
Paradise is a poisonous planet. In a different episode, the class system is favored over a system of slavery. On the mining planet of Ardana, which produces Zenitye, we find a society divided between the rulers who live in a luxurious cloud city called Stratos, and a subterranean slave colony of simple minded Triygo miners. The latter are prone to revolution because Zenitye emits an odorless gas that induces violence and enforces the mind. Kirk quells the rebellion by giving the zenityi intoxicates miners gas masks with which to repress their violence and better appreciate the high culture of Stratos. "It is clear," argues Goulde, "that slave societies are not acceptable to the Federation because proletarian ones are as fine as long as they produce goods."

"Genesis and Armageddon" is the third and perhaps best chapter. Goulde’s attention here turns to the role of women in *Star Trek*. The Klingon and Romulan women are virtually stereotypes of all that is evil and dark in "female nature." Federation women, on the other hand, embody all that is commendable in a liberal-democratic housewife: domesticity and docility. More generally, however, women are treated as treacherous and narcissistic femme fatales.

There is one glaring omission in Goulde’s overview, however: when he notes that women are not portrayed in important positions, he neglects the role of Saavik. Spock’s protege in the second and third films. The reader would not like to think that Goulde was repressing data which did not fit his thesis. As it turns out, however, the character of Saavik only confirms it: no Vulcans would cry as Saavik did, even at the funeral of her mentor. It seems that the Ms. Cleaver-style femininity attributed to all "good" women on *Star Trek* is more important than Saavik’s Vulcanch heritage, genes and training.

Also in this chapter is a more detailed analysis of the three *Star Trek* movies released since 1979. The increasing fascination with the power of destruction looms in importance in these movies more so than in the television programs. In the first movie, Viger, the omnipotent alien energy that threatens to destroy the universe, is treated with fear but with awe. In *The Wrath of Khan*, the Genesis Device is viewed similarly. It can create life, but only by altering the basic genetic structure of an entire planet in minutes, thus destroying as it creates: the ultimate doublethink.

In the final chapter, "Empire in Space," Goulde compares the essentially rational, anti-mythic *Star Trek* with *Star Wars*, which is "overly myth affirming, with its reliance on unseen magical forces which bring order to the personality and the universe." In *Star Trek*, technical rationality is portrayed as philosophically superior. In *Star Wars* it is the aestheticization of technology that is given a significant role à la Walter Benjamin. The galaxy is the site of a colonial Armageddon, and the viewer marvels "at the beauty of entire planets being vaporized." One cannot help, argues Goulde, but be drawn sillyness and incredulously towards an aesthetic that bears striking similarities to the fascists’ unwholesome delight in "the beauty of tanks razing a valley with flame throwers."

There is little doubt that through science fiction we subliminally enter into our most fundamental western myths. What is less obvious is that the popular Hollywood stuff also engages us in an imperialist discourse: we learn acceptance of the ideology of conquest and domination. With little effort, writes Goulde, one can "lose oneself in the quest for the ‘final frontier’ and play out the fantasies necessary to legitimate a Western democracy gone sour."

Self-reflection is usually the victim in this fantasy which projects a ready made image of self onto the world, one which includes phaser guns, light sabres and laser blasters. The interest and usefulness of this book is that it speaks directly to the Trekkies and the *Star Wars* fans, the cult worshipers who are likely to engage in massified role taking. Goulde’s message is simple but worth restating: ideology always makes a parody of the old philosophical question "who am I?". Here finally is a sociologist who is not just talking about critical theory, but doing it.

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