**Film/Book review – Star Trek: Discovery**

“Ten years before Kirk, Spock and the Enterprise, the USS Discovery discovers new worlds and lifeforms as one Starfleet officer learns to understand all things alien.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Star Trek can possibly be rated as one of the most influential TV-shows, if not the most, in history. Hence, the cultural importance of Star Trek and the accompanying cultural convergence and furthermore, the formation of new cultures, based upon Star Trek. Star Trek: Discovery is the newest member of the TV-shows, just having launched a few months back. The approach in story telling in Star Trek discovery is far different than compared to its brothers and sisters of the vast Star Trek TV-show collection. The fact that this TV show is very different is the reason why it felt most intriguing to analyse this particular piece. The main aspect that will be focused on, is the question how so many different cultures, note that different solar systems and their cultures are included, can harmonically coexist, sustain and converge. In aspects of direct communication, the aspect of how Star Trek: Discovery handles languages on an interplanetary level. To ease simplicity, the scope of analysis will be the beginning of season one and mainly restricted to episode one.

“While patrolling Federation space, the U.S.S. Shenzhou encounters an object of unknown origin, putting First Officer Michael Burnham to her greatest test yet.”[[2]](#footnote-2) First of all, the main aspect of Star Trek in itself is humanity being an interplanetary species and furthermore strives and explores the universe itself. I believe the concept of Star Trek in itself should be clear to everyone born before 1999. The USS Shenzhou vessel is main anchor of reference and handles as major place of action. The aspect of cultural coexistence while having so many cultures is the first aspect I will analyse for the TV-show. The USS Shenzhou would hold a crew size of maximum three thousand, meaning that maybe there will be a human crew size of maximum three hundred. The rest would simply be alien, no corporeal or artificial, if we restrict ourselves to the scope of one universe. The point I am trying to make is probably quite clear, with so many different species from all around the universe, there are sure a lot of cultural clashes.

The fact that culture can be dramatically different from another, it really makes the sustaining of cultures incredible. As example, a specimen from kelpien said:” Your world has food chains. Mine does not. Our species map is binary. We are either predator or prey.”[[3]](#footnote-3) That quote is from the human point of view very significant, because such a culture we could not comply ever. That species seems to be so different in their beliefs and overall culture.

When talking astronomical scale, there has to be standardisation to maintain order. The Federation is the entity trying to provide neutral ground, which is hard considering, neutral is far from objective. Therefore, many cultural clashes are predetermined, as for example a being sensitive to organic hair could not be sustained within a community of humans. On the other hand, this also means that many potential culture clashes not even arise in the first place and it balances as scale progresses.

The problem of language is particularly well handled in Star Trek, they just made English the language of the federation and mainly resisted adapting new languages for the sake of enjoyment rather than value. As well as the fact, that learning languages would probably not make sense, as technology would be so advanced, that live translation should be available. Having language out of the way, there is not much left to discuss on this aspect. Because we are talking about an astronomical scale of reference, the details of culture cannot be analysed, but generalised. Therefore, generally saying, what would probably be bigger of a problem the more scale of reference we utilise, is the fact that conflicts, misconceptions will increase as there are more potential parties to be in bad terms with, hence the likelihood increases. Stereotypes are mostly unimportant, because the number of possible stereotypes is unsustainable on astronomical scale. An urging problem though, is the standards a species is used to compared to other cultures. Meaning, that humans generally tend to be reserved to “blue-skinned half robot half whatever”, simply because our standard is completely different. The most clashes would probably arise through conflict created through species being reserved upon culture.

A particular aspect of the first episode that would be interesting to analyse is the scene in which the protagonist, having gotten this clue from a fellow Vulcan citizen, decides to start an attack on another vessel first, as that is considered a sign of strength in the opponent’s culture and hence mean that they will not return the fire. The logic in that is debateable, but the aspect that should be noted, is the difference in cultural perspective of actions made by other parties. In this particular case, the captain, a human did not want to open fire, whereas the protagonist, from planet Vulcan recommends opening fire as she knows better about cultural background of the opponents the Klingons. The importance of being exposed to culture is observable in this TV-show, as well as the coexistence or clashing of cultures of a number of astronomical scale.

The objective of this essay was to analyse aspects of cross cultural communication of a film or book, which has been done. The analytical part was divided into parts of reference, stated in the introduction, but also clearly visible in distinction throughout the document. The Cultural importance for Star Trek: Discovery is increasingly significant relative to its siblings, where culture was more thought of a “laissez faire” concept. Star Trek: Discovery applies Cultural models and concepts that are very helpful when analysing the cultural constellation of that TV-show, as mere brute-force would be senseless on that scale.

To finish off the conclusion of this essay, there will be a quote as a final piece of food for thought: “It would be unwise to confuse race and culture.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

**References:**

Fuller, B., Kurtzman, A., Martin-Green, S., Jones, D., Latif, S., & Go, I. et al. (2017). *Star Trek: Discovery (TV Series 2017– )*. *IMDb*. Retrieved 16 November 2017, from http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5171438/?ref\_=nv\_sr\_1

Semel, D., Roddenberry, G., Fuller, B., Martin-Green, S., Jones, D., & Latif, S. et al. (2017). *"Star Trek: Discovery" The Vulcan Hello (TV Episode 2017)*. *IMDb*. Retrieved 16 November 2017, from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5509372/>

*IMDB Quotes from "Star Trek: Discovery: The Vulcan Hello"*. (2017). *IMDb*. Retrieved 16 November 2017, from http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5509372/quotes/?tab=qt&ref\_=tt\_trv\_qu

1. Semel, D [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Fuller, B [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. IMDB quotes [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. IMDB Quotes [↑](#footnote-ref-4)