

Women at Warp Episode 76: Magneto was Right: Environmentalism in Trek

JARRAH:

Hi and welcome to Women at Warp, a Roddenberry Star Trek podcast. Join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Jarrah. Thanks for tuning in. Today with us we have Grace.

GRACE:

Hey everybody.

JARRAH:

And Sue

SUE:

Hidee-ho neighborinos.

GRACE:

Okily-dokily!

JARRAH:

And we are going to, for this first episode in, I guess second episode in 2018, but first one that we're recording in 2018-

SUE:

Yes.

GRACE:

The first *conceived* in 2018. Yes.

JARRAH:

Yes. We're going to be talking about Star Trek and the environment and environmentalism. But before we get into that we just have a little bit of housekeeping to do. First, we want to remind you about the Women at Warp patreon. So some of you may have seen there were some changes going on at patreon and we had written a letter to patreon opposing those changes. It was just how, like, the fee breakdown between patrons and creators was structured and we had opposed those changes. Patreon *has* decided to reverse those changes. So we will be sticking with them for now. And appreciate your continued support. You can support us. We are entirely listener supported by going to [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://patreon.com/womenatwarp) and pledging as little as a dollar a month to get access to exclusive bonus content. We do watchalongs. Sometimes we share bloopers. I think we were going to maybe look up some old photos of us at conventions to share with patrons. We're always coming up with different things to share so patreon.com/womenatwarp. Thank you so much for helping us keep the show up and running.

GRACE:

And remember, for less than a cup of coffee a month, you can enable all our weird shenanigans.

JARRAH:

Yes indeed. And another way that you can help support our podcast is by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you listen to your podcasts. This just helps other people find our show more easily and we always appreciate getting feedback. So thanks in advance for leaving us a review.

SUE:

And also you can leave a rating or review on Facebook as well which is another way to help spread the word because the more ratings and reviews there the more likely we are to show up in other people's feeds or in searches when people search for things like Star Trek or feminism.

GRACE:

Or warp.

SUE:

Or warp! Because you definitely search about warp technology on Facebook.

GRACE:

Well, you never know.

JARRAH:

Awesome. So Sue do you want to start us off with a bit of a basic definition of environmentalism and our theme for today.

SUE:

Yes. So the basic definition of environmentalism, in its most basic form really, is concern about and action aimed at protecting the environment and that can take a lot of forms. I mean we're going to talk about things that are as very obvious as The Voyage Home or it can be called Star Trek4: Save the whales.

GRACE:

"The one with the whales", yes.

SUE:

Yeah. I mean that that message hits you over the head. But we will also be talking about, you know, Mark of Gideon which is dealing with overpopulation and birth control. Force of Nature, which is a global warming allegory. Things like, believe it or not, tribbles being an invasive species and hurting the planet's ecology. So there are lots of different angles you can come at this from and I think often Star Trek deals with that sort of as the B plot or like the story that moves along the other story we're paying more attention to. But there is a lot of stuff there if you really dig deeper into it. So we're not going to be able to cover everything that ever comes up when we're dealing with environmentalism in Trek but we have picked a few from each series, I think, that will hopefully be able to get to today.

JARRAH:

Yeah I would say that Star Trek overall seems to, there are a ton of episodes where that's really the focus, but where it appears. It often reinforces the way that environmental devastation is connected to devastation of humans and other sentient life forms or other living things. And that is, I think, an important concept coming from the analysis of eco feminism. You know, some of the most early eco feminist thinkers really started to raise the connection between how domination and destruction of the environment is connected to oppression of women and other marginalized groups like Indigenous people and people of color. So I think that that is an important thing we're going to see coming up through the discussion.

GRACE:

Not to mention, just being not horrible about the environment is kind of a tenant of that secular humanist philosophy of Star Trek.

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean I was reading a bit in some of the background there was some debate among fans over whether or not Gene Roddenberry was a religious vegetarian *laughs* but I did find a part where, an interview, where Gene Roddenberry was saying, the unfortunate thing was there was no date on this I don't know when this was but he was saying at the time, like "I am not yet a vegetarian but I do feel very uncomfortable when I eat meat, knowing the process that went into that." So just, food for thought. Har har.

CREW:

laughs

SUE:

Wow. But you know, that that's a legitimate concern though right? Because free range and ethical practices in, like, livestock is becoming much more important to a lot of people.

JARRAH:

Yes.

GRACE:

Yeah it is a whole area you can get into debating various levels of sustainability and ethics in your food and where it's coming from.

.

SUE:

That's the word I couldn't think of: sustainability.

GRACE:

smug voice Sustainability. The ability to sustain, if you will.

JARRAH:

How do you want to approach this? Should we start with the original series and go forward through the cannon? All right! So we have like a big list that our amazing listeners wrote. Many many suggestions. We may not touch on all of them as Sue said but if you don't mind I wouldn't mind starting with the Mark of Gideon being one of the ones that I recently watched for this episode.

SUE:

Absolutely.

GRACE:

Go for it.

JARRAH:

This is the one where the green floating heads symbolize overpopulation. *crew laughs*

SUE:

Yeah.

GRACE:

Do they *not* in your community?

JARRAH:

Yeah. So like they go to this planet. The people kidnap Kirk so that they could take a factor from his blood to infect the, like, young adults with this deadly illness that Kirk was cured from. But it's like latent in his bloodstream. And their goal is to shorten their species lifespan to deal with their ridiculous overpopulation problem. Like, literally their overpopulation is like the worst possible bus ride you can imagine. Except all the time and I guess you sleep standing up and there's somehow still room to build a fake model enterprise.

SUE:

There are so many world building questions that I have.

GRACE:

Yeah, a bunch of people had to sleep on the floor for that.

SUE:

But like, how does the birthrate keep rising if there is literally like not enough room on the planet to get pregnant.

GRACE:

Not enough room to make any babies if you know what we mean.

JARRAH:

People do it in airplane bathrooms sooo

SUE:

They'll just have a lot of observers.

GRACE:

It's just part of the culture. We don't mean to kinkshame.

JARRAH:

They value "life" more than privacy.

SUE:

Ugh. OK.

JARRAH:

Did anyone else have any thoughts of this episode?

GRACE:

No we just kind of creeped ourselves out though I think.

SUE:

Well I think it's really funny. I think this episode gets forgotten by a lot of people and just earlier today I re-tweeted, actually, a tweet from Planned Parenthood in DC that had the screen cap of Kirk saying like "Well why don't you let your people learn about the technologies that can safely prevent conception?" And you know they tweeted something about like "Well thank goodness for Planned Parenthood. You can come learn more" And somebody replied to that tweet and said wait a minute this isn't from Swear Trek? No this is real.

JARRAH:

Yeah!

SUE:

This is accurate captioning from an episode in 1968 and Captain Kirk was talking about birth control.

JARRAH:

Yeah and that's definitely, I think, the highlight of the episode. Also the most edgy part of the episode and the Gideon guy basically says "Oh like we can't do that. We value life too much!" and Kirks like "you value life so much you're going to infect your people with a deadly disease and you're gonna kill your own daughter." It's like "Oh she volunteered it's okay!" But yeah It's a powerful moment for TOS

SUE:

And so many parallels that they'd rather let people die of a disease than let people prevent conception.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

GRACE:

Where have we heard that one before?

JARRAH:

Yeah that really to me connects with eco-feminist thought around the domination of women related to the domination of the environment. Because even Kirk isn't saying that, but unless, and I were not led to believe the Gideons reproduced radically differently from humans. They look exactly like humans only with worse clothes. *crew snickers*, so what you're talking about is basically forcing women to carry pregnancies to term unless it's always consensual on Gideon. Which is a possibility. But you know, pregnancy does have a disproportionate impact on a female body. So in their case their environmental problems and their oppression of women is completely connected. I mean the ending unfortunately doesn't really pan out in terms of a greater message because basically they decide "Well it's okay if we let them go through this plan as long as we save the one beautiful woman that Kirk's kissed and then she could just go cheerfully infect the rest of the planet."

GRACE:

If you prioritize Kirks girlfriend of the week everyone can go home happy.

JARRAH:

Yeah so they just let them go through with their plan. *deadpan* It's totally great, but you know whatever.

GRACE:

singsong Questionable.

JARRAH:

Season 3. What can you do? Other TOS episodes that folks wanted to talk about?

GRACE:

Well The Cloud Minders comes to cloud mind.

JARRAH:

Yes.

GRACE:

The Cloud Minders, wherein we've got two different societies on the same planet. One living underground doing the mining and it's basically all of them manual labor for this other culture living in the clouds in a beautiful paradise where they can devote everything to art and education and they just don't want to share.

Because you know, *waspy voice* “The people down in the mines they wouldn’t even know what to do with education if we gave them. You know?” There's a lot to be said there in that at least.

JARRAH:

Yeah. This is actually I think, an episode that holds up pretty well even from a modern perspective when you're looking at class analysis and actually, I think highlights some of the problems with some of the discourse around the resource industry and developing cleaner technologies. Because you know generally speaking you know there's a whole discussion around, okay so the people who work in these industries not necessarily doing so because it's like a super fun gig. Like, a lot of them it's like their families worked in that job they've been trained in that job. So how do you take those people with you when you're transitioning to clean industries? So I think that this episode speaks to that in addition to again just like that connection between environmental destruction and in this case class oppression.

GRACE:

And how the two really go hand in hand. I mean, a pretty prime example of that is what we've seen in communities where there's been fracking experimentation going on. And how that really will have a massive repercussion on the communities around it, on people's health. But there are people who are in charge who just think it's worth it if we're getting energy from that and we don't have to deal with the consequences. If it's happening to these people it doesn't matter.

JARRAH:

Yeah absolutely. Sometimes people like to think of themselves as more enlightened but they're actually just farther away.

GRACE:

Oh yeah you hear that all the time with people arguing about money and funding going into inner city schools just like “Well why would we put all that money into these people far away when it could be going to us who we know are going to use it well because it's us.” I kept thinking back when they have the bits where they're, like “Well what if you brought these people up to your literal you know ivory tower here and educated them and show them how to be more logical and enlightened.” And he goes all “It's not like they would know what to do. I mean they wouldn't have appreciated the way we would.” And I kept thinking back to that thing a few years ago where someone called out Nicholas Sparks and his wife for their private school not having very many non-white students in it and their response was “well you see they just have a different mindset and wouldn't take to our level of education. You know?” It was just like dear God man, listen to yourself.

JARRAH:

Sue did you have a TOS or TAS?

SUE:

I have *both*. I want to talk about the tribble episodes

JARRAH:

Alright! Tribble it up!

SUE:

And they're definitely, on the surface, they're treated as joke episodes they're supposed to be comedic and lighthearted but they actually, and the TAS episode specifically More Tribbles More Troubles, is really dealing with an invasive species. I think it's Koloth in that episode actually calls it “ecological warfare” or “ecological sabotage” because these new breed of tribbles that they've engineered just keep eating but they don't reproduce but they still keep eating and he hasn't slowed their metabolism at all. But overall the tribbles from wherever Cyrano Jones took them from have no natural predator anywhere else in the galaxy. So it's the same

as introducing a species to any ecosystem where it has no natural predator and they just keep reproducing and they completely change the environment.

GRACE:

And it is interesting that these episodes are about ecological sabotage, because a lot of the time when an invasive species *does* show up and start effecting a native area it really does just kind of start as a minor inconvenience and you laugh off. About ten years ago back in Washington we had a problem with a type of caterpillar silk worm that was just popping up everywhere and people were like "AH they're everywhere!" Stepping on them everywhere, and then there started the actual fallout from people trying to have their own home remedies and ways to exterminate them. A lot of people got hurt. It wasn't a great summer. Not gonna lie. Was not a fun summer hearing all those news stories about people accidentally lighting themselves on fire.

SUE:

Oh my.

GRACE:

Yeah. Washington is weird.

SUE:

Well the Klingons go so far as to create/engineer a predator: a glommer to go after these tribbles. And apparently it doesn't work that well in the end. But I mean that is also a thing that happens where they go and bring in predators and then they have to bring in predators for that predator and it becomes like the Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly a situation where it just keeps getting worse and worse and goes out of control.

GRACE:

So the ideal situation here is if they took a Cowboy Bebop approach and made it so that the tribble is like an off-world delicacy that has to be imported from their planet until people just can't get enough of it. *Then* you really turn your lemons into lemonade. Tribble-aid if you will. *Sue shudders* And you thought finding one in your coffee was bad.

JARRAH:

So one of the things I want to talk about is Spock and other Vulcans as vegetarians. Which we see again come up in Enterprise but it's first mentioned or implied and TOS. In *Wolf in the Fold* there's a, this isn't 100 percent clear though this is what this means, but he does comment that even plants are life and says "We all feed on death even vegetarians" so that isn't you know 100 percent clear that he's saying he's a vegetarian but then in *All Our Yesterdays* he's eating with Zarabeth and basically asks if there's meat in this and she's like "well there isn't much else on this planet" and he says he's behaving disgracefully because he ate meat and enjoyed it. Then later in the animated series episode the Slaver Weapon the Kzinti says to Spock "you're a Vulcan. I feel no pressing need to talk to an eater of roots who leaves humans at least are omnivorous." and so later in Enterprise we find that tT'Pol and most Vulcans are also vegetarian and she specifically links it to their logic and greater enlightenment than humans that they don't feel the need to consume meat. So I thought that was interesting

GRACE:

And then we just look back at another example of how Archer and Trip are just needlessly dickish to her. Sort of a "We're highlighting our cultural differences here!" but if you said any of that to another person they would think you were a massive dick. Vulcan aside you don't get to just to poop all over people's ideologies. *proud* Yeah I kept it safe for work.

JARRAH:

But yeah I mean it's interesting because I think we do see in Star Trek that, you know, when we think of the most times we see aliens eating meat probably the Klingons come to mind. and they would be sort of at the polar opposite or the other end of the spectrum from the Vulcans in terms of logic being very emotion driven and being seen as, like, more violent. For sure there is sort of this connection there with that like eating meat is more of like a baser thing to do. Versus vegetarianism is connected to logic and enlightenment and freedom from emotions.

GRACE:

bitterly Which is very fun to hear when you're anemic and you can't not eat meat.

JARRAH:

It's not meant to be a personal attack. I feel like it is also a small message in the greater society that we live in. Where like, you know, people often get upset if you have a lunch option that doesn't include meat. Not just for health reasons that people are like expecting to eat meat at every meal in the West. So I still feel like it's small T'Pol's voice in the crew of the Enterprise that is North America.

SUE:

True. All right well shall we talk about the whale in the room?

REST OF CREW:

THE WHALES!

SPEAKER: F1

The whales in the room that we want to shoot into space.

SUE:

I mean there is nothing that's even like subtext in The Voyage Home. It's all text.

JARRAH:

It's like, hey humanity you might just think that they're weird looking blobs full of perfume and lipstick *grace loses her mind laughing* but some aliens somewhere might think they're valuable.

GRACE:

Once upon a time these gentle giants of the deep were our only connections to space and now we're screwin' that up.

JARRAH:

Double dumb ass on you humans!

SUE:

Overarchingly though it's not just "save the whales" it's "save the oceans" because it's really true. Like if our oceans go to hell then. Like that's it!

GRACE:

Time will make double dumbasses of us all.

JARRAH:

I mean we're mocking it because it's like cheesy but it's obviously an omnipresent message and especially at the time. I mean now since that time obviously whales are still at risk although whaling is significantly less

than it was at the time that that movie was released there are significantly more international agreements and restrictions on whaling.

GRACE:

Especially when it comes to whales named after old timey comedy duos. That gets them protected like you wouldn't believe.

JARRAH:

chuckles You'd have to have the Klingon ship saving the whales from climate change. That's a lot harder to represent, than like a harpoon pingin' off the hull.

SUE:

..while our oceans are at risk from climate change *too*.

JARRAH:

That's what I mean.

GRACE:

So if Star Trek wants to start trying to get on that next issue we can just nip that in the bud right here. That'd be great.

SUE:

But, just real quick because I thought this was interesting when I found it. There's a website called environmentalgraffiti.com based in the UK which is apparently one of the top three environmental sites worldwide and it nominated *The Voyage Home* as one of the greatest environmental movies of all time.

JARRAH:

OK.

GRACE:

Why not?

SUE:

Sure.

JARRAH:

I mean unfortunately there aren't that many of those

GRACE:

Do you want to bet that Al Gore saw that list and was all "Aw man! Missed it by *that* much." *crew laughs*

SUE:

One of. Just *one* of.

GRACE:

Al Gore voice I was trying to make a difference and I was upstaged by a whale and a man in a bathroobe.

SUE:

I love that movie *laughs*.

JARRAH:

Yeah I know you talked about that in our classic Trek movies episode-

GRACE:

It's a friggin delight, man.

JARRAH:

Yeah and I mean Gillian Taylor is there to save the whales and to protect the whales. Those two whales. You know more about a conservationist than like an all around environmentalist but you know presumably she knows those things are linked and she's awesome-

GRACE:

-aside from being a foil take Kirk down a couple pegs. Because she's a whale biologist, she calls them like she sees them.

JARRAH:

Exactly.

SUE:

But they also. I mean, yes they're messing with the timeline of course but the argument she makes of "Who in your century knows anything about these animals?" is one that they take to heart and they bring her to the future because it's not just about "hey we need these whales to send this message back so that Earth doesn't get destroyed and then we don't care about them anymore" like they're concerned. I would like to believe that when Kirk says we want them to repopulate the species that it's true. And that like that's going to be her main mission now.

GRACE:

And you really do want to believe that Kirk as part of Starfleet that Starfleet would be taking that into account that you were going to take on some kind of undertaking like this you really do need to be prepared. You really do need to know what is actually needed so make your goal feasible and not proverbially let the minks loose in the Russian countryside as it were. That's another fun story of environmentalism gone awry.

JARRAH:

Anything else on the voyage home?

SUE:

Not if we want a reasonably timed episode.

JARRAH:

I would say that The Voyage Home is the most clear environmental message in Star Trek and it's up there with a couple of Voyagers and I think the most clear example in TNG is Force of Nature.

SUE:

100 percent. So this is the episode, the oft maligned episode, about warp fields destroying an area of space.

JARRAH:

Yup. So the scientists have discovered this. It's hurting their planet. Federation's kind of like "Well we'll continue to study the problem." The woman scientist is saying "You know it's already destroying our planet. I'm going to

kamikaze mission into a weak area of space to cause a rift to prove this is a problem” and then she does. And they're all going “Ooo shit.”

SUE:

Yeah, the theme of this episode and some of the ones in Voyager are really like “This is more urgent than your believing. Therefore I have to do something drastic to prove to you how urgent this is.”

JARRAH:

Yeah and I think the most key exchange in this episode is between Rabal who's the brother of the woman scientist and La Forge where Rabal says “I don't think we can look at space travel the same way anymore. We're going to have to change” and Laforge goes “I've been in Starfleet for a long time we depend on warp drive. I just don't know how easy it's going to be to change.” And he's like “It will be easy at all.”

SUE:

I marked the same conversation. Because it might not be *easy* but it's *necessary*.

GRACE:

I remember on first seeing this episode just when they first bring up the idea of “Yeah warp speed is screwing up our portion of the galaxy and it's very harmful.” I was like “But they warp all the time. This is going to turn out to be some kind of pseudo science thing and they're going to be like I don't trust scientists who aren't aligned with Starfleet or something like that” and then, no this is a very real threat and we need to actively work against it. I was very pleasantly surprised like “Oh! You guys are taking this more seriously than I thought you would.”

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean, I think over all, like, the episodes it doesn't have super great pacing. The end conclusion is kind of then, like, forgotten about for the rest of Star Trek time.

GRACE:

And the aliens are dressed like they shopped entirely off a reject rack at Chicos.

SUE:

So about that, though, the fact is they keep saying that it's harming space in that region of space and that specifically highly trafficked corridor. Not that it's harming all of space.

JARRAH:

Yeah but it sort of implies there might be other regions.

SUE:

Yes.

GRACE:

Yeah they're talking about how that effects could spread.

JARRAH:

Yeah and I still feel like, yo know, if the discussion is “it won't be easy” but that it *is* because we don't ever have to talk about it again.

SUE:

Right.

GRACE:

“Oh that was more convenient than we thought!”

SUE:

I mean Voyager comes up with trans warp so it will be fine.

JARRAH:

But yeah I mean, I do think the message is important though because when we're looking at climate change and you know the amount that has progressed since this point is truly terrifying. Since when this episode came out the things that scientists and policy makers are asking individuals and industries to do are not easy. It is not just enough to be like “Hey I am going to take a reusable cup today.” The like, relatively, easy changes are all important but there needs to be big changes if we're going to avert catastrophe. And I'm not sure that that message is totally sunk to the world yet and I mean there's a really key part there and this episode at the end where they're like “Okay well we're going to do this but what about the Ferengi? What about the Romulans? and what about the United States?”

GRACE:

And I love that part because then we have that moment of “well we're just going to have to trust that they will realize this is important.”

JARRAH:

Maybe we can send this episode to Donald Trump?

GRACE:

Maybe we could send this episode to a lot of people. Just you know, have it re-air for a couple months.

SUE:

Just because it's cold outside, that doesn't mean climate change isn't real. In fact it means it's extra real because it shouldn't be this cold. And there is a record temperatures everywhere else on the opposite side of the spectrum. Rage.

JARRAH:

Rage.

SUE:

Science rage.

GRACE:

singing Puuure rage.

JARRAH:

You what else gives me science rage? When like terraformers terraform over lifeforms.

GRACE:

UGH. That's the worst! I hate it! You're just trying to hang out and be like...a sand..sentient..glob and then just Starfleet. Man. They come and screw it all up.

SUE:

The worst part about this is that they knew something was going on and just kept going. That terraforming team was the worst.

JARRAH:

We are talking about home soil of course with the light sentient, what is it, inorganic life form?

CREW:

Yeah.

SUE:

Pretty decent episode for the first season of TNG.

JARRAH:

Yeah it's not so bad.

GRACE:

They do look like they're wearing jumpsuits made out of old trench coats though.

JARRAH:

bitterly Yes.

SUE:

First season TNG.

GRACE:

Yeah for the first season it's all right.

JARRAH:

But I did also like this because it showed that Starfleet when they're terraforming they aren't just looking for no sentient life. They're looking for no life.

GRACE:

Which is good to hear from an ecological standpoint. And as we have seen on *many* many Enterprise episodes don't just go down to the planet without doing some kind of survey first. You'll either kill your dog or wind up with an ensign full of rocks. *whispers* Just don't do it.

JARRAH:

Another just like super short exchange that I think is important in TNG is in True. Q, where Amanda is sort of wowed by how much this planet has let their air get polluted and says to Geordi that she can't believe how bad they let it get. Now they're spending all this...I guess not money but resources to get these filters to fix the problem rather than addressing the root causes of the pollution in the first place. And Geordi is just like "Yeep".

GRACE:

Again, Star Trek hitting a certain nail on a certain head there.

JARRAH:

Just like you know, war, disease, and inequality. We are past this in the 21st century. We also get in Lonely Among Us Riker saying that we no longer enslave animals for food purposes when they're explaining why they replicated meat at a banquet. Although later in another episode we hear that O'Brien's mom cooked with un-replicated meat. So presumably some people on earth are still allowed to cook actual animals for food and not use replicated meat but-

GRACE:

Culturally sustainability-wise you have to ask yourself, of the cultures that are you know make a living from hunting and exporting meat, how would they be affected by the replicator thing?

SUE:

Well presumably in the federation you're not making a living anymore. Right?

GRACE:

But you gotta wonder. *You gotta wonder.*

JARRAH:

Well there's complicated discussions now around, have been for a long time, around hunting and cultural practices and that's like sustainably hunting certain animals as part of indigenous traditions should be allowed to continue because it wasn't those traditions fault that the animals are at risk and that it's important to decolonize and redeem those cultures to restore those cultural practices. It's a complicated issue but that's a discussion that goes on now. I don't think O'Brien's mom is probably in like, the oppressed classes of humanity. But you never know.

GRACE:

She could be hunting her own haggis for all we know. The O'Briens are a hearty lot.

SUE:

It is true that some areas that do allow hunting and provide permits are using it as a form of population control as well.

GRACE:

That's true.

SUE:

So there's a lot of different aspects to that. But I feel that we are also obligated to quickly mention Insurrection because of the set-up.

GRACE:

Do we have to?

*fondly*I know. The setup is that they are strip mining the atmosphere of this joyous life giving, I don't know, fountain of youth planet. Which is bad. But that's that's all I really want to say about Insurrection. Ever.

JARRAH:

Yeah, you can return to our "Dude Buggy Adventures" episode where we talk about the TNG films for more on Insurrection.

GRACE:

Have fun listening! We had a questionable amount of fun watching.

JARRAH:

I mean, but that one is a terrifying mention because it talks about how basically the Federation is willing to relocate an entire indigenous population in order to get a resource from the atmosphere of this planet. Not all the federation but at least this one shady Admiral and probably some other people.

SUE:

Which kind of leads us right into the DS9 episode Progress.

GRACE:

Yes!

JARRAH:

Yup. I love this episode.

GRACE:

Refresh my memory, that's the one where Kira starts her beef that she consistently has with old people right?

Sue laughs

JARRAH:

Yeah. Kira versus the old dudes take one.

SUE:

So she's sent to this planet to remove a farmer and his two, I guess assistance workers?

GRACE

Cohorts?

SUE:

Because they want to set up something on the moon to get power or something. It's the Bajoran government. It's not a federation thing.

JARRAH:

Yeah and basically they want to do something better on this moon than just let this guy farm. So they're going to take his land away and they're like "well maybe somewhere better" and he's like "No this is my land this is my livelihood."

SUE:

Well it comes down to at one point, Kira goes back to the representative from the Bajoran government and she says "Why don't you instead of doing it this way which will immediately kill him by you know destroying any kind of atmosphere or whatever on the moon, why don't you do this other way where people could continue to live on the surface?" and the representative says "Well it would be a year before we get any power from that. Before we'd see any return." So it's basically like, well we could do it without killing you but it would take too long.

GRACE:

Also we would have to do it to appease just this one crackpot old dude.

SUE:

And his friends.

GRACE:

And his mute companions.

JARRAH:

I mean they are really making a “needs of the many outweighs the needs of the few” argument.

SUE:

Right.

JARRAH:

But then like, how do you weigh up expediency versus “well you could still get the same results.”

GRACE:

Especially when you're looking at the Bajoran culture as one that is really trying to economically rebuild and could probably *really* use a new energy source.

JARRAH:

Yeah but he's like “Oh I thought the occupation was over” basically. “So now it's someone else telling me what to do with my land.”

GRACE:

You just know that he's all those guys who if he saw security camera at the bus depot would go *insufferable voice* “Oh big brother is watching.” And then you have to be like “No that's just people from stealing the buses.”

JARRAH:

She car deals with this too. This is where Vedek Winn sends Kira to get the soil reclaimators from Shakaar and is basically like “You were in the resistance with him you should get the soil reclaimatore back because we need them urgently in this area.” And when she gets there Shakaar points out “We also need them urgently here and this is actually just a political move by Winn.” And in this case Kiras had enough of sucking it up and taking away people's land, and decides to go fight with Shakaar.

GRACE:

Fighting the good fight and you know doing anything that Winn doesn't want.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Any other DS9 we want to talk about? Or should we go on to Voyager?

GRACE:

Lets voyage forth.

SUE:

I think DS9 had some other things it was dealing with.

GRACE:

Yeah it can only tackle so many hard topics in a single week.

JARRAH:

Yeah there's definitely like a fair number of mentions that you could, if you were just trying to make the most comprehensive list possible, but not a lot that are focal points of plots. Alright Voyager time!

SUE:

So do we want to start with nuclear power or pollution?

JARRAH:

I mean I would say that the Malons, the pollution storylines about the Malon toxic waste garbage dumpers are the most clear environmental messages that I put up there with the whale movie.

GRACE:

Why don't the space garbage men get their own movie?

SUE:

I was thinking both Time and Again and Friendship One are very very clear but also I mean so is 30 Days about the water planet.

JARRAH:

That's true. Yeah there there's actually a fair amount in Voyager. Can you remind me about the nuclear power episodes because I did not re-watch those but I do vaguely remember Time and Again.

SUE:

Yeah. Time and Again I think is like the second or third episode of the entire series. That's the one with the-

JARRAH:

-candy corn?

SUE:

-with the candy shirts. Yes.

GRACE:

The candy corn-sets.

SUE:

Janeway and Paris I think are somehow transported back in time on this planet and there's a nuclear disaster that is what wipes out the civilization. *uncomfortable laugh*I say that so cavalierly.

GRACE:

breezy voice "Yeah there's a nuclear disaster. What do ya do? It happens."

SUE:

Right. So it's about safe nuclear power basically and then Friendship One is about the probe that is sent out from Earth to you know, leave the solar system and I'm not sure if it's explicitly stated that it is powered by a nuclear reactor but it certainly implied that way. And this civilization that finds it is basically suffering from radiation poisoning because of it and it's destroying it and Voyager has been sent to reclaim this probe because Starfleet is, back when they're in communication with Starfleet, realizes they're nearby so they are supposed to go pick it up and they find the civilization and are trying to help them and their reaction is "Well you did this to us. Why should we even trust you?"

GRACE:

I still think it's pretty great though. Like "Hey we know you've been marooned in space away from everyone you love, but can you just take this detour on the way back?"

SUE:

Right?

GRACE:

“We’ll add Probe Retrieval specialist to everyone’s resume?”

SUE:

But that one is not only like safe nuclear power, but it's sort of like contaminating a civilization even when you don't intend to. But you could potentially be harming something else just by sending your message out. Really.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And also this idea that like the waste that you put in someone else's backyard is still your waste.

GRACE:

Yeah it's still something that you have to maintain responsibility for. Which is another thing that we probably should be culturally talking about more.

JARRAH:

Yep. And in 30 Days we have the water planet. Paris again, being a key part of these episodes.

GRACE:

Maybe it has something to do with his accord? You know, Paris accord?

SUE:

Wow.

JARRAH:

Yes nice.

GRACE:

Thank you. Thank you. *prolonged pause* Anyway please continue!

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean that's the one where he goes out of his way to save the water planet people.

SUE:

And that's the other one where they outright say like “The situation is more dire than you understand. We're all going to die very soon.” And Paris goes and decides that he's going to take the action to like blow-up something they need so that they'll rebuild it more efficiently.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

GRACE:

impressed Hardcore.

SUE:

Echoes of Force of Nature right?

GRACE:

Yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah. It sort of reminded me of Homeward, the TNG episode where Worf and his brother are like helping those people escape and this idea of like if a planet environment is degrading, although in the case of 30 Days it is the people's fault, but like how does the Prime Directive apply and things like that. I don't know. There are some interesting discussions there but it was *pause* I was a little frustrated watching Homeward that they were just like "No we totally leave them to die. That's how the Prime Directive works."

GRACE:

singsong voice "Prime Directive means not our problem."

SUE:

Yeah. Far too often yes.

GRACE:

"Our prime directive is "home by five" thank you very much."

JARRAH:

Yeah. But I mean 30 Days is a bit of a different situation but it just reminded me in terms of like, you know guy interfering where he's been told not to because of the desire to save this people and their planet. And then we have the Malon: the garbage dumpers of the galaxy. Who look pretty gross.

GRACE:

How good do you think you're gonna look haulin' space garbage?

JARRAH:

Yeah I think Voyager did its best to try and make these guys seem like badass villains. They're still a little comical but maybe not as funny as the Ferengi?

GRACE:

But they're also I think, and this is soapbox time here, it's pretty good showing of them talking about culturally how important maintaining infrastructure for your culture is and how that is a job that while it's not great it's not glamorous it's still very important. Like garbage and waste disposal is still very important here in the U.S. and we make fun of them as being, you know, "Ugh it's for the people who *can't do*". But now we have seen cities go *completely* bananas just because of a single garbage strike. And that's nothing to joke about.

JARRAH:

Oh no! It's a super important job. The Malon however, their society has decided to like cut every corner possible and not value the workers and not value the infrastructure and instead just like drive the stuff as far away from them as possible.

GRACE:

"This bad thing? We need you to long-haul it just us as *faaaaar* from us as possible."

SUE:

That sounds familiar too.

JARRAH:

Luckily Janeways there.

GRACE:

Thank Janeway! *crew giggles*

JARRAH:

Any other Voyager thoughts? There are some other examples but I think we should continue to Enterprise.

SUE:

Agreed.

JARRAH:

I already mentioned the thing about Vulcans as vegetarians but there is the T'Pol quote "You humans claim to be enlightened yet you still consume the flesh of animals." Also, probably by the 24th century we could have also figured out if we had replicated meat we could have also figured out better treatments for anemia.

GRACE:

Yeah you would hope so. Really.

SUE:

Hey if a pill can stop kidney failure..

GRACE:

I want to regrow a kidney and I want to regrow my crappy blood thank you very much.

JARRAH:

Hear hear.

GRACE:

Now give me a vegan steak! That will be a thing right?

SUE:

So somebody, when I was looking for examples of environmentalism in Star Trek, somebody brought up Hatchery as an example of animal rights. That is a little *uncomfortable sound* to me because they're not animals right. They are another sentient species that the Enterprise crew was dealing with.

JARRAH:

I can't remember this episode. Are you able to refresh my memory?

SUE:

This is during the whole Xindi arc when they literally find a hatchery for, I think it might be the reptilians? For one of the Xindi species and there is a whole argument about whether or not to destroy the eggs

GRACE:

And a complete and total missed potential for an entire episode based around *cutesy voice* little baby lizard aliens.

.

SUE:

end of subject tone They did that in Voyager.

JARRAH:

But yeah I mean that's the same as saying you found your enemies babies. Can you kill them?

SUE:

Right. That's not really *pause* directly?

JARRAH:

It doesn't really matter that they're reptilian.

GRACE:

It's not really a question so much as an "Oh god!"

SUE:

I think the big one from Enterprise is the augment storyline, at least for me, on genetic modification and whether it's ethical whether... I don't know! So many things!

JARRAH:

Well I mean like, the consent of the subject is an issue and some of those episodes. That people don't know what's being done to them. This idea that there's like this grand design, but no one has really thought through the consequences, especially when you look at the Klingon side of things. That there's a failure in quite a few of these episodes to consider taking precautionary principle into account. That if the possible dangers are pretty great and you don't know what they are, then maybe not going ahead is a better idea.

GRACE:

Caution could be the way to go.

JARRAH:

Yeah or like, you know, trying to find out more about what the potential dangers are before proceeding. And also the spin off effects on others. So I think you see that in the augment storyline which is, you know, something that comes up in discussions of genetically modified organisms. I will say I think a lot of the discussion there is like there's some overblown rhetoric in our world. But there are some legitimate fears.

SUE:

dramatic voice How far is too far Jarrah?!*crew laughs*

JARRAH:

But there are some legitimate questions that are raised about, "ok well if we start allowing companies to sterilize plants they're taking away the reproductive capacity of plants takes away a fundamental thing and you're forcing like farmers to buy every year." And what happens if the non-sterilized genetically modified organisms like blow over into the next field? This is, actually, there have been lawsuits about this about like GMO seeds blowing into neighboring fields and contaminating other people's organic crops. So the spin off effects of modifying genes and basically like wanting to play God and thinking we're doing something great but you're actually... there's all these unintended effects on everything around you that you didn't anticipate.

SUE:

Can I just really quickly do a very very brief Sue science corner and remind everyone that non-GMO is not a thing. Literally everything has been genetically modified since-

GRACE:

-to some degree.

SUE:

even before Gregor Mendel went and like did his whole pea experiment, that's P-E-A, for different colors. Like we have bred, before we knew what genes were, we bred our agriculture our fruits and our vegetables to be what we desired. Like, go look up what fruits used to look like and what they look like. Now the watermelon is especially interesting but *that* is genetic modification. So the idea of like "I'm going to search out non GMO food." Just stop. There is nothing wrong with eating GMOs. Okay?

JARRAH:

But it also doesn't mean that like breeding is benign. Like we need to consider the ramifications of any types of interference or like non-interference in natural reproduction. Because I mean if you look at like breeding of dogs or like pure breeding, like, pure breeding has caused a lot of negative effects. People didn't realize over generations. So like absolutely you're totally right. And that's what I mean when I'm saying do your research. Look things up don't you know get panicked.

GRACE:

Well one question that you got to ask when you're talking about the Augments and letting these angry super power teenagers loose in the world, is does that make them count as an invasive species? Eh? Eeh?

SUE:

It kind of rings of it right?

GRACE:

Yeah!

JARRAH:

Yeah possibly.

GRACE:

Or the x-men. Or they're the x-men. *Sue laughs*

JARRAH:

Or both?

GRACE:

And totally when you said the spinoff issue and I was like "oh God they weren't going to make a spin off of the Augments were they??"

SUE:

They were the evil X-men.

GRACE:

powerful groaning But we HAVE THOSE. They're called the X-men. *Sue laughs* BOOM! Said it!

SUE:

All right. So-

GRACE:

cutting Sue off MAGNETO WAS RIGHT.

SUE:

Do we have anything else to bring up for Enterprise?

JARRAH:
Nyooope.

SUE:
I'm going to say that's a no. There's even a few things to mention from Discovery. *Grace makes on Ooooh noise* If you're not watching Discovery you might want to just maybe skip the rest of the episode. FYI. Possible spoilers. I remember when I was watching it really struck me it's I think it's at the beginning of Magic to Make the Sanest Man Go Mad they find the Gorgomander and right away is one of the lines is like "Well under environmental protection law we have to save it and transport it to another space where it can be safe." So like there are environmental protections for space whales which I think is pretty cool.

JARRAH:
That was pretty cool. Lorcas like "Screw that we're at war" and then everyone's like "No I think we should really save the space whale." And he's like "I guess."

SUE:
He loves dissecting animals.

GRACE:
That's a form of love.

JARRAH:
dejected voice "Go save your space whale."

GRACE:
laughing Just imagine him getting the Audubon society calendar every year in the mail now.

SUE:
Sorry Jarrah.. Did you have more on that?

JARRAH:
No that's pretty much all I was going to say. I was going to say it's cool that everyone convinces him they should save the space whale even though that then becomes a minor point to the fact that Mudd is hiding inside it.

SUE:
Right.

GRACE:
Well also we can't forget "save the space tardigrades" don't exploit them.

SUE:
Yes the tardigrade storyline is definitely more of the, I guess, animal rights issue.

GRACE:
Most definitely yes. The second that thing showed up and-

JARRAH:
-tough to watch.

GRACE:
Yeah.

JARRAH:
Yeah.

SUE:
We also have the Pavans in the last episode, that they don't think there is any life there and then they find out that there is in this strange way. And this mission they have becomes the first contact situation and everything changes because of that protocol.

JARRAH:
Yeah it's interesting. I think the tardigrade thing is particularly, it's the one that's explored the the most depth, this idea of you know it's become ok to experiment on this unique life form even though it's causing it pain because of war.

GRACE:
It really forces you to question that whole "needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few" or the one Tardigrade.

SUE:
Well especially because it can't communicate it can't consent to that.

GRACE:
Why are there no Betazoids onboard guys?

SUE:
It's one thing when Spock volunteers to go into the core, it's another when an animal who can't say no is forced into a situation where it's being harmed.

JARRAH:
Yes. So when they free it I was very happy.

SUE:
It was so pretty!

GRACE:
I called it Horsey-boo.

JARRAH:
Well I mean Andi called it Fluffy in her reviews right?

GRACE:
I just wanna hug that giant water bear.

JARRAH:
Yeah.

GRACE:

Well I think we've done our due diligence with talking about environmentalism in that I'm kind of bummed out now.

JARRAH:

Well Star Trek also gives us hope for the future.

GRACE:

That's right! I love hope!

SUE:

it's doing its job and making us look at ourselves and say "what are we doing?" Help us.

JARRAH:

We can be doing better. Which all of us have, things we can do better. So it's important.

GRACE:

They're holding up that mirror to humanity and we're just taking *intensely* a long hard look at it.

JARRAH:

All right. Any other final thoughts.

SUE:

"When man was killing these creatures he was destroying his own future."

GRACE:

"I'm just thinking about the last buffalo"

JARRAH:

and George and Gracie.

GRACE:

Them too. But mostly *Kirk voice* the laast buffalo.

SUE:

I'm still amazed by Kirk's birth control speech.

GRACE:

Yeah, it holds up.

SUE:

I just....*amazed* 1968 man.

JARRAH:

It should just only ever be watched as a clip of that one scene

SUE:

still amazed 1968.

JARRAH:

All right, well let us close out the episode then. Sue, where can people find you elsewhere on the Internet?

SUE:

You can find me on Twitter @spaltor. Thats S-P-A-L-T-O-R.

JARRAH:

And Grace?

GRACE:

You can find me on Twitter @Bonecrusherjenk and also *cutesy voice* hugging water bears. *crew awws*

JARRAH:

And I'm Jarrah, you can find me on Twitter @Jarrahpenguin that's J-A-R-R-A-H penguin, an animal that is highly endangered due to climate change. And if you want to contact our show we always like to hear from you. You can e-mail us at crew@womenatwarp.com. You can visit our website Womenatwarp.com. Come and read and comment on our blog. You could go on our Facebook or our Twitter @Womenatarp or like we said earlier you could leave us a rating or review on apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. Did I forget anything-

GRACE:

MAGNETO WAS RIGHT.

JARRAH:

All right. Thank you so much for listening. We'll talk to you in two weeks.

SUE:

"Rejection from society is what created the X Men."