Beyond the Final Frontier: *Star Trek*, the Borg and the Post-colonial

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Over the last three decades, *Star Trek* has become, to use Bernardi's term, a "mega-text" (1998: 11). *Star Trek*'s mega-text consists of much more than the various studio-produced television series and films - it also includes (among other things) novels, Internet chat groups, conventions and fanzines. That *Star Trek*'s premise of space exploration is a thinly disguised metaphor for colonialism has been extensively analysed (see Bernardi, 1998; Hastie, 1996; Ono 1996; Richards, 1997). Boyd describes the utopian future presented in *Star Trek the Next Generation* (*STNG*) as based on "nineteenth-century essentialist definitions of human nature, building ... on faith in perfection, progress, social evolution, and free will" (1996: 96-97). Exploration, colonisation and assimilation are never far from the surface of the STNG text. Less apparent, however, are aspects of the series which challenge the hegemonic view of this narrative and which present a post-colonial critique. In this paper we will explore a range of post-colonial moments and an emerging self reflexivity in the second generation series, focusing on those episodes of *Star Trek: the Next Generation* (*STNG*) and *Star Trek: Voyager* which feature an alien race known as the Borg.

Others in space

Much has been written about the role of the alien in science fiction as a means of exploring issues of otherness. As Wolmark notes: "Science fiction provides a rich source of metaphors for the depiction of otherness and the 'alien' is one of the most familiar: it enables difference to be constructed in terms of binary oppositions which reinforce relations of domination and subordination" (1994: 2). The alien as a site of "otherness" is therefore subject to the same kind of critiques that post-colonial critics apply to colonial texts. A key insight of the post-colonial program has been the simple yet profound realisation that the other does not possess some clear, definable and unproblematic ontological status. The Other exists only insofar as it is a projection of the self. Representations of the Other are representations of the self, or if not representations of the self, they are at the very least, the space in which questions of what constitutes the self and what constitutes the Other are asked and explored.

In *Orientalism*, Said demonstrates how western knowledge of the Other is not a neutral accumulation of knowledge about some passive object with a secure ontological status. He notes: "texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality that they appear to describe" (1978:94). Western knowledge of the Orient says a great deal more about the west than it could ever hope to say about the east. The same is true of depictions of aliens in science fiction. Aliens, as sites of otherness, are projections of our selves and expressions of the tensions concerning the question of what is self and what is other. Aliens are more than simply innocent creations of our imagination.

Post colonial spaces: self-reflection and the Borg

In her exploration of 'Cyborgs in Utopia' (1996), Boyd argues that *STNG* draws upon nineteenth century colonial ideals. She cites representations of nineteenth-century characters and clothing in some episodes as evidence that this period holds particular fascination for the *STNG* writers. We argue, however, that it is not the nineteenth century *per se* that informs the colonial discourse within *STNG*, but rather the values, ideology and iconography of the periods of great exploration. The central thematic of *Star Trek* is the exploration of uncharted territory; it is the frontier which the United Federation of Planets is committed to

mapping. Beyond the frontier "there be aliens".

This mapping, the process of making the unknown known is a fundamental component of a colonial project. The Federation, with its mission "to seek out new life and new civilisations", has parallels with the European exploration and colonising missions of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Space, uncharted and unknown, does not exist until the Federation charts, maps, names and ultimately controls it. Once colonised, the unfamiliar becomes familiar and is assimilated into the social structure that is the United Federation of Planets.

Although the Federation is committed to a project we would describe as colonialist, a self-critique and reflection on this colonial mission develops through the seven seasons of *STNG*. In particular we see the Borg as a 'post-colonial' mirror held up to reflect the nature of colonisation and assimilation. Episodes involving the Borg function as a post-colonial space within which the writers review the foundation narratives and the limits of their own perspectives. The colonising and assimilation functions of the Federation and the colonising and assimilating functions of the Borg are inverse reflections of one another. In reading the Borg in this way, we disagree with Weinstock's conclusion that "STNG's progressive thinking never reached the level of questioning its own authority" (1996: 335). In fact, the Borg become the chief vehicle through which ideas of self and other, difference and sameness are explored and critiqued. The Borg function as the prism through which the colonial gaze of the Federation is reflected and intensified.

The Borg are a race of enhanced humanoids implanted with cybernetic devices which are both internal and external to their bodies. The Borg initially are represented as both completely homogenous and Other to the Federation. The humanoid body exists as the blank slate onto which technological modifications are made; the body's integrity is disregarded. It matters not whether the body is that of a human, Klingon, Vulcan or other alien. All humanoid creatures are potential resources for the Borg collective which becomes a "multi-racial mass" (Bernardi 1998: 87). Visible transformations such as the insertion of tubes and the addition of artificial limbs and prosthetic eyes define the Borg as non-human. Each Borg is tied into a sub-space communication network which constitutes the homogenous synthesised whole that is the Borg collective. Free will, self-determination and choice are removed as easily as the artificial body parts are installed. The Borg are "entirely alien...lacking the possibility of individual self-determination" (Boyd 1996: 107).

The Borg are introduced in the episode 'Q-Who?', where they are presented and experienced as wholly other, beyond the realm of familiar experience. This first encounter is organised by the malevolent and omnipotent being 'Q' in response to Captain Jean-Luc Picard's ambitious claim that his ship the Enterprise and her crew are ready to encounter whatever was out there. Q demonstrates via the encounter with the Borg, that there are things of which the Federation has no conception. The Borg vessel is unlike anything previously encountered. The vessel shows no evidence of a command centre, or of crew quarters, or even of a crew. Scanning the ship for life signs proves fruitless, as the Borg do not register as individuals. The Borg collective is a unified whole rather than a collection of individual minds. The many are actually just one. Each individual Borg is just like another; they are entirely homogenous.

The homogeneity of the Borg collective is extended to the very form of the Borg vessel. Where the Federation's ships - and the Enterprise in particular - are "markedly feminine - smooth, circular, ...fetishizable, ... bright clean and

comfortable" (Bernardi 1998: 95), the Borg vessels are dark, cold, metallic cubes. These cuboidal forms are functional rather than aesthetic objects and lack any form of differentiation. All Borg cubes, and by extension all Borg, look alike. A contrived view of the homogenous Other is a phenomenon familiar to the post-colonial scholar (*cf* Said 1978: 48). The Borg are experienced as Other to the Federation, as the native is experienced as Other to the coloniser.

Q articulates this perceived sense of absolute difference: "Interesting isn't it? Not a he, not a she, not like anything you've ever seen before" ('Q Who?'). As Other, the Borg can only ever be encountered as enemy. The mutual unintelligibility of their languages, nuances and meanings, ensures no other relationship is possible. Nonetheless, searching for a way out of the inevitable hostilities, Jean-Luc Picard asks: "How do you reason with them?" to which Q responds: "You don't ... I've never known anyone who did". The Borg stand beyond reason, communication and understanding. They are presented to us and experienced by the crew of the Enterprise as irrational beings.

The otherness of the Borg shifts subtly in the episode 'I-Borg' where the comparison between the Enterprise's mission and that of the Borg reveals their similarity. An injured Borg, designated "three of five", is held by the crew of the Enterprise. As they study the mechanics of the Borg implants, "three of five" asks why they are examining him. Engineer Geordie LaForge responds: "Because you are different to us. Part of what we do is learn more about Other species". The Borg recognizes the sentiments of this and notes: "We assimilate Other species. Then we know everything about them. Is that not easier?" There is a clear and explicit acknowledgment that the Borg and the Federation share the same goal - the knowledge of the other. Similar sentiments are expressed by Beehler:

> The alien...always positions itself somewhere between pure familiarity and pure otherness...Taking its place on the border between identity and difference, it marks that border, articulating it while at the same time disarticulating and confusing the distinction the border stands for. (1987:32)

The boundary between the Borg and the Federation which at first seemed to be distinct and easily recognized appears to melt away. The Borg, who at first glance appeared to be completely Other to the Enterprise, are now revealed as being a mirror image of the Enterprise. The colonialist mission of the Federation is turned back upon it. The colonial gaze of the Federation is returned and intensified.

On several occasions members of Starfleet reflect on the similarities between their own objectives and the assimilationist motives of the Borg. In the *Star Trek*: *Voyager* episode 'Scorpion', Captain Janeway and her crew enter into an alliance with the Borg. In exchange for safe passage through Borg territory, the crew agree to give the Borg information on how to assimilate another species, known only as Species 8472. Species 8472 has up to this point been impossible for the Borg to assimilate. Janeway acknowledges that she is making a pact "with the devil" but she is unrepentant. Other crew members express a fear that the pact blurs the line between the Federation and the Borg. Commander Chakotay, second-in-command of Voyager notes: "The Borg have assimilated thousands of species. By enabling them to assimilate 8472 we [the Federation] would be guilty of colonization". The Borg are no longer beyond communication, no longer wholly Other. As Janeway comments, the Borg "are no different to us - they are just trying to survive". It is the arrival of still more alien Other in the form of Species 8472 that enables the Borg to be reclassified by the Federation. The recognition of similarities is taken further in an episode of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. A former Starfleet officer, Ettington rejects the Federation and joins a renegade

group known as the Maquis. When confronted by the space station's captain, Ettington disputes the sanctimonious position of the Federation, stating (facetiously):

> Everybody should want to be in the Federation. Nobody leaves paradise. In some ways you're even worse than the Borg. At least they tell you about their plans for assimilation. You assimilate people and they don't even know it.

There is no room for doubt in the words of Ettington. Star Trek has achieved a moment of self-realization (*cf.* Weinstock 1996: 335). The meta-narratives of colonialism and exploration are questioned. The methods and motivations of the Borg and the Federation may differ but there remains an acknowledgment of their similarities.

Self, Other and hybrid: the third space

The Borg represent one of popular culture's more sophisticated explorations of ideas on self and otherness. The Borg function simultaneously both as a depiction of the Other and of the recognizable self. We argue that in *STNG* the Borg function as a means of reflecting on the nature of this self/other problematic and ultimately, through the discursive space of the hybrid, as a means of challenging and collapsing the apparent rigid separation between self and other. "One cannot depict the totally alien" Benford (1987:14) writes, reminding us that the alien others we construct are projections of ourselves. In Q-Who?, the Borg are described by Q as "the ultimate user[s]… not interested in political conquest, wealth or power as you know it. They're simply interested in your ship, its technology. They've identified it as something they can consume."

For the Borg as callous gatherers of technology the Enterprise represents "raw material". The colonial nature of the Borg mission is emphasized and clarified in the Enterprise's next encounter with them ('The Best of Both Worlds: Part 1'). The Borg vessel informs the Enterprise that: "Resistance is futile. We wish to improve ourselves. We will add your biological and technological distinctiveness to our own. Your culture will adapt to service ours." The parallels with the Enterprise's mission are ironically played out. This time the words are spoken by the Captain of the Enterprise, Picard, who has been captured and assimilated by the Borg collective. Picard's Borg self, Locutus, announces coldly: "We will begin assimilating your culture and technology …. We only wish to raise the quality of life for all species". The Borg attempt to "raise the quality of life" is, as Wilcox observes, "A harsh parody of white assimilationist and colonialist practices" (1996:79).

Maria Strunken notes:

> The other is not an unidentified, foreign element, but an aspect of oneself. The terrorist represents the colonialist's fear of the perfect invader, the invader so much ourselves that we must fear his mimetic excellence, our body turning on itself for the purpose of self-destruction.(cited in Ono 1996: 175)

The Borg represent simultaneously contradictory and ambiguous notions of Other and self. Perhaps even more interestingly, the Borg colonize from within, by injecting microscopic nanoprobes into the body of their prey.

The Borg occupy a liminal space in which questions of self/ otherness and difference/ sameness are played out. The Borg episodes allow the series to reflect on the ways in which a self can come to know an Other and the ways in which clear and unproblematic distinctions between self and Other can be challenged. Recent post-colonial theory focuses on the ambivalence and fractures which characterize the colonial relationship. The old paradigm of the dominating colonizer (self) and the passive native (other) has been called into question (see Bhabha 1994a; 1994b; 1994c). In place of this unproblematic colonial relationship where self and Other are understood as stable and unitary terms, and where the authority of the self is unchallenged, comes an understanding that ambiguity and fracture lie at the very source of colonial power. For Bhabha, it is mimicry and the role of the hybrid which serves to disrupt colonial power and fracture the colonial relationship.

In our reading of the Borg as a post-colonial space, the episode 'I-Borg' is pivotal. In this episode the unambiguous relationship of colonial self and Other is ruptured when one of the Borg collective is individuated. This Borg becomes neither wholly Other nor wholly self - he is the hybrid. The eruption of the hybrid space into the colonial relationship fractures the colonial relationship and ultimately serves as the basis for the disruption of colonial authority. The emergence of the hybrid serves as a displacing space which challenges the previously clear self/other divide.

In 'I-Borg', the Enterprise encounters a single Borg separated from the collective. He is badly hurt and brought to the ship for treatment. The crew devise a plan which will rid them of the Borg forever. The plan involves infecting the single Borg with a virus and returning him to the collective. Its aim is nothing less than the annihilation of an entire race - genocide. Initially, there are no moral objections to this plan. However, in the course of his stay on the Enterprise, the solitary Borg experiences an identity crisis. Separated from the collective, this Borg no longer relates to himself as a "we" but begins to develop a sense of individuality, a sense of being an "I". Hugh (the name Geordie gives to the individuated Borg) is no longer entirely other; his status is far more ambiguous. Though Hugh has not become a human, he has ceased being a Borg and now occupies a hybrid space between Borg and human, between collective consciousness and individuality. Hugh's hybridity fractures the colonial relationship. The rigid barriers of self and other collapse and new possibilities emerge. The relationship between the Enterprise and the Borg is now changed and the plan to destroy the Borg is abandoned.

This shift from 'we' to 'I' is an important one and, as Ken Ono (1996:121) has reflected, it has parallels with Emile Benveniste's thesis that it is the distinction between 'I' and 'you' that creates subjectivity:

> Consciousness of the self is only possible if it is experienced by contrast. I use I only when I am speaking to someone who will be a you in my address. It is this condition of dialogue that is constitutive of person, for it implies that reciprocally, I becomes you in the address of one who in his turn designates himself as I . (1971: 224-225)

In the *Star Trek: Voyager* episode 'Scorpion: Part 2', a Borg is left stranded on Voyager. This Borg, designated "seven of nine" was once a female human who was assimilated into the Borg collective as a young child. The Voyager crew seek to reverse her Borg assimilation and return her to her human state. Seven of nine, however, does not wish to become human. For her, it is the shift from 'we' to 'I' that she is unwilling to make. "We do not wish to become who you are", she says defiantly to Captain Janeway. The Voyager crew hold her captive and

prevent her from returning to the collective; she will become human, even if it requires force to achieve this object.

Denied the choices that were given to Hugh, seven of nine will be made to conform to the wishes of the captain as representative of the Federation. Importantly, she refuses to re-take her human name and the Captain begins to call her simply Seven. Janeway reflects that seven of nine is "too much of a mouthful". This renaming is reminiscent of European colonizers' paternal bestowing of names on the childlike natives. Seven recognizes the similarity between the Federation's actions and those of the Borg - "Then you are no different from the Borg" she says, understanding that Voyager's attempts to make her human are no different from Borg assimilation. The other has been unmasked and revealed to be the self.

Colonial Language of STNG

As we have indicated above, the colonialist ideology of *Star Trek* is conveyed in many ways. One significant and important component is the use of colonialist terms. As already noted, the terms 'self' and 'Other' are commonly used in post-colonial and colonial discourses. The examples below highlight the significant intersections and juxtapositions of the language of *Star Trek* and the language of colonial discourse.

Colonial discourse is made up of references to new worlds, frontiers, assimilation and resistance amongst other things. Beyond the frontier of both historical European colonial expansion and that of the United Federation of Planets, reside swarming hordes of homogenous, essentialist representations of aliens. Humanity always resides on the closest side of the frontier. Within *Star Trek* even if the recently encountered others are technologically advanced, they invariably lack the characteristics of humanity, compassion, understanding and civilization. Two examples of this are the alien Cardassians and Ferrengi species. The Cardassians are warlike, exploitative and untrustworthy. The Ferrengi are a species of traders and merchants who pursue financial gain at the expense of all else. The Ferrengi are considered a reminder of a much earlier period of Federation history. As is often noted by Starfleet officers, the Federation has no longer a need for money; they have left these concerns deep in their past.

The frontier within *Star Trek*, as within colonialism, is a boundary between space and place. Place exists where names are known, features are recorded and maps can be drawn. Space exists where these are unknown. The known world is a place, the unknown world is space. When the Federation has mapped and recorded the attributes of areas of space the region is designated with a name. The previously unrecorded space now exists not as an unknowable domain but as a Federation territory.

Another similarity between colonialism and Federation exploration can be observed in the area of history. Early European explorers, on "discovering" the new world, frequently saw indigenous people as occupying a position within Europe's own earlier history. Australia's indigenes became conceptually "our ancestors" (Idriess 1960, Russell and McNiven 1998) with the arrival of British settlers. The noble savage imagery of the American natives led John Locke to remark "In the beginning all the world was America" (1976 [1690]: 26). Within *Star Trek*, recently encountered groups, perceived to be less advanced than the Federation, are frequently described in terms which suggest an expectation of unilineal evolution. The history of planets is often described in terms such as "stone age", or "bronze age" (as in the episode 'Who Watches the Watchers'). It is as if the historical trajectory of these groups is expected to follow the path

toward the advanced humans who represent the Federation. Such concepts are well known to scholars interested in colonial processes.

Discussion

Recent trends in post-colonial theory have witnessed a rethinking of Said's view of the colonial relationship. In particular, Said has been criticized for homogenizing and totalising the operations of colonial discourse (Thomas 1994; Moore-Gilbert 1997:53). In *Orientalism*, Said (1978) developed a model of colonial political relations in which all power lies with the colonizer. The colonised other is presented as an "effect" of the dominant discourse with no agency which can operate oppositionally. Resistance and contradiction within the colonial relationship receive little attention.

In recent years, the work of several diasporic subaltern scholars has developed and extended Said's original critique. Bhabha redresses these issues by focusing on the ambivalence and ambiguities which characterize the colonial relationship. Bhabha demonstrates that the colonial relationship is not simply an extension of the dominant-self: submissive-other. The colonial self and the native other are connected in more complex, ambiguous and confused ways. Bhabha (1994d) claims that the Other is constructed out of a fundamental contradiction and that this contradiction allows for the possibility of a fracture from within the colonial relationship. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin outline Bhabha's position concisely:

> In order to maintain authority over the other in a colonial situation, imperial discourse strives to delineate the other as radically different from the self, yet at the same time, it must maintain sufficient identity with the other to valorise control over it. The other, can of course, only be constructed out of the archive of the self, yet the self must also articulate the other as inescapably different. (1989: 103)

The Borg are a prime illustration of this ambivalence. Whilst being Other, they are undoubtedly recognizable as constructed out of the archive of self. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin add: "Otherness can thus only be produced by a continual process of what Bhabha calls 'repetition and displacement' and this instigates an ambivalence at the very site of imperial authority and control" (1989: 103). There is therefore an ambiguity or contradiction which emerges at the very moment of the construction of the colonial relationship. This ambivalence is highlighted to the colonialist by the presence in the colonial subject of hybridization or mimicry.

It is the returned gaze of the hybrid, the reminder of the contradiction at the very heart of the colonial relationship which challenges and ultimately fractures the rigid boundaries of colonial self and native other. The Borg – particularly Hugh and Seven - return the colonial gaze and often times intensify it. Hybridity refers to the moment when the discourse of colonial authority loses its univocal grip on meaning and finds itself open to the trace of the language of the other. Bhabha's notion of hybridity (Bhabha 1994c) is drawn from linguistics where hybridization refers to "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance". Hybridity refers to an utterance "that belongs, by its grammatical and compositional markers to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it, two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two languages". Hybridity, therefore designates language's fundamental ability "to be simultaneously the same but different" (Young 1995: 20). Colonial discourse or colonial authority usually understands itself as single voiced, as monologic. For Said (in *Orientalism*) colonial power is a dominating discourse which totally annihilates the voice of the other. Bhabha argues, however, that colonial authority is the product of hybridization. Colonial discourse is double voiced in that it contains within itself the voice of the other. The colonial self is constructed

discursively through its encounter with the native other. The colonial self is not solely defined positively, but is simultaneously defined through a lack, through that which it is not. It is this double voiced nature of colonial discourse which allows for subversion and intervention.

Bhabha argues that authoritative discourse must be singular. As Bakhtin notes: "It is by its very nature incapable of being double-voiced; it cannot enter into hybrid constructions" (cited in Young 1995: 22). When authoritative discourse encounters itself as hybrid, then this single voiced authority is undermined. Hybridity is "a problematic of colonial representation … that reverses the effect of the colonialist disavowal, so that other denied knowledge enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority" (Bhabha 1994c: 114). It describes a process in which the single voice of colonial authority is revealed as double-voiced in that it contains within itself the trace of the other. The "hybrid displacing space" develops in the interaction between indigenous and colonial culture and has the effect of depriving the "imperialist culture, not only of the authority that it has for so long imposed politically…but even of its own claims to authenticity" (Bhabha 1991: 57-8). Colonial power is the product of hybridization. The colonial self is produced out of the interaction with the native other.

Following Bhabha, we can see that colonial power and the colonial self are not the secure, sovereign entities we thought them to be. The colonial self carries within itself, the trace of the native other. This self is a function of the other. The colonial self, like colonial discourse, is not monologic. Colonial authority is built on these very tensions, contradictions and ambivalences. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin note: "What such authority least likes and what presents it with its greatest threat, is any reminder of such ambivalence. This ambivalence at the very heart of authority is exposed by the presence in the colonial subject of hybridization or colonial mimicry" (Ashcroft *et al* 189: 103).

The Enterprise's encounter with Hugh represents this encounter with the hybrid and therefore a challenge to its conceptions of what is self and what is other. What we have attempted to illustrate is a change in the way the Borg are experienced and presented. We have argued that this change resembles in broad outline the ideas of Bhabha, particularly with regard to the role of the hybrid as the disruption to colonial authority. We began by demonstrating that the Borg were presented as Other, although were in fact a mirror image of the self. Through the experience of Hugh the hybrid, this relationship is changed. The Borg are no longer simply Other and eventually they are even recognized as being a mirror image of the self. In the hybrid moment, the authority of the self is disrupted because it recognizes its dependence on the other for the very constitution of the self. In the hybrid moment, the self realizes that its self understanding is far from clear. In this moment, the self realizes that it is not some sovereign or fixed entity which exists in isolation of the other. The boundaries between self and other are collapsed.

The moment of self-reflection in the writing of the *Star Trek* text represented by the Borg allows for the questioning of the Federation and its foundation narratives. The Borg are the mirror image of the Enterprise. The voice of the Borg is actually the voice of the Federation. When the Borg state: "Resistance is futile. You will be assimilated", the Enterprise and her crew hear the echo of the Federation's own voice and motivations. Through the voice of the Borg we are presented with an ironic comment on the possibilities of cultural survival in the face of the Federation's expansion. We have already demonstrated the colonialist nature of the Enterprise's mission and of the Federation. We are now informed (through the Borg) that resistance to this mission is futile. It is impossible to withstand the force of colonial expansion. "You will be assimilated". All cultures

(the prime directive notwithstanding) will be drawn into the Federation. All others will be defined by the exploring self. To this dark and hopeless view, we are, however, presented with an alternative.

In 'I-Borg', the recently individuated Hugh speaks to the bar-tender Guinan, in an attempt to determine who he is and what he should do. Guinan is an El-Aurain, a race of long-lived humanoids who have had extensive contact with the Borg. Borg attacks and subsequent assimilation are responsible for the diasporic existence of Guinan and her people. Not surprisingly Guinan has a deep and pervading hatred of the Borg. When Hugh tells Guinan that "resistance is futile", she replies: "It isn't. My people resisted when the Borg came to assimilate us. Some of us survived." No colonising action can be complete - there will always be some that survive. Hugh responds, with a tilt of his head and in an unbelieving, perplexed manner he states: "Resistance is not futile?" He is lost amidst that half question, half statement. The *raison detré* for the colonising Borg is challenged by the survivors. Resistance can save the native Other but it also challenges the colonial self.

What is the nature of this resistance? Guinan and her people did not fight the Borg; they escaped and chose a dislocated life away from their homeworld. In the episode 'The Best of Both Worlds: Part 2', Guinan tells Picard that resistance against the Borg should not be thought of in terms of physical resistance. Resistance lies in the continuity of human spirit through remnant groups. This conceptualization of resistance follows recent trends in contact and post-colonial historiography. Said for example, argues that resistance should be understood as referring to "when efforts are made to reconstitute a shattered community, to save or restore the sense and fact of community against all the pressures of the colonial system" (Said 1993: 252). One may not be able to resist the Borg or the Federation physically, but they can nonetheless be resisted. Assimilation by the colonial self is not inevitable, nor is it ever complete.

An intrinsic part of the assimilation process is the adoption of a false consciousness by the one who is to be assimilated. Within Starfleet, many races come together and work as part of the Federation. Although cultural difference is accepted for the most part, it is subverted to allow the dominant human culture to prevail. In order to exist within the Federation, alien cultures must be assimilated.

Over the seven seasons of *STNG* numerous episodes revolve around the character Lieutenant Commander Worf. Worf is a Klingon raised by humans and fully integrated into Starfleet society. Worf struggles with his Klingon instincts, but invariably he chooses to remain within the Federation and forgo much of his own culture. Within the *Star Trek* archive there are no examples of more comprehensive assimilation than that offered by Worf. The native is asked not just to change but to accept the degraded view of their previous culture that is offered by the colonizer. Worf does indeed for the most part accept the culture of the Federation, however it is clear that he never fully relinquishes his own native culture. Worf's dialectical relationship within these two cultures shapes his character. He personifies resistance and assimilation, highlighting the ambiguities of both states.

The most profound form of resistance to the colonialist machine is precisely the refusal to adopt such a false consciousness. Resistance is best understood as referring to those acts which resist the logic of the colonialist enterprise. The colonialist mission seeks to make the native question the value of his/her way of life and ultimately to abandon it. The refusal to accept this point of view is perhaps the deepest kind of resistance. Like Pecheux's "bad subjects" who refuse

the image offered of them and turn it back to the offerer (1975, trans. 1982: 157), or in Sly Civility (Bhabha 1994b: 98), where the native refuses to satisfy the coloniser's demand for recognition, the most profound resistance is that attempt to "elude the subject positions to which the dominant order seeks to confine the other in order to confirm itself as dominant" (Moore-Gilbert 1997: 132).

Although this paper takes as its focus those episodes which deal with the Borg, there are other episodes of *STNG* which equally demonstrate moments of post-colonial reflexivity - in particular, the episode entitled 'Journey's End' in which Wesley Crusher questions the very constitution of his reality as defined by the Federation's colonial project. Crusher articulates the colonial dilemma - to interfere or to leave the other alone. In this instance the situation is complicated by the military structure of the Federation. As long as he wears the Federation uniform, Crusher is not free to choose to counter the hegemony. In 'Journey's End' a group of Native Americans are to be relocated from their planet as part of a treaty signed between the Federation and the Cardassians. The Indians, as they are referred to in the episode, are instructed to move. The Federation issues this order on the grounds that their relocation will serve "the greater good". Notions of 'greater good' and the sacrifices made by a few in order to serve the majority are commonly encountered in colonial history. Invariably the sacrifices are asked (demanded) of the natives and not the colonial powers. Removal of indigenous people, on to reservations and missions has had a lengthy and chequered history and is but one example.

In 'Journey's End' the Indians are described as having left Earth "to preserve their cultural identity" and despite their relocation they are still described as both "American" and "Indian". Lead by an elder named Anthoira, they refuse to comply with the Federation's orders. Relocation is not possible as their new home holds a "deep spiritual significance", and they will not leave it. Anthoira says: "We must hold on to what we have, even against overwhelming opposition". As negotiations proceed, Wesley Crusher, a young Starfleet Academy cadet who has spent his entire life within the Federation, begins to doubt the validity of the Federation's actions. As a Starfleet cadet, Crusher symbolizes the progression of science and the importance of the Federation's higher ideals. However, Crusher begins to question his place in the Academy and in the Federation.

Seeking answers to what appear to be insurmountable questions Crusher turns to the Native Americans. In a "habak", or a vision quest, he experiences an image of his (deceased) father, a Starfleet Officer who tells him: "You've reached the end of this journey, don't follow me". Wesley's encounter with the sacred, with an alternative value system, leads him to resign from the Academy and to join the Indians in their defiant stance against the Federation. Wesley tells Picard: "What you're doing down there is wrong. These people are not some random group of colonists. They're a unique culture with a history that predates the Federation and Starfleet".

It is surely not just a coincidence that the episode entitled 'Journey's End' features a clash between two cultural systems, between the dispossessor and the dispossessed. Whose journey is ending? Is it just Wesley's journey or is it perhaps the end of the colonialist mission of the Enterprise? The traveller tells Wesley that he was able to pull himself outside of time by opening his mind to new possibilities. This new time, this new reality that Wesley experienced was, it could be argued, a function of his transcending the limits of his colonial self. The end of the colonial journey occurs when Wesley, the symbol of Starfleet, of rationality, of science and of progress, calls into question the colonial construction of his identity.

In this paper we have argued that *Star Trek* has become increasingly self-reflexive. This self-reflection is apparent in those episodes which focus on the Borg and on Federation citizens who reject Starfleet's colonial ideology. The Federation's foundational charter "to explore strange new worlds, to seek new life and new civilisations" is revealed as inadequate. Indeed in 'All Good Things', the final episode of the series, Q informs Picard that the real journey that awaits is not further exploration of the stars, but the exploration of uncharted paths of existence - of different ways of seeing and of different ways of knowing. The final frontier does not involve travelling at warp speed through the stars, but involves exploring the strange new worlds of the post-colonial other.

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