

**T**hese are the voyages of Jay Goulding, a Sociology professor at York, who seeks more than new life and new civilizations. In his books, such as *Empire, Aliens, and Conquest* (1982), he has boldly one where no man has gone before, examining TV shows like *Star Trek* in an attempt to determine the effects of American culture on television, and vice-versa.

*Excalibur's* Howard Kaman recently caught up with Goulding to discuss the new series, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.



**EXCALIBUR:** *What made you decide to write about Star Trek?*

**GOULDING:** I think that it was the science fiction program that I liked the best of the lot. It's the one that I started collecting books on, and going to the conventions. I've gone to about a hundred conventions, and have about three thousand items on it.

**EXCALIBUR:** *At what point did you stop watching the show and start analyzing it?*

**GOULDING:** I would say that I always analyze things that way. But when you're a kid you look at (things) in a very different way. I grew up in a TV generation. So, I watched, when I was very small, the *Hercules* programs with Steve Reeves; mythological programs . . . especially on Greek mythology. I learned so much from it. When *Star Trek* came along, I just grabbed onto that. There were other programs before, as well, that should've started me really thinking about a lot of things. You could use them as templates for understanding everyday life . . . (such as) *The Outer Limits* and *The Twilight Zone*.

**EXCALIBUR:** *Do you see the new series attaining the sort of popularity that the old series received?*

**GOULDING:** The two programs are very different in a lot of ways. *Star Trek* was always designed for a university audience and NBC didn't like that at all. They said, "Look, you've got to have a wider range of things going for you." Indeed, this is what the new series has done. It's moving more and more towards a children's audience.

We'll see what happens with the new series. I think it will probably be around. People are looking for something new with *Star Trek*. The focus on the new series is almost the opposite of the old series. We'll see what happens with the fifth movie, which is being directed by William Shatner, and which I understand is to be all-out war with the Klingons. The new series tempers all of these things down incredibly so. It will be popular for a variety of reasons. The nostalgia reason is very important.

**EXCALIBUR:** *Why?*

**GOULDING:** DeForest Kelly's appearance in the pilot gave it a pick up at the point that it needed, because all of the new characters are so cool and calm. They rarely work up a sweat. You can see that. This is part of what Gene Roddenberry calls his "new family approach," to the Enterprise. The Enterprise is not simply to be a battleship any longer—it's a community.

**EXCALIBUR:** *What are the major differences between this show and the old?*

**GOULDING:** Roddenberry has said he's not going to have any stories about psionic powers, where you have magical wizards and swords and sorcery; no galaxy policeman image on the series; none of what he calls 'cultural imperialism,' where you're running around dropping American bombshells all over the place; and no old characters at all. They're all out, all the stereotypes of those characters.

There will be no fantasy—"We don't want to make this *Star Wars*," so he says; no warfare with the Klingons. There will be no Vulcans in the series. It's hard for me to hear this, of course, because you can't think of *Star Trek* without Vulcans. No plots with whole civilizations, instead we'll focus on individuals. No mad scientists with technology as a villain. No stupidity creating false jeopardy and, as I said before, no battleship sterility, where the ship is basically only a fighting element that's prepared to flux its photonic muscles.

**EXCALIBUR:** *Are there any differences in the casts of the two shows, from the point of view of acting experience or exposure?*

**GOULDING:** In the old series a lot of the actors were veteran science fiction actors: William Shatner (Kirk), Nimoy (Spock), Doohan (Scotty), Majel Barrett (Nurse Chapel). The whole range of them pretty well played either in movies, *The Twilight Zone* or *The Outer Limits*, which is more pure science fiction. In the new series there is only one character that is a veteran science fiction actor: Patrick Stewart, who

played Gurney Halleck, the war-master in *Dune*. The rest of them, literally, have played on soap operas, so they haven't been typecast.

**EXCALIBUR:** *Do you see parallels between certain characters on both shows?*

**GOULDING:** For sure. What happens is, in the original series, you have a conflict theory that is developing amongst a number of characters. So, what I've talked about is a tripartite relationship where Kirk metaphorically represents politics, Spock represents science, and McCoy, ethics or religion. Now these characters are all dichotomies within and between themselves, but that's primarily the focus.

The new series has done something very interesting. It's disseminated these characters. You have a father type figure, which is Captain Jean Luc Picard, who was born in Paris and who spent 22 years on a ship called The Stargazer. He is a real cool cookie. The fiery aspect of him is going to come from his first officer, Commander Riker, whose name suggests that he is a striker of some sort. So, Kirk is sort of split between those two characters.

Spock is very, very complex. How do you replace a Leonard Nimoy with a whole cast of people, basically? From the science aspect, you have Lieutenant Data, who is an android who gives us the facticity and logical aspect of Spock. You have the opposite, trying to represent Vulcan mysticism with Lieutenant Deanna Troi, who is a console on the ship. She has a feeling element, but she doesn't really interfere in any way. She can't do mind melds like the Vulcans do. She has no death grip or anything like this. Riker takes over the first in command aspect. The Klingon (Worf) is somewhat of a science officer as well. He seems to move from communications to the helm to science to battlestations. So there's this dissemination for Spock.

**EXCALIBUR:** *Are there any differences in the interaction between the characters?*

**GOULDING:** The characters in the first series were actively