Federation space in the Alpha Quadrant.

This creates a number of challenges to continuity, especially when one considers some of the more frequently mentioned stars, particularly Rigel, because there are at least a half dozen planets named “Rigel-something-or-other” mentioned throughout the series, including:

- Rigel II - Dr McCoy had once visited a cabaret there and had a tryst with a pair of women he met there in (*Shore Leave*)
- Rigel IV - home of Mr Hengist, a humanoid, long possessed by the entity who also turns out to be “Jack the Ripper” (*Wolf in the Fold*);
- Rigel V - home of a Vulcanoid species, perhaps an offshoot of the Vulcans (*Journey to Babel*)
- Rigel VII - home of the Kalar (*The Cage*; *The Menagerie, Part 2*, and SNW: *Among the Lotus Eaters*)
- Rigel XII - location of a dilithium mining operation (*Mudd’s Women*)

TNG would also add Rigel III to the list (Giordi LaForge and Leah Brahms lived there in the alternate future timeline in *All Good Things*) and in ENT, the *USS Enterprise NX-01* would begin and end its journey with stopovers on Rigel X (*Broken Bow* and *These are the Voyages*). An “Easter Egg” in the DISCO / SNW era Short Trek: *The Trouble With Edward* mentions a “Rigel VI”, thus leaving only the first, eighth, ninth, eleventh, and any planets beyond the twelfth not (yet) inhabited.

That’s a lot of planets. However, if you went looking for them around Beta Orionus, the star *we* know as “Rigel” in the constellation of Orion in the *Star Trek* universe, you wouldn’t find them there. That’s because the actual star Rigel, aka Beta Orionus, is 773 LY distant from Earth, and, being a massive “O Type” blue giant star (one which, due to the laws of astrophysics where massive hot stars live fast

and die young) it wouldn't remain a main sequence star long enough for intelligent life to evolve on *one* planet, let alone *eight*.

Instead, the “Rigel” in *Star Trek* has been (likely retconned in the TNG era) to be an “A or B Type” blue-white star *called* “Rigel” (for unexplained reasons) somewhere in the Alpha Quadrant, likely not especially far from Vega, Talos IV, Starbase 11, and the Alpha/Beta Quadrant boundary, located between 90-150 LY from Earth.

Interestingly there *are* two stars (sort of) named “Rigel” in the real night sky: the Rigel we all know as “Rigel”, ie Beta Orionus, and “Rigil Kentaurus”. That second “Rigel” is closer to Earth, too—in fact a whole *lot* closer. We just usually call it “Alpha Centauri A”. “Rigel” is the Arabic word for “foot”. However, the “Rigel” in *Star Trek* is neither of these.

No actual canonical explanation for this exists, but one could easily be offered: “Rigel” could simply and coincidentally be a name from another species (such as Vulcan) that sounds similar to our own name. Another possibility is that early 22nd Century colonization expeditions used naming conventions that adopted bright star names, e.g. “Aldebaran”, “Rigel”, and “Vega”. It's never been canonically established that the “Aldebaran Colony” is *actually* located on a planet orbiting that particular star, any more than this applies to the “Vega” or “Rigel” colonies. Those names could simply have been chosen because the expeditions set out in the *general direction* of those stars but setting the first available Class M planets they located along the way.

The TOS era producers created another problem for themselves by occasionally using actually existing star / cluster names that *are actually used* in an episode. Two first season examples stand out in particular:

1. Omicron Ceti (in *This Side of Paradise*)
2. NGC 321 (in *A Taste of Armageddon*)

The problem with using the name “Omicron Ceti”, no doubt the host star for the planet “Omicron Ceti III”, is that this star, which actually exists, is unlikely to be capable of sustaining an Earth-like, “Class M” planet, especially one with a blue sky. That's because the host star is a variable red giant. We usually refer to that star by its more common name, “Mira”.

Now, it's *possible* that this star could be reached by 23rd Century Starfleet ships, because it's approximately 300 LY from Sol, well within the (retconned) regions being explored by the Federation at the time. The problem is that

TNG used this star *again* in the first season episode *Conspiracy*, this time actually calling it “Mira”. Early in the episode, Picard meets with other starship captains (who warn him of the conspiracy) on Omicron Ceti V, called “Ditalux B”. The environment of this planet clearly matches what one would expect to see on a planet orbiting a red giant star. The temperatures are scorching hot (because, even though being a cool red star, the star's bloated giant stage brings its surface closer to the orbiting planet, thus bathing it in far more heat), and the sky is blood red, being dominated by its predominantly reddish light.

Planetary naming conventions have changed since actual exoplanets have been discovered by humans in real life (none had been found until TNG's final seasons). The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has adopted the following naming convention:

1. The Star the planets orbit is given the lowercase letter “a” (this is true even in a multiple star system, in which case capital letters are used to designate the component stars in order of intrinsic brightness). For example, our Sun would be “Sol a”;
2. The first planet discovered orbiting the star is given the letter “b”, *regardless of its proximity to the parent star*, unless multiple planets are discovered simultaneously, in which case, the planets are lettered in order of closest to furthest from the star using the letters available.

Following that convention, Earth is “Sol b”, and Mercury is “c”, Venus is “d”, Mars is “e”, Jupiter “f”, and Saturn “g”. Uranus—which was only discovered half a millennium ago would be “h”, and Neptune would be “i”. Although many denounce the IAU's demotion of Pluto to the status of “dwarf planet”, it's the closest thing there is to a final word on the subject, so, unfortunately for Pluto supporters, it doesn't receive a “j” (and to be fair, several large asteroids that orbit the Sun between Mars and Jupiter were once considered planets also).

Prior to the IAU's adoption of the above naming convention, it was common practice among science-fiction writers and exoplanet hunters to name exoplanets in order of distance from the star, and therefore, Earth would be “Sol III” or “Sol 3”, Mars, “Sol IV”, and so forth. However, the likelihood of conveniently and consecutively discovering exoplanets in order, from inward to outward—especially when the process of doing so has only recently been developed sufficiently to achieve any meaningful success—is close to nil. Therefore, the IAU's decision—though it may *again* piss off sci-fi fans as much as DISCO

ranks some *Trek* purists—is elegantly logical. That convention doesn’t preclude using the old convention, though, especially if every planet in a given system is discovered.⁴⁷

All of this science-factual digression aside, Ditalux B is identified as the *fifth* planet circling Mira. If that’s true, there’s something very odd about Omicron Ceti III, and I’m not referring to Berthold rays or the Spore Plants. Under any normal circumstances, Omicron Ceti III, two planets *inward* from Ditalux B, shouldn’t look like Earth, and it shouldn’t be remotely possible for humanoid life or Earth-like vegetation to exist upon it.

Confusing matters further, Memory Alpha suggests that the “Mira” seen in TNG: *Conspiracy isn’t actually Omicron Ceti III*, but rather a similar looking star in the constellation Antlia. In theory, since Omicron Ceti is a double star, Mira’s companion star could theoretically be the star orbited by the planet in the TOS era, but that wouldn’t work either, because Omicron Ceti B is a white dwarf, one accreting mass from Mira as the latter is likely to collapse into a white dwarf itself in a few million years or so, and therefore a class M planet existing under such conditions is damn near impossible (though that could explain the Berthold rays, perhaps.)

The other instance, of course, is the aforementioned NGC-321. There’s simply *no way* that the Federation could have contact with this distant dwarf galaxy in the 32nd Century, let alone the 23rd. The star cluster visited in TOS: *A Taste of Armageddon* is certainly a different location (retconned to be somewhere in the Alpha Quadrant, in the vicinity of Starbase 11), and is called “FGC 321” instead.

Star Trek creators do themselves no favors when they use actually existing stars or other astronomical phenomena (other than our own solar system and galaxy) as locations, because what is ultimately discovered usually winds up being substantially different than what’s fantasized. This is probably why the overwhelming number of planets, stars, nebulae, and so forth are fictional and made up. It saves everyone a *lot* of trouble!⁴⁸

Perhaps no greater illustration of this phenomenon involves Vulcan. In 2018, exoplanet hunters announced that they had discovered a planet orbiting 40 Eridani. This supposed revelation caused much buzz among the *Star Trek* fandom, but that proved premature. The alleged planet was located inward towards the star from its habitable “Goldilocks” zone, thus making it likely unsuitable for life. Further study subsequently ruled out this planet’s existence altogether. This time *Star Trek* had predicted the future inaccurately.

Ironically, this is the *second* time a planet named “Vulcan” had been proven mythical in real life. In the mid-19th Century, before Einstein and his theory of Relativity were a glint in anyone’s eye, astronomers were convinced that a planet orbited the Sun *inside* the orbit of Mercury, based on observations of the latter’s orbital period that deviated from predictions based on precise calculations. Astronomers believed that only gravitational perturbations from other bodies could explain these deviations, and the known planets couldn’t account for these. Only the existence of a tiny, rocky planet, orbiting very close to the Sun could explain the phenomenon (or so they believed). Due to this putative planet’s location, it was named after the Roman god of the forge, Vulcan. Try as they might, however, this planet could never be found. In any case, Einstein’s theory of Relativity showed that gravitational lensing accounts for the deviations, and there is no planet “Vulcan” (in our solar system at least).

Is it possible that a planet like Vulcan, ie N’avar, exists in the real world orbiting 40 Eridani? Yes, but if it does, it remains undiscovered by humans. Perhaps we’ll just have to wait for Zephram Cochrane to develop his warp engine.

In any case, in spite of all the challenges involved, the creators of *Star Trek* have done a phenomenal job of fictional universe building, such that it’s possible to create these halfway realistic star charts in the first place! I, for one, am quite willing to accept the occasional inconsistencies that inevitably arise.

⁴⁷ that said, it’s not even certain that every planet in our *own* solar system has been found. There’s growing belief among astronomers that a *true* ninth planet orbits the Sun in the deep reaches of the Kuiper Belt, far beyond Neptune’s (and Pluto’s) orbit. Also, I may well be mistaken about Uranus being designated “h”, because Pluto is not, in fact the first assumed planet to have been “demoted”. At one time, the five largest asteroids—with Ceres being the largest—were actually considered full-fledged planets, long before Pluto was discovered. Even Earth’s *Moon* and the Sun were originally classified as “planets”.

⁴⁸ There are occasions when even *fictional* names create problems. In the TOS era, for example, it was common for the writers to slap together a number of Greek letters to make a (barely) accurate sounding star name

(such as “Omicron Delta”. This was *essentially* the case with “Delta Vega”, the small, Class L planet featured in TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, which *must* be located near the upper or lower fringes (on the “z” axis) of the Galaxy, close to the Galactic Barrier. Apparently that same planet, in the Kelvin Universe, at least, orbits 40 Eridani, sharing the star with...Vulcan! But, 40 Eridani, being a mere 16 LY distant from Sol *couldn’t* be near the Galaxy’s edge. Yet, it seems apparent that the planets *are* meant to be the same. This is yet another reason why I don’t especially care for the “reboot” movies.

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- 2390 PIC 3: The End Is the Beginning (771) (42m)
- 2391 PIC 4: Absolute Candor (772) (44m)
- 2392 PIC 5: Stardust City Rag (773) (45m)
- 2393 PIC 6: The Impossible Box (774) (54m)
- 2394 PIC 7: Nepenthe (775) (58m)
- 2395 PIC 8: Broken Pieces (776) (55m)
- 2396 PIC 9: Et in Arcadia Ego, Part 1 (777) (44m)
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“NuTrek”, Continuity, and Canon

Introduction

There exists a raging debate among *Star Trek* fans: are any of the *Star Trek* series created after the series *Star Trek Enterprise* actually canon? Many quite vehemently insist that they're *not*. I'm here going to argue, quite vehemently that they *are*, and what's more, I will subject the arguments of the naysayers and use them to show why their beliefs are, in the words of a certain Vulcan-Human hybrid individual, “totally illogical.”

The lightning rod for the dislike of the new *Star Trek* series is predominantly *Discovery* (DISCO for short), and, to a lesser extent, *Picard* (PIC), though generally *any* of the series produced under Alex Kurtzman comes in for criticism.

There are a whole litany of reasons offered for why a vocal subset of fans are critical of the Alex Kurtzman era *Star Trek* series. These include:

- The new *Star Trek* (sometimes derisively called “Nu-Trek”) “breaks canon”;
- Giving Spock a foster sister and making him wildly emotional in his youth ruins the character we've come to know and love;
- The *Star Trek Discovery* Klingon redesign looks utterly ridiculous and overdone!
- The shows are too “dark”, and lack Gene Roddenberry's optimistic vision;
- The characters act “unprofessionally” and “cry too much”;
- The “original” *Star Trek* was “episodic”, with self-contained stories; the creators of the new *Trek* insists on season-long story arcs that are too plodding or hard to follow;
- The new *Star Trek* is too “cinematic”, lacking the fun, cheesiness, and cheap sets of TOS;
- Alex Kurtzman, and even Gene Roddenberry's son, Eugene, are just trying to make money off of Gene Roddenberry's creation;
- “NuTrek” is trying to “shove ‘wokeness’ down our throats!”

While no *Star Trek* series has ever been perfect, including TOS (don't these critics remember that iconic series' disastrous third season?), in my opinion, the Alex Kurtzman era *Star Trek* is of equally, mostly excellent quality as the older series, and frankly, if not bluntly, I call “bullshit!” on these criticisms. What's more, while some of those making them have good faith intentions, it is my firm belief, that the *origins* of these beliefs come from a very un-*Star Trekkian* place, and that's the reactionary fascist cesspool of the far right. I will attempt to make my case.

To do so, I will have to lay out my argument, point by point, starting with the most challenging issue: whether or not the new series “break canon”.

How Canon Works

Two topics guaranteed to stir debate among *Star Trek* fans more than any other are *continuity* and *canon*. This is undoubtedly due to the following well established beliefs:

1. *Star Trek* fans tend to be highly intelligent;
2. The *Star Trek* creators were dedicated to continuity and respecting canon;
3. Both the fans and creators are highly attentive to detail.

Given the rich history of *Star Trek* (and the fact that there are now close to 1,000 different “episodes” in the franchise), it's quite an accomplishment that *Star Trek*'s continuity and respect for canon is as high as it is. Maintaining consistency and respecting established canon is no easy task, especially given the production demands and budgetary constraints of producing such things.

Yet, the writers and producers are actually very adept at maintaining consistency; sometimes it's so subtle it's easy to miss. This is primarily done precisely because *Star Trek* fans are so attentive to details. This was the case, *even when only TOS and TAS existed*. In fact, fans of the franchise are so obsessively detail oriented, there've been numerous, albeit well intentioned, famous jokes about it (an infamous December 1986 *Saturday Night Live* sketch involving William Shatner playing himself at a *Star Trek Convention* and admonishing the fans to “get a life, grow the hell up, and move out of their parents' basements springs to mind!) In truth, the producers, writers, and actors (Shatner included) actually deeply appreciate the fans' dedication, which is why they include a generous amount of “Easter Eggs” in most episodes in the franchise, especially recently.

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Some of these Easter Eggs are admittedly fan service, but often they're useful in advancement of the plot. Many are so subtle that they're easily missed. Occasionally, they're even used as clues. The most notable of the latter is the newspaper possessed by the enigmatic "Carl" in DISCO: *Terra Firma, Part 1* and *Part 2*, which—apart from being *itself* an Easter Egg—is *chock full* of them in *every article and headline* referencing episodes involving timeline alteration stories from practically every series in the franchise (in fact, there's are so many of them, one could spend hours finding and identifying them all, and yet, one very observant fan did, almost immediately after the first half of the two parter broadcast. I have included a graphic they produced elsewhere in this guide). These clues all hint at "Carl's" *true* identity, and the payoff is extremely rewarding (and I guessed it correctly myself). This could not have been done had *Star Trek's* creators *not* been so dedicated to maintaining consistent continuity.

Of course, *Star Trek* isn't 100% *perfect*, and continuity errors and retroactive changes to canon do occur. Some of these are subtle and easy to miss, whereas others stick out like a sore thumb. It's the latter that spark the debates, some of which become acrimonious. This is especially so in the polarized world in which we now find ourselves, especially given the rise of Neo-reactionary far right authoritarianism, which—unfortunately—has filtered into the debates over *Star Trek*., where nefarious bad faith actors will use any debate to grind their various axes, a process made all too easier by unregulated, monetized digital media platforms which are far too easily weaponized. While this isn't primarily meant as a political polemic, divorcing the debates over canon and continuity in *Star Trek* (especially given that *Star Trek* was *always meant* as a forum for debating social issues from the get go) isn't possible, and so I won't presume to avoid it.

That said, before tackling the sticky subject of political debate within *Star Trek* (and *Star Trek* fandom), I believe it useful to focus on the basics of continuity and canon in the abstract, because such things *can theoretically* stand alone from political debate, even though in practice, that doesn't usually happen *either*, for reasons I will also offer later on.

Continuity is essentially another word for *consistency*. For example, if the phasers work one way in one episode, if they work entirely *differently* in another episode (or even later in the same episode), that is considered a *violation* of continuity. However, it is *not* a continuity error if the phasers are revealed to possess *new* capabilities in some future episode or series, as long as those new capabilities don't

explicitly contradict established limitations on their toolset. As you will soon see, that clarification is crucial and highly significant.

The budgetary constraints and production demands of many storytelling operations, including—but not limited to—Hollywood television shows (of which *Star Trek* was, and still basically is, in spite of digital streaming media having mostly eclipsed Network broadcast TV), often makes it very difficult—far more so than many casual fans realize—to absolutely maintain continuity perfectly. Two factors, above all else, put significant strains on continuity:

1. The need to tell a compelling, dramatic story;
2. The need to produce a fixed-length episode of television within a deadline and budgetary limits for a set number of weeks each year or "season ".

The latter factor has become somewhat *less* significant with the advent of streaming television, especially given the relaxing of strict time lengths for episodes. For example, *Star Trek TOS* episodes were *precisely* 52 minutes in length (allowing for commercial breaks). Nowadays, the episode lengths are actually variable (and that is actually better for storytelling purposes, because it eliminates the incentive to pad stories—as was painfully obviously done at the end of *TOS: Let That Be Your Last Battlefield*, where Beal chases Loki for almost *five minutes* while Spock essentially serves as a play-by-play sportscaster—or cutting, which was done to *TNG: The Measure of a Man*, though thankfully one can watch the full length, uncut version on the blue ray *TNG* box set).

In spite of those limitations, *Star Trek* has maintained continuity very well, perhaps better than most other productions. This was even the case when just *TOS* existed, but with all the new series and just over a dozen movies that have produced content that outsizes *TOS* by a factor of well over ten, in my opinion, it has done especially well (the same could *not* be said for *Star Wars* which I love dearly, perhaps nearly as much as *Star Trek*, and that's based primarily on the three "Saga" trilogy movies and *Rogue I*, alone. Likewise, another beloved series of mine, *M*A*S*H*, is *rife* with glaring continuity errors, particularly the fact that the writers often just ignore chronological events entirely, such as having Colonel Potter replacing Colonel Blake in 1952, and then celebrating *New Year's Eve* of 1951 *several seasons later!* This latter example is understandable, though, because it's very difficult to spend

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eleven seasons—usually understood as spanning a year—of television covering a three-year-war!)

Canon isn't quite the same thing, but it's interrelated. Canon basically means that once something is established as being so, it shall remain so throughout the fictional universe within which a franchise like *Star Trek* exists. If an established fact is ignored, it's considered a *violation of canon*, unless some further storytelling explains the change.

How is canon established in Star Trek?

For the most part, anything that appears on screen in an official Star Trek series becomes established canon. For example: it's well known that Spock is half human (by his mother, Amanda Grayson), and half Vulcan (by his father, Sarek). He has a half-brother, Sybok, who is fully Vulcan, and a human foster sister, Michael Burnham, who was adopted by Sarek. Burnham's biological father and mother were presumed dead, killed by Klingons on Doctari Alpha, though it's later discovered that Michael's mother, Gabrielle, survived. All of this has been revealed, on screen, in official *Star Trek* productions. However, if one were to transport themselves back in time to the week after the premiere broadcast of TOS: *The Man Trap* (which isn't even the first episode produced, as most now know, but the *sixth*) most of that canonical information hadn't been established.

Occasionally some details, such as character names that aren't given on screen but are given in credits or final shooting scripts are also considered canonical. For example, the blond, male navigator featured in TOS: *The Cage* and *The Menagerie* is named Jose Tyler, and the female yeoman, who asks Captain Pike "which one would have been 'Eve'", is named J. M. Colt. We don't (yet) know what the initials represent (even though some novels have given her the middle name of "Mia"), nor do we know whether or not she's a "Supervisor", like Gary Seven, because the sources that say otherwise aren't considered canon. *That doesn't mean that these noncanonical details couldn't later become canon.*

There another source that can establish canonical details, and that's the show's *writers' guide*. This is a "bible" of details to assist writers in maintaining continuity and respecting canon. This last source is rarely referenced (and most fans don't know of the details until later). Most of the details in this guide are developed into story points. Occasionally a few are not. For example, Nyota Uhura was actually fourth in command of the *USS Enterprise* in suc-

cession after Kirk, Spock, and Scotty from season 2 of TOS onward until STTMP. This doesn't mean she'd automatically be given command if neither Spock nor Scotty were available, but she'd assume command if the other three were *dead*, and no higher-ranking officers with command training were available. (The reason why she was never shown given temporary command until TAS was entirely political. TOS broadcast barely a decade after the height of McCarthyism, at the beginning of the Civil Rights Era, and before "Women's Lib"). This has been verified by both David Gerrold and Nichelle Nichols.

Finally—while this last rule is subject to debate—filmed, but deleted scenes as well as unfiled scenes in final shooting scripts *might* be canonical, *if no other explanation exists for details that are declared canonical by the creators or offer answers to otherwise unanswered questions*. An example of the first type is the established fact that Saavik is actually half-Romulan. This revelation is made in a deleted scene from TWOK (one which wasn't restored in the slightly longer "director's cut"). An example of the second instance involves Mr Leslie's unexplained miraculous recovery from death in TOS: *Obsession*.

Mr Leslie, played by William Shatner's good friend, Eddie Paskey, appears in over two dozen episodes of TOS, starting with *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, usually as a security guard. He usually doesn't have any dialogue (TOS: *This Side of Paradise* being a notable, rare exception). He is one of multiple security guards who is (apparently) killed by the "Cloud Creature" in TOS: *Obsession*, however, he appears in a number of later episodes, including *Turnabout Intruder*. He is credited as "Mr Leslie" in those later episodes, so what gives? According to Eddie Paskey, (confirmed by the episode's director, Ralph Serensky), there was originally a scene planned where McCoy was able to revive him with a miracle potion, but the scene was never filmed. Absent any other explanation, this detail is essentially canonical, *because no other explanation exists*.

Occasionally fans will use terms like "Alpha Canon", "Beta Canon", and "Head Canon". Of these three, only Alpha Canon—which basically means canon—is actually canon. "Beta Canon" refers to widely viewed, heard, (or read), Star Trek material, including some fan produced "episodes" or "movies" involving series characters played by their original actors (e.g. *Star Trek: Of Gods and Men*). Beta Canon is not, however, canon, unless Alpha Canon later confirms the details within. For example, Sulu's first name, "Hikaru" was initially given to him by Diane Duane in one of her *Star Trek* novels. However, this wasn't con-

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firmed in “alpha” canon until *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*. Perhaps one of the most famous examples is the long-held belief that Trelane (the flamboyant antagonist from TOS: *The Squire of Gothos*) is either Q (i.e. John Delancey) or a member of the Q Continuum. The latter theory was finally essentially canonized quite dramatically in SNW: *Wedding Bell Blues* (in which Trelane appears to be established as “Q Junior”, first seen in various episodes of VOY—and remember: the Q aren’t bound by linear time!)

Most “beta” canon remains noncanonical, however, no matter what fans desire. For example, I would absolutely *love* it if the events in STC: ...*To Boldly Go* was declared canon, because, in my opinion, it represents a *pitch perfect* bookend to the events shown in TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, but that’s not my decision to make. Very likely, at some point in the future, another, canonical depiction will be offered. (And, sadly, Vic Mignogna’s recently having been identified as a sexual predator probably makes that possibility far less likely) For now it’s merely “Head Canon”.

“Head Canon” refers to information that individual or groups of fans would *like* to be canon, but hasn’t been officially confirmed as such (though can be inferred by other details or hints). One of the most famous examples is the notion that Elim Garak and Julian Bashir are lovers (something that was finally *halfway* confirmed by the penultimate episode of LDS, though it was demonstrably an *alternate* (and holographic) version of Bashir, and we’re left wondering whether or not the Garak seen there was our familiar, Prime Universe iteration.)

My own piece of Head Canon (other than the aforementioned STC finale) involves Dr Jilian Taylor, the cetacean biologist from *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*. Although in real life, the *Cetacean Institute* doesn’t exist (it was filmed at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, approximately 100 miles *south* of San Francisco), in canon, it exists on the Bay in the city of Sausalito. What many viewers who—unlike myself—aren’t long time Bay Area residents often miss, is that the location of Star Fleet Academy is *precisely on the same location a few centuries later!* Therefore, in my head canon, Dr. Taylor develops Star Fleet’s “cetacean operations” program, i.e. employing willing and able sentient cetaceans as celestial navigators, and then goes on to teach the practice (to humanoids and cetaceans) at Starfleet Academy, *at her old job site!* (poetic justice, I say!) This is especially close to my heart, because I work on the ferry on the Bay.

Sometimes, Head Canon becomes Alpha Canon, but usually it doesn’t. For example, an old, TOS era piece of head canon was that Christine Chapel was the younger sister of Number One (Una Chin-Riley), given that Majel Barrett-Roddenberry played both parts. That belief has since been *disproven* canonically. Other examples included Sulu’s first name being “Walter” (it’s “Hikaru”) and Uhura’s being “Penda” (it’s been “Nyota” at least since the 1980s, and finally confirmed onscreen in SNW).

Indeed, it can’t be overstated: what does *not* determine what is and isn’t canon, is fan opinions. Unfortunately, many fans fail to grasp this undeniable fact. Another thing that does not make something canon is widely held assumptions. These two important points are often forgotten by angry fans when *Star Trek*’s creators introduce new details and dimensions to the *Star Trek* Universe that substantially reshape its nature, but don’t actually violate canon. The creators simply take advantage of vagueness in the overall picture to create new dimensions and facets. Sometimes it’s stretching “original intent” a bit, but this is how fictional world building works (it is also—believe it or not—how theological scripture evolves, and that’s likely not coincidental. *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* are, like religions, essentially endeavors in mythology creation).

Here’s a hypothetical example of how this might work in practice: It’s widely accepted that it’s established canon that the first three assigned captains of the original *Constitution Class USS Enterprise NCC 1701* were, in order of succession: Robert April, Christopher Pike, and James T Kirk. It’s also an established fact that Kirk immediately succeeded Pike. That said, it’s never been *absolutely* established canonically that the latter two are the second and third captains in succession. There *could* have been an individual who served as captain *between* April and Pike (one could humorously hypothesize a captain “May” to follow “April”). However, since nothing has been established within canon that conclusively proves that Pike didn’t immediately succeed April, Pike’s status as the second captain to command the “OG” *Enterprise* is *for the moment* established canon. The creators *could* decide to create a captain that served between April and Pike (they probably won’t; this is just a thought experiment).

A lot of people, including many dedicated *Star Trek* fans struggle mightily with the information I present follows the words “that said”, but—as frustrating as that factual information is—that *is also how canon works* even if it frustrates dedicated fans, especially those emotionally wedded to a belief that’s based on an assumption shared by

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most or all. A good deal of the debate over Star Trek canon, *especially* in the wake of DISCO and later franchises, happens because fans often ignore that inconvenient fact.

However, if these fans were to watch *Star Trek* in *production* order, from TOS to Section 31 (and whatever comes after), they'd realize that adding these levels of detail within the fictional universe is *always* done this way. Most of these new “shades” are subtle and free of controversy, so much so that nobody notices them. For example, can anyone name the *Star Trek* episode that established the naming convention for the four galactic quadrants of the Milky Way Galaxy? I can. It was the third season TNG episode, *The Price* (prior to that, the writers used the terms “quadrant” and “sector” interchangeably, as if they were the same thing, or at least vaguely similar). That same episode, coincidentally, planted the seeds for both DS9 and Voyager!

It's become a widely held (but entirely mistaken) belief among a vocal subset of hardcore Trek fans who venerate TOS (TAS is often overlooked or dismissed as noncanon, though that is *also* erroneous for reasons I will present soon) and what's often now called (Rick) “Berman era Trek” (meaning TNG, DS9, VOY, and ENT), but regard DISCO and everything produced after it as being noncanon, that the latter “throws canon out the window”, whereas the earlier *Trek* respected canon religiously (with one notable exception—Khan's recognition of Chekov in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*—though even *that* example isn't as solid as most insist). This very argument hinges upon whether one accepts the statement: *creators of a franchise reserve the right to modify it within its established boundaries as they see fit. This includes filling in gaps created by omission that fans widely assume don't exist.*

Now consider the following sentence, spoken by Captain James T Kirk (William Shatner) to Commodore Jose Mendez (Malachi Throne) in TOS: *The Menagerie*, Part 1:

“I met (Captain Pike) briefly when he was promoted to Fleet Captain; I took over command of the *Enterprise* from him. Spock served with him for thirteen years—“

This may come as a great shock to many, *but nothing in that sentence is contradicted by any of the unaltered Prime Universe timeline events shown in SNW.*

Let's start with the sentence itself. It takes on a different meaning if written this way:

“I met (Captain Pike), briefly when he was promoted to Fleet Captain; I took over command of the *Enterprise* from him. Spock served with him for thirteen years—“

That extra comma may not seem like much, but it *does* change the sentence's meaning, and while the sentence isn't—strictly speaking—worded properly, it could easily mean that Kirk was informing Mendez that he *first* met Christopher Pike when he was briefly appointed to Fleet Captain, but—since the conversation took place in a medical ward corridor when time to tell an unabridged story wasn't available—omitted saying, “*and I occasionally visited the Enterprise and interacted with Pike during a few joint missions after that first meeting.*”

Just because someone omits a few, relatively minor details, it doesn't change the overall meaning of the conversation, i.e. that Kirk knows Pike, as a casual acquaintance, but Spock and Pike are very close friends. (Interestingly, it's implied that McCoy *also* knows him, but no details of his association are given, which isn't problematic, but it proves my point: that various details of the past associations with Christopher Pike are not given, but left to the imagination).

There *is* a more obvious error, that nobody else seems to have noticed, and that's Mendez apparently describes Pike as being “about the same age” as Kirk. If true, there are two obvious problems with that assertion:

1. James Kirk is *canonically* the youngest individual in Starfleet to achieve that rank, at approximately 32 years old, but if Pike is the same age and captains the *Enterprise* 13 years previously, wouldn't that make him 29 during the events of TOS: *The Cage*?
2. Anson Mount, who plays Pike in DISCO and SNW is obviously old enough to be (Kirk actor) Paul Wesley's father in SNW.

Nobody I've noticed seems concerned about that, quite possibly because everyone just reasoned it away as an obvious, careless, but meaningless error in the dialogue. A difference that makes no difference is no difference, perhaps.

Then again, it's entirely possible that those arguing against “Kurtzman era Trek” being canon don't harp on this detail is because it was obviously erroneous due to canonical information established within the run of TOS it-

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self, and admitting that doesn't serve their less than honest axe grinding.

The problem with arguing *against* the notion that creators reserve the right to make such changes subsequently hinges upon whether fans become emotionally attached to a widely held (but not firmly established) belief. In truth, most fans are perfectly willing to accept *actual* violations of canon, particularly where they have no significant effect on the direction of the franchise, but are nevertheless willing to go to war over *perceived* violations of canon.

Believe it or not, one can make this point by looking entirely within the confines of TOS. Let's consider what's considered to be the most infamous canon violation of them all (at least within the TOS era). Borrowing some equipment out of "Crewman" Daniels's quarters for a moment here, I take you to a crashed cargo carrier on the surface of Ceti Alpha VI—er—V ca 2282. Captain Clark Terrell and First Officer Pavel Chekov have been captured by a group of "augments". Their leader, Khan Noonian-Singh begins to speak. Witness:

Khan (to Terrell): "I don't know you... (to Chekov), but you... I never forget a face... Mr... Chekov, isn't it?"

"How could Khan remember Mr. Chekov when the latter wasn't even part of the *Enterprise* crew yet!?" is the universal reaction to this scene. Indeed, Walter Koenig has since revealed that even *he* quietly pondered this conundrum, but kept quiet out of fear that were the writers to have realized their "mistake", Koenig's part would be reassigned to someone else, e.g. George Takei (though were one to re-watch TOS: Space Seed, they'd quickly discover that Sulu wasn't present for that week's episode, either!)

In truth, however, this isn't the continuity error or canon violation everyone *thinks* it is. It's never been established, canonically, that Chekov wasn't yet an *Enterprise* crew member in TOS: Season 1. He simply wasn't yet a *bridge* officer. One could easily and credibly establish that he was an up-and-coming cadet. And just because there's no scene filmed *showing* an interaction between Chekov and Khan doesn't mean that one never took place.

To add weight to this argument consider the following: Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Scotty, Uhura, Sulu, and Chekov (and to a lesser extent Rand and Chapel) have all been established as the core members of the TOS crew. However, *none* of them, save Spock, appear in *every* episode (if one includes TOS: *The Cage*). Chekov is, of course, not present in Season 1, but he is frequently absent in Seasons 2 and 3.

Sulu is sometimes absent, particularly in the latter half of Season 2 (Takei was in the movie "The Green Berets", which was being filmed at the time). Rand is, of course, gone after the first half of Season 1 (her last appearance is in TOS: *Conscience of the King*). Chapel only appears sporadically throughout (usually to provide a romantic foil for Spock). Scotty appears in barely half of the Season 1 episodes, even though his role as Chief Engineer was firmly established in his first TOS appearance: *Where No Man Has Gone Before*. Even McCoy is absent in two season 1 episodes (in addition to *Where No Man Has Gone Before*): *What are Little Girls Made Of?* and *Errand of Mercy*.

Conversely, there are important (in universe), but rarely seen, crew members, but—by extension—are not highly significant (for narrative purposes) characters that are nevertheless part of the roster of approximately 430 crew members worth mentioning.

Consider the following: Records Officer, Benjamin Finney; Security Chief Giotto; Assistant Chief Engineer, DeSalle, Dr Joseph M'Benga; and Dilithium Specialist, Charlene Masters. We hardly *ever* see *them*. It would be convenient to dismiss them as "redshirts", which is a term used to categorize one-off characters whose role it is to die on away missions (or give Bones an opportunity to once again dramatically proclaim, "S/he's DEAD, Jim!") who are frequently—though not always—red shirted security guards, by that isn't the case. It is true that these are essentially "extra" tertiary characters introduced to fill in a role that the "core seven" (or nine if one counts Rand or Chapel) couldn't credibly fill in a story, but by establishing their roles as being significant within the *Enterprise* crew and command structure, it can logically be inferred that they're present—even if they're not often, or almost never—seen (and remember: there are approximately 430 crew-members aboard the *USS Enterprise* NCC 1701, at least in Kirk's day). Three particular examples stand out in my mind.

The first is Ben Finney. Although his actual role is to serve as an antagonist in a one-off story, i.e. the TOS Season 1 episode, *Court Martial*, it's established, on screen, that he is the *Enterprise's* "Records Officer", and only he alone, other than Kirk or Spock, can modify ships log entries. A no less—though easily missed—detail is that he holds the rank of *commander* (evidenced by the two solid stripes on his gold command grade uniform sleeve). While it's true that he is referred to, onscreen as *lieutenant-commander* Finney, Spock *also* is described thusly, frequently throughout Season 1, but is never seen wearing anything less than

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commander's rank insignia throughout. Contrast this with McCoy, Scotty, and Lang (a *gold-shirted* lieutenant-commander who is killed on Cestus III by the Gorn early on in TOS: *Arena*) who all wear lieutenant-commander's rank insignia (one solid and one dashed stripe on the uniform sleeve). Although it's not canonically established, barring any evidence to the contrary, at least until the events of TOS: *Court Martial*, Finney is third in command, just behind Spock. Keep in mind that this is the *fifteenth* episode in the series.

The second example is Security Chief, Giotto, seen only in TOS: *Devil in the Dark*. On screen, he *also* wears a full commander's rank (two-solid stripes on his sleeve), though—as would seem to be a running problem in Season 1 of TOS, he, *too*, is *addressed* as lieutenant-commander. Clearly his role is very important, even if the character is *not* (in fact, the actor playing the part, Barry Russo, would reappear as “Commodore Bob Wesley” in the second TOS season episode: *The Ultimate Computer*).

The third example is Doctor Joseph M'Benga (Booker Bradshaw in TOS, Babs Olusanmokin in SNW), although he has only two onscreen appearances in TOS, there's no reason to suspect that he didn't serve the entire time during the run of TOS (unless later episodes of SNW establish otherwise). M'Benga is actually a very important crewmate, even if—in TOS, at least—he's rarely seen: he's the backup CMO, as established by his appearance in Dr McCoy's absence (by virtue of the latter's being marooned with Kirk, Sulu, and D'Amato) in TOS: *That Which Survives*. Certainly, Khan and/or his band of augments would have had to deal with these three, as well as hundreds of others.⁴⁹ Chekov could easily have been among them!

In fact, *That Which Survives* provides yet another piece of evidence that discounts the idea that Khan's recognition of Chekov represents either a continuity error or canon violation. Chekov doesn't appear in the episode (the often seen, but rarely heard Lieutenant Hadley is seated there throughout the episode). It's not as though Chekov wasn't needed in the script, at least, because in Sulu's absence (due to his presence on the away team), Spock summons a female helmsman, Lt Rhadda, to relieve him (that there were *five* guest characters—Rhadda, M'Benga, D'Amato, Watson, and Losira—with significant speaking parts, rules out Chekov's absence being due to budgetary limitations, especially in Season 3, where the budget was especially

constrained. The most logical real-world explanation is that Koenig was unavailable that week, and so the role of Rhadda was created in his absence. As for “Hadley”, Billy Blackburn, who played him, was something of a Swiss Army knife, performing multiple offscreen production roles, so giving him Chekov's lines wouldn't have worked in this instance). Yet, after Sulu mentions the Siberian comet impact of 1908, Kirk states, “If I'd wanted a Russian history lesson, I'd have brought along Mr Chekov.”

Clearly, Chekov can be *present* without necessarily being *seen or heard* on screen for his presence to be canonical, and that can be extrapolated to Season One of TOS. Therefore, while it takes a great deal of explaining, the fact that Khan easily recognizes him, even though he's not seen in TOS: *Space Seed* doesn't in anyway rule out the possibility that an interaction between the two took place. In fact, their initial meeting *could* even be established *later*. >>>A long rumored “Long Trek” that Alex Kurtzman and others have hinted about is a story about Khan between the events of TOS: *Space Seed* and *TWOK*.<<< Such an episode could include a “flashback” of Chekov, perhaps leading his fellow lower deckers in an attempt to resist Khan's augments' takeover in between the “suffocation” scene in the Bridge and the failed attempts by Khan to convince Spock, et. al. In the Briefing Room in *Space Seed*, as has long been suggested by fans (or even presented in non-canonical novels and comics).

Chekov's first canonical *appearance* (at least thus far) of course happens in TOS: *Catspaw*, which takes place after *Space Seed*, but that doesn't mean he wasn't already a crew member. No dialogue or canonical details contradict that possibility. The short of it is: until otherwise established, an earlier meeting between Khan and Chekov prior to their reunion on Ceti Alpha V is canon, *even though we've never seen it*.

What's fascinating about this debate is that it overlooks much more blatant canon violations made in TOS that simply cannot be explained away. The most glaring example is one that just about everyone overlooks, and that's the fact that TOS's taking place in the 23rd Century AD *simply cannot be reconciled* by the dialogue and math expressed in TOS: *Squire of Gothos*.

Consider the following information established in the episode: Kirk & crew encounter the planet “Gothos” in

film noir vibe—these important, but rarely seen, characters could mainly serve on the “night shift”.

⁴⁹In fact, in my Head Canon, and what could provide the core characters for yet another spin-off—perhaps with a

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the midst of a “stellar desert” within the Alpha or Beta Quadrant of the Milky Way Galaxy approximately 900 years from Earth (an odd notion, considering that *Earth itself* is in what could accurately be described as such, as the Solar System is currently on the far fringes of the Orion Spur of one of the galaxy’s spiral arms). Trelane looks through a “telescope” (of sorts) at Earth, thus viewing it “900 years in its past”. He then proceeds to interact with the *Enterprise* crew cosplaying as an English gentry man of the 1780s, name dropping Napoleon Bonaparte at one point. Ever logical, Spock concludes that Trelane is looking at Earth (and making assumptions about humanity) based on *900-year-old* information! You may have already guessed the problem here, but if not, I’ll spell it out: if, as everyone now accepts and as canon has now firmly established, TOS is set in the 23rd Century, then Trelane *should be seeing Earth and humanity as it was in the 1300s, not the late 1700s!* Either the math is wrong (and Spock unfamiliar with Earth history, a possibility firmly ruled out by numerous bits of established dialogue in multiple TOS episodes as well as in SNW), Trelane is lying (and *nobody* catches it), or, *this episode takes place in the 27th Century!*

There is really no way to massage the truth that, factually, according to far too much dialogue in TOS: *The Squire of Gothos*, the action takes place in the 27th Century. Now, Agent Daniels *did* mention that this was indeed one of the centuries which involved the Temporal Wars, but honestly the simplest explanation is that the TOS creators and writers hadn’t firmly agreed on the actual timeline yet. This is a dubious argument as well, however, because there *are* many other bits of dialogue scattered throughout TOS that it is, in fact, set *roughly* in the 23rd Century, though not as specifically to a given year or decade. (It’s now generally accepted—the fuzzy math of *The Squire of Gothos* notwithstanding—that TOS episodes take place 300 years after they were first broadcast IRL. So, since this episode was broadcast in early 1967, it therefore takes place in 2267).

To be fair, this glaring canon violation can be forgiven on the grounds that it was made in a mid-first season episode of TOS, in which the creators were still sculpting the overall basic shape of the entire Star Trek Universe (one which they could not have had any idea would become so culturally iconic). In fact, there’s are *numerous* examples of “rough” canon extant in TOS: Season One that were quickly retconned:

- Roddenberry’s initial concept was that of a *United Earth*, but Gene L Coon and Dorothy Fontana ex-

panded that vision to the *United Federation of Planets*, in which Earth, Vulcan, Andoria, Tellar Prime, and numerous other worlds were coequals. The “Federation” isn’t even mentioned until TOS: *Arena*, the nineteenth episode into the series (link -

<https://screenrant.com/star-trek-federation-first-mention-the-original-series-arena-factoid/>)

- Likewise, the *USS Enterprise* was initially said to be chartered and governed by the “United Earth Space Probe Agency” (UESPA). This was subsequently retconned into Starfleet Command;
- In TOS: *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, Spock noted that “one of his ancestors married a human female”. This is *technically* still true if that ancestor is his father, Sarek, but it’s likely that the creators hadn’t established this yet;
- One episode later, in TOS: *The Corbomite Maneuver*, Spock establishes that his mother was indeed that human female, but he also refers to his parents in the past tense, as if they’re deceased (of course, as we’d later discover, Sarek would live *at least* another century into the TNG era!);
- The Vulcans are frequently described as “Vulcanians”...

...and so forth.

In fact, if one pays close attention, they’ll notice that this ongoing refinement of canon is a never-ending process that happens continuously throughout the history of Star Trek, as the Star Trek universe evolves.

Some examples include the introduction of ridged-headed Klingons in *Star Trek the Motion Picture*, a change that wouldn’t be canonically explained until the final episodes of the final season of ENT, and the naming of the four galactic quadrants into “Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta”, in TNG’s third season episode: *The Price*.

This latter example is fairly easy to miss if one isn’t paying close attention, but prior to TNG: *The Price*, the terms “sector” and “quadrant” are used interchangeably. Following the episode, clear distinctions between the two are made from then onwards. The naming of the four galactic quadrants was a watershed moment, thus planting the seeds for DS9 and VOY in the same TNG episode! One might be forgiven in thinking that the naming convention itself was newly established in the time in authors episode takes place *in universe*, however, in ENT: *Regenera-*

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tion Captain Archer informs T'Pol that the cybernetic adversaries (whom the viewer knows are the Borg, even if Starfleet won't learn this for another two centuries) sent their message "somewhere deep in the Delta Quadrant." DISCO and SNW frequently reference the Alpha and Beta Quadrants, and also officially canonize the Star Trek Stellar Cartography maps that had hitherto been semi-canonical at best.

Creators usually make these changes to give their fictional universes more depth and dimension, and the characters more...well...character. They are usually well intentioned, even if they piss off fans. Plus, sometimes, as was the case in the "naming" of the Milky Way's galactic quadrants, they inspire and open up huge story potential. It's likely that neither DS9 nor VOY would have happened had the seemingly insignificant defining of the galaxy's "astrography" not been done!

These constant refinements are usually so subtle, few fans, even hardcore Trek fans with all of their obsessive attention to detail, notice them. Occasionally, they're quite glaring, however. The introduction of ridge-headed Klingons in STTMP is a perfect example. It was never explained whether or not the Klingons *always* had forehead ridges, and the viewer was left to assume this was the case (but the limited TOS budget and rudimentary visual effects prevented it being shown on screen (alternate explanations included multiple subspecies of Klingons, or multiple stages of maturity). The fact that Kor, Koloth, and Kang all reappear on DS9 *with* forehead ridges that they previously lacked would seemly have lent credence to that theory, but then the creators chose to make DS9: *Trials and Tribble-ations* and make a joke out of the glaring contradiction at Worf's expense.

Not content with that, in ENT: *Affliction* and ENT: *Divergence* the creators decided to make the answer to the question put to Worf by Odo, O'Brien, and Bashir whether the "ridgeless" Klingons were the product of "a genetic mutation or biological experiment" be "literally, both!" (using human augmented DNA from Khan's era the catalyst). Such changes are known as "retconning" (from "retcon", an abbreviation of "retroactive continuity").

Retconning isn't unique to Star Trek. A famous example, from Star Wars was the revelation that Darth Vader is

actually Anakin Skywalker, Luke's father, and that Leia Organa is his sister. Neither idea was established in George Lucas's original concept (there was even a sequel to what has now been retconned into *Episode IV: A New Hope* (a subtitle that it initially lacked) that established that Leia and Luke were *lovers*, rather than siblings (I possessed a comic book version of this story, but misplaced or lost it in my youth), but the idea was ultimately dropped, and the events within it declared non-canonical by Lucas, himself). The notion that Leia and Luke were *siblings* was a blatant (and not very subtle) retcon that occurred between the making of *Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* (I'm fairly certain the kiss shared between the two in the former would have been far less passionate had the information revealed in the latter, had that not been the case, and in any case, these details have been established in print anyway.)⁵⁰

The earliest retcon that comes to my mind is J.R.R. Tolkien's retconning of Bilbo's finding of the One Ring in *The Hobbit*. Everyone now accepts that Bilbo finds the Ring in Gollum's cave, and that this is ultimately revealed to be Sauron's Ring of Power in the sequel, *The Lord of the Rings* (LOTR). However, that is *not* the way it was *originally*. Before Tolkien wrote LOTR, *The Hobbit* was a simple adventure story, taking place in the fictional universe of "Middle Earth", that he had been creating for several decades (but never publishing any works about due to his extreme perfectionism about his own fictional writings), but only very loosely related to it. The Necromancer wasn't originally Sauron, and merely served as a plot contrivance to remove Gandalf from the action for the middle portion of the story (thus allowing Bilbo to level up). The Ring wasn't yet established as Sauron's evil tool, either. It was merely a magic ring that belonged to Gollum. What's more, Gollum didn't *lose* the Ring, he *gave* Bilbo the Ring as a prize for winning the game of riddles, after which he *willingly* escorts Bilbo out of the cave to rejoin his companions whom had accidentally lost him initially.

However, when Tolkien set out to write a sequel, which, too, was initially meant to be a lighthearted adventure, no longer in length than *The Hobbit*, it grew into the sprawling epic it ultimately became organically, as Tolkien wound up much more closely connecting all of the threads in the first story to the lore of the fictional universe he'd been creating for some time. The Necromancer became

⁵⁰Ironically—and somewhat creepily—Donnie and Marie Osmond coincidentally(?) foreshadowed all of this by playing "Leia" and "Luke" in one of their late 1970s "Osmond

Family" variety shows. Redd Foxx played the part of Kenobi and quipped, "Vader will never catch me. I live on a faraway planet called 'Sanford' which has no Sun."

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Sauron, Bilbo's magic ring became *the* Ring of Power, and LOTR would become a much darker, more ominous, and ultimately more apocalyptic epic.

There was just one major problem, and Tolkien struggled mightily to address it: why on (Middle) Earth would Gollum simply *give* Bilbo the Ring? The author's ultimate answer was to perform a *substantial* retcon by revealing that *The Hobbit* was a story written by Bilbo *himself* in the third person, and in the telling of the tale, he had *lied* about Gollum "giving" him the Ring altogether! Instead, what *really* happened was that Bilbo had found the Ring after Gollum had lost it, had subsequently beaten Gollum in the game of riddles, was about to be double crossed by Gollum (who wished to eat Bilbo regardless), but couldn't find him, because the latter had inadvertently put the Ring on his finger and rendered himself invisible. Then, Gollum inadvertently shows Bilbo the way out of the cave, because he goes looking for the Ring, only to guess what had happened as Bilbo exits the cave at the end! As for why such an ethical and upstanding hobbit such as Bilbo would lie so blatantly, Tolkien had waved that away by simply declaring that the lie was another side effect of The Ring's evilness.

To avoid confusion, Tolkien rewrote those sections of *The Hobbit* to reflect the "true" course of events (i.e. he incorporated his retcon into the prequel) after publication of the *Lord of the Rings*, which proved extremely popular, more so, in fact, than the prequel that spawned it. Tolkien's retcon was ingenious, because LOTR is an epic tale (one I personally love dearly), and the Peter Jackson movies expertly bring it to life (in my opinion). None of this would have been remotely possible *without* the retcon. It may be a "cheat" in the purist sense, but it's a commonly used conceit in storytelling and fictional world crafting. And it likely predates Tolkien. Most ancient mythologies almost *certainly* use retconning, too. Space limitations here prevent me from going further down this particular trans warp rabbit hole.

The point of all this is that this sort of constant refining, which is essentially an ongoing *retconning* is normal, and it is essentially *also how canon works*, including in *Star Trek*. And this brings me to the absurd and reactionary argument that any *Star Trek* created by Alex Kurtzman is "not canon".

There's little doubt that *Star Trek Discovery* has polarized the fanbase. I, myself, have criticisms of the show.

For example, I agree that its first season is exceedingly dark, perhaps overly so. I'm not at all a fan of the pre-TOS starship and Starfleet design schema. I *definitely* agree that the *third* redesign of the Klingons was excessive and unnecessary. However that's as far as it goes for me. New iterations of *Star Trek* *rarely* fail to ruffle the long-time loyal fans' feathers. *STTMP* alienated many fans for various reasons (including that Klingon redesign), and it took the success of *STTWOK* to win a multitude of them back. The same was true of TNG. I, myself, struggled with ENT when it was first released, and refused to watch it until after I saw the first episodes of DISCO (which I didn't dislike, but desired more context). After watching seasons 1 and 2 of DISCO (Season 3 hadn't been released), I decided to give ENT a second chance, and couldn't believe I'd been so critical after its pilot episode!

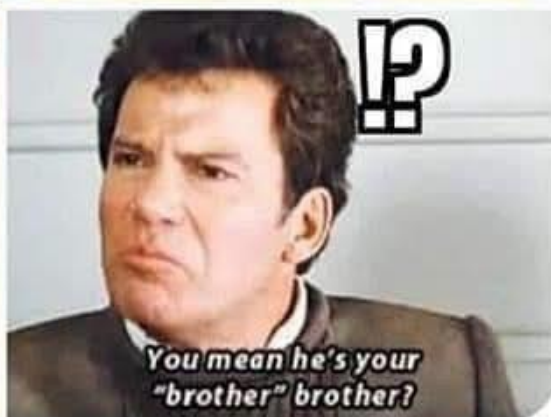
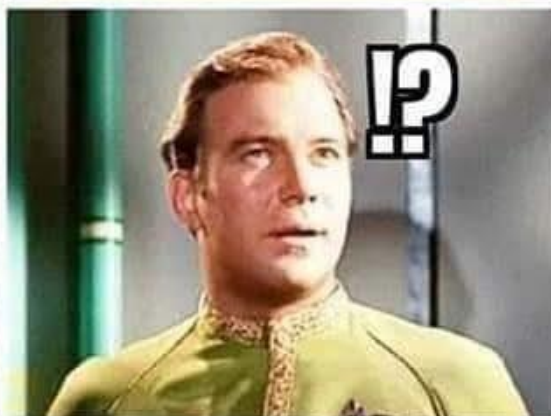
Star Trek, as is the case with any beloved and fairly well-crafted fictional universe, fires fans' imagination, and the resulting Head Canon is often elaborate. Innumerable volumes of novels, digital novels (comic books), games, fan fiction, and more only deepens that process. New movies and series in such a franchise often sound discordant notes, shaking loyal fans' expectations and disrupting the preconceived ideas they hold dear. Most fans, including those initially skeptical of a new series, even those that seemingly take the franchise in new directions, eventually grow to accept the new series. In fact, many go on to love them even more than the older ones. However, there *are* traditionalists who never accept the new material. They're either too stuck in their ways, or they have other reasons. To quote the Talosian magistrate, "That is (their) choice." They are entitled to their opinion.

These fans, however, are *not* entitled to their own facts. It's entirely within any fan's prerogative to say, "I don't like this particular *Star Trek* episode or series". To this day, I can't bring myself to watch *Star Trek V* or the Kelvin "reboot" movies. There are a handful of incredibly wretched episodes in each series (even SNW, DS9 and TNG). It's *not* within a fan's purview to unilaterally declare something "non canon" just because they don't like it or it challenges their preconceived ideas about the *Star Trek*.

This brings us to the next prevailing belief that I intend to challenge:

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Haters: Spock suddenly having an adopted sister he never mentioned would NEVER happen in Star Trek!
Meanwhile, on Star Trek...



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Spock's Unknown Sister and Youthful Emotions

I find this to be one of the more absurd arguments given the fact that it's already been revealed that Spock has a half-brother, *born out of wedlock no less!* (At least Sarek adopted Micheal Burnham!)

Some might try and invoke the fact that Gene Roddenberry (who was not particularly keen on *any* of the films produced after *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*) declared that *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* was “apocryphal”, but Paramount Studios as well as those producing TNG (which was in its second season at the time) *did not*. At most, references to the film were rarely (if ever) invoked. DS9 and VOY *never* referenced anything to do with the film, and TNG practically avoided it as well. The one exception was TNG: *The Nth Degree* which sees the *USS Enterprise NCC 1701-D* journey to the galactic core at the behest of the Cyrythians. The “God” character in *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* does resemble them, but the connection has never been confirmed.

That said, there have been some references to *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* in more recent interactions of *Star Trek*, notably the appearance of Sybok in SNW.

As I've already established, just because we've *not* yet heard of Michael Burnham in previous iterations of the franchise does *not* rule out her existence. Throughout the first season, and half of the second season of TOS, the viewer wasn't aware of the fact that Sarek or Amanda were still living. Throughout the first few seasons of DS9, we're not fully aware that Benjamin Sisko's father is still alive *either* (and dialogue would seem to suggest he isn't). It's not ever mentioned that Surak's katra was carried by a human, i.e. Jonathan Archer (nor, of course do we even learn of the *existence* of Archer) until ENT. Again, these retroactive introductions of new story elements *are precisely how fictional universe building works*. One can argue whether they work or not, but one cannot simply declare them noncanonical arbitrarily.

As for Spock's youthful “emotionalism”, *something* must explain why Spock *smiles* in TOS: *The Cage*. The *real-world* explanation, of course, is that Spock's character hadn't yet been fleshed out, and his lack of outward displays of emotion was actually an incorporation of Una's (Number One's) (apparently) emotionless personality. However, unless fans are willing to simply overlook the inconsistency without an “in universe” explanation (and why would they?) the explanation must be given. Season 2 of DISCO and SNW offer that explanation: Spock (being

half human) was in his formative years. That, combined with personal traumas, result in his not yet embracing Vulcan discipline. If a full Vulcan, namely Tuvok, struggled with emotions—prior to spiritual discipline—certainly one can see how a half-Vulcan, half-Human would do so as well.

One can argue—and I tend to agree—that perhaps, SNW's writers and creators have leaned a little too far into Spock expressing emotions in his younger years, but—as Brad Boimler so bluntly points out—history will ultimately remember a disciplined, (mostly) emotionless Spock. Then again, as Doctor McCoy might slyly respond, (it'd be remembered that way), “in a pig's eye”.

“Kurtzman Era' Trek is Too Dark”:

Still another other argument used to suggest that the Kurtzman era *Star Trek* isn't legitimately canonical is the often-repeated denouncement, “the shows are too ‘dark’, and lack Gene Roddenberry's optimistic vision.”

Again, this smacks of very selective cherry-picking. LDS, SNW, and PROD are anything *but* “dark”, and it's only fair to say that Season 1 of DISCO and Seasons 1 and 2 of PIC were significantly so, but the “darkness” wasn't a sign that *Star Trek* itself had turned pessimistic. On the contrary, each was an attempt to argue that *Star Trek's* utopian vision should serve as a beacon of hope even when things seem most hopeless (Picard says as much to Guinan in the middle of Season 2 of PIC).

If one wishes to counterpose “Berman era” *Trek* they'd be wise to consider carefully. DS9, considered by many fans to be one of the best of all *Star Trek* series was *incredibly* dark at times. In fact, *every* series had its “dark” moments. TOS: *The Enterprise Incident* was especially so. The introduction of the Borg into TNG in *Q-Who* was an *especially* chilling moment (to say nothing about *The Best of Both Worlds*). Much of Season 3 of ENT was especially so. VOY got *incredibly* dark with episodes like *The Year of Hell, Parts 1 & 2* and *Equinox, Parts 1 & 2*. And who can forget the DS9 episode *In the Pale Moonlight*? It doesn't get much darker than this!

The fact is that, while *Star Trek* offers a *mostly* positive, utopian, “post scarcity socialism” (as Pelia describes it) future, *no* experience is without its occasional dark moments. (If there weren't any, there'd be no story!). What's notable is that each series in the franchise has its own unique tone (some darker, some brighter).

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I realize it might be rubbing salt on a wound of his critics to paraphrase the much-maligned Alex Kurtzman, but he likens the various different *Star Trek* series to “different colored crayons in a single box”, and I think he’s exactly right. The way I see it is this:

- TOS represents the basic utopian vision of the United Federation of Planets, IDIC, and the Prime Directive (albeit through a rather 1960s tinged liberal interventionist filter);
- TNG represents the same vision, though one grown past its cocky adolescence into mature and measured adulthood (this is personified beautifully in the scene between Deanna Troi and Will Riker in TNG: *The Best of Both Worlds, Part 1*, i.e. where they discuss how much more “seasoned” Riker has become);
- DS9 serves as a vehicle to put that utopian vision to a major stress test, pushing those limits almost to the breaking point, but one where the ideals hold up to that test;
- VOY offers a different stress test by placing champions of the utopian vision in an unfamiliar place, far from home, with only each other and their wits available to survive. Can they hold true to those utopian ideals? Ultimately they do, but it’s a real “journey” to say the least;
- ENT depicts how the utopian vision was realized (and how we cocky and arrogant humans came of age and learned to cooperate with the rest of the founding members of the Federation);
- DISCO depicts just how easily we can stray from that vision through our own arrogance and hubris, and that can happen *even if* we have the best of intentions. It also shows that we must learn to effectively process grief and trauma to realize that vision. I have more to say about this, but I’ll deal with that shortly;
- PIC depicts the utopian vision of TOS and TNG in its autumn years, when the frustrations we all feel in life, and the regrets we have from past mistakes tend to haunt us. Do we succumb to bitterness or do we keep fighting for a better future no matter what the odds?
- LDS is, by contrast, an irreverent, but nevertheless loving spin on all of the above and more. It is a recognition that for all of our supposed “greatness”

and veneration of “heroes”, it is the mundane, everyday tasks that matter, and that we should never take ourselves so seriously that life ceases to be fun (even in a post scarcity socialist utopia);

- PROD is about coming of age and finding one’s place in the ongoing effort to build that utopia;
- SNW is a modern, contemporary spin on the TOS theme, albeit with updated social values to fit those of the real world. It literally is what TOS would have been if it had been made in the 2020s instead of the 1960s. That it is so close to TOS in spirit likely goes a long way in explaining why it is the most beloved iteration of Kurtzman era *Trek*.

Season One of DISCO was indeed dark, perhaps as dark as the franchise gets, but that’s required by the storyline. DISCO is particularly focused on how personal traumas have major impacts on how people react, and how that affects their decisions. This *necessitates* a darker tone. As a result, DISCO is a particularly melodramatic show.

This indirectly touches on yet *another* argument the critics of Kurtzman era *Trek* routinely invoke: “The characters act ‘unprofessionally’ and “cry too much”, which I will deal with later:

“The Characters in ‘Kurtzman Era’ *Trek*, Particularly *Discovery*, Act ‘Unprofessionally’ and Cry Too Much.”

It’s *definitely* true that Michael Burnham acts unprofessionally in the DISCO pilot episode: *The Vulcan Hello*, attempting a mutiny, and then actions that blunder the Federation into a very destructive war with the Klingon Empire (an act for which she suffers deeply), but one shouldn’t be too quick to judge.

After all, in *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, Captain Kirk and his crew *literally steal the USS Enterprise NCC 1701, sabotage the USS Excelsior NX 2000, and defy Starfleet’s prohibition to traveling to the Mutara Sector* just to rescue Spock’s prototype matter regenerated body (also risking war with the Klingons, I might add). If that’s not the *height* of unprofessional behavior, I don’t know what is! One could even argue that Kirk & crew were *less* justified in *their* actions, because they’re proceeding under the belief that “the needs of the one outweigh the needs of the many” (though, as it turns out, history unfolds in such a way that this act *actually* winds up being a case of “the needs of the *bigger* many out-

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weighing the needs of the *smaller* many, due to Spock's actions bringing about the eventual cessation of animosity between the Federation and the Klingons as well as the Romulans, because, eventually all three become allies, even to the point of all merging into the Federation by the 32nd Century, *but there's no way anyone would have known this then!*, whereas Burnham, at least, was (erroneously, it turns out), trying to place the needs of the many ahead of the needs of the few!

This isn't the only example I can cite. In *Star Trek: Insurrection*, Captain Picard & Crew defy Starfleet's orders to save the Baku. That Starfleet was acting unethically due to desperation (the Dominion War was raging at the time) doesn't make Picard's actions any less "unprofessional". Jonathan Archer engages in actual (albeit relatively mild) *torture* (again out of desperation) in ENT: *The Xindi*. That he later feels intense remorse and guilt over his actions doesn't make it any more professional. And, once again, I could point out Benjamin Sisko's actions in DS9: *In the Pale Moonlight*.

On the other hand, was Captain Janeway acting "professionally" when she ordered the hybrid character, "Tuvix", to revert to his constituent entities, Tuvok and Neelix in VOY: *Tuvix*? By all standards, *yes she was*, but that doesn't make the decision any less controversial (indeed, it's one of the most heated debates among fans). The real question isn't whether or not it's "professional"; the issue is whether or not *it's the right thing to do* given the circumstances. Sometimes, those circumstances don't offer clear, unambiguous answers (though, sometimes, I think the writers chicken out and let the resolution become a case of the ends justifying the means, which is *especially* true of DS9: *In the Pale Moonlight*, though it's such a good story, that its excellence outweighs that particular flaw, in mine and many other fans', opinions.

So why is Burnham given more grief than the others? The only fathomable explanation I can see is that, *once again*, the far right talking heads are weaponizing the fact that she is a black woman to push their vile, reactionary agenda among what they hope will be a receptive audience (young, particularly white, males). That's *especially* likely in the matter of the alleged "excessive crying" in later iterations of the franchise.

It's particularly telling that a great many of those who have conservative and reactionary leanings have a problem with later series leaning into freer displays of emotion, because it's a core tenet of a hyper masculine mindset that one is expected to "suck it up" after experiencing trauma,

and certainly the storytelling (and episodic nature) of TOS tended to often unintentionally reinforce that worldview. Consider the TOS episodes *City on the Edge of Forever* and *Operation Annihilate!* Apart from being one of the rare instances in the TOS era when two episodes that followed one another in *production* order also did so in *broadcast* order, James Kirk experiences deep personal traumas in *both*. In the first episode, he must allow and witness the death of Edith Keeler, a woman from the past he quickly grows to love, in order to preserve the historical timeline. Kirk is *devastated*, but by the next episode he's reasonably "fine" again, but then discovers his older brother, George Samuel (aka "Sam") Kirk has been killed by the alien creatures menacing the Deneva colony. As is later revealed in SNW, Sam Kirk isn't just a "redshirt", but James Kirk's reaction is relatively understated.

Captain Kirk has just experienced *two* traumas, but by the next episode, the second season premiere, *Catspaw*, he's fine again. By contrast, the character of Michael Burnham spends much of her time processing the traumas that deeply affect her, and many of the critical fans seem bothered by this. That is their prerogative of course, but really the whole point of DISCO is to address the issue of how we, as humans process trauma.

There are two reasons why this stands out particularly in DISCO, as well as Kurtzman era Trek generally. First of all, TOS dates to an earlier era of television where, outside of serial dramas, which were mostly "soap operas", most dramatic series consisted of standalone, self-contained stories (more about that later as well), and therefore events that happened one week would more less be forgotten the next. Secondly, psychology has advanced significantly in the nearly sixty years since *Star Trek* was conceived. It's more or less accepted, among social scientists at least, that emotionally traumatic experiences have lingering and lasting effects, and if these aren't fully addressed, these experiences can have lasting deleterious impacts. In recent years there has been much written about the necessity of giving space to process grief. To be certain, this was accepted to be the case even in the time TOS was produced, but in the sixty years hence, theories on *how* one processes grief and trauma have evolved, and—as one can imagine—not everyone agrees on this new information.

In the 1960s, the approach to such things was to recommend the victim "shake it off", pick themselves up, and "get going" again. This isn't the case anymore, especially given the fact that many studies show that simply "shaking things off" doesn't work (victims often wind up having to

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process the trauma anyway, and not too infrequently fall into self-destructive habits). One need only to look at the sheer volume of PTSD experienced by military veterans after service in wartime (particularly wars waged for dubious reasons). To be fair, TOS *did* occasionally deal with this phenomenon. The best example is TOS: *The Doomsday Machine*, particularly in the case of Commodore Matt Decker, who is absolutely *wracked* with grief, having inadvertently condemned his entire crew to death due to an error in judgment. Decker is driven by survivors' guilt and an insatiable desire to avenge his dead crewmates, to the point it drives him practically insane. Decker isn't an evil man; he's a good man who's been broken by PTSD, and William Windom plays the part *perfectly*.

What's controversial to many of Kurtzman era Trek's critics is that many of the recommended approaches to healthily addressing such traumas run counter to hyper masculine approaches, *particularly* those traditionally associated with military institutions (though, one should keep in mind that Gene Roddenberry—himself a military veteran—was not found of militarism). Given the close association between far-right authoritarianism and hyper, often toxic, masculinity, it's not particularly shocking that reactionaries would try to weaponize criticism of newer *Star Trek* iterations in order to grind their ideological axes.

DISCO and PIC particularly stare down the hyper masculine approach by allowing the “hero” characters, including legacy characters such as Jean-Luc Picard and Spock, to lean into their vulnerabilities, and to be less than “perfect” (though, interestingly, Seven-of-Nine's character arc and grief processing results in her becoming a hardened, vigilante, bad ass—albeit a left insurrectionist one, not a *reactionary* one). PIC, particularly, deals with our heroes fighting through their demons, and—as Cristobal Rios eloquently states it—“nobody ever gets it right all of the time.” What matters is that ultimately almost each character completes their character arcs.⁵¹

If one wants to complain about “crying” in DISCO, they might want to avoid some specific TOS episodes, such as:

- TOS: *The Naked Time* - Spock has a very lengthy *and emotional* cry, because the complex, alcohol-like molecules temporarily remove his inhibitions, allowing his

⁵¹Arguments against PIC being canon strike me as *particularly* absurd, given the fact that a *lot* of the elements depicted in the “future” timeline of the TNG finale, *All Good*

human half—which we learn from later episodes and series—has been routinely traumatized;

- TOS: *The Doomsday Machine* - Commodore Decker is absolutely stricken with grief and survivor's guilt. He blames himself for inadvertently condemning his approximately 430 crewmates to death by the Planet Killer;
- TOS: *Wolf in the Fold* - Scotty is nearly inconsolable when he cannot figure out whether or not he has murdered three women (we later learn he has not, of course);
- *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* - Spock weeps for V'ger out of pity (although that's particular scene was cut from the theatrical version, both the greatly extended home release version and directors' cut version retained the scene, and it's a safe bet that most fans have seen the latter versions, as they were the most readily available);
- *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* - When Scotty's nephew, Peter Preston dies, Scotty is again, understandably, reduced to tears (although this may be lost on the viewer if they have only seen the theatrical release, which is approximately six minutes shorter. One of the cut scenes includes an extended scene following Preston's death where Scotty, still in tears asks Admiral Kirk, “why?”, and Kirk reveals that's it's Khan, out for revenge);
- *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* - Admiral Kirk breaks down and cries (as he denounces Kruge as “you Klingon BASTARD!”) after learning that the latter has ordered the murder of his son, David.

And let's not forget Picard crying in TNG: *Sarek* or *Generations* (not to mention *Data* crying tears of joy upon learning that his cat, Spot, survives the crash landing of the *Enterprise-D*'s saucer section on Narendra III), or Sisko crying quite dramatically as he processes the grief caused by the death of his beloved wife, Jennifer, at the hands of the Borg at the Battle of Wolf 359.

The fact is that main characters have cried *plentifully* throughout the history of the franchise, and fixating on the fact that Michael Burnham (played by the very talented

Things more or less come true in PIC, which is especially fitting, because the latter series takes place right within that future timeline's timeframe.

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Sonequa Martin-Green, who is obviously one of those actors who can cry on cue, and very convincingly at that) or Sylvia Tilly (who is a neurodivergent character, played by the very talented Mary Wiseman, whose ability to engage in pratfall comedy with impeccable timing)⁵² strikes me as an excuse to direct one's reactionary ire at the first series in the franchise with a woman of color as its lead character, and little more.

The “original” *Star Trek* was “episodic”, with self-contained stories; the creators of the new *Trek* insist on season-long story arcs that are too plodding or hard to follow;

It's mostly true that TOS was strictly episodic, with the one rare exception being *The Menagerie*—which was made to solve a production backlog, save money, and make creative reuse of the then unaired first pilot. That was mainly due to the nature of broadcast television in those days, which I've previously described in detail in “How to Use This Episode Guide.” *Star Trek* was strictly episodic, because—outside of soap operas—television *in general* was episodic.

That's not to suggest that the idea of continuing storylines was never *considered*, however. Originally the episode *Tomorrow is Yesterday* was intended to follow *The Naked Time*, which—when one thinks about the “time travel” twist at the conclusion of the latter, one which happens without consequences, it's apparent that there was an intent for that story to lead somewhere more significant. Why this didn't ultimately happen probably had much to do with the aforementioned nature of television. The average viewer might only see an episode once or twice, especially if the show never made it into syndication. Hanging story threads would be lost on the average viewer. What's more, nobody could've realistically predicted just how popular *Star Trek* would ultimately prove to be, let alone that it would become a global cultural phenomenon.

The “sausage making” of traditional television (as *The Trouble With Tribbles* story and script writer David Gerrold bluntly described it) actually had serious limitations, includ-

ing some that, frankly, strained credibility. The biggest being that our hero characters could experience a deep emotional trauma (e.g. Kirk having to allow his true love, Edith Keeler perish in order to preserve the Prime Universe timeline) one week, only to have the matter forgotten one episode (usually one week's time for the viewer) later.

It created other drawbacks as well. For example, the only really atrocious TOS episode from its phenomenal first season is *The Alternate Factor*, which suffered primarily due to a last minute replacement of the main guest star (Lazarus was to have been played by John Barrymore, but he was a last minute no show) compounded by hasty script changes that essentially gutted some of the main elements of the story (Charlene Masters was to have had a romantic involvement with either anti or prime Lazarus, though which one has not been made clear). What nobody seems to have noticed is that while it's never been suggested that the main, obsessed Lazarus *might* actually come from the “Mirror” Universe, he acts an *awful lot* like he *could*. If this episode were being produced now, say, for SNW, what better way to foreshadow what would be to come than with this revelation? (It'd certainly have made this misfire of an episode a better story!)

Fast forward to the early 21st Century, and the television viewing experience is entirely different. Now the average viewer watches on-demand television, which allows them to watch any episode (once it's released) any time they wish. Furthermore, “binge” viewing (watching numerous episodes in marathon format) has become much more common. Not only does it make sense to carry story threads from one episode to another, doing so encourages more continuous rapt attention of the viewer. It is for this reason that DISCO and PIC both leaned heavily into season length serial drama story arcs. Granted these could be somewhat hit and miss. Season one of PIC tries to do far too much in its final episodes, and Season three of DISCO's ultimate resolution is something of a letdown. Nevertheless, the storylines fit comfortably within the *Star Trek* universe, in my opinion, and what's more, the serial drama *isn't* as much of a departure as some critics might think.

⁵²I won't even waste time arguing with these clowns over the absurd claim that “Sylvia Tilly wouldn't make it into Starfleet due to her being overweight/out of shape,” which is blatant “fat shaming”. Mary Wiseman is obviously a big woman, but as can be clearly seen in various episodes of DISCO is in optimal physical shape as her jogging through

the corridors of the *USS Discovery NCC 1031* clearly illustrates, and the notion that women should conform to a preconceived (by males) standard of beauty or body type is patriarchal horseshit and is barely worth giving any consideration other than utter contempt.

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In fact, it's ironic that many of the "Kurtzman" era *Trek's* critics hold up "Berman era" series as virtuous, because every single one of those had *plenty* of multiple episode story arcs.

DS9 had many such serial threads, including the franchises' first three-part episode (to kick off its second season) and it concluded with a *nine-part* finale. Many story elements in earlier episodes would set up crucial elements in later ones. While many episodes had "self-contained" stories, overall they usually contributed to a greater narrative, culminating with the Dominion War.

VOY, by definition was a series-long story arc, namely the odyssey of *USS Voyager* and its crew to return to Federation Space from the far flung reaches of the Delta Quadrant. While many episodes were "self-contained" in a sense, one could argue they were part of a much greater story. In fact, *The Year of Hell* nearly became a season long arc, but the creators ultimately decided against it for various reasons. One could also conversely argue that the series was *limited* by an episode-centric framework. For example, it strikes me as a solely missed opportunity that Voyager only faced off against the Vidians and the Kazon in alternate episodes. They *could* have had to deal with both simultaneously. Perhaps, instead of introducing the Traib (whose elitism and arrogance created the conditions that induced the Kazon to form warring pirate gangs to begin with), the Vidians *themselves* could've been the cause. Perhaps the stand-alone episode, *Critical Care*—itself an impassioned critique against denying health care to lower income members of society—could've been woven into that overall story arc. None of this happened, of course, and that is due to the limitations of episodic television.

ENT's entire third season was a single-story arc, namely the desperate attempt by Captain Archer & crew to prevent the destruction of the Earth by the Sphere Builders, who were using the Xindi as proxies. While many *sub-stories* took place, and even an occasional break (such as *North Star*), ultimately they were driven by the overall narrative.

Even TNG *almost* introduced the idea. The original plans for Season Two were to involve a season-long attempt to solve the mystery that was introduced in the season one finale, *The Neutral Zone* (the answer being that the bases along the Neutral Zone had been destroyed by the Borg). In fact, the episode *Time Squared* was *originally* meant to introduce Q into the season long arc, setting up the events in *Q-Who*. Unfortunately, all of these plans were scuttled by a strike by the Writers Guild, and instead a

bunch of already available lesser quality scripts were used instead (indeed, the season premiere was an unused TOS Phase II script, which goes a long way in explaining its utter disjointedness).

Meanwhile, "Kurtzman era" *Star Trek* has demonstrated that it can produce "episodic" series with LDS and SNW quite well (while not sacrificing character arc development) just as easily as it can produce "serial drama" series with DISCO, PIC, and PROD. Ideally a happy medium where the best of both worlds (no pun intended) are incorporated would be best, but partisans on both sides of that debate will have their arguments against it. It's a legitimate debate, certainly, but it's no excuse to amplify toxic influencers whose *real* dislike of the newer series is that it triggers their fragile reactionary worldviews.

Improved Technology Demands Improved Production Values:

Another frequently heard argument trotted out to declare the Kurtzman era *Star Trek* "non canon" is the oft heard, "the new *Star Trek* is too "cinematic", lacking the fun, cheesiness and cheap sets of TOS."

Frankly I find this argument very unconvincing, because it smacks of presentism. Yes, the TOS era sets were cheap, even cheesy by today's standards, but *for their time* they were incredibly advanced, *especially given the extremely shoe-string budget under which the creative staff had to operate*. According to David Gerrold, the writer for TOS: *The Trouble With Tribbles* (as well as a few other *Trek* episodes), each episode had a budget of approximately \$150,000 US in 1967 (which is worth approximately \$1.4 million US in 2025 dollars). To an average viewer, that might seem like a lot, but in actual fact, it's not.

Remember that TOS was created in the late 1960s, long before personal computers were widely available, and visions of what technology would look like 300 years into the future were wild guesses at best. At the time, few people imagined that computer technology would advance as rapidly as it did by the TNG era, let alone the DISCO era!

Consider the (mid 1960s) extrapolations of 23rd Century computer technology one sees in a typical episode of TOS:

- The computer speaks in a monotone voice (provided by Majel Barrett). In the real world, technology advanced beyond this in the 1970s;

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- The crew frequently use what look like floppy discs (those colorful squares they call “tapes”), and the ship’s ops seem quite dependent upon them (and, if the first few Season 1 TOS era episodes are to be believed, they depended on *lots* of them).⁵³ Such technology was already obsolete by the opening years of the 21st Century in the real world—though, to honor these props, SNW has retconned them into isolinear chips.
- Throughout TOS, Yeomans periodically bring what resemble etch-a-sketch pads for Captain Kirk to sign (these have been since retconned in SNW to more closely resemble handheld tablets, a technology quite common in the early 21st century);
- The data storage media are consistently described as “tapes”, but magnetic tape storage for *data* was already obsolete by the early 1990s, and was further obsolete for audiovisual purposes by the early 2000s;
- The TOS communicators resemble late 1990s “flip” (cell) phones that have since been rendered obsolete with the advent of smart phones and tablet devices that are more advanced than the PADDs seen in TNG (though the creators subsequently also used them in ENT, which is set in the mid 2100s);
- In *Operation Annihilate* Nurse Chapel tells Dr McCoy that “the plates have returned from the lab”; she is referring to *photographic plates* taken from an X-ray machine, however technology in the real world has already rendered that method obsolete (such imaging is now directly uploaded into computer files);
- Even the “Tricorder” is likely to be eclipsed by smartphone capabilities by the mid-2000s, if not sooner.

Later iterations of *Star Trek* have quietly forgotten or retconned these anachronistic trappings seen frequently throughout TOS, though an easy canonical explanation

would be to simply state that the 2260s experienced a pseudo-retro fashion (and such an explanation *could* credibly have been given by Beckett Mariner in a LDS episode. Indeed, some hints of that *were* evoked by both Mariner and Boimler in SNW: *Those Old Scientists*, albeit subtly...at least for them).

By today’s standards, a lot of this, as well as many other things depicted in TOS appear cheesy, but that is strictly an unintended consequence of the times changing in unpredictable ways that the futurist visions of the 1960s simply couldn’t anticipate.

To be fair, those same futurists greatly *overestimated* the advances humankind would make in spacefaring ability. It was assumed by many, if not a majority of society, that the manned Moon landings—which were beginning just as TOS was producing its final season—would usher in a wave of continued manned space exploration, with missions to Mars and beyond happening throughout the rest of the 20th Century. As we know, this didn’t happen. In fact, the last humans walked on the Moon in 1972, and humans have not ventured any farther than a few hundred miles above the Earth since then. Yet, TOS—as well as many other futurists (whether factual or fictional) held much more wildly optimistic views of how far humans would venture off the Earth! (As it stands, it’s not even certain that humans will even set foot on the Moon again any time soon, since it’s prohibitively expensive).

Another thing that has changed significantly since the mid 1960s is the viewing experience of the average viewer. In the early days, shows like *Star Trek* were filmed in 35mm analog film format, using analog motion picture and/or video cameras with resolutions far inferior to 2025 level technology. In fact, the average smartphone can now capture a better-quality video stream, without any studio magic (lighting and so forth). Some shows weren’t even filmed in *color* (*Star Trek* was, but earlier shows, such as *The Twilight Zone* were strictly filmed in black-and-white). The quality of the images one could depict on screen wasn’t especially high by today’s standards.⁵⁴

mation! However, in the 1960s, it was likely that the creative staff assumed this pile of tapes probably carried scarcely more information than an equivalent pile of “key punch” cards.

⁵⁴Another easily missed detail is the use of colored lighting in TOS. For example, the lighting in the recessed panels around the outer rim of the bridge set of the USS Enterprise NCC 1701 consists of what are essentially colored in-

⁵³In *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, in the “briefing room” scene, which opens with Lee Kelso’s line, “well, it didn’t make any *sense* that he’d know...”, Kirk has approximately *four dozen* of these “tapes” arranged in four neatly stacked piles on the table in front of him. Given the fact that a 21st Century smart cellphone that size can already store enough books worth of data to fill a library the size of an entire starship, that’s an *incredibly* large amount of infor-

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This didn't matter to the average viewer, because their reception technology was equally, if not more primitive. The only medium available then was analog broadcast television, almost exclusively using old style VHF (channels 2-13). Most televisions had screens smaller than 25 inches diagonally, and static interference was not uncommon (cable TV wasn't even a thing). Furthermore, the resolution quality was poor, and the images often grainy. A good many televisions were black-and-white, so even there, the viewer didn't quite get the whole experience.

By today's standards this all seems incredibly low quality, and it is. However, *for its time* this was *cutting edge technology*! Keep in mind that the first television broadcasts happened in the 1930s. Just 30 years before that, most people didn't even have *electricity*!

The quality of televisions (as well as the numerous other video monitors, including smartphones that can function as televisions in the moment) has increased significantly, and the resolution has increased to the point of rivaling the human eyeball. It's simply not possible to replicate the cheesiness of 1960s era set quality and have it look credible to most viewers.⁵⁵

This was true even as early as 2004, when the ENT two-part episode, *Through a Mirror Darkly* made use of recreations of TOS era *Constitution Class* starship interior sets to depict the *USS Defiant* (from TOS: *The Tholian Web*), which, of course, is a nearly identical sister ship to our beloved OG *USS Enterprise*. The producers reduplicated the TOS sets (and costumes) in perfect detail. They even built new sets to depict what existed at the upper ends of the famous diagonal "Jeffrey's Tubes" (basically service corridors and crawl ways with circular rather than rectilinear or trapezoidal portals, but familiar TOS design highlights and details). The problem was, it was painfully obvious that

candescent flood lights. They add to the simultaneously cheesy and exotic look of the bridge's interior, but that's merely a clever side bonus, because they actually serve a cinematographic purpose, which is *mood* lighting.

In the 1960s, even electric lighting was technologically primitive by today's standards. Most light bulbs, including those used on television studio sets, were incandescent tungsten filament bulbs (in fact, white (ironically), old school incandescent bulbs can be seen behind the red glass in the rectangular "red alert" panels), running on strictly analog circuits. If one looks carefully, colored lighting is used *extensively* in TOS (it's easy to spot the uses of reds, greens, blues, magentas, and so forth. Green, for example,

everything looked like a cheap 1960s era TV set and not a futuristic starship. This would only be a much bigger problem to deal with in the Kurtzman era.

The other problem the studio had was the fact that as technology advanced (and fans had access to significant volumes of information that detailed the TOS era set design specifications), it became laughably easy for *just about anyone* to produce *their own* TOS era *Star Trek* beta canon series. In fact, as noted elsewhere in this guide, a good number of attempts have been made, and some of them are of such high quality, it'd be *extremely easy* to fool someone with little knowledge or familiarity with *Star Trek* that what they're seeing is the "real McCoy" (no pun intended).

Star Trek Continues and *Starship Farragut* are two notable examples. Indeed, the quality of some of the episodes of each are equal to, if not slightly *better* than the TOS era productions (certainly if one considers that the TOS episodes have been digitally remastered with improved visual FX). If any group of adoring fans can produce their own, high quality *Star Trek* (and I, for one, welcome it, as long as it respects canon and adheres to the franchise's overall progressive, utopian vision—and they almost universally *do*, which is encouraging, even if their creators—looking at you, Vic Mignogna—themselves fall short in real life), then who'd bother with the studio productions?

The producers of the Kurtzman era *Star Trek* have, in my opinion, tried to honor the original aesthetic in and as much as they can, but it's not easy to regress one's visual productions to a 1960s quality without it looking utterly fake.⁵⁶ This is especially true given the fact those aforementioned computer technology advances allow for much greater and grander visual effects!

A similar complaint by many old school fans involves the apparently "vast" spaces on the SNW *Enterprise* vs the

was used very prominently in sickbay. Magenta was used in Captain Kirk's quarters. When the set was redressed to serve as Spock's cabin, red was used instead, adding to the distinctive look and feel. Nowadays, modern technology has mostly done away with colored mood lighting, since various moods and shades of white can be digitally controlled.

⁵⁵That was partly the point of the third season SNW episode: *A Space Adventure Hour*. The episode simultaneously parodies and honors the technological "cheesiness" combined with the political progressiveness of TOS.

⁵⁶Again, this is painfully obvious looking at SNW: *A Space Adventure Hour*.

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TOS *Enterprise* which is a latter in universe iteration of the hero ship. The real-world exploration for this is that Roddenberry & co would dearly have *loved* to have been able to design sets of similar size and scope, but again were constrained by technological and budgetary limitations. Even in vast Hollywood soundstage studios, space is at a premium (and this was especially true in the early days given the vast amount of volume needed to contain the sheer number of incandescent set lights and rigging which is far less of an issue now as technology has improved). Advanced visual technology such as CGI and AR Walls were utopian fantasies in the 1960s much like the Holodeck is now.

The TOS creators certainly *wanted* to depict such things, but simply couldn't. This remained true in the TNG era. How do we know this to be true? Consider just how much of the *Galaxy Class USS Enterprise NCC 1701-D* the viewer never got to see (because the sets were never built), but were known to exist in canon (because plans were drawn and there are now computer simulations that anyone can actually try out that put the user within them virtually). How many know that the following spaces existed?

- Numerous bar and lounge spaces other than Ten-Forward;⁵⁷
- The Main Shuttle Bay, aka “Shuttle Bay One”, which was a vast space the size of an aircraft carrier deck;
- Cetacean Operations, which is very much like the facility seen in the animated LDS, complete with Dolphin crew members;
- The Captain's Yacht;
- An actual “shopping mall” (albeit one without currency) not unlike the Promenade seen on DS9;

They do, in canon (in the show writers' guide, at least), but as mentioned, budgetary and space constraints precluded their being seen.

Just because we see some sets on the original *Constitution Class NCC 1701 Enterprise* in SNW that aren't seen in TOS doesn't mean they don't exist. One needn't even venture outside of TOS to prove this. For the *entire* run of TOS, the viewer *never* sees, or even hears of, “Deck 2”. Deck 1 is, of course, the Bridge. Deck 3 is only ever seen (and identified as such) from the corridor in *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield*. Most of the time, the scenes outside of the Bridge, Transporter Room, and Engineering (whose actual location itself is subject to vigorous debate, with the most logical answer being that there are actually *two* nearly identical spaces—i.e. one in the rear of the lower saucer section and one in the front of the forward star drive section—to conform to the actual dialog) are essentially assumed or identified as being on decks 4-7. Yet, we all know that there *must* be a “Deck 2”, because otherwise the other numbers wouldn't be used!

Some variations on the arguments focus on how much larger *specific sets* (such as the Captain's Quarters) appear in SNW vs TOS, and while that is a fair point—though one that *could* be canonically addressed by pointing out that between Pike's and Kirk's tenures as captain the crew size more than doubles (from approximately 200 to 430), thus necessitating tighter accommodations—it hardly represents an unprecedented move. Nobody seems to complain much about the substantial changes that take place to the configuration of the Engineering space(s) between Seasons 1 and 2 of TOS (they're *pretty* substantial), or, for that matter, about the numerous changes to the Bridge that occur between *Star Trek II* and *III*, even though the time periods in those movies canonically take place in almost immediate succession.⁵⁸

As for the radically different designs on the *USS Shen-zhou* and *USS Discovery* those can be attributed to their possibly having been constructed in a different shipyard than the *Constitution* class (though, ironically, it would seem the TOS era Romulans also get their ships built in that same shipyard if their interior designs are any sample!). The

for example, spend an entire non-duty, non-sleeping eight hours in “Three-Forward”, and not encounter another individual, save the bartender!

⁵⁸One *particularly* noticeable detail to *me* at least is that the buttons in Sulu's helm console are *white* in *The Wrath of Khan*, but *blue* in *The Search for Spock*, and it isn't just the lighting. I suppose the *Enterprise* *could* have stopped off at a starbase (after rescuing the marooned crew members of the *USS Reliant* and had that console replaced.

⁵⁷ Some Beta Canon material even depicts a whole series of (insert-deck-number-other-than-Ten-here) “Forward” lounges, much like “Ten Forward”, though perhaps with less spectacular views. Some fans have pointed out, in various YouTube videos, that given the sheer size of the starship, its crew complement of approximately 1,000—which includes non-Starfleet personnel and children—actually has enormous amounts of solitary space to go. One might,

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point of all of this is to point out that the argument against the Kurtzman era series being “non canon” fall to pieces if one is going to argue over production values and set designs. And, as you can imagine, that same logic does also apply to that pesky set of arguments over the *Discovery* Season 1 Klingons, too.

The Klingons Redesigned Again?!?

The next argument is one to which I’m deeply sympathetic: “The *Star Trek Discovery* Klingon redesign looks utterly ridiculous and overdone.” I quite agree, and what’s more frustrating, still, is how this redesign *complicates* (but doesn’t necessarily contradict) canon, and frankly, I find that latter reason a more compelling argument, so I’ll deal with it first:

As any long time Trekkie knows, the Klingons, first scene in TOS: *Errand of Mercy*, were essentially humanoid, sporting smooth foreheads and “Fu Man Chu” facial hair. Although initially intended as a “one-off” adversary for Kirk, Spock, & Co, John Colico’s performance as “Kor” made the Klingons a beloved foil for the Federation, (and then, later on as the Organians predicted, “frenemies” and usually uneasy allies), this they appear frequently in TOS and TAS with their original look.

When fans flocked to movie theaters in 1979 to watch the long-awaited return of *Star Trek* they were surprised to find that the Klingons had undergone a major redesign for *Star Trek the Motion Picture*, gaining forehead ridges, and longer hair. This caused much consternation and debate among the fans, but the redesigned Klingons were eventually accepted by most fans, and in every subsequent appearance, they retained their “new” look.

There was no established canonical explanation for the redesign. Fans and Beta Canon offered plenty of their own, including:

- The Klingons engaged in a civilization wide genetic reengineering program to look fiercer and more war-like;
- The Klingons suffered some massive biological event that altered their genetic makeup and appearance;
- The Klingons underwent some sort of metamorphosis as they age, gaining ridges as they grow;
- There are actually *two* subspecies of sentient Klingons, those seen in TOS and TAS, and those seen in all the TOS movies and beyond;

- There’s no actual difference. The Klingons are all the same, but the TOS budget (and primitive FX technology of the time) didn’t allow for the ridges, so just ignore it.

The studio basically pretended for years that the last explanation was essentially the correct one, that is, until for a 30th anniversary commemoration in 1996, DS9’s writers and producers decided to *literally* revisit the past by making a time travel induced sequel to TOS: *The Trouble With Tribbles*, in this case, DS9: *Trials and Tribble-ations*. The creators used CGI, reconstructed sets, and TOS era props to place the DS9 actors directly into the scenes from the TOS episode. This includes the famous “bar brawl” scene (prompted by the Klingon, Korax, comparing the *USS Enterprise* to a “garbage scow”, and Scotty responding by belting the former in the chops).

This created something of a problem. How to explain the OG ridgeless Klingons? It wouldn’t do to go with the “all-Klingons-have-always-had-ridges-we-just-couldn’t-afford-to-show-it” excuse. The notion that two separate subspecies of Klingons wouldn’t work either, because a few years previously, Kor, Koloth, and Kang had all returned in DS9: *Blood Oath*, but with ridges! The “metamorphosis with age” explanation wouldn’t be believed, given the fact that Worf’s son, Alexander, had ridges, and he was 25% *human* to boot!

That left only two possible choices: a biological experiment or a genetic mutation. Knowing that this couldn’t be easily hand waved away by discerning fans, the writers and creators turned these remaining choices into a joke at Worf’s expense, matching the lighthearted comedic tone of both episodes.

A decade later, however, the previously referenced two-part episode in the final season of ENT established that the correct answer was a combination of *both* remaining choices. While, perhaps, this was a bit heavy handed, in a way, it’s a fairly elegant explanation, and it basically fit into a running subtext that it repeated contacts with the Klingons, Andorians (as allies), Romulans (albeit unseen, honoring the canonical details established in TOS: *Balance of Terror*), Suliban, and Xindi catalyzed the formation of the Federation.

According to the dialogue established in ENT: *Affliction* however, the viewer is left with the assumption that the overwhelming majority of Klingons, including the important Houses of the warrior caste, lose their ridges. This creates a huge problem for the DISCO pilot, *The Vulcan*

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Hello, because T’Kuvma and all the Klingons featured there not only had ridges, many other anatomical features, particularly their hands and fingers, had undergone yet *another* redesign. The Klingon battle cruisers and ships also deviated greatly from their standard designs, looking more like some sci-fi equivalent of an armada of spacefaring ancient Egyptian sarcophagi (replete with gold flourishes). The Klingons’ garb was utterly atrocious. Lastly, the fact that the Klingons, including the female Klingons, were bald was akin to pouring gasoline onto the fire.

Most fans believed that these redesigns were aesthetically overdone and unnecessary. I agree, and what’s more, the studio seems to have gotten the message, because they slowly dialed back the redesign. In DISCO Season 2, the Klingons all regained their hair (a line of dialogue from Michael Burnham to Ash Tyler early on offers an explanation—though some fans were angered further by the producers’ apparent need to rationalize their essentially admitting an aesthetic wrong turn). By Season 2 of SNW, the Klingons had mostly reverted to their TNG era look, albeit with much finer details. The uniforms looked their familiar designs, too. Their battle cruisers, too, reverted to the standard TOS era D7s and Birds of Prey.

As much as it angered the fans, all of this “aberration” can be, and mostly has been, canonically explained: T’Kuvma’s rise represented an apex of Klingon fanaticism, which, like many reactionary fascistic movements (and it was certainly that), it often cloaks itself in garish displays of abhorrent aesthetics. The big problem wasn’t the aesthetics, as horrid as they were. No, the biggest problem—and it’s strangely clear be that most of those claiming that Kurtzman era Trek “isn’t canon” frequently overlook is the following question:

Why do the post-ENT, pre-TOS Klingons (regardless of their look) have forehead ridges *at all*? Given that the first two seasons of DISCO and all of SNW takes place within that period, shouldn’t the Klingons be ridge-less? By giving them forehead ridges again, the creators have created the need for yet another explanation that begs giving.

While I’m aware of no official explanation from the studio, producers, or creators, I suspect the decision to retain the ridges primarily results from the fact that the quality of television production is forced to keep up with advances in video and picture quality, as I previously discussed. The simple fact is that the “augment” Klingons just don’t look believable, even if going with the ridges complicates matters (perhaps the “restoration” surgery was

only available to a limited number at first, and it took until the end of the TOS era for every Klingon to get it?)

There is one other possible explanation: it’s been convincingly argued by many that the original TOS Klingon design draws heavily upon inspiration from blatantly racist stereotypes of Mongolian peoples. While it may have still been borderline “acceptable” to still show this on television in 2005, it certainly is *not* now, and so the producers of DISCO elected to quietly sweep that under the rug.

One might be tempted to raise umbrage at this and cry “foul!”, but in doing so they’d be conveniently overlooking the fact that the Berman era *Trek* creators pulled a “bait-and-switch” of sorts, when they redesign the look of the Trills between TNG (where they’re introduced in the fourth season episode *Symbiosis*) and DS9. Initially, in TNG, the Trill had no spots, but *did* have forehead bumps. However, in DS9, Jadzia-Dax—and practically every other Trill—had smooth foreheads and spots. One *could* argue that the *Trill* had multiple (humanoid host) subspecies (and that’s hinted to be the case in DS9 ?????), but there’s just one small problem: in the Season 5 TNG episode, *The Perfect Mate*, we’re introduced to the Kriosians, who look *an awful lot like* the DS9 version of the Trill! And why did the creators pull this switcheroo, hoping nobody would notice? The reason is that they wanted to emphasize Terry Ferrell’s natural beauty, believing the Kriosian design would do so far more dramatically than the original Trill look. In other words, it was done for entirely superficial (and frankly, shallow) reasons. Yet, almost nobody tries to claim that DS9 “isn’t canon”. Odd, isn’t it?

When did the Critics Mind Meld with the Late Mr Roddenberry?

Some of the most absurd arguments made in defense of the position that “Alex Kurtzman era Star Trek” (i.e. any series produced from DISCO onwards, inclusive), essentially boil down to making wild guesses about what the late Gene Roddenberry would or wouldn’t have ever sanctioned (such as Spock having a human foster sister), as if *they* have some access to Great Bird of the Galaxy’s “katra” or some other inside knowledge of Roddenberry’s thinking that everyone else, including his own family members *doesn’t*. (These same loudmouths have also been known to claim that Roddenberry’s son, Eugene—who wholeheartedly embraces the new material, and shares some creative oversight, even if limited—is merely getting rich off of Kurtzman’s cash cow, etc.) Honestly, these arguments are

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signs of desperation by these angry fans who are looking for some deeper “truths” to bolster their very weak arguments that the new material “isn’t canon”.

Frankly, I call “bullshit!”, and there are two reasons why this is so. First of all, the late Gene Roddenberry isn’t the last word on what is or isn’t canonical, neither in death nor in life for that matter. As I have already mentioned, many of the ideas created for TOS (including the United Federation of Planets and Starfleet) were those of his colleagues (including Gene Coon and Dorothy Fontana). Roddenberry embraced those ideas, at least publicly, but not necessarily behind the scenes. For example, it’s how well established that Roddenberry had major disagreements with Jack Sowards, Nicholas Meyers, and Harve Bennett over some of the details of *STTWOK*, particularly the more militaristic tone of Starfleet depicted in the film. While the final product *did* incorporate many of Roddenberry’s suggestions and at least dialed back some of the script’s more militaristic elements, some nevertheless remained, and it’s *still* considered one of—if not the—best *Star Trek* movies ever produced.

Star Trek TNG is often considered to be the best series in the franchise (although sometimes DS9 wins those contests depending on who’s asked), but its first two seasons were less than stellar (according to most reviews). The overwhelming consensus opinions hold that it wasn’t until the *third* season that the show achieved its full potential (though, in my opinion, the second season episode, *Q-Who*, which finally introduced the Borg, is *really* when the series came of age—even though it preceded the forgettable “clip show” episode, *Shades of Grey*). One reason—though certainly not the *only* reason for this shift had to do with Gene Roddenberry *stepping back* from being the “mother hen” so-to-speak.

It should also be pointed out that—with due respect to the Great Bird of the Galaxy—the majority of so-called “Berman Era Trek” was produced *after* his death (including most of TNG’s 5th season, all of its 6th and 7th, and the entirety of DS9, VOY, and ENT). One substantial result of his passing was that TOS era characters, including *especially* an older Spock (played by Leonard Nimoy) began appearing in TNG, DS9, VOY, and ENT episodes. Roddenberry had strictly prohibited this (the inclusion of McCoy in *Encounter at Farpoint* was the single instance he’d allowed until the episode *Sarek*—and even *then* the writers had to stubbornly insist on doing so until Roddenberry relented), because he wanted the new series to have its own identity and stand in its own two feet.

Roddenberry’s intent was good—to an extent—given the fact that when a story gives in to “fan service”, it’s very easy for the plot to get lost. Indeed, some of the episodes that feature TOS era characters *do* venture a little too far in this direction. As much as I enjoy DS9: *Blood Oath*, some of the elements *do* strain credibility somewhat. However, Roddenberry’s blanket prohibition was, in many fans’ opinion, too strict. The much celebrated two-part (and later three-part, with the addition of the Season 3 DISCO episode that serves as a confirmation) TNG: *Reunification* episode succeeds *brilliantly*, centering Spock as an essential part of the story, rather than just tossing him into to the mix carelessly because “it looks cool”. Thankfully, much of the later “crossovers” succeed quite well, too. However, it’s highly likely that many would never have occurred with Roddenberry at the helm, as he was consistently insistent about *not* relying on them.

Likewise, Roddenberry would’ve probably nixed a *great deal* of DS9, because it presented Roddenberry’s future universe (which sometimes literally offered debates on morality in black and white, in the case of TOS: *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield*) in shades of grey. For example, he’d almost certainly balk at the very existence of the Maquis, likely arguing that, “the Federation would’ve solved the problems that would create such a dissident movement,” (Roddenberry wasn’t a dogmatic leftist, but he *was* a hardcore utopian, who insisted that such matters could be resolved through debate and democracy in his ideal future, which *Star Trek* was), and it’s a safe bet that he’d have had a warp core breach over *In the Pale Moonlight*. He’d have experienced a dozen over the very *idea* of Section 31.

However, all that said, most dedicated *Star Trek* fans would probably *disagree with* Roddenberry on these particular points. DS9 isn’t a repudiation of his utopian vision, it is a *test* of it. Thoughts on utopian futures and the inner workings of them have evolved substantially since the 1960s. While Roddenberry was no Stalinist, his ideal utopian society *does* seem a bit quaint and naive to think that such an idealistic future still wouldn’t require constant vigilance and hard work to keep it on track (and many socialists and anarchist revolutionaries, even those of the utopian and libertarian variety have argued as much), and often times the real world (or universe), doesn’t offer easy or obvious solutions to complex problems. Only in totalitarian *dystopias* does anyone argue that “we all live in perfect harmony, all of the time,” (and that’s always a lie, when one looks at all of the facts).

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Even TOS and TNG routinely explored these difficult questions. For example, in TOS: *Court Martial*, Captain Kirk refuses to take the path of least resistance to save his career, and calls out Commodore Stone for wanting to engage in a cover up. In TOS: *This Side of Paradise*, Kirk argues *against* a stagnant (albeit artificially induced) ideal intentional community, because it offers neither individual nor collective freedom. Even DC Fontana's TOS: *The Enterprise Incident* was *originally* going to include a subplot of Kirk *denouncing* the espionage and subterfuge he was being ordered to conduct against the Romulans, because he believed it was unethical (the network wouldn't allow it), and honestly, that foreshadows Bashir's disdain for Luther Sloan and Section 31 in DS9.

The upshot of all of this is that on the one hand, Roddenberry wasn't always the final authority in matters of *Star Trek's* overall direction *even when he was in charge overall*, and on the other, while the general progressive utopian-leaning future *was* certainly his inspiration, *a lot of others* have had a hand in shaping it, during and after his lifetime. It's a *collective* vision, and when one strips away the rhetoric and straw men arguments against "Kurtzman Era *Trek*", one realizes that there's far more continuity than discontinuity.

So what are the arguments *really* about?



Star Trek was *Always* "Woke"

Now, at last we come to the final charge against contemporary *Star Trek*: "NuTrek" is trying to "shove 'wokeness' down our throats!"

In all honesty, I believe the majority of the previous points, for the most part, are really subtexts of this point. This is evident in the fact that the majority of the other criticisms are coming, by far, from the more white, more heterosexual, more male, and more conservative leaning fans (no doubt spurred on by far-right influencer *non*-fans who sense an opportunity to recruit new followers). That's not to suggest that everyone parroting the arguments made by the far-right influencers are, themselves, acting in bad faith. Most, likely, aren't, but that's exactly the point: far right political views are deeply unpopular, and therefore the only way they gain traction is through the deliberate manipulation of non-far-right true believers' cynicism and fears.

Far right influencers have been doing this for decades, although until recently they've not gained much traction. However, monetized, algorithm driven and unregulated social media has created the means for such manipulative and bad faith behavior to explode and fester.

Claiming that *Star Trek* has *only recently* become a bastion of "wokeness" (i.e. progressive thought) is ahistorical in the absurd. Although I deal with the degree of "wokeness" in TOS in substantial detail in "Star Trek TOS Was More Revolutionary Than You Think," it's worth rehashing some of the essential points:

The fact is that *Star Trek* has *always* been "woke"; indeed, "wokeness" is *the entire point* of *Star Trek* as the "Great Bird of the Galaxy", Gene Roddenberry, himself, intended it. It's worth noting that although Roddenberry had served in the military (in World War II), and had also been a policeman, his political leanings were substantially center-left. He was anti-fascist, anti racist, and pro-Union. He even expressed some degree of agreement with socialism (although more likely he was a social-democrat, perhaps coeval with Bernie Sanders), though he was definitely *not* an authoritarian state capitalist (what most people in his day erroneously associated with "communism" and Marxism). While highly critical of Stalinism, he was *not* in agreement with the McCarthyist hysteria that was rampant throughout the 1950s and early 1960s in the US, the timeframe in which his ideas for *Star Trek* were conceived.

In fact, although it's often considered Cold War propaganda today, the late second season TOS episode, *The Omega Glory*, written by Roddenberry, was *actually* intended as an *anti*-Cold War and *anti*-McCarthyist (but pro-American) statement. Clearly the "Comms" are treated as antagonists (and the Asian racial stereotypes—while perhaps considered mainstream, even among the left in the mid

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1960s—are glaring and cringeworthy now), but Kirk’s stern admonishment to the “Yangs” that the words of the “E Pleb Neesta” (i.e. the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America), must apply to *all* including “the ‘Comms’ as *well!*” is a deeply *anti*-McCarthyist statement (and to be certain, the right wing McCarthyists were a lot more like the Stalinist authoritarian “Communists” than they were different, a point that Roddenberry may have intended to make, but failed, undoubtedly due to the fact that the script—initially written as a possible series *pilot*, but never really finished—was dusted off and used as a late second season episode to save money). The episode didn’t age well at all, and the concept of an all too “parallel Earth” (again something that would likely have been modified and better developed had the script not been hastily used as a stopgap) strains credibility. Still, the essential point remains that Roddenberry was *intending* “wokeness”!

Sometimes those complaining about “wokeness” in contemporary iterations of *Star Trek* will (sometimes honestly, though unwittingly parroting bad faith arguments, but all-too-often simply making bad faith arguments) counter by alleging a “lack of subtlety” relative to the TOS era. Truthfully, such an argument can’t be taken seriously, especially given such TOS episodes as *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield*, which challenges racism with all of the subtlety of a Borg attack. Even the location of the planet, “Cheron” in the “southern” part of the Milky Way Galaxy, is a poke at the “Jim Crow Deep (US) South.” Don’t misunderstand me: having *lived* in that region in for a time in the 1970s, and being Jewish, I got a lot of dirty looks, even at the age of 5-7, because I didn’t see any reason why I shouldn’t be friends with Black kids as well as White ones, I approve the message, but it’s anything *but* “subtle”.

It wasn’t just particular TOS episodes that demonstrated “wokeness”, either. The very core concepts of the show itself were by *definition*, very progressive:

- A racially integrated crew, composed of multiple human ethnicities, nationalities, and backgrounds working together as equals was an *incredibly* radical notion in the mid 1960s;
- A united planetary federation with Earth being but one of many equal worlds (although it was considerably downplayed, albeit as much for *budgetary* reasons as anything), was even *more* so;
- The very concept that emphasized that intelligent non-human, and not always humanoid, extraterrestrial be-

ings might want to *be our friends* rather than evil marauding monsters that wanted to enslave, destroy, or *eat us* (as if the latter is actually even physiologically possible, which—as Carl Sagan has pointed out—is highly unlikely) was perhaps the most “woke” idea imaginable!

You have to understand: such notions are incredibly quaint by *today’s* cultural standards (though there are still no shortage of malevolent extraterrestrials, even in *Star Trek* as well), such things weren’t the cultural norm in 1966. Then, while much Science Fiction *in print literature*, at least, *was* leftist (or at least progressive)—and this was itself a form of underground resistance to McCarthyism, not altogether different than the Samizdat served as an underground resistance to Stalinism in the Soviet Union at the time—a lot of “Science Fiction” on the Silver Screen and the relatively new medium of television was not so much. That, too, was due to McCarthyism. The post-World War II anticommunist hysteria—much like the Salem Witch Trials (and it’s no coincidence that “The Crucible” dramatizes the latter as a metaphor for the former, given that it was produced by victims of McCarthyism)—had been *intended* (among other things) to purge popular culture of leftist ideas and weaponize it in the service of Cold War US imperialism (and to be fair, the Soviet Union was no better, doing the same with *their* popular culture).

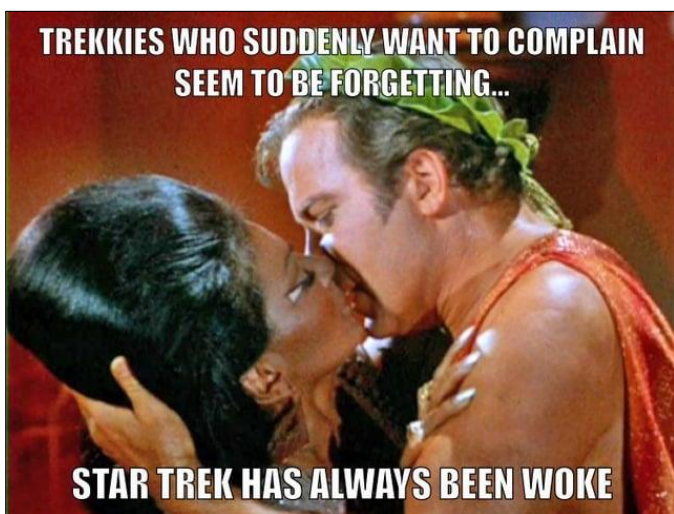
A great deal of early Cold War era popular culture (particularly TV, movies, and radio) featured thinly veiled anti-communist and anti-progressive propaganda, and Science Fiction was no exception. Time after time, the extraterrestrials were depicted as malevolent antagonists who threatened Truth, Justice, and (a staunchly conservative and anti-communist interpretation of) the American Way. Sometimes the thinly veiled propaganda was even *less* subtle than a Borg attack. A particularly glaring example is the infamous Roger Corman flick, “It Conquered the World” (which was actually later repurposed into a third season Mystery Science Theater 3,000 episode, but is now impossible to find—outside of bootleg copies or original VCR recordings—because Mr Corman didn’t take too kindly to having Joel Hodgson and his robot friends skewer this celluloid turkey for the McCarthyist silliness it is, and the aggrieved director wouldn’t agree to grant Best Brains the rights to release the MST3K version commercially, which strikes me as sheer pettiness and small mindedness).

Unfortunately, while most Americans likely *weren’t* in favor of the witch-hunts conducted by Senator Joseph

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McCarthy, Roy Cohn, J Edgar Hoover, et. al., many were nevertheless very war weary—having lived through World War II. The fears of nuclear war, and the apocalyptic and likely world ending dangers it posed, made all the more ominously by the fact that the US and the USSR were in a nuclear arms race, one which could well have spiraled into an actual nuclear World War III, which nearly happened over the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962—and such fears are all too easily weaponized by reactionary ideologues.

There were rare exceptions to such propagandizing, such as the 1951 film, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*—a movie that inspired both *Star Trek* and *The Twilight Zone*, but for the most part, Science Fiction on screen and radio, tended to reinforce the prevailing Cold War mentality. It took courageous individuals with progressive outlooks such as Rod Serling and Gene Roddenberry to effectively break through the miasma and show us that the future *wasn't* necessarily determined to be death by nuclear apocalypse or a reactionary totalitarian dystopia (and it may seem strange reading this, because those horrible futures *do* remain possibilities, and seem to be more likely now than they were *since* the days of TOS, but I, for one, don't believe they're any more inevitable now than they were then), and we needn't fear the unknown.



If anything, as I elaborated in “**Star Trek TOS Was More Revolutionary Than You Think**,” TOS was actually intended to be *even more “woke” than it was allowed to be by its network, NBC*. Although not outright censorship, commercial networks, and NBC was no exception, had whole departments devoted to making sure the content they produced wasn't too “controversial”, and since the vast majority of viewers were (in the mid 1960s at least) white, mid-

dle class suburbanites (with presumably socially conservative to moderate views—although that presumption was more likely than not a self-selecting result of what the commercial networks tended to produce in the *first* place), those departments typically constrained how progressive a TV show (or movie) could be.

In the case of NBC, which produced TOS (“Berman”-era *Trek* was produced by the now-defunct UPN network—itsself largely created to resurrect the franchise in the first place—and Kurtzman era *Trek* is produced by CBS, which is ironic, given the fact that CBS rejected TOS before Roddenberry turned to NBC), this was known as the ironically initialed “Broadcast Standards” (literally “BS”) department. Various chroniclers of the production of TOS, particularly David Gerrold, have documented the BS Department's persnickitiness (as well as the amount of disgruntlement this induced among *Star Trek's* creators, particularly Gene Roddenberry and Gene Coon who routinely experienced the gutting of their brain children, so-to-speak).

When it wasn't the Network, it was either Desilu (still led then by Lucille Ball), and/or Paramount Studios constraining the attempts by Roddenberry, Coon, Fontana, Justman, et. al. from pushing the envelope. Two particular examples stand out:

First, and very well documented, is the initial rejection of the character of “Number One” (Una Chin Riley in SNW) after screenings of *The Cage*. The other is the tortured history of how the proposed character arc and initial eponymous episode of “Joanna” (McCoy) was quashed and mutilated into (a hastily slapdash) caricature of 1960's counterculture, the infamous “space hippies” episode, *The Way to Eden*. I detailed these examples in “**Star Trek TOS Was More Revolutionary Than You Think**,” so I won't belabor the point. The fact remains that TOS was substantially “woke”, and its creators wanted it to be *more so*, but were constrained from achieving that.

Some notable examples of the “wokeness” TOS include (but aren't limited to)

- *The Corbomite Maneuver* - in this episode, the supposedly malevolent Balok and his “First Federation” turn out to be friendly and curious, rather than a menace to be feared. Overcoming prejudice and fear of the unknown (classic *Star Trek* themes) are the very essence of what's often denounced as “wokeness”;

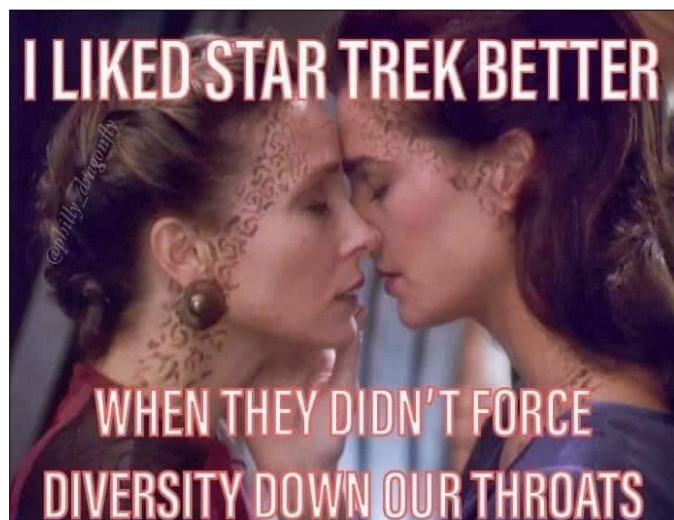
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- *Arena* - in this episode, Captain Kirk learns that conflicts with potential adversaries are better solved non-violently, that often times such conflicts are never all-or-nothing, black-and-white, and that the United Federation of Planets *aren't* entitled to be the police of the Milky Way Galaxy, nor are they the most advanced civilization inhabiting it. These themes are revisited in *Errand of Mercy*;
- *Devil in the Dark* - in this episode, Kirk, Spock & crew learn that a silicon-based life form that has been killing human miners on its home planet is doing so not out of malice, but because it's a mother trying to protect her hatchlings. Not only does the episode argue that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" (a theme revisited in *Is There In Truth No Beauty?*), it ultimately shows that workers (the miners) can work in *harmony* with the environment, instead of against it (a green syndicalist message!);
- *The Trouble With Tribbles* - is a classic tale of ecological balance and the dangers of disruption of it;
- *Journey to Babel* - this episode shows the United Federation of Planets is much more than Earth and Vulcan, but many equal worlds working together;
- *Day of the Dove* - is a very powerful argument for non-violence (though the other side of the coin is argued in *A Private Little War*, but in that case, one could evoke the first eight verses of the third chapter of the biblical *Book of Ecclesiastes*, though many people recognize that as the lyrics to the Pete Seeger song, Turn! Turn! Turn!)
- *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield* - is an anti-racist and anti-violence polemic;
- *The Cloud Minders* - is surprisingly anti-capitalist, something that was hard to openly argue shortly after the McCarthyist era (though David Gerrold, who wrote it, notes that his original script was even more so, but the network requested that some of the more radical elements to be dialed back);
- *Plato's Stepchildren* - not only is this the episode that includes the "first"⁵⁹ interracial kiss (between Kirk and

Uhura) on network television, it also argues against ableism.

...and these are just some of the more notable examples!

That said, there were many times when TOS fell short of being perfect. Some of these can be somewhat explained (though not *justified*) as "reflecting the times". Captain Kirk's (somewhat exaggerated, but nevertheless real) reputation as a womanizer reflected 1960s conventions of alpha male hero archetypes. The equally cringeworthy racist stereotypes of Mongolian people as the inspiration for the TOS era Klingons were sadly all too common, even among progressive, mostly white Hollywood creators, and *Star Trek* was unfortunately no exception. That's not to suggest that Roddenberry & Co were speaking out of both sides of their mouths when they promoted racial, ethnic, and gender inclusiveness. It's just that—as Christobol Rios so eloquently points out in Season 1 of PIC— "nobody ever gets it exactly right all of the time." While committed to progressive utopian ideals, the visionaries were, themselves, products of their time, and not always conscious of their learned prejudices and biases.



This was no less the case with so-called "Berman Era" *Star Trek*, i.e.. TNG, DS9, VOY, and ENT. Each of those series promoted a progressive, forward-thinking perspective. There are *many* examples, but I'll focus on a handful:

television viewer, and those kisses were "PG" rated compared to the one here.

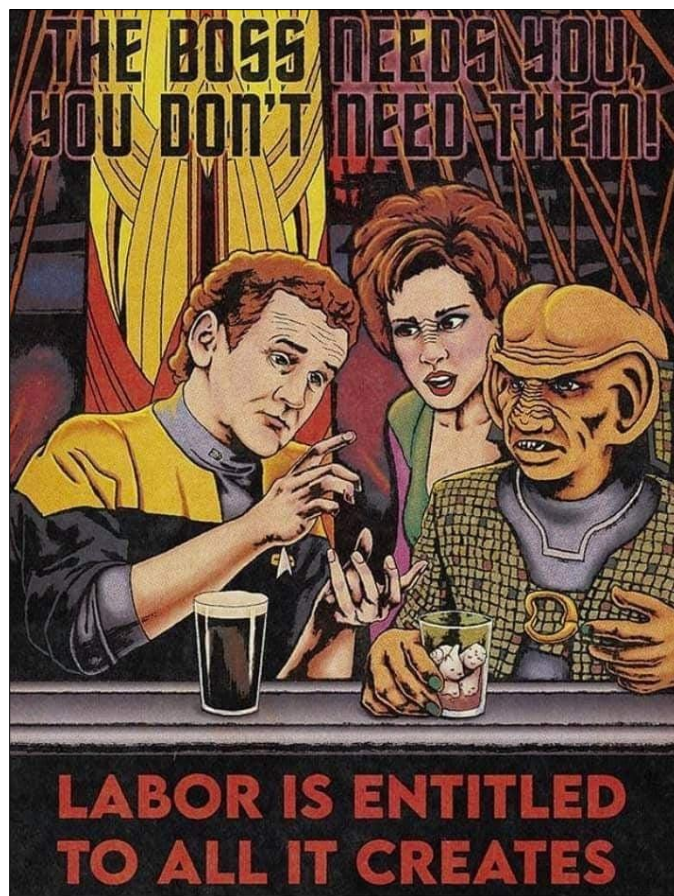
⁵⁹This isn't actually true, though, if one considers the many kisses between Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball, though Arnaz, a Cuban expatriate, could pass as "white" to many a 1950s

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- TNG: *Up the Long Ladder*, while more commonly remembered for its cringeworthy Irish stereotypes (an infrequent case where *Star Trek* falls short of being perfect), is essentially an unapologetic reproduction rights themed story;
- TNG: *The Measure of a Man* is a deeply anti-racist and anti-slavery statement, and is considered one of the best *Star Trek* episodes ever made (and, there's actually a *longer* version with some restored scenes that were deleted to shorten the episode to the standard 45-minute length of television episodes in TNG's broadcast run);
- TNG: *The Masterpiece Society* while often incorrectly being identified as an *antiabortion* story (in direct contrast with *Up the Long Ladder*) is *actually* an anti-Eugenics story as well as having an anti-ableist sub-text (strongly focusing on Geordi La Forge's blindness);
- DS9: *Bar Association* is a pro union and fairly anti-capitalist polemic. In fact, unions and labor lawyers alike have praised this episode as being one of the best and most accurate examples of what union organizing looks like in practice. At one point, Rom—the protagonist—quotes Karl Marx and Frederick Engels most famous line from *The Communist Manifesto*, “Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!” to his brother, Quark, the story's antagonist;
- DS9: *Rejoined* succeeds where TNG: *The Outcast* and TNG: *The Host* chicken out, featuring the first non-heterosexual kiss (between Jadzia Dax and a female partner of a previous Dax host);
- DS9: *Far Beyond the Stars* tackles racism and white supremacy head on and pulls no punches in doing so. Though its “dream sequence/celestial orb vision” sequence is set in 1950s US, its message resonates 75 years later, including the chilling—but pointed—police brutality sequence. This is considered the absolute best episode of DS9, and among the top five episodes of all of *Star Trek*;
- VOY: *Critical Care* is an unapologetic condemnation of inequality and profit-driven healthcare. The Voyager EMH is abducted by a mercenary, who subsequently sells him to a class/stratified 20th-21st Cen-

tury Earth-like Delta Quadrant planet, and ordered to serve the wealthy few, while poor, destitute working class patients are dying due to lack of “societal importance” The Doctor is understandably appalled at this appalled at these deplorable conditions, and actually engages in direct action to remedy them (in fact, his actions, in fact, are *almost* consistent with anarcho-syndicalist praxis);

- VOY: *Author, Author!* revisits many of the themes explored in TNG: *The Measure of a Man*;
- ENT: *Stigma* is an allegory for the social ostracism that victims of HIV suffered, which—in the 1980s—was (wrongly) associated with homosexuality.



Throughout the TOS and TNG eras, *Star Trek* was consistently anti-prejudice, anti-bigotry, and anti-fascist, i.e. “woke” (though in the TNG era, critics would have used the term “politically correct”, instead, and during the 1960s, they’d have just denounced it as “communist!”). Indeed, I can still recall—in the early 1990s—a classmate with far-right beliefs referring to Deanna Troi derisively as

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“the touchy-feely girl” (because, apparently, there’s something deeply threatening to toxically masculine socialized dudes about opening up).

What’s different now, relative to the 1960s and 1990s is not so much that “NuTrek” prominently features a black woman, a body positive neurodivergent young woman, gay, and transgender characters, but instead the presence of an easily accessible online far right media sphere. This exists because far right influencers have effectively weaponized open internet and social media platforms, no doubt in reaction to the spread of progressive ideas through popular media, including movies and television. The latter don’t exist due to some nefarious politically correct woke communist ministry of propaganda. On the contrary, they exist *in spite of* the dominant capitalist market driven monetized media, *because most people want and support the progressive vision that Star Trek offers.*

The far right’s values are *not* popular; they represent immaturities, fears, and prejudices that humanity historically continues to evolve *away* from. It is only due to the fact that the divisiveness those reactionary views foster serves the rich and powerful (in their quest to stay that way in the face of overwhelming popular opposition) that they persist at all and find traction among the less enlightened among us. The only way they can have power is if reactionary influencers make dishonest arguments in bad faith in order to spread them in the form of disinformation and misinformation.

I firmly believe that such bad faith arguments are behind the hatred for “Kurtzman Era” *Star Trek*, and that I have convincingly made the case that these arguments are specious and wrongheaded. “New” *Trek* is no less genuine than the iterations that have preceded it. Indeed, it’s as genuine and consistently *Star Trek* as it ever was, perhaps even to a fault, and those who believe otherwise are simply p’toqs who lack honor.

May the *Star Trek* universe continue to expand and enlighten forever. Humanity is much improved because of it.

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26th – 32nd Centuries [and beyond...]

Ca 3074 AD (and ca. 4000 AD)

2645 VOY 90: Living Witness (518)

3188-89 AD (Discovery, Season 3)

2646 DISCO 30: That Hope is You, Part 1 (789) (51m)
2647 DISCO 31: Far From Home (790) (53m)
2648 DISCO 32: People of Earth (791) (47m)
2649 DISCO 33: Forget Me Not (792) (54m)
2650 DISCO 34: Die Trying (793) (55m)
2651 DISCO 35: Scavengers (794) (48m)
2652 DISCO 36: Unification, Part 3 (795) (49m)
2653 DISCO 37: Sanctuary (796) (47m)
2654 DISCO 38: Terra Firma, Part 1 (797) (47m)
2655 DISCO 39: Terra Firma, Part 2 (798) (48m)
2656 DISCO 40: Su'Kal (799) (54m)
2657 DISCO 41: There is a Tide (800) (47m)
2658 DISCO 42: That Hope is You, Part 2 (801) (61m)

3190-91 AD (Discovery, Season 4)

2659 DISCO 43: Kobayashi Maru (816) (52m)
2660 DISCO 44: Anomaly (817) (49m)
2661 DISCO 45: Choose to Live (818) (55m)
2662 DISCO 46: All Things are Possible (819) (59m)
2663 DISCO 47: The Examples (820) (51m)
2664 DISCO 48: Stormy Weather (821) (46m)
2665 DISCO 49: ...But to Connect (822) (46m)
2666 DISCO 50: All In (828) (51m)
2667 DISCO 51: Rubicon (829) (44m)
2668 DISCO 52: The Galactic Barrier (830) (51m)
2669 DISCO 53: Rosetta Stone (831) (49m)
2670 DISCO 54: Species 10-C (833) (51m)
2671 DISCO 55: Coming Home (835) (60m)

3191-92 AD (Discovery, Season 5)

2672 DISCO 56: Red Directive (909) (59m)
2673 DISCO 57: Under the Twin Moons (910) (52m)
2674 DISCO 58: Jinaal (911) (55m)
2675 DISCO 59: Face the Strange (912) (51m)
2676 DISCO 60: Mirrors (913) (56m)
2677 DISCO 61: Whistlespeak (914) (56m)

2678 DISCO 62: Erigah (915) (54m)
2679 DISCO 63: Labyrinths (916) (57m)
2680 DISCO 64: Lagrange Point (917) (48m)
2681 DISCO 65: Life, Itself (918) (85m)

3193(?) Starfleet Academy, Season 1

2682 SFA 1: Kids These Days (971)
2683 SFA 2: Beta Test (972)
2684 SFA 3: Vitus Reflex (973)
2685 SFA 4: Vox In Excelso (978)⁶⁰
2686 SFA 5: Series Acclimation Mil (979)
2687 SFA 6: Come, Let's Away (981)
2688 SFA 7: Ko'Zeine (983)
2689 SFA 8: The Life of the Stars (984)
2690 SFA 9: 300th Night (986)
2691 SFA 10: Rubincon (988)

Far Future (after 4,200 AD?)

2692 Short Trek 2: Calypso (746) (15m)

⁶⁰ The release numbers jump here because the short-form web series Star Trek Scouts (SCO) is considered canon, yet its in-universe dating is

indeterminant. I have not reviewed this series yet, and only came across its existence when I was adding these SFA episodes. I will integrate the SCO episodes at a f

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“You know, you should really just read the paper; everything you need to know is right here in black and white.”

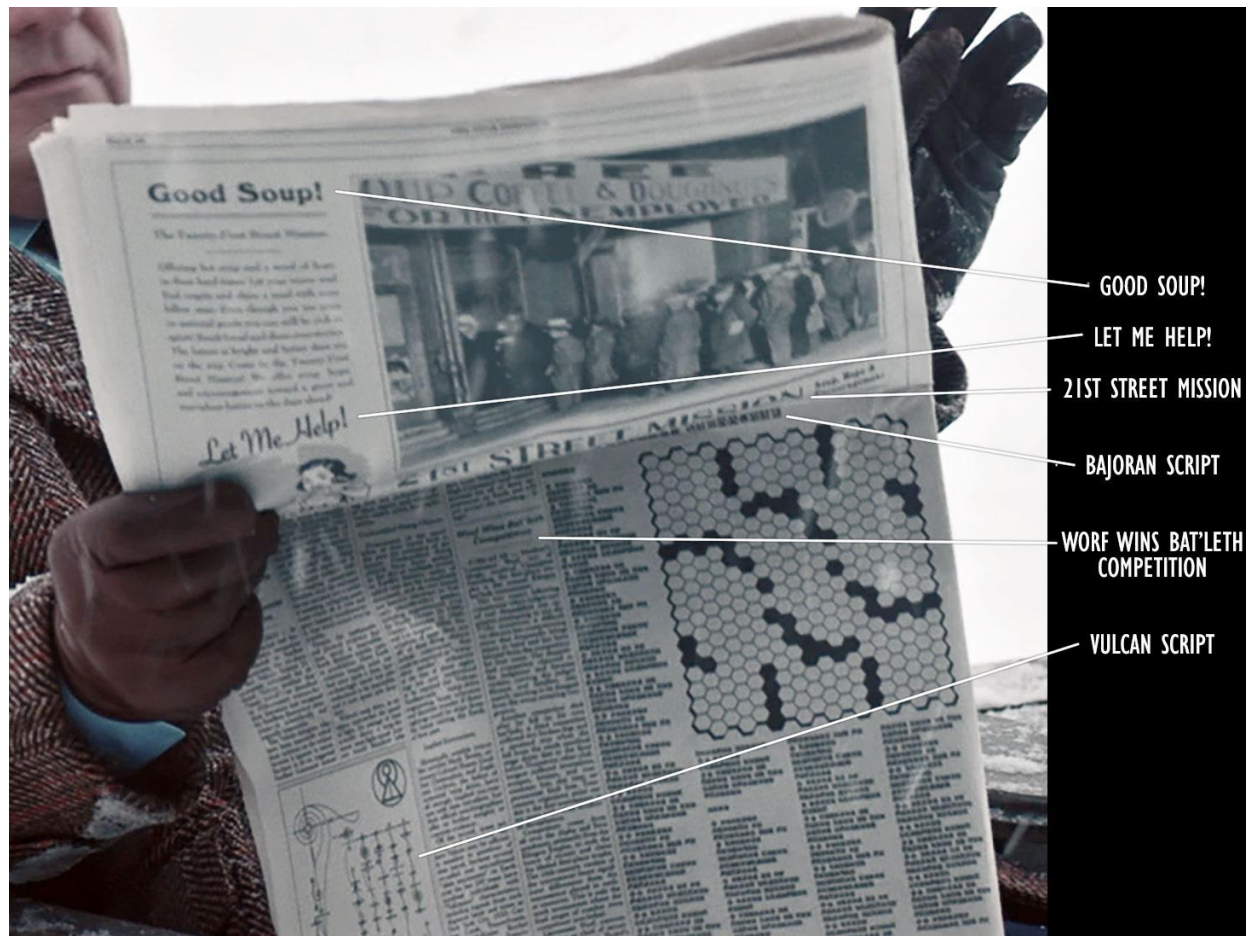
—”Carl”



“Carl’s” Newspaper from *Star Trek Discovery*, Season 3, Episode 9: *Terra Firma, Part 1* (front page)

1. *The Star Dispatch* is a direct reference to ST TOS: *City on the Edge of Forever*. While in the past, Kirk and Spock have to prevent McCoy—who accidentally overdosed on Cordrazine and leaped through the *Guardian of Forever* into Earth’s past—from changing history. Spock retrieves recordings of both timelines from his 23rd Century tricorder using early 20th Century technology (“stone knives and bearskins”). Eventually he finds recordings of two variations on the same newspaper revealing the two timelines. The newspaper is the *Star Dispatch*, complete with the same logo.
2. Box: **Delivering Tomorrow’s News Today** is a reference that this “newspaper” exists out of “normal time”.
3. **Volume MMMCLXXXVIII** – Roman numeral representing 3188.
4. Price: **15 Quatloos** – a reference to the undescribed currency of unknown value used by “The Providers”, the disembodied brains in ST TOS: *Gamesters of Triskellion*.
5. Main Headline: **Emperor Georgiou Dies Horribly Painful Death** with subheading **Cells Pulled Apart** is a direct reference to the subplot taking place across Season 3 of *ST Discovery*, in which Georgiou is dying as a result of crossing between universes and jumping almost 1,000 years forward in time.
6. Headline: **Supernova Threatens T’Kon Empire; Billions Perish** – a reference to ST TNG: *The Last Outpost*, in which the crew of the *USS Enterprise NCC 1701-D* makes first contact with the Ferengi, and both are stopped from engaging in combat by an ancient, sentient portal left over from the T’Kon empire which existed 100,000s of years in the past and was ultimately destroyed by a supernova.
7. Headline: **Shuttlecraft USS Jenolan Believed to Be Missing** – this is the shuttlecraft that found crashed on the “Dyson Sphere” in ST TNG: *Relics*. The *Enterprise D* crew finds an intact pattern in the Jenolan’s transporter buffer, which has been jury rigged to keep it intact for 70 years. The pattern turns out to be Scotty.
8. Headline: **Andorians ... Contraband** – this could be a reference to Thy’lek Shran and the events in ST ENT: *These are the Voyages*, but it’s difficult to be sure.

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"Carl's" Newspaper from *Star Trek Discovery*, Season 3, Episode 9: *Terra Firma, Part 1* (back page)

9. Caption: **Good Soup!**, photo of the **21st Street Mission**, and byline **Let Me Help** are all references to Edith Keeler and the early 20th Century setting of *ST TOS: City on the Edge of Forever*.
10. Title: **Worf Wins Bat'leth Competition** – a reference to the *ST TNG: Parallels*, in which Worf shifts between alternate timelines, but is the only character aware of it. In the correct timeline he wins the competition. In two others he comes in second and ninth, thus cluing him in to his predicament.
11. **Crossword Puzzle** – instead of squares, it features hexagons, and there's a "double helix" pattern, possibly a reference to the Suliban time traveler, Silic, and his benefactor "Future Guy", from numerous *ST Enterprise* episodes.
12. **Bajoran Script** – this seems to accompany the "crossword" puzzle.
13. **Vulcan Script** – it's not clear what this reads, but at least one blogger speculates that it reads: "The Vulcan Science Directorate has determined that time travel is impossible", a belief firmly held by most Vulcans in the 22nd Century, and often uttered throughout *ST Enterprise's* many episodes, but ultimately revealed to be a misconception by Captain Archer's many contacts with 29th Century temporal agent "Daniels".

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How does *Prelude to Axanar* fit into the timeline?

That's a tough one. *Prelude to Axanar* is an as yet still not completed fan-made docudrama that is set in Robert April's time detailing a four-year war between the Federation and Klingons centering around Garth of Izar (from the *TOS* episode *Whom Gods Destroy*) before he lost his mind. It also details how these events led to the creation of the *Constitution Class* starships (of which the *USS Enterprise NCC 1701* is the best known). It features some veteran *Star Trek* actors, including Gary Graham (reprising a much older Soval) and J.G. Hertzler. By all accounts, what portions of it exist, are considered very good.

The problem is, it's impossible to reconcile with alpha canon.

The events described above would have to set it at least five years prior to the events of *The Cage*, but dialog in the *ST Discovery* episode *The Vulcan Hello*, which takes place three years later, establishes that there've been almost no interactions between the Federation and the Klingon Empire since Jonathan Archer's time, 100 years previously.

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