

= Tuvix =

" Tuvix " is the 40th episode (24th in the second season) of the science fiction television program Star Trek : Voyager . The episode originally aired on May 6 , 1996 , and tells the story of Tuvok and Neelix being merged into a unique third character named Tuvix .

The episode was substantially rewritten from its original incarnation as a lighthearted story to a more somber tale with serious moral and ethical implications . Tom Wright guest stars as Tuvix to lend more credence to a unique new character that consists of equal parts Tuvok and Neelix . Both director Cliff Bole and Wright himself had reservations about the latter 's take on the character , and despite a perceived lack of support , Wright still praised the Voyager cast and crew . Both the story and performances of " Tuvix " were lauded by the production team and critics alike .

Researchers and critics found " Tuvix " teeming with technical and philosophical content , including thematic ties to other episodes in the Star Trek canon , real @-@ world logical and metaphysical ramifications , and scientific concessions for the story . " Tuvix " was well received by fans and television critics , earning approval ratings between 75 ? 80 % ; the Tuvix character and Janeway 's forced separation of the same were particularly polarizing among the episode 's audience and distinguishes the episode for the copious feedback it generated .

= = Plot = =

On stardate 49655 @.@ 2 , Lieutenant Commander Tuvok (Tim Russ) and Neelix (Ethan Phillips) are sent to collect botanical samples from a discovered Class M planet . When beamed back aboard Voyager , the two men and the orchidaceae they collected are merged at the molecular level to become a single lifeform which names himself Tuvix (Tom Wright) . After ruling out transporter malfunction , the crew discovers that when demolecularized in the matter stream , the genetic material of the alien orchids acted as a symbiogenetic catalyst and is the culprit for the combination of the two crewmembers . Unfortunately , the process cannot be reversed , and Tuvix is accepted as a member of the crew with the rank of lieutenant , functioning as chief tactical officer in Tuvok 's stead .

Kes (Jennifer Lien) reacts poorly to Tuvix as his existence deprives her of both Tuvok and Neelix , her mentor and boyfriend respectively . Her displeasure lessens over the course of the episode , but never completely goes away . Captain Janeway (Kate Mulgrew) accepts Tuvix in his role as an excellent chief tactical officer and " an able advisor , who skillfully uses humor to make his points " . Tuvix himself , having the combined memories and personalities of his constituents , melds the previously intractable qualities of both and improves upon them , flexing either muscle as the situation requires : " Chief of security or head chef , take your pick ! " .

Two weeks after the accident , the Doctor (Robert Picardo) develops a contemporary equivalent to barium sulfate (BaSO₄) radiocontrasting using a custom radioisotope with which he can identify the disparate DNAs of the two original crewmen and use the transporter to disentangle the two . Tuvix denounces the procedure however . He argues that he has rights and that he doesn 't want to die , for to restore the two lost crewmen would require his execution . After discussing the situation with Commander Chakotay (Robert Beltran) , Kes , and Tuvix himself , Janeway ultimately decides to proceed with the separation , acting in absentia to protect the rights of the two original men . Tuvix makes a final emotive plea for support from the crew , but finds no supporters . After the Doctor refuses to take Tuvix 's life in compliance with the medical precept of doing no harm , Janeway performs the procedure herself and succeeds in restoring both Tuvok and Neelix .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

" Tuvix " was formerly known as " Untitled Tuvok / Neelix " , " One " , and " Symbiogenesis " , with

the third of these persisting through the episode's development and shooting . The episode and its teleplay were written by Kenneth Biller ; the story is credited to Andrew Shepard Price and Mark Gaberman . Though described by Biller as " high @-@ concept " , the original story by Price and Gaberman was much more light @-@ hearted and tended more towards slapstick . Biller and Brannon Braga felt the tone of the episode was so akin to a 1960s sitcom , the two of them even wrote a theme song for it . Biller re @-@ wrote the episode to focus more on the serious philosophical questions raised by the episode and especially the inevitable separation of Tuvix back into the series regulars . In Biller's original treatment , Tuvix recognized that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few and consented to his fissure . However , after a discussion with executive producer Michael Piller , Biller began to " [poke] at the audience " by throwing up roadblocks to the episode's foregone conclusion ; first Tuvix was re @-@ written to object to the procedure and then the Doctor's refusal was added to force Captain Janeway to put truth to action . Piller later described Biller as " the poet laureate of Star Trek " , highlighting his work on " Tuvix " and " Lifesigns " as examples .

= = = Casting = = =

Director Cliff Bole and the episode's producers originally considered having series regular Ethan Phillips (Neelix) portray Tuvix , but decided against it fearing that he was too identifiable and would have difficulty integrating an equal amount of Tuvok's character into his performance . Casting for " Tuvix " was done by Junie Lowry @-@ Johnson , C.S.A. , and Ron Surma .

The only non @-@ recurring guest star in " Tuvix " is the eponymous fusion of two main characters . Though guest stars have occasionally played major recurring characters ? e.g. , Sandra Smith as Captain Kirk in the original Star Trek's " Turnabout Intruder " and David Birkin as Captain Picard in Star Trek : The Next Generation's " Rascals " ? Tom Wright is the first to portray two in the same episode .

When contacted by his talent agent , Wright jumped at the opportunity to create a character wholly unique to the Star Trek franchise . When he auditioned for the role of Tuvix , Wright had never seen Star Trek : Voyager and was completely unfamiliar with the characterizations of Tuvok and Neelix . Instead , he drew upon his prior experiences with the characters' actors , Tim Russ and Ethan Phillips respectively , to successfully vie for the role . Executive producer Jeri Taylor was pleased with the casting of Wright , marveling at his ability to bring credibility to the prospect of two characters in one .

After securing the role , Wright was provided video of Tuvok and Neelix from previous episodes from which he refined the character . Instead of portraying Tuvix as simply a vessel for two separate consciousnesses , Wright blended the two characters to form a unique third . Wright focused on juxtaposing the contrary physical and emotional natures of the two characters in his performance ; in scenes where Neelix's persona is more prominent , Wright played up Tuvok's composed physicality , and in scenes where Tuvok's skills and experience were needed , Wright leaned more heavily on Neelix's exuberant mannerisms . Wright also worked hard to exhibit the intrinsic warmth of both characters and make Tuvix as likable and sympathetic a character as possible . Author David McIntee (Delta Quadrant) felt that Tuvix expressed more of Neelix's mannerisms than Tuvok's . He also noted that Tuvix adopted Neelix's right @-@ handedness as opposed to Tuvok's left @-@ handedness .

= = = Costuming and makeup = = =

McIntee hypothesizes that the modified Starfleet uniform Tuvix initially wears after his creation was influenced by the orchids which were also transported . He called it " an illogical but subtle and attractive stylistic touch " and praised its design suggesting they all be modified duly . Robert Blackman served as costume designer for " Tuvix " .

In an interview with The Official Star Trek Voyager Magazine in 1998 , director Cliff Bole spoke highly of guest star Tom Wright , saying he was a " good actor [who] prides himself on being

Shakespearean " , but felt that he was in over his head working on Star Trek , particularly underestimating the rigors of working under the requisite makeup . Bole detailed a four @-@ hour , 4 a.m. process to apply the glue , mask , and prostheses before the actor even began delivering his lines for what was an all @-@ day shoot ; all of these " subtract from [the] performance " of actors unaccustomed to them . Bole tempered himself explaining that he had seen " really competent actors " suffer from the same trials and simple exhaustion that he saw in Wright 's performance . For his part , Wright compared the trials of the " heavy makeup " and contact lenses required to play Tuvix with his previous roles on Creepshow 2 and Tales from the Crypt . Tuvix 's makeup was designed and supervised by Michael Westmore .

= = = Filming = = =

Tom Wright described working on " Tuvix " as an exercise in forcing himself to work outside his known comfort areas and confessed he was unsure of the quality of the end product . The actor complained about what he saw as a lack of support and guidance from the Voyager team , saying he felt adrift and unsure as to what was expected of his performance , especially since his portrayal reflected two of the starring characters . However , he also conceded that it may have been intentional in an effort to evoke a genuine sense of off @-@ balancedness in the character . Either way , though he was unaccustomed to the environment , Wright expressed his willingness to revisit Tuvix or even work on any Star Trek again if the opportunity arose . In interviews , Wright specifically fondly recalled his time working with Jennifer Lien (Kes) , Kate Mulgrew (Captain Janeway) , and director Cliff Bole .

In a 1997 interview , Wright explained how the episode 's dialogue posed a challenge in that not only did he have to take great care to adhere to the vernacular of Star Trek and not sound too contemporary or " too 1997 " , but he had to take several days to accommodate himself to the episode 's " treknobabble " with the assistance of Robert Duncan McNeill (Tom Paris) . Director Cliff Bole later praised Wright for his ability to improvise , but explained that it was to the actor 's detriment as " Star Trek is not an ad @-@ lib format " , and he felt Wright assumed he could wing some of it . Mulgrew also bemoaned the technobabble in " Tuvix " when asked by Starlog for her " most memorable line of technobabble " ; " When did he cease to be a transporter accident and start to be an individual ? "

Bole heaped praise on the episode 's final scene in which Janeway " stalks " into the corridor outside sickbay after performing the procedure which restores Tuvok and Neelix . He extolled , " That last shot I did with Kate [Mulgrew] , as she 's walking into the camera , she told the whole story with her face . She gave a great performance . I only asked for a few things ; she brought that look and emotion to work with her . " In his book The Meaning of Star Trek , author Thomas Richards also credited Mulgrew in this scene . Richards saw Janeway troubled by her difficult decision between two undesirable options and how " she must live with the choice . [A] death has cast a shadow over the ship , and for the first time in the series the Federation has put to death one of its own . "

In a 1996 interview with Cinefantastique , Robert Picardo reminisced that as the Doctor he had " a substantial amount " to do in " Tuvix " . Picardo would also look back on the episode , and the scene in which he " countermand [s] the captain " especially , as a turning point in the Doctor 's and Janeway 's relationship , calling it an " interesting moment for both characters " . Ethan Phillips would also remember being excited reading the script for " Tuvix " as an opportunity to discover more about his character .

The science lab set in the first act is a redress of the isolation chamber in sickbay , but with a blue background as opposed to the yellow .

= = Analysis = =

Elaine L. Graham 's book Representations of the Post / Human uses " Tuvix " to contrast Star Trek : Voyager with Star Trek : The Next Generation ; " Tuvix " is an example of how the former series

tended to incorporate stories that touched on moral and ethically ambiguous situations and decisions . Graham notes how the character of Tuvix was written to encourage audience sympathies , yet was still effectively sentenced to death in contravention of what she describes as the " exemplary Star Trek values [of] sentience , self @-@ determination , and personhood " . Thomas Richards ' The Meaning of Star Trek also focused on the morality of decisions in " Tuvix " as compared to the original Star Trek and The Next Generation ; more than Star Trek : Deep Space Nine , the Voyager is far from the United Federation of Planets and " must address every value of the Federation [...] in a universe in which those values may no longer apply . " Richards describes the episode as " truly remarkable " for its depiction of Janeway 's sentence of capital punishment and her performing the very first execution in all of Star Trek . Not only is this shocking for the audience in comparison to episodes and series past , but even the fictional Voyager crew are stunned . In 2000 , David McIntee pointed to these themes and plot points as having made " Tuvix " the most debated episode in Star Trek fandom yet , and one of Star Trek : Voyager 's " most thought @-@ provoking , and [...] single most discussed , episode . "

In her book American Science Fiction TV , Jan Johnson @-@ Smith noted that " Tuvix " is one of a recurring type of Star Trek episodes concerned with issues of individuality and self . She thematically tied this episode to Star Trek : The Original Series ' episode " The Enemy Within " where the transporter rends Captain Kirk into two separate representations of his psyche , Star Trek : Voyager 's episode " Faces " where hybrid Human / Klingon character B 'Elanna Torres is split along her bloodline into two separate species , and Star Trek : Deep Space Nine 's character of Jadzia Dax who is of a conjoined species (Trill) that repeatedly goes through a conjoining process when the host organism dies . When asked regarding accusations of " Tuvix " and other Voyager episodes simply aping previous Star Trek series in this way , executive producer Michael Piller called out Time magazine for their comments on the matter before conceding , " [Y] ou 've got to keep new people coming in and pitching because otherwise you 're going to be retreading an old ground . " Seven years later , when writing Star Trek : Enterprise 's " Similitude " , Manny Coto would take pains to write that episode to be dissimilar to " Tuvix " .

In his paper published in the Polish Journal of Philosophy , University of Sussex professor Murali Ramachandran examines the combination of Tuvok and Neelix into a single individual for its implications to modal logic . Mr. Ramachandran , though forced to disregard the metaphysical considerations imposed by " the very nature of tele @-@ transportation " , promotes a " Kripkean counterpart theory " using this study of the characters .

Athena Andreadis ' book To Seek Out New Life : The Biology of Star Trek attempts and fails to legitimize the episode 's biologic science , even accepting all other technologies presented . Not only does the synthesis of Tuvix violate the law of conservation of mass , but the separation poses the problem of differentiating the two species ' genes , a significant hurdle when science of the 1990s couldn 't differentiate between humans and chimpanzees . After detailing the combination of the Talaxian and Vulcan species , the cellular chromosomal pairing , and the " synaptic coherence of two brains / minds within one skull " , Andreadis finds the whole proposition laughable from a scientific standpoint , comparing it to the 1986 film The Fly as an example of bad science . Ultimately , she comes down against the transporter regarding its fictional capacity to do that which is claimed .

= = = Tuvix (character) = = =

Tom Wright spoke on his interpretation of the character in 1997 ; he felt the two constituent halves of Tuvix " represent [ed] the left and the right side of the brain ? where one is weak the other is strong , and vice versa . "

In his 2005 book , Teleportation : The Impossible Leap , David J. Darling notes that while Tuvix was well @-@ liked by other characters , his fate was in fact ultimately determined not by his arguments or the decision of the captain , but by the " [e] nsemble casting and contractual arrangements " of the show . Wright also felt the separation of Tuvix was inevitable from a perspective of dramatic necessity . The UPN promotional video for the episode played on expectations of the audience to

like Tuvix at the cost of the Tuvok and Neelix characters .

= = Reception = =

In an interview with Cinefantastique , writer Kenneth Biller said that he received a " lot of mail " regarding " Tuvix " and that Janeway 's tough decisions in the episode generated a lot of discussion and really moved a lot of people . Director Cliff Bole felt the episode was " well @-@ accepted " , and both he and the producers liked it . Actor Tom Wright explained the episode 's popularity saying it resounded with viewers because it had no outright moralizations or specific good and evil characters ; the episode deals with a no @-@ win scenario . Writer Thomas Richards concurred with Wright in agreeing that the episode 's frank depiction without any judgments was a significant strength in its favor .

Cinefantastique 's Dale Kutzera gave " Tuvix " three out of four stars , Nikki Harper for STAR TREK : The Official Monthly Magazine gave the episode four out of five stars , and Bill Florence for The Official Star Trek Voyager Magazine called it one of Voyager 's " strongest episodes to date " . In his book Delta Quadrant : The unofficial guide to Voyager , David McIntee was impressed by the episode 's capacity to rise above its " appallingly silly " premise ; McIntee attributes this to the casting of Tom Wright as Tuvix , whose acting he saw as a guide to the tempo of the episode , keeping it from proceeding too slowly . He gave the episode an 8 / 10 rating . In a list of the top 100 episodes of the Star Trek franchise , " Tuvix " was placed in 56th place by Charlie Jane Anders at io9 .