

Painted Men and Salt Monsters: The Alien Body in 50s and 60s American Science Fiction Television

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(1) If, as we have seen, it is often claimed that television is awash with graphic images of the body, American television science fiction was virtually fascinated with the figure of the alien during the late 1950s and 1960s, where it routinely focused on the body – both alien and human – as images of difference. From monstrous aliens and mutated humans to evil cyborgs and painted men, the body became a space in which to examine and negotiate ideas concerning race, nationhood and gender. Series such as *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964), *The Outer Limits* (1963-1965), and *Star Trek* (1966-1969) examined specific constructions of difference through their episodic format and consistent use of the 'alien' as an instrument of narrative storytelling.

(2) This chapter focuses on the development of the human and alien bodies as depicted in the science fiction television series of the 1950s and 1960s. As such it takes a chronological approach, examining the changing representations of the body as they were conceived and addressed throughout the major and influential series of the time. As I will argue in the first part of this essay, the figure of the alien was a predominantly cinematic character in the 1950s. It was a mainstay of the B movie sf/horror film that was often presented in stark contrast to the human, and so challenged existing definitions of normality. Often this is read as simply presenting the alien as irredeemably Other, with flying saucers, hideous alien blobs, and mutant monsters operating to confirm American society as the rightful masters of the galaxy. However, as Mark Jancovich has pointed out, many of these aliens also challenged the *status quo* in other ways, and operated to question established definitions of normality. In many films of this period, the threatening alien actually focused fears and anxiety about developments *within* American society, while others presented the alien as a persecuted figure oppressed by intolerance. It was this later trend that was developed in Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*, a television series that did not depict humanity as superior to the alien other, but instead turned its gaze on humanity to challenge definitions of normality in Cold War America. As a result, the overtly alien body was largely absent from what was generally a 'cerebral show' that focused on the human mind rather than the alien body (Stark 1997: 86-87).

(3) It was only in the 1960s that television started to display a fascination with the spectacle of the alien body. *The Outer Limits* revelled in creating outrageously ghastly mutants, aliens and monsters, although even here these alien others were often presented sympathetically despite their visual differences, and were often presented as a friend or benevolent helper in relation to the human protagonist who was often presented as ignorant or violent. These stories were frequently confined to the Earth and often used images of difference to highlight human prejudice and intolerance. Differences between the human and the alien body enabled an investigation of

America's Cold War politics. While television was becoming America's "'window on the world'", various events quite literally brought home to us that threatening "things" from the outside could reach us with ease through this very same portal' (Worland 1996: 112). As the alien became all the more gruesome and macabre towards the end of the series, episodes relativized American definitions of normality, and presented humanity as one, insignificant species among others in the Universe rather than the epitome of normality, the central standard against which all alien species and cultures could be judged.

(4) After *The Outer Limits*, science fiction television and its human characters departed from Earth's confines in *Star Trek*, which continued to use make-up and special effects in its depiction of the alien body, but also changed the meaning of the encounter between the human and alien. Although many stories continued to present first contact with the alien as one that relativized definitions of normality, it also started to place humans back at the centre of the Universe, as the arbiters of right and wrong, and the standard against which all aliens would be judged. *Star Trek* used the alien body as a mirror image; a hideous and often evil doppelganger that played up human frailties but also confirmed mastery. In *Star Trek's* Utopian future, humanity has overcome its problems and could move out into the Universe with positive affirmation. As a result, while this presented humanity as having freed itself of earlier social problems it also meant that these problems were then projected onto the alien as that which was in need of correction by the intervention of benign human agency. In many ways, while the show clearly displayed a fairly radical political agenda in a range of areas, particularly race, it also ran the risk of reinforcing American foreign policy at the time.

Film and its Outer Limits

(5) Mark Jancovich (1996: 15) points out that most critics of the 1950s invasion narratives see them as being inextricably linked to Cold War ideology, so that the alien was code for the imminent Communist threat. American films of the decade, this critical orthodoxy claims, demonised both the Soviet Union and any resistance to the *status quo*, ensuring that the institutions and authorities of the country were protected from the so-called red menace that was spreading the nation. By pulling together Americans were given two choices, either support America or be seen as a Communist sympathiser. The result of this distinction meant that there was a clear line between right and wrong, America and the alien other (see Lucanio 1987; Tudor 1989 and Biskind 2000). However, as Jancovich contends, American culture was itself going through an 'identity' crisis, so that the threat posed by the Communist as 'alien' was often little more than a code for developments *within* American society. If the alien often presented a horde of mindless conformity that threatened to overwhelm America, the so-called suburban dream was itself often accused of being threat to individual identity. The image of the middle class male was one of uniformity: they commuted to work *en masse* dressed in their grey flannel suits, and returned home to their idealised, yet all too similar, modern suburban homes. The technological advancement of consumer

culture that had promised so much was instead stifling Americans' own self-worth:

It has often been pointed out that the qualities that identify the aliens with the Soviet Union is their lack of feelings and the absence of individual characteristics... however... it was common in the 1950s for Americans to claim that the effects of scientific-technical rationality upon their own society was producing the same features within America itself (Jancovich 1996: 26).

(6) Despite the contradictory reasons for America's feeling of vulnerability in the 1950s, the fact remained that the alien, its desire to conquer Earth, and its technological pre-eminence, were common themes in the films of that decade. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *War of the Worlds* (1953), *Invaders From Mars* (1953), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and many more presented America and the world in the grip of emergency – emergencies 'that jeopardized the future of the race; they were not national, nor even international, but planetary' (Biskind 2000: 102). *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* even took that external threat and made it a discernibly internal one by focusing on the invasion of the human body by an alien force (Hendershot 1998: 26). Unlike television, film was able to take on ambitious projects showing humanity at the brink of destruction using 'Technicolor, Cinemascope, and 3D technologies'. As a result, the threat of the alien was intensified on the big screen during the 1950s and television contribution to the genre was largely postponed until the beginning of the 1960s (Telotte 2001: 95). What the small screen did offer were cinema-like serials from the 1940s such as *Captain Video and his Video Rangers* (1949-1955), *Rocky Jones, Space Ranger* (1954), *Space Patrol* (1950-1955) and *Tom Corbett, Space Cadet* (1950-1955). These series, although generally deficient in technical brilliance, created a space for the science fiction television series. However lacking they were in adult story-telling or complex character development, these series showed that television was a suitable medium through which the alien, usually men with face paint, and the human body, albeit idealised visualisations of the human male, could be shown in a futuristic setting. As Rick Worland points out, these series were considered to be 'aimed at children' yet the fact that they appeared on television showed just how much the medium was effected by 'a repressive political climate that obstructed presentation of any ideas outside the commonplace' (1996: 104). The introduction of series such as *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits*, with their more critical politics and outlandish depictions of the alien and human, signalled an attempt on behalf of writers such as Rod Serling and Leslie Stevens to comment on the very conservatism that encouraged the networks to produce uncritical programming.

(7) In many ways *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits* shared in *Star Trek's* famous televisual polemicism. Unable to discuss politics directly, these series used science fiction, futuristic settings and the alien body as metaphors through which to participate in current debates. As Rod Serling recounted about his work prior to *The Twilight Zone*, 'I was not permitted to have Senators discuss any current or pressing problem... In retrospect, I probably would have had a much

more adult play had I made it science fiction, put it in the year 2057, and peopled the Senate with robots' (quoted in Engelhardt 1998: 153). Just as Gene Roddenberry managed to address issues such as Civil Rights, Vietnam, and sexual inequality on *Star Trek* by setting it in the future, so too could Serling by using the generic tropes and signifiers of fantasy, horror and science fiction. This attempt to create morally informed storylines was emphasised by *The Twilight Zone's* anthology series format – half hour episodes introduced and concluded by Serling's short verbal commentary that summarised the lessons learnt in the drama (Worland 1996: 104) – and the use of 'science fiction to question the conformist values of post-war suburbia as well as the rising paranoia of Cold War confrontation' (Sconce 1997: 1454).

(8) As I have already intimated, *The Twilight Zone's* power to subvert notions of reality and human identity was mainly revealed through the use of mind games, the plot twist at the end which jilted the audience's perception about what is right and real. Format, settings, and even the title portray the series as a 'place of shadows, of vision that is clouded, a place that may be penetrated by light and understanding or cast into darkness and confusion' (Ziegler, 1987: 33). The human body was central to the series' sense of things not being what they seem, yet rarely was the body shown as looking anything other than normal. In episodes such as 'I Shot an Arrow into the Air' (1960) human astronauts are the central characters – after crash landing on a desert planet the crew of the *Arrow* are forced to fight and kill each other for what supplies are left in the hot and arid environment. Humans are perceived as being nasty, savage creatures that resort to murder so that the individual can survive. The ironic twist at the end, where the surviving astronaut realises that they had actually crash landed in Nevada and were only a few miles from water and civilisation, serves to underscore the savage potentials that lie beneath the façade of humanity – the real monsters that came from space are human. Likewise, in the episode 'The Invaders' (1961), we are introduced to a shabby looking house where a woman is being terrorised by small and technological advanced humanoid invaders – the two images of civilisation contrast sharply so as to make us think that the woman living alone is the 'alien'. However, as we find out after a series of encounters between the giant and the humans, the little invaders are actually from Earth and have travelled to the giant's planet in the name of conquest and exploration. When they mistake the woman's attempts at defending herself from attack as aggressive posturing, the humans return to Earth under the impression that the planet is too dangerous to be explored. What is clear from this ironic twist, using body size to emphasise humanity's galactic insignificance, is that humans are the aggressors not the alien giant – the bodily harm and psychological trauma suffered by the woman is proof of human cruelty. For most of this episode, there is no dialogue, which 'deflates our self-importance visually' and codes the miniature humans as the invaders (Wolfe 1996: 135). 'Such reversals', according to M. Keith Booker, 'were highly effective at a moment in American history when many traditional 'Us vs. Them' boundaries were being challenged' (2004: 14). As America entered a new age as a world leader and

nuclear power, Americans were coming into contact with new cultures and peoples that forced them to reconsider their own self-identity.

(9) In instances when the alien threatened humans on Earth, its physical presence was more often implied in the actions and reactions of humans. The visually distinctive and monstrous alien body was rarely seen, and humanity was presented as monstrous, particularly in its tendency to turn on each other when threatened by the outsider. For Matt Hills, *The Twilight Zone* favoured 'the subtle approach, arriving at horrifying images through unsettling its audience rather than aiming for a "gross-out" moment' (2004: 220). In 'The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street' (1960), humanity is presented as problematic when a fear of alien invasion causes a local community to turn upon itself in a hunt for alien intruders. In the process, this story emphasises the human potential for cruelty and intolerance, as the friendly neighbours turn into an angry mob whose fear of the other leads them to persecute those who display 'alien' qualities such as reading comic books and love of astronomy – signifiers of people who exist outside perceived normal social behaviour. Most interestingly, visions of the extra-terrestrial are notoriously absent from this episode until the concluding twist, when it is revealed that the aliens are actually watching Earth from above. They do not need to invade the Earth as human ignorance, prejudice and fear destroy society from within. Similarly, in 'Will the Real Martian Please Stand Up?' (1961), a group of stranded commuters in a diner discuss the rumour that a UFO might have landed nearby and, in so doing, start to suspect that the inevitable alien could be one of them. Questioning notions of what is human – who is the real American? – Serling presents a broad range of characters from different racial and ethnic backgrounds among the stranded travellers. Again fear of the alien reveals a wide range of prejudices and intolerances; and again the twist at the end shows that humans are fallible: they not only fail to identify the alien but it is even revealed that there were actually two aliens in their midst, one of whom is a Martian with a third arm under his trench coat and one of whom is a Venusian with a third eye under his hat.

(10) Like the invasion narratives of the previous decade – *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* for example – both these episodes conform to Vivian Sobchack's observation that science fiction films' 'flat angles, uninspired camera movements, and downright unimaginative cinematography seem finally purposeful in creating *mise en scene* in which a drumming insistence on the ordinary creates extraordinary tension' (Sobchack 1998: 125). The emphasis on the mundane *mise en scene* – a diner, a quiet street – heightens the potential threat posed by a group of stranded passengers and acquainted neighbours. Dressing humans and aliens in normal attire not only recreates the contemporary look of Cold War America – thus locating the paranoia within a realistic setting – but also serves to underscore *The Twilight Zone's* ability to make much from the limited budget and costuming.

(11) Rick Worland sees the revelation at the end of 'The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street' as a signal to the Cold War conservatism inherent in 1960s television programming – despite Serling's attempts at questioning the orthodoxy of American politics. The twist showing that

aliens really do exist reveals 'Maple Street's fears to be anything but delusional'; in some senses the fact that the neighbours were reduced to paranoia and social panic is justified considering the threat that does linger on the outside. The Soviet Union coded as alien, a potential threat to an idyllic American suburb, confirms that if Americans do not act – however much in a frenzy – then the country will be forced to fight the Cold War closer to home rather than abroad (Worland 1996: 107). However, it is possible to see these two episodes somewhat differently. In both episodes, the aliens have 'outperformed their human counterparts' (Wolfe, 1996: 136), either by subtly changing their physical appearance or, more pointedly, not even coming down to Earth at all. The physical differentiation between human and alien body merely comes down to having an extra limb or eye, but the gulf between species is shown as insurmountable.

(12) 'Eye of the Beholder' (1960) uses the body somewhat differently, and overturns traditional notions of beauty in the episode's climax. During the majority of the episode a young woman anxiously waits to see if reconstructive facial surgery has successfully enabled her to conform to her society's established standards of beauty, or whether she will continue to be seen as a monstrous freak. However, it is only at the end of the episode that it is revealed that the doctors and nurses that are treating her are actually pig-snouted aliens, a revelation that is given further force when they react in horror when their surgery turns out to have been unsuccessful and that their patient is, by the standards of 1950s American television, a beautiful young blonde. In this way, the episode not only relativizes the definitions of normality current in America during the late 1950s and 1960s, but it also condemns the fascist conformity in which those who fail to conform are shunned and hated (Wolfe 1996: 154). As we have seen already, in the episodes featuring alien impostors, it is easy to read these stories as an attack on racial intolerance, and yet what is interesting is how *The Twilight Zone* achieves its effects by subtle altering of the audience's perceptions of reality at the end of each episode, and the alien operates to relativise established definitions of normality.

From Earth to the Stars

(13) If *The Twilight Zone* rarely used make up to present that alien, the deformed, mutated, monstrous, and totally inhuman body was central to the storytelling of Joseph Stefano and Leslie Stevens' science fiction series, *The Outer Limits*. However, like *The Twilight Zone*, these alien creatures were not simply monstrous others, but frequently acted to relativize established definitions of normality. If they were visually different, to the human, these differences were defined as alternative rather than inferior. As the show's creators put it, they wanted to present the audience with 'new worlds beyond reality; sights and sounds never before experienced; adventures of the innermost mind, the farthest galaxies, and all that lies between' (quoted in Schow, 1998: 2).

(14) As a result, the aliens were not just painted men in jumpsuits, but rather the production team showed great imagination from the make-up and costuming departments as the producers tried to imagine creatures completely different to their human counterparts, creatures such as Empyrians, Ebonites, Zanti, Helosians, and Kyben. The constant march of imaginative alien bodies surpassed those seen in series such as *Star Trek* or *Lost in Space* (1965-1968). Such diversity was only matched in variety and originality by Britain's *Doctor Who* (1963-1989, see for example Britton and Barker, 2003) while, in *The Outer Limits*, this variety and originality worked to displace humanity from the centre of Universe. The aliens were not simply humanoids or monstrous others, and their sheer diversity as creatures presented humanity as simply one species among many.

(15) Furthermore, many of the episodes concerned the threat of science going wrong or with humans destroying themselves with nuclear warfare, radiation poisoning and genetic mutation – all of which were fears directly relevant to its period, which was one of the Cold War and the nuclear arms race (Boyer 1994: 354). In this context, the alien was not simply a figure of suspicion and fear, but was often a potential saviour – so long as humans could learn to live with a being that looked so different to themselves.

(16) The pilot episode 'The Galaxy Being' (1963), originally titled 'Please Stand By', emphasized the eerie nature of the Control Voice's now famous opening monologue, and showed how the series would come to view the human and alien body throughout the first season – visually distinctive yet perhaps ideologically linked. Lowly radio station owner and inventor, Allan Maxwell (Cliff Robertson), struggles to prove to his wife that the time he has spent on research has not been wasted, although others see his search for alien life in the galaxy as an infantile project. Instead of using his radio equipment solely to provide advertising and entertainment, Maxwell would rather use it in an attempt to contact extra-terrestrial life. When his wife asks him, 'What makes you think you can discover anything? Who are you?', Maxwell replies, 'Nobody. Nobody at all. But the secrets of the universe don't mind.' His response to the wife's antagonistic question serves to accentuate the alienation felt by Maxwell as he struggles to continue his work. Becoming more and more of a loner, the inventor would rather spend time with his machinery than go out with his wife, and his desire is rewarded when an alien replies to Maxwell's communications. The eponymous Galaxy Being, a resident from the Andromeda system, appears to Maxwell as a strange yet friendly figure. The dark brown costuming of the creature was enhanced by reversing the negative so that the original wetsuit became bright white in the actual finished version on screen. As well as using traditional make-up effects to create this alien creature, staff working on the suit added slippery rubber and stuck on large-pupiled eyes to accentuate the exotic nature of the being (Schow 1998: 37). Combined with the technical wizardry of simple negative-reversal, the Galaxy Being had two layers of alienating features, not only did the costume make the alien imposing to humans but so did his radioactive glow.

(17) Significantly, Maxwell's first words to the alien are 'Who are you?' – effectively repeating his wife's original question to him but with a different meaning. Furthermore, like Maxwell, the Galaxy Being is a loner. Both are solitary beings that are willing to risk isolation from their respective cultures in pursuit of a passion for the unknown, a passion that is only matched by their ingenuity in using radio waves to cross the galactic expanse. The Galaxy Being tells Maxwell that he was not allowed to use his equipment to explore space, just as Maxwell was often criticised for draining the radio station's power to pursue his quest. The two beings, although physically alien to one another, are kinsmen in spirit: both are struggling to discover something beyond their own experience and escape the limitations of their respective societies. The contrast between bodies is obviated by the similarities between their social surroundings. Only when the Galaxy Being is mistaken for an aggressor toward the end of the episode is there a potential for death and destruction, but here it is the humans who are the real threat and they are presented as small-minded beings that use violence when confronted with the unfamiliar. Perhaps more significantly, unlike the differences between altered human and alien bodies in *The Twilight Zone*, the similarities between Maxwell and the Galaxy Being's philosophy serve to illustrate the polemical tone of the Control Voice at the end of the episode:

The planet Earth is a speck of dust, remote and alone in the void. There are powers in the universe inscrutable and profound. Fear cannot save us. Rage cannot help us. We must see the stranger in a new light – the light of understanding. And to achieve this, we must begin to understand ourselves and each other (quoted in Schow 1998: 7).

The 'light' that is mentioned in the final monologue reminds viewers of the bright light shone by the alien in the preceding narrative; the physicality of the alien body is lessened by the sense of the ephemeral that emanates from Maxwell's radio station – the bodily menace is exceeded by the heavenly glow of humanity's potential alien companion.

(18) As the series began its second and final season, it was felt by some that too much time was being spent on the 'usual monster bullshit... funny rubber masks, and basically silly ideas' (Harlan Ellison quoted in Schow 1998: 249). With such sentiments being expressed by key writers working on new scripts it is possible to see a shift in narrative emphasis in the later episodes. From the sense of general human insignificance seen in 'The Galaxy Being', stories from the second season started to expound upon humanity's more positive traits: the main one being Man's endless thirst for knowledge. Instead of being portrayed as an immature, savage, and technologically backward race, humans were forgiven for these indiscretions because their overall *raison d'être* was a noble one – if innocent people and aliens were harmed in the process of gathering knowledge then it was a small price to pay. The episode 'Demon With a Glass Hand' (1964) typifies *The Outer Limits'* more utilitarian mantra. In this story Robert Culp played Trent, who is dressed in a casual sports jacket, white slacks, plimsolls and black gloves and is on the run from a humanoid

species called the Kyben. In stark contrast to the 'bug-eyed' monsters typical of the first season, and first seen in 'The Galaxy Being', the only physical feature that distinguishes the Kyben from the human is their thick black eye makeup. Dressed in dark sweat pants and top, with a gold medallion around the neck, they look more like bunglers or bank robbers rather than an intergalactic army. Indeed, the episode's writer, Harlan Ellison, whilst critical of the series' over-the-top alien costumes criticised the make up and wardrobe asking, 'And why the black circles around the Kyben's eyes? Some of them look like human beings; some of them look like weirdos with cheesecloth over their faces' (quoted in Schow 1998: 287). One reason for this costuming may well have been economy, after all while Ellison's original script had called for a huge chase across the city, with the Kyben and Trent trading blows in several different locations, a decision was made to cut costs by limiting the location shooting to the now iconic five-story Bradbury Building in Los Angeles, so that the chase could be staged 'vertically' rather than 'horizontally' (Schow 1998: 284).

(19) Trent's isolation is perhaps best epitomised by the apparent normalcy of the surroundings. The architectural landmark becomes his prison as the Kyben continue to pursue him for reasons that are not made clear to either him or the audience until the end. Shot in *noir* style, with shadows and empty offices offering no hiding place from the Kyben or his inner demons, Trent bears a close resemblance to the male protagonist of the *film noir* cycle. The episode's voice over frames Trent's plight like many of the private detective films while the building's exposed metallic internal structure, with high glass ceiling and open lift shafts, externalise his inner confusion as he continues to pursue the reason for his plight (see Note 1). For Andrew Spicer *noir's* 'existentialism places great emphasis on the city as a trap. Interiors are often cramped, awkward and claustrophobic' (Spicer 2002: 67), and Trent's mission seems almost over before its rationale becomes clear to him. The only overt clue to Trent's past is that he possesses a glass hand, which houses a prosthetic computer that supposedly holds the key to all human knowledge. Unfortunately, he does not know how he came to have it, nor has he any memory of who he is. Throughout the story the only thing that Trent knows for sure is that the Kyben have come from the future, where they are at war with the Earth, and that they want the hand, which is they key to their victory. When the Kyben attacked the Earth, the entire human race went into hiding and the hand holds the key to the location of humanity's hiding place. As he tries to avoid capture, Trent befriends a lowly garment worker named Consuelo Biros (coded as an American ethnic by the actress' use of a Latin accent even though she wears a blonde wig) and they both try in earnest to retrieve the missing fingers of his computer hand so that Trent can finally solve the mystery of both humanity's location and his own identity.

(20) The shocking twist at the end of this story is that Trent is actually a robot that has been created by the humans of the future to protect humanity from the Kyben. His body houses a copper wire that contains the essence of every human in electrical form; the entire knowledge of the human species is contained in his metal body. His glass hand holds the key to unlocking this power but he must remain the lone guardian

of humanity for eons, until sufficient time has passed and it is safe for humanity to return to the Earth. Trent's body becomes the embodiment of technical achievement, through which humanity is able to outwit the Kyben and use an artificial body to contain their real human form. The closing monologue intimates that although Trent looks human, and even literally contains the essence of humanity within himself, he cannot feel love or pain and therefore he must wait out his years in isolation. As Trent became closer to Consuelo, it was clear that he could not truly love her. Even though he looks human, he is unable to experience human emotion, while it is the technological appendages to his body – the copper wire and the glass hand – that embody humanity.

(21) This episode was not the first time in the series that Culp's body was used as the metaphorical saviour of humanity. In 'The Architects of Fear' (1963) Culp's character, Allen Leighton, volunteers to have his body changed into an alien form so that he will be able to scare the nations of the world into working together instead of waging war on each other. Like so many science fiction stories of this period, this episode suggests that human society is so fearful of the other that it can only be united by a common threat (Worland 1996: 112). Both Culp episodes use the human body as a tool, changing it into an alien or robot to save humanity.

(22) *The Outer Limits* was becoming an overtly polemical series, one that portrayed humans as ignorant yet open to future potentials. However, by the time of *Star Trek*, America technology was beginning to catch up with the spectacular narratives and settings seen in science fiction television, and NASA were well on their way to fulfilling their promise of sending men to the moon. In this context, Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek* became a symbol of JFK's progressive and liberal New Frontier politics, with its meta-narrative now being as famous as the iconic ships, uniforms, and actors that populated the fictional worlds of the Federation's future. For all those who explored space, from the original series (1966-1969) to the retrospectively historical crew on *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001-2005), their voyages to places unknown in which they meet with aliens both hostile and friendly were a constant education. Freed from the past turmoil of an Earth wracked by war, poverty and inequality, *Star Trek* was able to depict a future where humans could fulfil their true potential. Humanity was on a constant voyage of discovery where it could learn from mistakes of the past and continue to improve and achieve the utopia first conceived by Roddenberry in 1964. The multicultural crew that sat aboard the Enterprise was representative of all that America should live up to: Women would be able to assume positions of responsibility equal to men, African-, Asian-, and Euro-Americans would be able to live in harmony after overcoming the divisions of race and racism, and nations once at war with each other could overcome their petty squabbles for the benefit of humankind. Consequently, the body, specifically the relationship between human and alien bodies, became vitally important in visualising this project of multiculturalism and education: 'In this sense *Star Trek* acts as a moral guide to humanity's progress in life, making obvious what needs to be done but

not providing its audience with all of the answers' (Geraghty 2007: 77).

(23) Intriguingly, the first episode to be aired, 'The Man Trap' (1966), was heavily inspired by *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits* in that the plot involves a mind game in which things are not what they appear to be. In this story Kirk and his crew are called to planet M-113 on a routine supply mission when people start to die from extreme salt deprivation, due to a monster that is not only able to create the illusion of being human but requires salt for its survival. As the story progresses the Salt Monster has to change appearance several times in order to get more salt from its helpless victims, and finally attempts to kill McCoy in the guise of a past lover. In other words, the monster mimics femininity to seduce McCoy before she strikes and, when Kirk interrupts this encounter, McCoy is forced to kill the image of the women that he once loved. This episode also reveals the tension within the show. On the one hand, the alien is portrayed as a relatively sympathetic being in this episode, the last survivor of a lost civilization, and yet it is also seen as a dangerous threat that kills without remorse. Furthermore, the image of beauty that it shows to Kirk and McCoy hides a hideous alien body and treacherous alien motivations. Its frequent association with femininity is also significant as it saps the life from its male victims much like the monstrous feminine described in Barbara Creed's classic study of horror (see Creed, 1993). As a result, the episode could be read as suggesting that femininity threatens to distract heroic masculinity from its five-year mission, to covert the male explorer into a domesticated conformist (see Note 2).

(24) Certainly, *Star Trek* used the alien body and the idea of physical difference to explore contemporary political and social issues. For example, Roddenberry used the alien to explore issues of civil rights, and its politics here were often fairly radical for the period (See Note 3). Episodes like the 'The Enemy Within' (1966) used the doppelganger motif to point out humanity's capability of committing acts of violence. When Kirk is caught in a transporter accident his personality is split between two identical versions of himself; one that inherited his good traits such as compassion and caution, the other inheriting his more evil traits such as deception, lust and violent aggression. Throughout this episode Kirk's body is depicted in abject ways, the good side is weak and feeble without the more stronger, vicious Kirk and the evil side shows signs of madness and physical instability without the calming influences of the compassionate Kirk. Mike Hertenstein sees this treatment of humanity's multiplicity as typical *Star Trek*, in this case the weak and strong body of the captain represents human duality often seen in myth and legend as the centaur – half man, half beast – part of nature yet also an outsider (1998: 8). The moral of the story is that people need both halves to live, allowing one to take over the other means that humans will destroy each other. In order to survive humanity must learn to be inclusive: the individual must learn to accept the different parts of itself, and the society as a whole must learn to accept the different elements from which it is composed: 'To *integrate* is to combine elements to form an interrelated, unified

whole. *Trek* certainly has always prided itself on inclusiveness' (Hertenstein 1998: 10).

(25) Similarly, *Star Trek's* 'Let That Be Your Last Battlefield' (1969) 'addresses the meaning of race with telling self-consciousness' by showing two aliens unable to forget their bigotry (Bernardi 1998: 3). However, Daniel Bernardi suggests that this episode, although intending to highlight America's inherent racism and social segregation based on colour, confirms *Star Trek's* liberal humanist intent through dialogue and alien make-up (the aliens differ in that while both have bodies that are black on one side of their face and white on the other, one alien is white on his left side and the other on his right side). Using the aliens' body as an allegory for America's problem the series implies that humanity will have integrated and progressed beyond racial bigotry in the far future. Nonetheless, at the same time the series also implies that the future will be one where whites 'are morally, politically, and innately superior, and both colored humans and colored aliens are either servants, threats, or objects of exotic desire' (68). The predominantly white crew of the *Enterprise* see the warring pair of 'painted' aliens as primitive because they have not progressed like humans – however, what this sentiment underscores is that the notion of the racial 'other' is still a sensitive subject in the twenty-third century, particularly when the Federation is run by young, white men. Hertenstein's notion of inclusivity discussed in relation to the evil twin comes true only if the racial minority submits to the ideology of the majority.

(26) As a result, there are clear contradictions within *Star Trek* vision of the future, yet there is also evidence of a strong desire to visualise difference, both physical and cultural, in ways that challenge the audience to make up their minds for themselves. Part of the polemical nature of the series is reflected in what Catherine Johnson calls the 'regulated innovation' of *Star Trek* (2005: 75). The series clearly conformed to generic tropes of science fiction but within a heavily regulated television industry and under the constraints of small budgets and artistic practice it had to be innovative yet familiar in order to attract and maintain an audience: 'Far from being merely a "cloak" within which to disguise the treatment of contemporary issues, [*Star Trek*] actually works at the service of the action-adventure format within the demands of 1960s network television production' (Johnson 2005: 92). This is best exemplified in the series' use of colour (NBC was set on making colour one of its unique selling points to advertisers and consumers) in that imagining new worlds week in and week out could best be achieved by using and reusing sets and make up techniques in the representation of alien worlds and creatures (84). Bold colours and outrageous alien costumes were just a small part of the particular look the production crew was trying to establish. Such an aesthetic is identifiable in the episodes discussed here: for example, the boldly contrasted face paint of the warring aliens in 'Let That Be Your Last Battlefield' not only stood in for the race debate that waged during the Civil Rights years but also represented *Star Trek's* desire for innovation in the use of vivid colours and costuming of the alien characters. Production in this case is clearly influenced by Roddenberry's personal politics, NBC's desire to please sponsors, and

the production staff's talent for visual design. Moreover, *Star Trek's* use of the body as site for innovation and regulation through make up and production design is symptomatic of the 'representational strategies' employed to fulfil 'the network's desire to represent racial minorities without alienating certain audience demographics' (Johnson, 2005: 89). The alien body was more than just a site for encountering the unfamiliar, it served to visualise the developing relationship between the science fiction genre and America's television networks.

Conclusion

(27) This chapter has provided an examination of some of the major science fiction television series of the 1950s and 1960s, showing that the groundbreaking developments in narrative and effects helped position the physical body in such captivating and controversial ways that the series still remain prime examples of how the genre can still affect its audience in the present day. Beginning life as unadorned cameos in the action serials of the early fifties, alien and human bodies simply reflected America's own self-doubts and cultural fears at a time of increased paranoia and Cold War pessimism. *The Twilight Zone* explored these fears and used the body, much like the famous portal in its opening credits sequence, as a doorway into another realm, which sought to relativize American definitions of normality. As well as touching on ideas about bodily difference and physical disability, it showed that the human mind was a powerful instrument in which imagination could be used to open up notions of the possible rather than close them down.

(28) Following on from *The Twilight Zone*, both *The Outer Limits* and *Star Trek* used more and more garish images of the alien other in their polemical narratives. Again contemporary social issues were central to their episodic narratives; however, the two series differed from one another in their approach to bodily difference and alien physiology. *The Outer Limits* still offered caution in its storylines. Americans should beware of falling for visual traps such as fearing what seems to be different to the norm. Visual appearance cannot be deceptive: that which seems to be threatening may be benign or even liberating, and that which appears to be normal may be dangerous. As a result, the show suggested that America could not carry on being divided by notions of racial and ethnic difference. Similarities will come from within, not without.

(29) Although *Star Trek* continued to use the alien body to criticise racism, sexism and fear of the 'other', it did so within the terms of Kennedy's New Frontier and Roddenberry's liberal-humanism. As a result, while it often suggested encounters with aliens could liberate humans from their own limited experiences, it also suggested that the future was a Utopia in which Americans had succeeded in curing all their social ills. In this liberal Utopia, humanity became the figure of tolerant authority, against which other species and cultures were judged. Caught between being Roddenberry's political soundboard and fulfilling NBC's commitment to visual innovation through new technologies such as colour, *Star Trek* struggled to maintain its appeal

to a wide audience. Nevertheless, the analysis presented here of the three series illustrates that notions of the corporeal were important instruments in the various processes of mid-twentieth century storytelling and essential elements in the formation of the science fiction television genre as we still know it today.

Note 1: David Schow outlines how the building became like a character in Ellison's final draft of the script, with Trent having to traverse up and down in order to understand the reasons behind the Kyben's presence and find out who he was and what secrets were hidden in the glass appendage to his left arm. The building has also appeared in another science fiction *noir*, *Blade Runner* (1982), where the 'ornamental ironwork, Mexican tile floors, Belgian marble staircases and a glass roof that floods the five-story atrium with daylight' (Schow 1998: 284-285) contribute to both examples' *noiresque* narrative and male protagonist's personal struggle.

Note 2: Karin Blair's *Meaning in Star Trek* (1977) analyses the triangular homosocial relationship shared between Spock, Kirk and McCoy and shows how women throughout the series were shifted in and out as the patriarchal power dynamics changed. See also Geraghty (2003: 453-458) and Bick (1996).

Note 3: Other science fiction series at that time such as *The Invaders* (1967-1968) did the reverse by recreating a sense of Cold War paranoia through stories centred on government conspiracies and aliens that looked human except for slight differences to the physical appearance of the hand.

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Filmography

Blade Runner (1982). Produced by Michael Deeley. Directed by Ridley Scott. Written by Philip K. Dick (Novel), Hampton Fancher and David Peoples. 117mins. Ladd Co./Warner Bros.

Captain Video and his Video Rangers (1949-1955). 30mins. DuMont Television Network.

The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951). Produced by Julian Blaustein. Directed by Robert Wise. Written by Edmund North. 92mins. Twentieth-Century Fox.

Doctor Who (1963-1989). BBC Television.

The Invaders (1967-1968). 43 episodes. 45mins. ABC.

Invaders From Mars (1953). Produced by Edward L. Alperson. Directed by William Cameron Menzies. Written by John Tucker Battle and Richard Blake. 78mins. National/ Twentieth-Century Fox.

Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956). Produced by Robert H. Solo. Directed by Philip Kaufman. Written by W.D. Richter and Philip Kaufman. 80mins. United Artists.

Lost in Space (1965-1968). 83 episodes + pilot. 45mins. CBS.

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The Outer Limits: Demon With A Glass Hand (1964). Produced by Ben Brady. Directed by Byron Haskin. Written by Harlan Ellison. 45mins. ABC.

The Outer Limits: The Galaxy Being (1963). Produced by Joseph Stefano. Directed by Leslie Stevens. Written by Leslie Stevens. 45mins. ABC.

Rocky Jones, Space Ranger (1954). 39 episodes. 26mins. Official Films Television.

Space Patrol (1950-1955). 30mins. ABC.

Star Trek: The Enemy Within (1966). Produced by Gene Roddenberry. Directed by Leo Penn. Written by Richard Matheson. 45mins. NBC.

Star Trek: Let That Be Your Last Battlefield (1969). Produced by Fred Freiberger. Directed by Jud Taylor. Written by Oliver Crawford from a story by Lee Cronin. 45mins. NBC.

Star Trek: The Man Trap (1966). Produced by Gene Roddenberry. Directed by Marc Daniels. Written by George Clayton Johnson. 45mins. NBC.

Star Trek: Enterprise (2001-2005). 45mins. UPN.

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