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THIS FILE CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS:

Deegan, Mary Jo. 1986. "Sexism in Space: The Freudian Formula in 'Star Trek.'" Pp. 209-224 in *Eros in the Mind's Eye: Sexuality and the Fantastic in Art and Film*, edited by Donald Palumbo. (Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy, No. 21). New York: Greenwood Press.

Sexism in Space: The Freudian Formula in "Star Trek"

MARY JO DEEGAN

Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship *Enterprise*, its five year mission to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before.

These words, spoken at the beginning of each televised "Star Trek" episode, set the stage for the fantastic future. Although the "Star Trek" series was cancelled in 1969 after only three years of production, it generated a large cult following that flourishes still today. One reason for the series' remarkable longevity is its depiction of the future as a Freudian fantasy. This Freudian vision draws on cultural myths embedded in the patriarchal dominance of men over women characteristic of Western civilization.

According to Freud, both sexes are driven by three instincts—sex, aggression, and the death wish—but men have the most powerful instincts, and they are most driven by their desire to have power over other men. This Freudian worldview is dramatized aboard the starship *Enterprise*, where women are secondary figures who either provide romance or reveal that any woman's desire for power is "abnormal." But men "normally"

struggle for power, and the men of "Star Trek" usually strive for control over the starship. Sometimes, however, all human life is threatened by nonsexed "things," such as viruses or living energy, and the men struggle to defeat these alien forces. Yet in all cases this fantasy of space travel involving a deeply bonded, essentially male group is linked to everyday discrimination against women in contemporary society.

Freud's concept of personal development and its instinctual basis is one of the most influential interpretations of social behavior accepted today. Based on the idea that men are physiologically, psychologically, and mentally superior to women, Freudian thought has been strongly criticized by many feminists (e.g., Friedan, 1963; Miller, 1975; Firestone, 1971). Their critiques interpret Freud's worldview as a legitimization of sexism and, therefore, antithetical to feminism. Mitchell, however, developed in 1975 an innovative feminist critique that sees Freud as an accurate observer of a sexist society. Freud's ideas can thus be seen from a feminist perspective to illuminate rather than perpetuate sexism.

Each Freudian instinct—involving sex, aggression, and the struggle to live or die—is enacted differently by each sex, and each instinct is unconscious and symbolically hidden. The male body, defined as superior to the female's, drives the male to seek power in the social order. Yet each male's quest for power conflicts with that of other males, and this especially threatens each father's control over his sons. Freudians discuss the central theme of males seeking to overthrow the power of other males as either the "Oedipal myth" or the theory of the "primal horde." The "Oedipal myth" involves the son overthrowing the power of the father. This scenario is reenacted in every father-son relationship; it is the major developmental state for generating "normal" behavior in men and determines their adult capacity to "love and work." The "primal horde" theory is a large scale reenactment of the Oedipal myth in which control over society is achieved by challengers, usually younger men, who overthrow once powerful older men. Females who "properly" recognize their physical and emotional inferiority to males want only to love men and bear their children.

Freudian concepts form a network of ideas, a formula, for

organizing action in a dramatic script. This particular, patriarchal formula segregates the world into spheres of "male" and "female" control; but the female sphere is dependent upon the male sphere for knowledge, access to material and emotional resources, and power. The male sphere is governed by rational rules that generate and maintain the social order (e.g., the rules governing the military, education, business, and politics). The female sphere is governed by emotions and relations within the family and home. Love links these separate spheres. For women, sex is defined as an emotional and material connection necessary for establishing paternity as well as financial and emotional security. For men, sex is a physical, animal instinct that explains why men temporarily succumb to the power of women. Women gain power and protection through men; their world is mediated through men, and this explains their need to "capture" men.

There are three major variations of this Freudian formula in "Star Trek," and each variation corresponds to a cultural myth associated with a Freudian instinct. The first myth involves the sexual instinct. In this romantic scenario, women want to love the men of "Star Trek" in order to find meaning and happiness. While the men find these women attractive, women must be forsaken in favor of the men's higher mission on the starship. The second myth involves the aggression instinct. In this power scenario, men want dominance over other men; women are not seen as appropriate opponents. The third myth involves the struggle between life and death. In this death struggle, the men fight living but asexual "things"; the success of the patriarchal leaders in these struggles literally determines the survival or extinction of all humans, and usually prevents a potential Armageddon. Each "Star Trek" episode contains components of each myth and echoes of each instinctual battle, but the most prominent and engaging scenario involves the Oedipal struggle for power.

Together, the *Enterprise's* male leaders face the dangerous unknown. They share fear and excitement, laughter and tears, the conquest of internal and external challenges. This male bond is the emotional focus of the series and determines the fate of all dependents. Captain James T. Kirk has absolute command of the *Enterprise*. In every episode, Kirk makes crucial decisions

affecting the lives of his crew, and he usually seeks the advice of Mr. Spock (the half-human, half-Vulcan First Officer and Science Officer) and Dr. "Bones" McCoy (the Chief Medical Officer). Since Spock identifies with his Vulcan heritage, he bases his decisions on logic and rationality, and is so threatened by emotionality that expressing emotion can be fatal for him; he is the most popular member of the crew, surpassing the Captain in fan appeal (Marsano, 1977). Dr. McCoy, the voice of concern and nurturance, is Spock's foil; he is concerned with the emotional effects on the crew of Kirk's decisions. Outspokenly opposed to Spock's reliance on logic, McCoy repeatedly insists that people are not essentially rational and that the application of reason alone to a human situation is destructive and short-sighted.

Symbolically, Spock represents the extreme embodiment of masculine traits, and McCoy represents the feminine. They externalize respectively the voices of reason and emotion in the Captain's continual struggle to decide the fate of the ship and its crew. Both gender poles are integrated in the patriarchal leader, Kirk. While in some ways Kirk thus seems to be psychologically androgynous, to combine both male and female traits, his decisive masculinity is nonetheless established through his conspicuous heterosexuality, the frequent display of his chest and biceps, and his exaggerated, even swaggering "macho" air. Kirk is a "real man"; and all men on the *Enterprise* are distanced from the "female" concerns of our culture, bearing and rearing children and performing domestic labor (Mitchell, 1966). Instead, they live in a rarefied, masculine sphere dedicated to an abstract, rational ideal that is accomplished through their nurturant starship. These men love each other and the ship; however, any hint of homosexual overtones in their characterizations would destroy this vision of heterosexual male bonding. Thus, women are constantly introduced as attractive temptations that are resisted for the sake of the "higher," male mission. In this way, "normal" heterosexuality is constantly reaffirmed, but assigned an inferior status and thus controlled.

The starship, an idealized womb, is home to 430 crew members for whom it provides defense and mobility as well as life support. It handles all the crew's needs quickly, efficiently, and quietly: Wall slots deliver food and drink, doors automatically

slide open when approached, and all rooms are kept constantly spotless without the appearance of any human intervention. The *Enterprise* is emphatically female. She is the target of men's ambitions, greed, lust for power, and love. Usually referred to by feminine pronouns, "she" is Kirk's love, his "mistress." No mortal woman can compete successfully with "her." While all the male leaders, as well as Chief Engineer Scotty, "love" her, McCoy because she nurtures her human inhabitants and Spock because she embodies his duty, only Kirk admits to his emotional bond and need to deny himself sexually in order to have "her." Because she enables the men to fulfill their life's mission but makes no emotional demands on them, she cannot ask too much. Only human females can do that.

The only female character who appears regularly in the series is Lieutenant Uhuru, the black Communications Officer who fills the traditional female role of translating linguistic meaning. She is the high-tech telephone operator of the future. She is never the primary focus of an episode, however, and one of her largest roles occurs in "The Trouble with Tribbles," in which she "adopts" the very affectionate, furry little title creatures, which are unable to control their reproductive functions.

It is as romantic figures that other women ordinarily occupy their most significant, although individually short-lived, roles (see Table 1). Instead of struggling against men for power, women try to associate with powerful men who represent and protect "their women." For "Star Trek" men, romantic involvement is a distracting and threatening emotion. They want but do not need romantic love, and their sexual desires are awakened by the female presence. Women, however, do need love and must trick men into giving it to them. Therefore, romantic love in this patriarchal formula is an exploitative device used by women to gain some control over specific men. The only exception occurs when a perfect, sacrificing female attracts the higher emotions as well; one such female appears, in "The City on the Edge of Forever," but she dies at the end of the episode.

In the very first episode, "The Man Trap," McCoy is lured into protecting and loving a being he believes is an old flame. Unfortunately, she is a disguised alien who kills men by draining their bodies of salt. Undisguised, she is quite ugly; her face is

Table 1.
Episodes Structured around the Romantic Myth—
The Struggle for Love

	Episodes Involving Human Females	Episodes Involving Alien Females
First Year of TV Series	"Mudd's Women" "Miri" "The City on the Edge of Forever"	"The Man Trap" "What Are Little Girls Made of?" "The Menagerie," Parts I & II "The Devil in the Dark"
Second Year of TV Series		"Catspaw" "The Metamorphosis" "Friday's Child"
Third Year of TV Series	"Is There in Truth No Beauty?" "The Paradise Syndrome"	"The <i>Enterprise</i> Incident" "Spock's Brain" "For the World Is Hollow and I Have Touched the Sky" "Wink of an Eye" "The Empath" "Elaan of Troyius" "The Mark of Gideon" "That Which Survives"

dominated by a large, salt-sucking mouth. McCoy accurately perceives her only after he is no longer in love with her. In "For the World is Hollow and I Have Touched the Sky," McCoy "allows" himself to fall in love when he believes he is fatally ill and decides to spend his last year of life with the high priestess of a doomed planet. When he recovers and the planet is saved, both return to their "duties." In "This Side of Paradise" McCoy falls in love due to the influence of alien spores; when the spores' effects are counteracted, McCoy returns to "normal."

Kirk is frequently seduced by women. In his one "true love" affair, in "The City on the Edge of Forever," he goes back in time with Spock to the Earth of the 1930s to rescue a drug-crazed McCoy, who is being aided by a beautiful twentieth-century social worker. Kirk falls in love with her, but must finally let her die rather than alter the course of history by saving her. In "Shore Leave," Kirk imagines that he meets an old lover while

on a planet whose alien inhabitants make the thoughts of humans appear to be reality. In "Elaan of Troyius," Kirk falls hopelessly in love with a warrior princess who is bound to a loveless marriage agreement designed to settle a war between two planets. The episode's title suggests she is, like Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman of all times. In "The Paradise Syndrome," Kirk is lured into marriage with another high priestess and proclaimed a god after he develops amnesia. Spock must destroy the mythical paradise ruled by the priestess to extricate Kirk from his "dream-state."

Most of Spock's romantic temptations occur when "he is not himself"—i.e., when he is invaded by spores in "This Side of Paradise" or transported to an earlier, barbaric age when Vulcans had emotions in "All Our Yesterdays." These are unusual, life-threatening states; but even his "normal" period of sexual arousal, when he is driven by libido, severely limits his ability to work. This occurs once every seven years and is called (appropriately, for patriarchs) "Amok Time." During this brief period Vulcans are completely controlled by their sex drive, and it is only then that they marry. To choose his bride, Spock fights—and, through McCoy's ruse, believes he kills—Kirk, his "best friend and commander." Yet Spock's intended love rejects him because he is away from home too much. Thus Spock's "normal" sexuality is satisfied—for at least another seven years.

Human women—for example, the blind telepath of "Is There in Truth No Beauty?" and the woman who loves a Greek god in "Who Mourns for Adonis?"—frequently fall in love with aliens. These women abandon "human" society, preferring their alien lovers over their basic identification with humanity. For women, love overrides any other bond or commitment. In every romantic episode, human women are introduced either as evil temptresses or as culturally and morally superior but sexually unavailable temptresses. Yet they can be legitimately attractive. Female aliens, however, are usually just stupid and vicious, and provide opportunities for the extreme depiction of females as limited and despicable beings. "The Man Trap" is a salt-eating killer. The series' answer to the titular question, "What Are Little Girls Made of?" is "mechanical bodies and brains." In this episode, a male who had previously loved Nurse Chappel controls

an "army" of loyal female androids who try to destroy the *Enterprise*.

In "The Metamorphosis," an alien Companion enters the body of an ancient, marooned space pioneer, rejuvenates him, and communicates with him. He is still so lonely, however, that he has the Companion bring Kirk, Spock, and a human female diplomat to his planet of exile. The human woman, a brilliant ambassador who makes constant complaints and demands, has a rare disease. Her dissatisfaction is due to her declining health and her failure to fulfill her life-long ambition, to love and marry a man. The pioneer, on realizing he has been having an alien form of intercourse with the Companion, feels he has been raped and that the immortality conferred through his congress with the alien is not worth this price. Thus, the alien enters the dying body of the diplomat, revivifying it but thereby relinquishing "her" alien immortality, in order to love a mortal man.

In one of "Star Trek" 's most complicated deprecations of women, yet another priestess steals "Spock's Brain" and installs it in the computer that empowers her to act and requires the brain to continue functioning. Kirk and McCoy, with Spock's brainless body in tow, follow the "brain tracks" to descend to, and are captured on, a planet where the native males inhabit a harsh environment and are enslaved by the strange creatures (i.e., females) who give them both pleasure and "pain." The pain derives from a strong electric shock transmitted through bracelets all the men wear. Spock's zombie body is impervious to pain, however, and this circumstance allows Kirk and McCoy to free themselves and retrieve Spock's "brain." This story of a computer-controlled woman stealing a man's brain is an intricate seduction/castration fantasy that dramatizes the evil power of mindless women.

"Friday's Child" exploits deep-seated fears men and women have of touching each other. In this episode's "primitive" world, a man must die if he touches a woman who is not his wife: Every woman, except one's spouse, is both untouchable and deadly to men. "The Empath" is an alien female whose species communicates only through the mind. Her race is incapable of acting generously or unselfishly, and she learns to be generous and selfless from the patriarchal men of the *Enterprise*. Both the

Empath and the *Enterprise* crew, however, are guinea pigs in an experiment conducted by a group of male aliens who are testing the Empath's "altruistic" capacity. In "The *Enterprise* Incident" a female Romulan starship captain captures Spock, falls in love with him, and consequently loses her command, her starship, and her status among her species.

Women are customarily nagging and deceitful in episodes involving Harry Mudd. In "Mudd's Women," this sleazy entrepreneur gives women a fountain-of-youth drug that makes them temporarily beautiful—just long enough for him to use them to separate some foolish miners from their valuable dilithium crystals, which they barter for the ersatz beauties. In "I, Mudd," the intergalactic con man creates an army of female androids that participate in his scheme to trap the crew of the *Enterprise* and steal their ship. Mudd's punishment is to endure an endless tongue-lashing from a platoon of androids created in the image of his nagging, unattractive wife.

Although they might become encumbrances as wives, "good women" in "Star Trek" wish only to serve men. They will forsake their species, give up immortality, and practice any deceit to trap one. But they are always put in their place. The real danger to the men of "Star Trek" is not women, however; the serious threat is the loss of power, which only other men can usurp.

Patriarchal authority is threatened by other men, and Kirk is constantly confronted by this Oedipal challenge (see Table 2.). "Charlie X," a seventeen-year-old boy with superhuman powers who is picked up by the *Enterprise* after having been raised by aliens, tries to take control of the ship but is subdued by Kirk in a face-to-face confrontation. In "The Doomsday Machine" a mad starship captain temporarily gains command of the *Enterprise* while Kirk is stranded aboard another starship, but again Kirk ultimately defeats his challenger. Likewise, in "Dagger of the Mind," the inmates of a model penal colony lure Kirk into their fortification, only finally to lose their bid for control also.

In "The Space Seed," Khan, a selectively bred "superman" who ruled a quarter of the Earth in the 1990s, is saved along with his followers from an eternal exile of suspended animation in deep space by the *Enterprise* crew. Khan immediately tries to

Table 2
Episodes Structured around the Oedipal Myth

	Episodes Involving Human Males	Episodes Involving Alien Males
First Year of TV Series	"Charlie X" "Where No Man Has Gone Before" "The Enemy Within" "Dagger of the Mind" "The Conscience of a King" "The Galileo Seven" "Tomorrow Is Yesterday" "Court-Martial" "The Space Seed" "A Taste of Armageddon" "The Alternative Factor"	"The Carbomite Maneuver" "Balance of Terror" "Shore Leave" "The Squire of Gothos" "The Arena" "The Return of the Archons" "Errand of Mercy"
Second Year of TV Series	"Mirror, Mirror" "The Doomsday Machine" "I, Mudd" "A Piece of the Action" "A Private Little War" "Patterns of Force" "The Omega Glory" "Bread and Circuses" "Assignment: Earth"	"Amok Time" "Who Mourns for Adonis?" "The Changeling" "Journey to Babel" "Wolf in the Fold" "The Gamesters of Triskelion" "Return to Tomorrow" "By Any Other Name" "The Ultimate Computer"
Third Year of TV Series	"Whom Gods Destroy" "Let This Be Your Last Battlefield" "Requiem for Methuselah" "The Way to Eden" "The Cloud Minders" "All Our Yesterdays"	"And the Children Shall Lead" "Spectre of the Gun" "The Tholian Web" "Plato's Stepchildren" "The Savage Curtain"
Films	<i>Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan</i>	<i>Star Trek III: The Search for Spock</i>

take over the starship through enlisting the aid of a female officer who falls in love with him, but Kirk regains control of his vessel and banishes the "superpeople" to a rough but habitable planet. Khan returns in the movie sequel, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, for another unsuccessful Oedipal conflict. In this second failed bid for power Khan is motivated by revenge, for the planet on which Kirk deposited him and his followers was rendered uninhabitable by a cosmic catastrophe soon after colonization.

Kirk is occasionally challenged by "male" computers that have run amok. When "The Ultimate Computer" is selected to replace Kirk as captain of the *Enterprise*, it subsequently refuses to relinquish control. This conflict reveals that the "female" ship is helpless without a human male to command her. In "By Any Other Name," a computer that has been tampered with "proves" that Kirk is responsible for the death of a former rival and friend. The fact that false information had been planted in the computer by Kirk's enemy is discovered before the challenging male and his computer "accomplice" can permanently strip Kirk of his rank through a court martial.

In "The Changeling" an ancient space-probe's programming is altered by collisions in deep space, and the probe proceeds to destroy all imperfections, including "flawed" humans. Kirk pretends to be the probe's Maker to reactivate the central directives embedded in the program that require the probe to destroy itself rather than harm people. *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* borrows from "The Changeling" plot: an ancient space probe is granted near-infinite power by a race of supermachines and returns to Earth to pose a potential threat to "parasitic" organic life. It, too, searches for its Maker. In this movie, two female aliens are allowed to be officers on the bridge, but only after the "romantic" threat they pose is cancelled: Ilia, a Deltan, has taken a vow of chastity regarding humans because intercourse with a member of her race is fatal to them; Savak is incapable of "falling in love" due to her Vulcan ancestry. This adventure begins when Admiral Kirk wrests command from the new, young captain, Decker. It concludes with the "merging" of Decker, Ilia's former platonic lover, with a robot duplicate of Ilia created by the space probe. Symbolic sex with a machine replaces the deadly intercourse with a female specifically forbidden early in the film.

Male aliens also vie with Kirk for power. In "The Arena," Kirk successfully fights a lizardlike alien commander in a battle of "champions" to settle a territorial dispute. In "And the Children Shall Lead," another male alien, an incarnation of evil, uses children he has traumatized with fear to enter and take control of the *Enterprise*. However, Kirk revives the children's memories of their loving parents, and thus breaks the "evil father's" spell. Kirk is temporarily the "wise" patriarch who cares for the abused and exploited children.

Of course, the series' principal alien antagonists are the Federation's traditional foes, the Romulans and Klingons. Romulans, who appear in "Balance of Terror" and "The *Enterprise* Incident," play more fairly than Klingons; as long as Federation representatives stay in their "territories," the Romulans do not attack. Klingons are a different breed altogether. Gerrold observes:

Klingons are professional villains. They are nasty, vicious, brutal and merciless. They don't bathe regularly, they don't use deodorants or brush their teeth. They don't even visit the dentist twice a year. They sharpen their fangs by hand because they think pain is fun. They eat Blue Meanies for breakfast.¹

In "Errand of Mercy," their first appearance, the Klingons attack a pacifist planet, Organia, that Kirk mistakenly feels it is his duty to protect. Kirk fights the Klingon captain but is stopped by the Organians, who are actually more powerful than both the Federation and The Klingon Empire. The Organians force the antagonists to stop fighting, thus setting the precedent for their surreptitious conflicts in subsequent episodes. Klingons also appear in "The Trouble with Tribbles." These little fur balls screech and tremble in the presence of Klingons, and this behavior leads to the unmasking of Klingon spies who are sabotaging precious food stores. In both "A Private Little War" and "Friday's Child," Kirk fights Klingon spies who pretend to be helping unsophisticated natives on primitive planets. And in "The Day of The Dove," an alien being that feeds on hatred tries to use and destroy both species. Kirk foils this scheme by establishing a temporary truce with the Klingons that lasts until their mutual enemy is defeated.

Finally, the most serious threat to the ship is internal treachery. This is a major "Star Trek" theme, and a favorite variation is Kirk's vulnerability to "the dark side" of his human nature. "The Enemy Within" appears when a transporter malfunction splits Kirk into two personas, one good and one evil. Neither facet can survive without the other, and both aspects of Kirk finally reintegrate to preserve their shared existence. In "Mirror, Mirror" Kirk finds a counterpart universe in which the parallel Kirk and *Enterprise* crew are evil instead of good. Evil doubles replace Kirk and McCoy, who are transported to the "wicked" *Enterprise*. The good Kirk wins the day by convincing the evil Kirk's woman—apparently, only an evil Kirk would have one—to join forces with him.

Since all men vie for power, human and alien males have a common bond. In their lust for power even male Klingons behave more like human men than human women do. Only the very last televised episode, "Turnabout Intruder," presents a woman as a serious threat to Kirk's power, and she is mad. The Freudian assumption behind "Turnabout Intruder" is that a "normal" woman would never desire a starship captain's authority. Janice Lester and Kirk had once been lovers, but Janice's jealousy over Kirk's chance to be a starship captain, a chance that a mere female could never have, destroyed their relationship. Later, while conducting an archeological dig, she discovers a machine that lets her exchange bodies with another human. This provides her with the opportunity to "adopt" a male body and end her "penis envy," so she murders the members of her expedition, lures Kirk to her dig, and swaps bodies with him.

Once on board the *Enterprise*, however, Janice-Kirk does not act "correctly." Despite her male body, she does not have the psychological and moral superiority to succeed with the masquerade. The crew senses that something is wrong, and a court martial is initiated. Spock finally deduces that only a woman in Kirk's body would act so strangely—i.e., be so incompetent, so easily angered, and so irrational. Kirk-Janice, however, acts "just like a man," even though he inhabits a female body. Kirk-Janice overcomes Janice-Kirk in a struggle of personalities, and each personality returns to his/her "natural" body. Speculating on Janice's behavior, Kirk and Spock conclude that "Her life could

have been as rich as any woman's if only . . . she had ever been able to take pride in *being* a woman."² She would have been "sane" and "lovable" had she accepted her place.

A few episodes revolve around the possible extinction of all human life, an Armageddon myth, by asexual things, often chemicals and viruses (see Table 3). In "Operation Annihilate!" a batlike thing attaches itself to the human body and causes excruciating, fatal pain. After killing the inhabitants of an entire planet, it is finally destroyed by massive doses of ultraviolet light. Spock plays a crucial role here because only his "extra Vulcan eyelid" saves his eyesight and life when he is exposed to the ultraviolet radiation. McCoy sometimes saves humanity through his medical knowledge. In "The Naked Time" a mutated form of water reduces everyone to his or her most "animal" nature. Spock, of course, experiences emotions while others exhibit various forms of "madness" stereotypically appropriate for their sex and ethnicity. McCoy finds the antidote in the nick of time. When the spores in "This Side of Paradise" infect his body, only Kirk's love of the *Enterprise* enables him to persevere and prevail. In "The Apple," Kirk, Spock, and McCoy successfully battle a "snake-like" computer that controls humanoids. They "disarm" it to prevent a planet from colliding with a comet.

This familiar trio also rides the galaxy of Zetars, a form of living light. The Zetars invade Mira, a female crew member who is especially open to new experience. Ultimately, they are forced out of her body by air pressure. The malevolent cloud of Kirk's "Obsession" is similarly removed by air pressure and forced out of the *Enterprise's* conduits. In "The Immunity Syndrome," Kirk, Spock, and McCoy fight a mega-amoeba that threatens to "eat" the whole galaxy. Spock's superior scientific training and physical endurance make him the most "logical" pilot of an exploratory shuttle sent to examine the "thing." Kirk uses the craft as a "hypodermic needle" to inoculate the virulent "virus" with antimatter just before it is ready to form more "little" mega-things! Another energy "thing" meddles in space conflicts in "The Day of the Dove," when Klingons and Earthmen form a temporary truce to save their lives. The "aging virus" of "The Deadly Years" almost causes the *Enterprise* crew to perish due to the ineptness of a commander who governs in Kirk's absence.

Table 3
Episodes Structured around the Armageddon Myth

	Episodes with Nonsexed Things
First Year of TV Series	"The Naked Time" (alien water) "This Side of Paradise" (spores) "Operation Annihilate!" (single cell that attacks nerves)
Second Year of TV Series	"The Apple" (snake-image computer) "The Deadly Years" (aging virus) "Obsession" (chemical creature) "The Immunity Syndrome" (mega-amoeba)
Third Year of TV Series	"The Day of the Dove" (entity that lives off hatred) "The Lights of Zetar" (energy entity)
Films	<i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> (V'ger) <i>Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan</i> (Project Genesis) <i>Star Trek III: The Search for Spock</i> (Project Genesis)

Only Kirk, after recovering from the virus, can guide the ship to safety.

"Star Trek" was originally conceived as a less sexist entertainment than it finally turned out to be in the majority of its televised episodes.³ Yet the Freudian formula is a successful one, emotionally and commercially, because it provides a consistent view of women as "aliens" who know their proper place. Powerless in political, military, and economic spheres, these women of the future still resort to stereotypical feminine wiles and snares to lure unsuspecting men into emotional traps. Although they may sometimes, often through subterfuge, gain a temporary advantage, women are always subdued by the men of the *Enterprise*. Sexually stimulating women may only temporarily distract these men from their higher duty to their feminized machine, their starship. Emotional attachments between men and to a machine are depicted as normal; however, commitment to women is not only traitorous but—in the instance of the masculine ideal embodied in Spock—can even be fatal.

“Star Trek” dramatizes patriarchy, male control over women. Its audience identifies with the characters and their struggles and has installed the TV series and subsequent films in an enduring niche in the sexist culture it reflects. The “Star Trek” formula thus supports and is supported by other patriarchal formulas. Each one echoes the others in providing models of submissive roles for women and dominant roles for men.

NOTES

1. David Gerrold, *The World of Star Trek* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974), p. 32.
2. James Blish, *Star Trek 5* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 338.
3. See Stephen E. Whitfield and Gene Roddenberry, *The Making of Star Trek* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968).