



The World of Star Trek

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In *The World of Star Trek*, David Gerrold opens up dialogue on the people, places, and events that made Star Trek one of the most popular series ever. Gerrold discusses what was successful and what wasn't, offering personal interviews with the series' legendary stars and dissecting the trends that developed throughout the seasons.

The complete inside story of what happened behind the scenes of the Star Trek universe, from scriptwriters' memos to special effects and more, *The World of Star Trek* is the companion all Trekkies need for the most all-encompassing breakdown and analysis of Star Trek.

The World of Star Trek Details

Date : Published January 28th 2014 by BenBella Books (first published 1973)

ISBN :

Author : David Gerrold

Format : Kindle Edition 239 pages

Genre : Media Tie In, Star Trek, Nonfiction, Tv

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From Reader Review The World of Star Trek for online ebook

Laura says

I read this book about one million times when I was a kid. Around 30 years later, it became the subject of a pretty funny incident between my husband and me, too, so it was part of my destiny. Or something woo woo like that, I dunno.

Mike says

I found this on my parents' bookshelf, looking as though it hadn't been touched since 1971. When I opened it, the cover fell off.

While I love the original *Star Trek*, and while David Gerrold wrote "The Trouble with Tribbles", one of the very best episodes of the series, this is a very haphazardly-organized book. There are a number of interviews with members of the cast that are more like extended monologues without any theme in common; a list of episodes, non-chronological (I could not figure out how they are organized, if in fact they are); black-and-white photographs of the cast; examinations of Star Trek fandom that warn, sternly, against the excesses of trimming your eyebrows to look like Spock and practicing black magic rituals to make Leonard Nimoy fall in love with you; and pedantic explanations of fanzines and science-fiction conventions that made my eyes glaze over.

The last section, however, is perhaps the most interesting, as it talks about how the exigencies of TV production resulted in what every fan of the original *Star Trek* knows, deep down, hard as it can be to admit- the show did not reach its potential. I would say that approximately 1/3 of the episodes are excellent, 1/3 are decent, and 1/3 (mostly those in the last season) are almost unwatchable. NBC's cavalier handling of the show and Roddenberry's subsequent walking from it, as well as tight budgets and shooting schedules, led to many episodes that succumbed to formula. How many times, after all, can Kirk fall in love with the high priestess of a tribal society that worships a cosmic computer, or convince a renegade machine to commit suicide by demonstrating that it's been behaving illogically? In how many episodes can the away team beam down to an unknown planet and find that some mysterious force has rendered communications and the transporter inoperable? You'd think Starfleet would eventually invest some money so that every has-been computer god's fly-by-night energy field wouldn't be able to cause such problems for its flagship.

But perhaps the best criticism Gerrold makes is that the show never really challenged the idea that the Enterprise's mission was essentially benign. Broadcast as it was during the Vietnam War, there was an opportunity to question the rightness of American interventionism in foreign countries. Kirk broke the Prime Directive (the edict stating that members of Starfleet must never interfere in the development of the alien cultures they encounter) in just about every other episode - he altered the course of civilization's development (just off the top of my head) on the Nazi planet, and the gangster planet, and the planet that had developed along the lines of the Roman empire, and the planet where they thought they were the descendants of the ancient Greeks, and the planet where they didn't know about copulation (obviously unacceptable to Kirk)...he may even have altered history in a mirror universe! But very rarely was the audience allowed to consider that the culture the Enterprise crew came into contact with might have been better off left alone. It seems that questions along these lines would have clashed with Roddenberry's idealistic vision of the future,

and the Federation's role as galactic peacekeeper.

I can think of one possible exception. "A Taste of Armageddon"- Kirk, at his most ruthless and uncompromising, resolves centuries of perpetual conflict between two civilizations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKmUd...>

Daniel Kukwa says

The first non-fiction work covering "Star Trek" that I ever read. I would have preferred a bit more contemplation on the early movie era (which is where this revised version concluded), but it's a solid overview of what made "Star Trek" tick...and why we love it so much. Or why you SHOULD, if you're one of the not-we...

Walt Murray says

This is a history of the original Star Trek series, and details how the show went from concept through production, and then became the legendary series it is today. Gerrold details the relationships between the actors, the producers and directors, and between the show's participants and the network. The reader gets warts and all, but I finished the book a bigger fan than when I started it.

Charles says

An insider's look behind the making of Star Trek

As someone who viewed the original Star Trek series when it aired for the first time, I can be considered an original Trekkie. While the science segment of the science fiction was often weak, the ideas and the vision for the future that it represented extended beyond what anyone could have imagined at the time. It represented a future where humanity had finally been able to end the conflicts on Earth, build a mighty fleet of star ships and find species on other planets that became allies. However, the future was not altogether rosy.

In episodes such as "The Space Seed" there were allusions to a ghastly, incredibly destructive nuclear war on Earth. It was hinted that this was the action that finally galvanized the human race to end conflict and join together. There were also the continuous conflicts between the Federation and the Romulans and Klingons. However, while there was the note of a brutal war having been fought between the Federation and the Romulans, war is averted in the two episodes where the Enterprise and the Romulans meet.

Gerrold was the writer of "The Trouble With Tribbles" considered by many to be the best episode in the original series. He takes us behind the scenes in the creation, piloting and filming of the original series. He pulls no punches in his description of Star Trek, describing the strengths and weaknesses of the series. When something was done poorly, he explains that some of the failures were a consequence of the time. The late sixties was a time when women and minorities were not given strong roles, what you see in the original series was ground-breaking for the times. Any attempt to go any farther than what was done was blocked. Gerrold also mentions how the show began to show signs of fatigue, as the story lines began to be redone in

an attempt to save money. Star Trek was a high budget show, so there was very attempt to save production costs, often to the detriment of the show. Finally, Gerrold also describes the development of the first three Star Trek feature movies and the fits and starts that took place before the first one was ever made. Given the success of the series of Star Trek movies, it is amazing to read how much time and effort it took to get the first one made.

Gerrold has an insider's view of the Star Trek phenomenon and he tells his stories very well. If you want to go beyond the basics of the series and learn some of how things were really done, then this is a book you need to read.

This review also appears on Amazon

Barry Simiana says

A fun, though serious insight into the making and the affect Star Trek has had on the world since its inception. Great stories from the production by many of those involved right from the beginning. Though a contributor to the show and an

Unabashed fan, David Gerrold's research covers and destroys may of the rumors that have been circulating for years about the goings on behind the scenes. As expected, the writing is great. This volume stopped at the third movie. It would be great to see this authors take on the remaining, original series based movies, the current reboot and the Next Generation. One day soon, perhaps.

Good stuff.

Dark-Draco says

The first thing you have to remember about this book is when it was published. Gerrold was a Star Trek scriptwriter and this gives him a view of things that is unusual, interesting and funny. He is very fair with both his praise and his criticism, but some of his comments are dated - either in the views he is expressing or because Star Trek has moved on so much from those early days. I did enjoy it though and made me want to track down the repeats on those of so obscure Sky channels!

Melanie says

Yes, another one of my pet obsessions. This was really good for Gerrold's insight into what went into writing the original Trek series, and also for his thoughts on why Star Trek has had such an impact on our culture.

Andy says

Gerrold's books on the Star Trek series are all a blast; he's got a sharp wit and tells loads of fun stories. I still

remember these books from first reading them when I was a kid and totally obsessed with the show.

Michael Hanscom says

I have something of a fascination with the non-fictional aspects of classic Trek—both the behind-the-scenes show stuff and the general fandom of the time—and it's fun to read accounts that are closer to that time than we are now. This book was originally written in '73, just a few years following the demise of TOS, and a few years prior to the first film. Trek was in syndication and picking up new fans, while existing and new fans were banding together (via letter, 'zine, and telephone) to create the first Trek conventions as the fandom was just starting to grow into the juggernaut it eventually became. A really neat look at a slice of time in Trek history.

Ron says

Written in the late 1970's, Gerrold, screenwriter for the classic episode "The Trouble With Tribbles", gives an excellent background to the original Star Trek. Ever watch the third season DVD over the course of a week or so? Then you will concur with Gerrold's points about the decline of the show in that season. Many other interesting tidbits for the fans.

Some of Gerrold's ideas, such as his suggestion that Star Trek should have had a "contact team" to go to planets instead of Kirk and Spock, miss the boat. For a lot of us, the show *was* about action-adventure, and if Kirk, Spock and McCoy had too much screen time at the expense of others, then that's how it should have been.

Colleen Hillerup says

Particularly interesting for the section on fandom - pre-internet, but still a way for people to connect and make lasting friendships. Also interesting to see the state of things in Star Trek when there was no guarantee of anything beyond the three seasons.

Natalie says

I've owned three copies of this book, having read and re-read to destruction the first two. I loved it. I'm kind of afraid to look at it again 15...20? years after the last time I read it. But I bet I'll still love it.

Tracy Poff says

Though I'm generally reading these books in publication order, for the next book in our *Trek* journey, we

need to step back in time about a year. Today's book is the second non-fiction *Trek* book we're looking at, David Gerrold's *The World of Star Trek*, published April 12, 1973.

The prologue describes the approximate outline of the book:

Actually, there are three worlds of STAR TREK. First, there's the STAR TREK that Gene Roddenberry conceived--the original dream of a television series about an interstellar starship. Then there's the STAR TREK behind the scenes, how the cast and crew made Gene Roddenberry's ideas come true, how they were realized and sometimes altered in the realization. And finally, there's the STAR TREK Phenomenon, the world that the fans of the show created, the reality that they built in response.

All three of these worlds are fascinating, and all three of them are dealt with in this book. Each of the worlds of STAR TREK created the next; and like interlocking rings, each had its effects on the others. The show created the stars, the stars engendered a fandom, and the fans kept the show on the air.

This book would seem to be in the vein of Whitfield's 1968 book, *The Making of Star Trek*, though its focus is somewhat different. As Gerrold himself notes, Whitfield's book more than adequately covers the details of the production of the series, so Gerrold does not spend too many words repeating these details. The book's opening ("Part One: The First World of Star Trek--Gene Roddenberry's Dream") repeats the familiar details from *The Star Trek Guide* and the original series format, much like Whitfield's. But where *The Making of Star Trek* examines how the series's premise works to make a show that could be produced within the constraints of a television budget, *The World of Star Trek* considers how it enables interesting stories:

[Kirk] would be explorer, ambassador, soldier, and peacekeeper. He would be the sole arbiter of Federation law wherever he traveled--he would be a law unto himself.

The implication here is that *there are no other channels of interstellar communication*. At least, none as fast as the *Enterprise*.

...

If Kirk could check back with Starfleet Command every time he was in trouble, he would never have any conflicts at all. He would simply be a crewman following orders. He wouldn't be an explorer or an ambassador--just the Captain of the local gunboat on the scene.

Gerrold has some definite ideas about the way stories ought to be told. For example:

The single dramatic element which provokes excitement in a play is this: *your identity is in danger*. All others are merely variations: your life is in danger, your country is in danger, your girl friend might leave you, your wife might find out, your brother might die, the police might catch you. Something threatens to prevent you from being the person you already are or want to be.

...

But if you endanger the hero's identity week after week, not only do you run the risk of melodrama--you also run the risk of falling into a formula kind of storytelling. This week Kirk is menaced by the jello monster, he kills it by freezing it to death; next week Kirk is menaced by the slime monster and kills it by drying it out; the week after that he is threatened by the mud monster and defeats it by watering it down; the following week Kirk meets the mucous monster . . . Again, the ho hum reaction. Or even the ha ha reaction.

The second part of the book ("The *Star Trek* Family--The People Who Made The *Enterprise* Fly) generally avoids focusing on the production aspects of the show, considering them adequately covered by Whitfield's book. Instead, the bulk of the text is made up of extended excerpts from interviews with some of the principal figures in *Trek*: Leonard Nimoy, William Shatner, DeForest Kelley, James Doohan, Walter Koenig, George Takei, and Nichelle Nichols; also included is an interview with William Campbell, who played Trelane in "The Squire of Gothos".

The interviews are very interesting, giving a look at how the actors felt about the show and the characters they played. Since these interviews were conducted at a distance of a few years from the show, they make a nice complement to the interviews in *The Making of Star Trek*, which was published while the show was still in production.

Following the interviews is a complete listing of each *Star Trek* episode, its writers, and its guest stars. A handy reference, in the days before the internet!

The third part of the book ("The Star Trek Phenomenon") discusses the well-known letter-writing campaign to save *Star Trek*, organized by Bjo Trimble, then discusses the fandom more generally, touching on fanzines, conventions, and other details. A very interesting look at how scifi fandom--and especially *Trek* fandom--was organized at the time, and how it was viewed.

In fourth part of the book ("Star Trek Analyzed--The Unfulfilled Potential"), Gerrold examines some of the specific elements that make up *Trek* episodes, both good and bad. For example, he criticizes Kirk and Spock always going out on dangerous away missions:

...this is the most deadly of all criticisms that have ever been leveled against STAR TREK:

A Captain, whether he be the Captain of a starship or an aircraft carrier, simply does not place himself in danger. Ever.

...

This is one *major* problem in the STAR TREK format, the one difficulty that forces the show into a set of formula situations week after week--the focusing of attention on two characters who should not logically be placing themselves in physical danger, *but must do so regularly*.

Gerrold suggests a specially tainted "Contact Team" should be sent on away missions instead. Actually, his idea is a good one, and was vindicated in *The Next Generation*, years later: Riker was not at all interested in allowing Picard to go out on dangerous away missions, and when Riker was himself in command of the ship he too was reminded by the crew that he was too important to be risked in that way. Better late than never, eh?

The final section of the book ("The return of Star Trek...?") looks at the possibility of the show's return, and gives details on some of Gene Roddenberry's then-upcoming projects: "Spectre", "Questor", "The Tribunes", and "Genesis II". And finally:

Oh, yes. One more thing. What if STAR TREK *doesn't* come back . . . ?

"Well," says Gene. "I have a lot of notes on a new concept, a planet-travel show. Not for this season, but for the next one. I'm going to start putting it together . . . "

You see, the fans are right. STAR TREK lives!

I think that the foregoing excerpts give evidence enough that, even if you don't entirely agree with Gerrold's ideas about drama, he has plenty of insightful things to say about *Star Trek*. And besides being informative, the book is entertaining. The excellent little parody of bad *Star Trek* plots, "Green Priestesses of the Cosmic Computer", is not to be missed. I know that I gave a pretty strong recommendation of Whitfield's book before, but if you are more interested in the stories of *Trek* than the production of TV episodes, you might prefer to give that one a miss and read *The World of Star Trek* instead.

David Gerrold is the author of the TOS episode "The Trouble with Tribbles" and its sequel, the TAS episode "More Tribbles, More Troubles", among other *Trek*-related work, plus a number of original novels. Published simultaneously with this book was another by Gerrold, *The Trouble With Tribbles: The Birth, Sale and Final Production of One Episode*.

Scott Shadel says

I do not remember when I read this. But looking at the 'sneak preview' for Star Trek III I would say it was in 1984.

If you like the original series of Star Trek this book is wonderful to read and has a lot of inside information. Especially with what we know now of a lot of what is told if rather funny.

David Gerrold is also not new to Star Trek or Sci Fi at all either. Not only has he written 'The Trouble with Tribbles'. He also wrote episodes for Sliders, Babylon 5, and The Twilight Zone...among others.

Some of it even tells the story of people you never saw on the show: How would you like to be the secretary to Mr Spock? Are you a Trekkie or a Treker?

David brings to light the good and the bad. Not because he hates it but because he has a love and wants all of us to see what made trek what it is today. If you want a stroll down memory lane then take a look at this

book.
