

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY**

**BATTLESTAR GALACTICA AS A
POSTMODERN-SCIENCE FICTION TV SHOW**

Master's Thesis

AYŞEGÜL BERRAK KÖTEN

İSTANBUL, 2010

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Thesis Supervisor: ASSOC. PROF. SELİM EYÜBOĞLU

İSTANBUL, 2010

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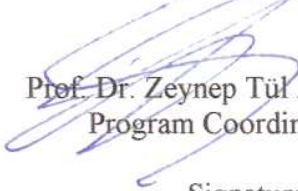
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ABSTRACT

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA AS A POSTMODERN-SCIENCE FICTION TV SHOW

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Department of Cinema - Television

Thesis Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Selim Eyübođlu

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In today's world, where rooted changes are occurring in all fields, we observe important changes in terms of style, quality and content of TV show in the light of postmodernism. In TV shows of the recent period, it is not possible to talk about a single genre. Especially in the definitions of science fiction genre, which is quite controversial, the discourse of speculative fiction is drawing attention. Some science fiction products, which adopt and use postmodernism characteristics, benefit from subgenre components and borrow basic characteristics of other genres or redefine it through adopting and immingling such characteristics. In this sense, this thesis, which proposes the acceptance of Battlestar Galactica series, which draws attention all around the world, as a postmodern science fiction, considers postmodern science fiction genre in terms of speculative fiction. The story, characters and subtexts of the series, which is considered within postmodern sensation in this study, have been analyzed in terms of problem of othering, identity and gender concepts. Along with it, references have been made for the purpose of comparing important postmodern TV shows.

Keywords: The postmodern, speculative fiction, science fiction, TV show, Battlestar Galactica

ÖZET

POSTMODERN BİR BİLİM KURGU TV DİZİSİ OLARAK BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Köten, Ayşegül Berrak

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Her alanda köklü deđişimlerin yaşandıđı günümüz dünyasında postmodernizm ışığı altında birçok TV dizisinin biçim, nitelik ve içerik yönünden deđişimde olduđu gözlenmektedir. Son dönem TV dizilerinde sadece net bir türden bahsetmek mümkün görünmemektedir. Özellikle tartışmalı bilim kurgu türü tanımlamalarında spekülâtif kurmaca söylemleri yeniden dikkat çekmeye başlamıştır. Postmodernizm özelliklerini özümseyerek kullanan bazı bilim kurgu yapımlar, alt-tür bileşenlerinden beslenirken, başka türlerin temel özelliklerini de ödünç alır veya bu özellikleri harmanlayarak kendine has yapısıyla benimseyip yeniden tanımlar. Bu bağlamda dünya çapında büyük ilgi gören Battlestar Galactica dizisinin postmodern bir bilim kurgu olarak kabul edilmesi gerektiđini öneren bu tez, postmodern bilim kurgu türünü spekülâtif kurmaca bağlamında görmektedir. Bu çalışmada postmodern duyum içinde deđerlendirilen dizinin hikayesi, karakterleri ve altmetinleri ötekileştiremememe sorunu, kimlik ve toplumsal cinsiyet kavramları açısından mercek altına alınmıştır. Aynı zamanda önemli postmodern TV dizileri örneklerine de karşılaştırma yapmak amacıyla başvurulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Postmodern, spekülâtif kurmaca, bilim kurgu, TV dizisi, Battlestar Galactica

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. CONFLICTING DEFINITIONS OF POSTMODERN SCIENCE FICTION	
2.1 DEFINING SCIENCE FICTION.....	8
2.2 CONFLICTING DEFINITIONS OF POSTMODERNISM.....	23
2.3 DEFINING SPECULATIVE POSTMODERN SCIENCE FICTION.....	26
3. POSTMODERN SCIENCE FICTIONS ON TV	
3.1. POSTMODERN TV SHOWS.....	33
3.2. SCIENCE FICTION TV SHOWS	43
3.3. POSTMODERN-SCIENCE FICTION TV SHOWS.....	54
4. BATTLESTAR GALACTICA AS A POSTMODERN-SCIENCE FICTION	
TV SHOW	
4.1. THE CRISIS OF OTHERING AND IDENTITY: THE RENAISSANCE	
OF BATTLESTAR GALACTICA AS A RECLAIMING GENRE.....	65
5. CONCLUSION.....	87
REFERENCES.....	92

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Kara Thrace “Starbuck”	81
Figure 4.2: Gaius Baltar	85

1. INTRODUCTION

We are now in 2010 and we are also witnessing that what was foreseen prospectively by many science fiction movies, novels or TV shows in 2000s has materialized today. Our remaining quite silent against and not responding to numerous technological or scientific innovations unveiled today can cope with neither the powerful feelings nor reactions posed by consumption society and the change in the 1980s nor with that intellectual agitation in the 1960s. All these changes once created the ground for the maturation of individuals or societies. From being informed about different ideas to adapting to new inventions, people have already got used to living these various environments come and borrowed from different cultures or places.

As in television medium, although defining the period we live in as postmodern brings out discussions and conflicts on the matter, postmodern heroes, authors, short stories and visual arts are still too common and popular even if they contain certain differences and changes in terms of discourse and style. Since the early 1980s, postmodernism cannot still be defined, there is still not common consensus on it and still a number of new answers, examples and circumstances are being created on the question of “what is postmodernism”. That is, if postmodernism or postmodernity could have been defined, postmodernism would have come to an end. Postmodernism discussions and efforts to define postmodernism do continue, yet it is most of the time not possible to definitely specify what is postmodern like “this is postmodern” or “that is not postmodern” in the light of common characteristics of such definitions.

Postmodernism, as an intellectual movement, literally means a rooted break with the past and values predominated in the past. Postmodernism, symbolizing the period which we are in and which is equipped differently in comparison to the past, defines the new social-cultural formation. Cultural and aesthetic formation called post modernism means a turning point and indicates a change of age. Postmodernism, which may be characterized as

a series of artistic, philosophical, cultural and socio-scientific thoughts, has references to the modern world and the culture. While postmodernism blurs the borders between the art and daily life in addition to the borders between high culture and popular culture, it is also a cultural genre which, more or less, is reflected on facile, centreless, self-reflective, differential, eclectic and pluralist art (Eagleton 2003, p.58). Postmodernism also brings along the dissolution of modernist doctrines and symbolic systems. The most prominent characteristics of postmodernism, which found expression along with the pluralization of worlds of living, are diversity, contingency and ambiguity. In this respect, postmodernism is the constant and irreducible pluralization of cultures, communal traditions, ideologies, living styles and language games (Marshall 1998, pp. 592-593). Along with the increase of diversity, in an environment where relationship amongst groups becomes slippery - or where it is too close to each other- we are encountering with numerous things in terms of acquired-learned, selected and fictionalized style, format, content and disclosure as, on one hand, audience-viewer-reader or attendant and as creator-producer-implementer (player-singer-director- or cast-crew etc.) on the other hand. In this sense, science fiction, as a genre, is the most controversial one among slippery-blur and interlocked and snarled-blended circumstances in both literature and cinema as well as TV. Up until today, including today, themes incorporated by the science fiction genre (such as alternate Earth, far future, Ancient history, time travelling, paralel universe, utopias, dystopias or in between, apocalyptic worlds, alien invasion, robots, androids, cyborgs, cyberpunk, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, technology, etc.) is used in an effective way in many areas. Literature, cinema and TV practices of science fiction genre appears as a reflection of the world we are living in. Our expectations from TV shows do vary.

Experiences we attained bring our fantastic expectations to peak points. Endless innovations and changes may gather expectations at two peak points: We may either be imaginative in an utopian fashion or may be buried down to darkness in a dystopic manner. Future may actually appear as re-writing the past or lessoning from learned truths. The darker the past is, the darker quest the future might be and may be evaluated thus and so. On the other hand, science and technology brings novelties into our lives or we might adapt

to the developing technology in an easier or faster way. When describing the future, we now can calculate even percentages of realization of probabilities. In such an environment, people, with such experiences they live as audience, viewer or reader, may foresee their concerns or expectations with understanding-perceiving-accepting or with facing with what is happening and has happened in the world.

Today, the definition of science fiction genre is still being discussed. When you include postmodernism critics that there cannot be a definite definition into these discussions and conflicts on what science fiction is and is not, there arises a number of different points of view and approaches. There are also basic thoughts followed by these different viewpoints. Within self-specific characteristics of circumstances of modern and postmodern age, which circumstances complement each other or which circumstances are shaped in contrary characteristics, even classifying, categorizing novels, movies or TV shows or analysing them under such circumstances might create conflicts and discussions. As some science fictions are not in compliance with science and incorporate everything that is speculative, they are considered as postmodern science fiction. These science fictions are postmodern due to standing at a place contrary to progressive and modern in dystopian and noir line.

The main argument of this study is to determine with which genre or genres *Battlestar Galactica* (2003-2009), among the recent TV shows, might be evaluated and to put forth that the series is actually successful as a reclaiming genre within a postmodernist discourse. The viewpoint of this study has been the fact that people who dislike science fiction genre and who do not follow this genre are watching this series with interest.¹ The purpose of this study is to determine how *Battlestar Galactica* (Hereafter *BSG*) might be positioned, along with answers to the following questions. While doing so, some important and successful postmodern TV shows will be included in the first two chapters. In order to support and strengthen the examples and to analyse these series with a postmodern approach, it will be compared some series with one another.

¹ See www.eksisozluk.com: *Battlestar Galactica*

How can we define postmodern TV shows? What are the postmodern tendencies-reflections in the series before and after 2000? What are the common characteristics of postmodern series? What are the most significant characteristics making a series postmodern? When, for the first time, did postmodern TV series start to draw attention? What are the postmodern reflections of heroes? What is the postmodern sensation in science fiction TV series? What is it that makes these science fiction series different? What are the series that are examples for transitivity among genres in science fiction series? What is the relationship of science fiction series with horror- film noir- adventure- western-fantasy genres, what are the examples for it? What is the genre of *Battlestar Galactica* series? Why did BSG become successful as reclaiming genre? Does *BSG* constitute a mixture of genres as a reclaiming genre? Why is it so difficult to identify with *BSG* characters? Why is it so open to variation to identify with characters in *BSG*? Why cannot we identify with only Cylons or only with people? How binary oppositions are removed in *BSG*? How identity and gender are supported and shaped with subtexts?

In this study, *BSG*, which is considered and evaluated as postmodern science fiction, has been analysed with interpretive approach through postmodernist approaches. As the first examples of postmodern science fiction are in literature, this study refers to film, TV and science fiction studies methodologically in the light of cultural studies and critical theory through starting with literary and genre theory. The main purpose of this interdisciplinary study is to define what postmodern science fiction TV shows are and to uncover their place and positions within postmodern culture in a detailed way by means of these methodologies. When discussing, an evaluation will be made through taking subgenres of science fiction genre into consideration. Along with that, it will be considered some different science fiction series broadcasted before and after *BSG* and therefore, pave the way for a discussion environment for postmodern genres. Containing different series will help us uncover the position of *BSG* in science fiction genre in a more explicit fashion.

As science fiction genre, it brought different dimensions to the existing arguments and discussions through violating its own genre borders by taking some common characteristics

from many genres and then commandeering them. In fact, the question “what if” might turn any genre into science fiction. Accordingly, in cases where the science fiction category is controversial, the definition-classification of ‘speculative fiction’ has brought a flexibility to this genre. The connection that science fiction establishes with horror, fantasy and western in modern and postmodern periods creates difference when defining ‘the other’. Although approach to the unknown is gathered under many common grounds within these three genres, in fact, science fiction presents it in a different manner. Science fiction intercepts with western genre in terms of discourse while it incorporates other genres like horror and fantasy, it intercepts with western genre.

As much as J.J. Abrahams’ *Lost* (2004-2010) has a wide audience among fans at each segment, Ronald Moore’s *BSG* does also have a vast audience from different categories when two series are considered from this viewpoint. Further, the number of fans of *BSG*, who dislike and even hate from the science fiction genre, is quite challenging.² If ‘Lost’ may incorporate the characteristics of both fantasy, science fiction with psychological thriller genre, *BSG* explicitly makes references to various genres under the roof of science fiction genre. It is possible to see subgenres of science fiction in *BSG*: Tendencies to fantasy science fiction, mythological sci fi, new age sci fi and space opera and western contents do actually indicate how postmodern the series is. The unique structure of *BSG*, among shows, which stroll around genres or which re-define these genres, is an indicator how well the series re-fictionalized 1978-1980 original story and how well it was reproduced.

One of the most important common characteristics is the problems in ‘othering’ in the recent postmodern science fiction series such as *BSG*, *V*, *BSG*’s spin off *Caprica*. On the slippery line plying between other and self, audience may find the reflections of various important political, social and historical subjects in the world through sub-texts. Furthermore, these shows also make references to today’s hot and popular subjects. The

² See www.eksisozluk.com: *Battlestar Galactica*

audience, when watching these postmodern series, faces with his/her own fears and concerns and therefore might have the opportunity to question their identity and to uncover the impacts of the society, environment they live in as well political and economic conjuncture. As most of the series discussed in this study are American products, circumstances and situations the series attempt to reflect do actually contain main characteristics of the American culture.

The most important common characteristics of these postmodern series is the problem of 'othering'. The characters in these series, who most of the time behave cruelly or slyly, show goodwill with a perfect sensitivity, and even the protagonists who pursue the truth are sometimes very self-seeker, this thusly creates excitement and curiosity for the audience. The intimacy and closeness and headiness of the relationship established between the good and bad characters create an important reason for the viewers to watch these series as a powerful influence of created character conflicts and fights. In this sense, in order for TV series to continue episode by episode and in order to create a 'story arc', the question whether soap opera, used as a narrative format, is a genre or format is explained with the answer 'a bit of both'. In TV serials, soap opera factor is adopted and internalised by different genres and is re-defined.

The reason why viewers follow these series is maybe the result of how these series reflect directly the postmodern, world, life and environment or the postmodern people and these series shape them. In postmodern TV shows into which binary oppositions are assimilated, we observe a cyclical progress of events and characters instead of a linear progress in postmodern science fictions, in particular. These postmodern series, which do not develop progressively, the most prominent example of which is *Battlestar Galactica*, do satisfy viewers, and use the characteristics of various genres in terms of content, discourse and style. In this context, when conflicts on the definition of postmodernism are included into the science fiction or speculative fiction conflicts, it will be necessary to consider such approaches when telling definite things about genres of these series.

This study included the conflicts and discussions on and definitions of science fiction, speculative fiction and postmodernism in the first chapters. The second chapter starts with the first examples of postmodern TV shows and dwells upon the prominent characteristics of popular modern and progressive science fiction series. These series have been discussed through considering sub-genres of science fiction. The second chapter also included examples from postmodern science fiction series and tried to uncover why these series are postmodern ones. The transitions, transformations of genre will be examined with examples. And in the third chapter, *Battlestar Galactica*, which is the main example and subject matter of this thesis, has been discussed and evaluated as a postmodern science fiction series. The relationship of BSG with other genres has been discussed with self-other, gender and identity concepts through sub-texts incorporated.

2. CONFLICTING DEFINITIONS OF POSTMODERN SCIENCE FICTION

2.1 DEFINING SCIENCE FICTION

Most books written about science fiction begin by trying to define its subject, offering an answer to the question, ‘What is science fiction?’ Most formulations tend to claim one of several elements - science and technology, human, or change, in what-ever form - make a fiction a science fiction. An answer to ‘What is science fiction?’ show there is no clear consensus and often emphasizes different aspects of the genre. Before exploring science fiction television it may help to consider what we generally mean by science fiction, how it functions as a genre, how it has developed over time and its major identifiable themes. There are lots of studies on science fiction genre and *The Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction* which is one of the most important exhaustive sampling includes around twenty descriptions of science fiction, and lists many of the theories attempting to define it (Stableford, Clute and Nicholls 1993, pp. 311-314).

Science fiction is and has been an important genre across several media. In English language literature it stretches from Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein* (1818) to the work of Ursula Le Guin, J. G. Ballard, Philip K. Dick, Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, and others. But it has also been produced in cinema, television, computer games, comic books or graphic novels and radio. Science fiction genre gained its popular designation in 1926 from Hugo Gernsback, the editor of *Amazing Stories*. Stableford, Clute and Nicholls imply that Gernsback described it as “a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision” and cited Jules Verne, H.G. Wells and Edgar Allan Poe amongst its numerous authors (Stableford, and others 1993, p. 311). Gernsback laid out the defining qualities of commercial science fiction in language that combined manifesto and commercial how to manual. He provided explicit definitions of what he meant by ‘scientifiction’. Gernsback elaborated the language of earlier proponents of futuristic fiction, claiming that science fiction was revolutionary new form writing, destined to

replace the nonscientific, unimaginative, conservative literature of the elite. In his editorial pronouncements Gernback repeatedly insisted that the science of science fiction should be so exact that the fiction would become a stage for invention, thus making the genre, “a world force of unparalleled magnitude” (Csicsery 2008, p. 47).

The science fiction genre has simply proven to be one of the most flexible popular genres – and perhaps for that very reason, one of the most culturally useful. It is important how the science fiction TV shows reflect attitudes toward science, technology, and reason as they have evolved in American culture over the course of the twentieth century. Science fiction genre includes facing a kind of paradox, one akin to the problematic logic built into the form’s combinatory designation - that is, as science and fiction, as fact and fabrication.

It commonly proposes the sort of ‘*what if*’ situations in which scientists are typically engaged as they set about designing experiments and conducting their research: extrapolating from the known in order to explain the unknown.

The definitions that emphasize the imaginary and futuristic features of science fiction and re-evaluate the reality by extrapolation are made by Christopher Evans in 1988 “Perhaps the crispest definition is that science fiction is a literature of ‘what if?’ What if we could travel in time? What if we were living on other planets? What if we made contact with alien races? And so on. The starting point is that the writer supposes things are different from how we know them to be” (Evans 1988, p. 9).

In 1959, Richard Hodgens claimed that science fiction involves extrapolated or fictitious science, or fictitious use of scientific possibilities, or it may be simply fiction that takes place in the future or introduces some radical assumption about the past or present (Hodgens 1972, p. 79). David Hartwell’s *Age of Wonders* suggests that science fiction is ‘so diverse’ in its forms and subjects that it defies any simple definition. Science fiction is a world phenomenon but also too difficult to define, as it includes a wide range of subgenres and themes, and one of the difficulties in discussing the science fiction genre is that it

should be defined before it is described. Rather, Hartwell argues that “science fiction has been an umbrella under which any kind of estrangement from reality is welcome” and indeed entirely suited to the genre with its emphasis on wonder, so he sets about describing the genre by focusing on its audience, on the diverse community and interests of science fiction readers (Hartwell 1984, p. 10).

An overview of science fiction aimed at those already familiar with the form, Edward James’s *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (1994), from the start announces that it is “an attempt to define science fiction,” yet one which recognizes that “a proper definition can be achieved only by understanding what authors are trying to do or have tried to do” throughout the form’s existence. It thus charts a historical path, looking at “how definitions of science fiction changed as science fiction itself changed,” and how “the development of science fiction as a literary category is bound up with attempts to define it and with attempts by writers to live up to those definitions” (James 1994, pp. 1-2). Also, James quotes from the writer and legendary pulp editor John W. Campbell Jr. who is one of the most important figures in the shaping of modern science fiction literature, instructed that science fiction should be “an effort to predict the future on the basis of known facts, culled largely from present day laboratories” (James 1994, p.50). Furthermore, some pragmatist definitions associated with the technology and modern science are made by J. O. Bailey “a piece of scientific fiction is a narrative of an imaginary invention or discovery in the natural sciences and consequent adventures and experiences ... It must be a scientific discovery - something that the author at least rationalizes as possible to science” (Jakubowski and Edwards 1983, p. 17). In addition to the definition of science fiction characterized by Bailey, David Pringle makes a point of the same feature of the definition “science fiction is a form of fantastic fiction which exploits the imaginative perspectives of modern science” (Pringle 1985, p. 9).

As J. P. Telotte (2001) highlights that yet that prescription, which went far to shape the developing literature of science fiction in the United States, hardly accounts for the full appeal of the form - an appeal that some would pass off as due to its adolescent character,

others would trace to its archetypal elements, and still others would explain as fundamental to its speculative nature, its expression of common human curiosity. It is an appeal, in any case, that has, over time, lured some of Western culture's most important fictionalists (Edgar Allan Poe, Jack London, H. G. Wells, Aldous Huxley, Walker Percy) to try their hands at its subject matter (Telotte 2001, p. 5). One can claim that science fiction is just about science and technology, but this does not mean that it is written only for the scientific audience. Science fiction might be mainly about the human element, and about the effect new discoveries, happenings and scientific developments will have on human beings in the future. However, there are some definitions which are all associated with the humanistic side of science-fiction: McGregor quotes from Theodore Sturgeon, "a good science-fiction story is a story about human beings, with a human problem, and a human solution, that would not have happened at all without its science content" (McGregor 1988, p. 225).

A variety of terms have since been used, but 'science fiction' remains the dominant one, often abbreviated to 'sf' and appearing sometimes in upper case as 'SF'. The mass media has adapted it into 'sci-fi', a term that certainly seems good enough for the popular cable/satellite 'SciFi' television channels. The letters 'sf' may also function as a convenient catch-all, as author and theorist Damien Broderick (1989) warns, because these 'initials are the accepted abbreviation of a whole sheaf of classificatory terms applied to texts produced and received in ways marked only ... by certain generic, modal or strategic family resemblances' (Broderick 1995, p. 3). The use of '*speculative fiction*' in the sense of expressing dissatisfaction with traditional or establishment science fiction was popularized in the 1960s and early 1970s by Judith Merril and other writers and editors. The term has now come into wider use as a convenient collective term for a set of genres. Note the use of the term prophetic by both, with its complex of connotations quite at odds with the grounding in science - religion and rapture, voices and visions, the conjuring otherwise known as fantasy. In the 1960s, however, Judith Merril's *SF: The Best of the Best* (1967, p. 5) essentially proposed 'sf' as a new, more general term to replace 'science fiction': "Science fiction as a descriptive label has long since lost whatever validity it might once have had ... SF (or generically, s-f) allows you to think science fiction if you like, while I

think science fable or scientific fantasy or speculative fiction, or (once in a rare while...) *science fiction*.” According to Merrill, SF is an abbreviation for Science Fiction (or Science Fantasy). Science Fantasy (or Science Fiction) is really an abbreviation too. Merrill (1959, p. 10) writes:

Here are some of the things it stands for... S is for Science, Space, Satellites, Starships, and Solar exploring; also for Semantics and Sociology, Satire, Spoofing, Suspense, and good old Serendipity. (But not Spelling, without which I could have added Psychology, Civilizations, and Psi without parentheses.) F is for Fantasy, Fiction and Fable, Folklore, Fairy-tale and Farce; also for Fission and Fusion; for Firmament, Fireball, Future and Forecast; for Fate and Free-will; Figuring; Fact-seeking, and Fancy-free. Mix well. The result is SF, or Speculative Fun...

‘Sf’ was soon adopted by several academic critics, most notably Darko Suvin, who in *Positions and Presuppositions in Science Fiction* (1988) called ‘sf’ an “indispensable acronym”. By labeling ‘sf’ an ‘acronym’ (a word formed from the initial letters of other words), Suvin indicates that he regards ‘sf’ not as an abbreviation but as a new word. Employed with such a belief, ‘sf’ represents an attempt to escape from the established meaning and implications of the term ‘science fiction,’ and the exclusive use of ‘sf’ in publications like science-fiction studies thus has ideological overtones (Suvin 1988, p. 19). In more theoretical terms, Darko Suvin, in his 1979 book *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, defines science fiction as “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative frame-work alternative to the author’s empirical environment,” and it is distinguished “by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional ‘novum’ (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic” (Suvin 1979, p. 63). Alongside cognitive estrangement, Suvin identifies one other major structural component of science fiction: “the narrative hegemony of a fictional innovation or novelty, the novum, where the narrative is determined by a change/changes to the mundane experience based upon some scientific or logical innovations.” This idea can be simplified to suggest that most science fiction stories are based upon the premise ‘what if...’ (Suvin 1979, p. 71). Science fiction creates new histories or new futures and examines their impact upon societies and individuals.

However, there are some theorists who disagree with Suvin on his ‘cognitive estrangement’ and ‘novum’ terms. Paul Kincaid (2008, p. vii) is one of whom objects to Darko Suvin’s definition of science fiction:

The core of Suvin's characterization is his notion of “cognitive estrangement.”... But to take the next step and say that it defines science fiction can only be true if it accurately describes everything that we recognize as science fiction, but equally accurately excludes everything that we recognize as not science fiction ... Cognitive estrangement, therefore, is a jagged idea or image that makes you stop and look again at what you know, that makes you look more closely at the world being presented ... So cognitive estrangement is useful, but not really as useful as all that when you are trying to tie down what is different about science fiction. And all the time I am trying to nail this down (for some reason the image of nailing jelly to the wall comes to mind), I keep coming back to Damon Knight's ostensive definition: science fiction is what I point to when I say science fiction.

Also, science fiction does not often appeal to the higher or intuitive logic of the occult, but is distinguished by cognition as a correlative, which Suvin considers “identical to that of a modern philosophy of science” (Suvin 1978, p. 45). In this way it is also distinguished from fantasy and supernatural genres. Suvin’s definition of sf as a genre of cognitive estrangement is useful for film and television as much as for literature. Firstly, it offers us a sense of the loci of sf, and secondly it seeks neither to include nor exclude. Instead, it takes into account the fact that any generic model is at the mercy of endless qualification and that, in common with any paradigm, the organising perspective is the issue of primary significance. Suvin’s approach is chiefly structural and therefore he defines sf by its clearest patterned content: science. In English the word ‘science’ is strongly biased towards natural sciences rather than technology, whereas the French word science, like its German counterpart Wissenschaft, is better translated as ‘knowledge’ (Ebert 1980, p. 92). The term ‘science’ implies fact, knowledge, certitude, while the addition of ‘fiction’ on the one hand seems to contradict an implicit scientific code of accountability but on another points to the active role of the imagination in the creation and the experience of science fiction, whether literary or cinematic.

Nevertheless, science fiction clearly does not lend itself to easy definition. As Vivian Sobchack notes in her seminal book on American science fiction cinema *Screening Space* (1997, p. 17), it’s very rationale seems to work against the ‘tyrannical’ academic demand of

defining terms. The content of a story is in itself little help, either. In Sobchack's opinion, we might assume, therefore, that certain previously established definitions would be handy for cinematic application, that by now there would be a consensus of critical opinion as to precisely what science fiction is. However, she highlights that this is not the case. According to her, the problem of satisfactorily defining science fiction has also plagued critics and writers of science fiction literature; although there is some small agreement here and there, contradictions and simplifications predominate, and the variety of definitions remains as problematic as it is useful (Sobchack 1997). More succinct and even more general is the aesthetic definition of the genre given by Sobchack (1997, p. 19), as adapted by many science fiction writers:

A good science fiction story is a story with a human problem, and a human solution, which would not have happened at all British author and critic Kingsley Amis, however, sees science fiction a bit more narrowly than do Merril, Moskowitz, or Sturgeon: science fiction is that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesized on the pseudo-technology, whether human or extraterrestrial in origin.

According to Telotte, (2001, p. 6) the science fiction film very often shares characteristics with other popular genres, even borrows rather forthrightly from a broad range of them, as we find in the case of *Outland* (1981) and its echoes of the western, *Starship Troopers* (1997) and its imitation of a host of World War II films, *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Dark City* (1998) with their dependence on the conventions and look of the American film noir, and especially the *Star Wars* saga (1977, 1980, 1983, 1999), which borrows by turns from westerns, war films, Japanese samurai epics, and the serials. Telotte (2001, p.7) argues that every study of a film genre, either explicitly or implicitly, begins from similarly problematic issues: concerns with what to include and what to exclude, and on what basis we can begin to make those determinations. When a culture is undergoing a lot of changes due to scientific advances and technological developments, and expects to undergo more, it's hardly surprising if stories about these changes become popular as a way of expressing people's feelings (optimistic or otherwise) about change. Science fiction is largely based on writing rationally about alternative possibilities. It is often contrary to known reality, but

also relies on a considerable degree of suspension of disbelief provided by potential scientific explanations to various fictional elements. When it comes to science fiction's definition, we have difficulty finding an accurate definition of it. There is more than one, of course. It includes such a wide range of themes and subgenres which have all common but variants too. With respect to Greg Grewell (2001, p. 27), however it is defined, science fiction remains grounded in the colonial narrative.

Science fiction as a genre blends other genre's components and it becomes debatable. As Lawrence Alloway says that "one of the dangers of genre theory is that the categories may be taken rigidly. When that happens they lose their descriptive usefulness and assume a normative function" (Alloway 1971, p. 53). These issues constitute what is often referred to as the empirical dilemma, which poses the question of how we can ever determine what characteristics typify a genre without first determining what texts constitute the genre, even though that very decision about textual inclusiveness would logically seem to hinge upon prior decisions about the genre's identity or definition.

Actually, the genre discussions have a long history, especially in the US. In their studies Edgerton and Rose (2008, p. 4) indicate American television genres examined quiz and game shows, police stories, soap operas, science fiction and horror, comedy, detective programs, and news; the more extensive TV genres surveyed police series, detective shows, Westerns, medical melodramas, science fiction and fantasy TV, situation comedies, soap operas, American made-for-TV movies, docudramas, news, documentaries, sports telecasting, game shows, variety shows, talk shows, children's programming, educational and cultural programming, religious programming, and television commercials. According to Edgerton and Rose, still, the analytical emphasis remained mainly on textual matters, such as setting, plot structure, characterization, iconography, theme, technique, and style.

Bruce Kawin (1995, p. 319) suggests the genres' respective 'attitudes' are different, particularly toward "curiosity and the openness of systems"; that is, while horror, he argues,

seeks to close the door on the unknown and to suggest how dangerous an unbridled curiosity can be, science fiction opens it and embraces that very openness as an opportunity for intellectual growth. In effect, Kawin believes that the horror and science fiction films offer audiences two quite different sorts of pleasure or satisfaction in the distinct ways they confirm or challenge our relationships to the world and to others (Kawin 1995, p. 321).

Anyone who has watched even a few science fiction films, episodes of a *Twilight Zone* serial, or several episodes of the *Star Trek* or *Babylon 5* television series, for example, would probably argue that he or she could, with little hesitation, decide if a certain work belongs within the science fiction category. That sense of certainty probably springs from the fact that the typical viewer easily recognizes particular hallmarks, visual icons that, over the course of many years, have helped constitute a common signature that cultural consensus or historical use has by now assigned to the genre. Included in this broad category are such things as character types, situations, clothing, lighting, tools or weaponry, settings - all those elements that have often been described as the language of the genre, and much of which has been long established in the popular consciousness thanks to the corresponding literary tradition and its reliance on illustration, on visualizing its 'what if' scenarios. Despite the haphazard ways in which such commonplace elements are often cited by reviewers, noted in introductory film texts, or even intruded into casual conversation, they have invariably proved a useful starting point for much discussion of formulaic narrative and have been readily adapted into structural descriptions of a variety of genres, as is illustrated by Edward Buscombe's efforts to subsume such elements into a scheme of "inner" and "outer forms" for genre discussion (Buscombe, 1995, p. 21). Nevertheless, if, in comparison to the genre dimensions that Tzvetan Todorov (1975) explores, these elements point up a potentially more significant level of specificity for genre identity - that is, if they almost immediately make the form recognizable to most viewers - they also seem to tell us little about what specific texts mean for us or the genre's place in a cultural nexus. In an effort to deal with the sort of vagaries that have often attended earlier genre criticism, a criticism that typically took as its starting and ending point those immediate signifiers of identity, Rick Altman (1995) has outlined a useful

structural model, an unnoticed virtue of which is that it draws precisely upon a combination of that generalized common consensus and iconic specificity. This “semantic/syntactic” description of a genre’s workings, adapted from linguistics, helps to isolate the elements that contribute to the genre text’s meanings and provides a paradigm for sketching out a formula’s most distinctive icons and narrative events. It does so by considering the generic text, first, as “a list of common traits, attitudes, characters, shots, locations, sets, and the like,” and second, as a group of “certain constitutive relationships ... into which they are arranged” (Altman 1995, p. 30). While the iconic elements represent the genre’s semantic dimension, its language, those relationships - the plot developments, character actions, typical events - form its syntax, its grammatical structure. When taken together, the semantic and syntactic elements allow us to model the structure of any particular generic text, compare it to other examples of the genre appearing either at the same time or at some other point in film history, and measure it against any closely allied genres with which it might share semantic and/or syntactic elements.

However, as Robert Romanyshyn (1989) has noted in his study of the impact of technology on Western culture, that sort of danger has, to some degree, always been built into our various technological accomplishments, not simply because of the ways they can distract us from our world or fascinate us with all that we might craft - both of which are indeed dangers to which we have culturally succumbed outside of the cinema - but rather because of the way that the technological positions us vis-à-vis the world and others. He argues that through its vantage - what we might well think of as its implicitly cinematic nature - technology situates the individual as “a spectator self behind the window” of its instrumentality, distant and detached from the world, a passive viewer of its unfolding story (Romanyshyn 1989, p. 117).

Richard Meyers quotes from Jeff Rovin that by 1975, Rovin had not progressed far beyond Hodgens’ formulation, providing one that typically draws attention to scientific elements; according to Rovin, science fiction is “any science-based event that has not occurred but

conceivably could, given the technology of the period in which the film is set” (Meyers 1984, p. 9). Taking another approach, William Johnson in 1972 had claimed that science fiction “films hinge on a change or changes in the world as we know it. The changes may be caused by man or be outside his control” (Johnson 1972, p.10). In 1980 Lester del Rey gave a definition that somewhat echoes Johnson’s by defining the genre as “an attempt to deal rationally with alternate possibilities in a manner which will be entertaining” and one that “accepts change as the major basis for stories” (del Rey 1980, p. 5). But del Rey furthers Johnson’s endeavor by emphasizing the genre’s mutability: “Science fiction ... rejects the unchanging order of things. It states implicitly, if not explicitly, that the world of the story is different from the accepted present or past of the reader. The change may be in science, environment, attitude, morality, or the basic nature of humanity” (del Rey 1980, p. 9).

According to Frederik Pohl (1997, p. 11), in which he claimed that “the task is impossible.... As science fiction is the literature of change; it changes even as one tries to define it”. Pohl takes up the issue of defining it thus: if “perhaps we cannot satisfactorily say what SF is, ... we still may be able to identify ... what it ... does” (Pohl 1997, p. 12). What that is, writes Pohl, is proffer itself as “a literature of ideas” and promote “futurology” (Pohl 1997, p. 14), which includes “the ways in which science-fiction stories may have influenced actual research,” “the future shaping of human beings,” and “what effect, if any, the stories [have] had on the outside world” (Pohl 1997, p. 16). According to Michael Kandel, when people ask what science fiction is they are “often really asking: What should it be?” Because it defies simple definition, Kandel believes there is a “sf genre-ghetto” (Kandel 1998, p. 1-2).

Also, the science fiction film, as a genre constantly in the process of redefining itself, has to negotiate between these two potentials: its capacity for limitless vision and experience, on the one hand, and the possibility for helping to foster such distance and alienation, on the other. That it has become so very popular in the last few decades, after something of a falling off in the 1960s and 1970s, argues powerfully for its ability not only to harness the

technological power that drives it, but also to address the technological attitude that haunts it - in effect, to use the former as a way of dealing with the latter. In this regard, we might note what seems an increased emphasis on mediation and the technology of reproduction - in effect, an imagery of film itself - in recent American science fiction movies. Certainly, the dominant image of the science fiction film throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s has been that of the replicated human, the image of ourselves caught up in a world of technological reproduction, one whose very limitless capacity for mimesis promises to deliver all things to us, while also threatening to deliver us to a kind of thing, to reduce us to near irrelevance - indistinguishable from our many copies or clones.

A discussion of the science fiction genre that argues simultaneously for the difficulty of establishing hard and fast generic boundaries and the necessity for recognizing certain constitutive elements - not only the sort of semantic and syntactic elements that Altman describes, but also specific themes that are imbedded in that structure and the genre's technological underpinnings, and that give rise to its science fiction character. Formula of science fiction narratives typically emphasize a broadly characteristic iconography before turning to discussions of how those various icons shift in meaning or value from one era to another.

In his study *Fantasy and the Cinema*, James Donald (1989, p. 10) argues that genre involves: "not just the obvious iconographic and narrative conventions ... but also 'systems of orientations, expectations and conventions that circulate between industry, text and subject.' What distinguishes one genre from another are not so much particular formal elements as the way such elements - which may be common to a number of genres - are combined so as to produce particular narrative structures and modes of address." Fredric Jameson takes this further, suggesting that we should not simply "drop [generic] specimens into the box bearing those labels, but ... [also] map our co-ordinates on the basis of those fixed stars and triangulate this specific given textual movement" (Jameson 1982, p. 322). Genre theory is therefore more useful for co-ordination and location rather than as a means

of pure delineation, inclusion and exclusion. For decades the pursuit of genre studies meant a search for the 'purest' example of a type - as Jameson suggests, it was a quest to "unveil, surprise and possess the ultimate 'secret' of the thing itself (a passion with a long history of its own within science fiction)" (Jameson 1982, p. 322). Television theorist John Caughie follows a similar path, suggesting that we need to be sensitive "to generic difference as much as to repetition, and, in particular, to generic difference which cannot simply be assigned to the magical agency of authorship" (Caughie 1991, p. 127). In doing so, we see that "genres are used for specific purposes, address specific problems, provide specific pleasures, produce specific types of insights and experiences" (Gripsrud 1995, p. 20).

The question of what comprises any genre demands continual reassessment and reconsideration in the context of its era, ideology and culture, all of which impact upon it in the past, present and future. Just as a self-reflexive text must refer by default to its conservative ancestry, so the most conservative text must also contain the capacity for self-reflexivity and ironic critique: the capacity is only recognised through the act of reading - the power of individual realisation which lies within the reader. This provides an antidote to what Robin Wood (1992, p. 478) calls "the tendency to treat the genres as discrete. An ideological approach might suggest why they can't be, however hard they may appear to try: at best, they represent different strategies for dealing with the same ideological tensions". This offers the possibility of a comparison between, for example, a Western and a science fiction text, demonstrating the communality between apparently disparate genres and removing a huge obstacle to progress within genre theory.

Fredric Jameson (1991, p. 285) follows in the rich formalist tradition, suggesting that what science fiction offers is simply "the estrangement and renewal of our own reading present". In this context, Grewell (2001, p. 37) says that if science fiction, as Jameson claims, "registers fantasies about the future", then given the cliched maxim that history repeats itself all of this should really come as no surprise. According to him, despite its profit-motive and proclivity to entertain, film is a medium intended to edify and instruct, and if its

master-plots are familiar then the truly fantastic of science fiction film remains its visuals, the 'science' behind the science. In *Terminal Identity*, Scott Bukatman (1993, p. 10) suggests:

Science fiction narrates the dissolution of the very ontological structures that we usually take for granted. Theorists of poststructuralism and postmodernism are fond of cataloging the crumbling of such foundational oppositions as "organic/inorganic, male/female, originality/duplication (image/reality, artifice/nature), human/nonhuman" (this typical list is McCaffery's) ... Science fiction constructs a space of accommodation to an intensely technological existence.

Science fiction offers novel concepts for consideration - for example; alien life forms, time travel, warp drives. Visual science fiction needs to manifest images of those concepts convincingly, and at some level science fiction television narratives must compete with the immense techniques of cinema and the often less immediately gratifying realities of prosaic scientific experimentation. Science fiction may accept and thus believe as plausible or may reject its science as well as the cultural context enabling the trajectory of the plot. As Greg Grewell (2001, p. 27) argues that Darko Suvin's point "a science fiction text is senseless without a given socio-historical context: Outside of a context that supplies the conditions of making sense, no text can be even read.... Only the insertion of a text into a context makes it intelligible". Science fiction productions, then, rely on what Suvin calls a "universe of discourse" to be intelligible.

It is very important to pay attention to Fredric Jameson's *Progress Versus Utopia, or Can We Imagine the Future?* (1982). This is a theoretical meditation undertaken in the context of Jameson's ongoing critique of contemporary multinational capitalism, and his long-standing interest in the possibilities of the utopian imagination. Jameson (1982, p. 148) argues that science fiction as a narrative mode is inherently contradictory, extending as it does into a (limitless) future while nevertheless being constrained to arrive at some kind of novelistic resolution which functions as "the mark of that boundary or limit beyond which thought cannot go". Jameson discusses that "the common-sense position on the anticipatory nature of science fiction as a genre is what we would today call a representational one" (Jameson 1982, p. 150), that the work of contemporary science fiction is, in fact, "to

defamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present” (Jameson 1982, p. 151); he concludes that science fiction’s “multiple mock futures,” rather than attempting to imagine any kind of ‘real’ future, “serve the quite different function of transforming our own present into the determinate past of something yet to come” (Jameson 1982, p. 152). As a result, Jameson argues, science fiction more properly functions as a marker of our present imaginative limitations than as any kind of future anticipation. For him, this demonstrates the contemporary failure of the utopian imagination; as a genre, science fiction “becomes transformed into a contemplation of our own absolute limits” (Jameson 1982, p. 153). Furthermore, Veronica Hollinger (1999, p. 243) analyzes Sobchack and Jameson in her study, ‘postfuturism’ details some of the ways in which the spatiality of science fiction’s filmic images is influenced by and linked to the spatiality of contemporary Western consciousness, as theorized in Jameson’s very influential writings on postmodernism.

Particularly, this study emphasizes postmodern critical advantages as the key. Science fiction genre has been profitably opened up through a great variety of investigative approaches – especially in recent years that the science fiction films and TV shows increasingly seem to be an intriguing point of convergence, a kind of testing ground for much of contemporary literary, film, TV, cultural and critical theory with postmodern approach. At the outset, though, we should understand that all of the critical approaches surveyed in this study essentially constitute tactics for asking questions about postmodernist texts, and more specifically about science fiction TV shows. Increasingly, those TV shows seem to mark off specific areas for certain questions that are particularly important to contemporary technoculture: through robotic images, questions about the nature of the self; through apocalyptic scenarios, about the fragility of human existence; through virtual-reality systems, about the construction of culture; through genetic explorations, about the nature of gender. Consequently, science fiction defamiliarizes our lives and with them the science fiction lives we read about, and reflects them back to us in an extravagant, extrapolated way.

2.2 CONFLICTING DEFINITIONS OF POSTMODERNISM

As in science fiction, it is very hard to define the term ‘postmodernism’ straightforwardly, partly because it is a complex phenomenon and partly because different critics refer, as it can be seen, to different versions of it. The term ‘postmodernism’ is often used to refer to different, sometimes contradictory concepts. Indeed, postmodernism encompasses many topics yet it refuses to say anything conclusive about any of them. Hal Foster’s *The Anti-Aesthetic* is a touchstone volume for postmodern debate and theory. In his book, Foster notes that some critics, like Rosalind Krauss and Douglas Crimp, define postmodernism as a break with the aesthetic field of modernism. Others, like Gregory Ulmer and Edward Said, engage the “object of post-criticism” and the politics of interpretation today. Some, like Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard, detail the postmodern moment as a new, “schizophrenic” mode of space and time. Others, like Craig Owens and Kenneth Frampton, frame its rise in the fall of modern myths of progress and mastery. But all the critics, save Jürgen Habermas, hold this belief in common: that the project of modernity is now deeply problematic (Foster 2002, p. xi). Also, Foster indicates that in cultural politics today, a basic opposition exists between a postmodernism which seeks to deconstruct modernism and resist the status quo and a postmodernism which repudiates the former to celebrate the latter: “a postmodernism of resistance and a postmodernism of reaction” (Foster 2002, p. xii).

According to Foster, the former can be said to be the simplistic approach of embracing or denouncing early postmodern theory as a coherent nihilistic entity, thus stifling possibilities of any form of societal progress. This approach denounces modernist discourses that still believe in such progress, hence the prefix ‘post’. It is also most associated with advanced capitalist societies like the US. In respect of Foster, postmodernism as resistance, on the other hand, is a much more positive and humanistic definition that emphasizes the possibilities of postmodern thought. It suggests that certain insights of postmodernism can accomplish progressive and effective political change. These differences between critical and uncritical postmodernism are closely linked to the material conditions in which they

arise. In an advanced capitalist society like the US, the need for profit outweighs the need for social criticism. For this reason, postmodernism as reaction, the amoral branch of postmodernism reigns in such a society. Foster (2002, p. xiii) specifies:

A postmodernism of resistance, then, arises as a counter-practice not only to the official culture of modernism but also to the 'false normativity' of a reactionary postmodernism. In opposition (but not only in opposition), a resistant postmodernism is concerned with a critical de-construction of tradition, not an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo-historical forms, with a critique of origins, not a return to them. In short, it seeks to question rather than exploit cultural codes, to explore rather than conceal social and political affiliations.

In *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Fredric Jameson (1991) defines that postmodernism as a movement in arts and culture corresponding to a new configuration of politics and economics, “late capitalism”: transnational consumer economies based on global scope of capitalism. Jameson argues that postmodern aesthetic comes from the marketplace. Modernism and postmodernism are cultural formations that accompany specific stages of capitalism. Just as realism was an embodiment, in terms of literary form, of nineteenth-century capitalism, and modernism was the expression of the reified, post-industrial capitalism of the early twentieth century, so what postmodernism is for Jameson is the expression on an aesthetic and textual level of the dynamic of ‘late capitalism’. Just as capitalism has this economic logic, so it also has a cultural logic, and the cultural logic of late capitalism is what we call ‘postmodernism’ (Jameson 1991).

Linda Hutcheon (1988, p. 6) alludes to Jean François Lyotard’s view of postmodern culture, its “contradictory relationship to what we usually label our dominant, liberal humanist culture”. More accurately, Lyotard, as Hutcheon remarks, posits postmodern culture as having a provisionality of response to “master narratives” such as art or myth that would have been consolatory to modernists. Hutcheon situates Lyotard within the general attack of postmodernism on “master narratives of bourgeois liberalism”. According to Hutcheon, for “Lyotard, postmodernism is characterized by ... incredulity toward master or meta-narratives: those who lament the ‘loss of meaning’ in the world or in art are really

mourning the fact that knowledge is no longer primarily narrative knowledge of this kind” (Hutcheon 1988, p. 6). In addition to these, Hutcheon (2002, p. 2) implies:

It seems reasonable to say that the postmodern’s initial concern is to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we unthinkingly experience as ‘natural’ (they might even include capitalism, patriarchy, liberal humanism) are in fact ‘cultural’; made by us, not given to us. Even nature, postmodernism might point out, doesn’t grow on trees.

This cultural or sociological understanding of the concept of postmodernism is comparatively straightforward, even if the boundaries of the concept are debatable. By definition, postmodernism is a context determines content and experience. It is decentralization of authority; loss of control by a central authority. Multiple, overlapping emerging media, which are participatory, localized in production and content which meanings, interpretations, and realities are divergent. In postmodernism agency is local and non-hierarchical. According to Mestrovic (1991, p. 20) what is labelled as postmodernism includes the following diverse and often contradictory phenomena and:

... neo-conservative ideology, reactionary sentiments, cynicism, a rejection of narrative structure, parody, stylistic promiscuity, pastiche, schizoid culture, excremental culture, a preference for visual images over words, fantasy, a ‘post-tourist’ search for spectacle, the epistemological equivalence of past and present, end of the Eurocentric perspective, commercialism, nihilism, and a penchant for ‘hyper-reality’ in which distinctions between the real and the unreal are no longer valid. Above all, postmodernism is defined as an attack on the ‘myth’ of modernity, the belief that the progressive liberation of humanity shall occur through science.

Mary Klages (2007, 166) claims that postmodernism, like modernism, follows most of these same ideas, rejecting boundaries between high and low forms of art, rejecting rigid genre distinctions, emphasizing pastiche, parody, bricolage, irony, and playfulness. According to her, postmodern art (and thought) favors reflexivity and self-consciousness, fragmentation and discontinuity (especially in narrative structures), ambiguity, simultaneity, and an emphasis on the destructured, decentered, dehumanized subject.

Hutcheon (1989, p. 37) highlights positive potential of postmodernity: “The postmodern, as I have been defining it, is not a degeneration into ‘hyperreality’ but a questioning of what reality can mean and how we can come to know it.” And so, by destabilizing the

notions of the real and the imaginary, postmodernism offers critical potential without denying the existence of reality. Hutcheon (1989, p. 34) explains that the effect of postmodernism “is not really a blurring of boundaries between fact and fiction, but more a hybridizing mix, where the borders are kept clear, even if they are frequently crossed.” By crossing these borders, postmodern productions or work of art are provided with new versions of old instruments, like parody and irony, to criticize society and its constructed nature.

Postmodernism can be seen as a reaction to modernism’s monotonous universal world vision and its values of individuality, progress, and human self-determination. While modernism was serious, formally experimental, and apocalyptic, postmodernism is more often parodic and playful. In modernism, it’s all about the enlightenment project of rationality, which enabled people to believe that science and reason would make the world an increasingly better place in which to live.

2.3 DEFINING SPECULATIVE – POSTMODERN SCIENCE FICTION

In the light of this information on postmodernism written above, it will be suitable to approach to the speculative fiction notion that encompasses such specific genres like science fiction, fantasy, horror, supernatural fiction, superhero fiction, utopian and dystopian fiction, apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction, and alternate history. The term has been used to express dissatisfaction with what some people consider the limitations of science fiction.

Speculative fiction is a term, attributed to Robert Heinlein in 1941, that has come to be used to collectively describe works in the genres of science fiction, fantasy, and horror (Lilly 2002). It also may include other genres, such as mysteries, alternate histories, and historical fiction. Speculative fiction can be a collective term to describe works of science fiction, fantasy, and horror and also addresses works that are not science fiction, fantasy, or horror, yet do not rightly belong to the other genres (fragmentation – decentering of the subject).

The dualism notion of science fiction has been replaced by the postmodern relativism and turned into speculative fiction.

Judith Merrill in her science fiction and nonfiction writings effectively challenged the prevailing science-adventure ('hard') mode of science fiction and promoted novel approaches to fiction about possible futures that struggled to put a human face on the abstract problems of new, seductive and terrifying, sciences and technologies. In her words, "the industrial, political, and technological space age meant the beginning of a new period of exploration in 'the human factor,' as opposed to the 'hardware,' for both science and science fiction" (Merril 1967, p. 5). Merrill understood both the politics of mythologizing and the unique role of science fiction, reconfigured as 'SF,' as modern myth. In her 1967 science fiction annual anthology, *SF: Best of the Best*, she appears to struggle with the evolving issue of the nature of science fiction literature - with its ever widening inclusiveness, the science in science fiction, and, especially, with the role of science fiction as modern myth, Merrill (1967, p. 3) writes:

More recently there has been much talk (from me among others) about SF as modern myth. It may seem pretentious to speak of a field which degenerates so readily into mere adventure story as the replacement for classical philosophy in our time - and yet this is to some extent the role s-f has been playing. Science-fiction is not fiction about science, but fiction which endeavors to find the meaning in science and in the scientific-technological society we are constructing.

Merril, emphasizes the aspect of speculative side of science fiction that does it by creating new environments and introducing changes based on the previous postulated approximation of human being's reality: In *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, Stableford, Clute and Nicholls (1993, p. 312) cite from Merrill: "Speculative fiction: stories whose objective is to explore, to discover, to learn, by means of projection, extrapolation, analogue, hypothesis-and-paper-experimentation, something about the nature of the universe, of man, or reality". She uses the term 'speculative fiction' here specifically to describe the mode which makes use of the traditional 'scientific method' (observation, hypothesis, experiment) to examine some postulated approximation of reality, by introducing a given set of changes - imaginary or inventive - into the common background of 'known facts', creating an environment in

which the responses and perceptions of the characters will reveal something about the inventions, the characters, or both.

Although Merrill prefers description to definition in breaking down recognizable types of SF stories, she does end up making a general statement as to what constitutes the 'essence' of science fiction. Sobchack (1997, p.18) specifies that Merrill identifies three basic SF stories:

...the Teaching Story, whose function seems to be the popularization of science and technology, the Preaching Story, which essentially warns and prophesies; and a type of story which she labels Speculative Fiction, "whose objective is to ... learn ... something about the nature of the universe, of man, of reality. It is in this last type of story that she finds the heart of science fiction and, in fact, ends up with a definition after all.

Judith Merrill was Donna Haraway's inspiration to do so. Donna Haraway (1989) was interested in what she refers to as the narratives of scientific fact - those 'potent fictions of science' - within a complex field indicated by the signifier SF. Haraway in *Primate Visions* (1989) explains that Merrill idiosyncratically began using the signifier SF to designate a complex emerging narrative field in which the boundaries between science fiction (conventionally, sf) and fantasy became highly permeable in confusing ways, commercially and linguistically. Her designation, SF, came to be widely adopted as critics, readers, writers, fans, and publishers struggled to comprehend an increasingly heterodox array of writing, reading, science fiction, science fantasy, speculative futures, speculative fabulation (Haraway 1989, p. 5). Science fiction stories and Merrill's imaginative concept, 'SF', prompted Haraway's challenging suggestion that we might read scientific practice as essential story-telling practice and listen to scientists as essential storytellers. According to Haraway, from only a slightly different perspective, the history of science appears as a narrative about the history of technical and social means to produce the facts. The facts themselves are types of stories, of testimony to experience. But the provocation of experience requires an elaborate technology - including physical tools, an accessible tradition of interpretation, and specific social relations. Haraway (1989, p. 4) emphasizes that "not just anything can emerge as a fact; not just anything can

be seen or done, and so told.” She suggests that scientific practice may be considered a kind of story-telling practice - a rule-governed, constrained, historically changing craft of narrating the history of nature. Scientific practice and scientific theories produce and are imbedded in kinds of stories. She notes that any scientific statement about the world depends intimately upon language, upon metaphor (Haraway 1989, p. 5).

Just like postmodernism, in speculative fiction the time of the story can be blur. Nostalgia and retro styles, recycling earlier genres and styles in new contexts, film/TV genres, images, typography, colors, clothing and hair styles, advertising images, all these eclectic things might be blended. All stories might set in the future or past. History represented through nostalgic images of pop culture, fantasies of the past. History has become one of the styles; historical representations blend with nostalgia. This loss of history is something Jameson considers traumatic, but as we might expect this trauma is ‘repressed’. There is still a ‘depth’ to society; history and society still determine culture, even though postmodernism denies this depth and flattens it out. But Jameson notes the way the way ‘historicism’, or the urge towards history, has become in a sense ‘neurotic’. He identifies a current fascination with ‘nostalgia’, particularly in film. “Nostalgia films restructure the whole issue of pastiche and project it onto a collective and social level, where the desperate attempt to appropriate a missing past is now refracted through the iron law of fashion change and the emergent ideology of the generation” (Jameson 1991, p. 19).

The postmodernism, unlike the modernism, give prominence local narratives, ironic deconstruction of master narratives: counter-myths of origin. It suspects and rejects the master narratives for history and culture. Speculative fiction challenges the master narratives for history and culture by painting a noir picture through its codes and rejects totalizing theories; underlines the pursuit of localizing and contingent theories. The point in question for speculative fiction is that skepticism of idea of progress, anti-technology reactions.

In speculative fiction the action of the story can take place in a culture that never existed, a world we know nothing of, or an earth that might have been or might be, to name a few. It can be a simple story wherein a man and woman, have been involved in an experiment to see if opposite genders could co-exist in the close confines of a spaceship. All stories might set on other worlds, because we have never gone there. Whether “future humans” take part in the story or not, if it is not Earth, it belongs to fantasy and science fiction. If all stories supposedly set on Earth, but before recorded history and contradicting the known archaeological record stories about visits from ancient aliens, or ancient civilizations that left no trace, or lost kingdoms surviving into modern times. Time and history replaced by speed, futureness, accelerated obsolescence in a way that is similar to postmodernism (Card 2001, p. 17).

Science fiction properly applies to a point using romantic character types, plot structures and settings but sourcing its fantasia in rationalist futurology. This speculative genre existed for a few decades at most before its practitioners exploded the rigid proscriptions and prescriptions of the original form. Evaluating the speculative fiction in the context of postmodernism, for example, Ridley Scott’s 1981 film *Blade Runner* is often cited as a thoroughly representative postmodern text. As a film it simultaneously inhabits the visual idioms of a ‘futuristic’ science fiction, and a retro film noir that evokes the 1930s. The technology is forward-looking, the dress styles, dialogue and situation of a form of ‘private detective’ narrative is backward-looking. But Scott does not ‘quote’ these filmic styles of noir in order to make any specific point about that time or ours; it is rather a matter of surface styling (Adam 2000, p. 126). *Blade Runner* underlines that what are the dimensions that define humanity and what are the bottom line traits necessary to be considered human or humane. In this point of view, science fiction was one of only a handful of genres to employ plots that transcended accepted gender roles and transcended culture, and, as Joanna Russ (1995, p. 91) points out, went where some of the most ‘fascinating characters’ were not necessarily human.

As J. Merrill stated before, speculative fiction has a great capacity to deal with human problem. It is all matter thought experiment that deals with human problem. The great classics of speculative fiction have always taken the human point of view. Putting ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. They reacted as they were wont to do in their times. Within the boundaries they were given by society at that time. But the great leap of reason and humanity came when they rose above their circumstance and became extraordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. They rose above the moment. They became more human than before.

Speculative fiction embraces works that do not fit neatly into the separate genres. This, with no doubt, has got much to do with the hybridization of forms of postmodernism. Speculative fiction eliminates the need for a separation between science fiction, fantasy, and horror because they are different forms of one thing. The term also cleans up the confusion of having sub-genres lie within sub-genres. David Bowlin (2002) thinks:

Speculative fiction is a world that writers create, where anything can happen. It is a place beyond reality, a place that could have been, or might have been, if only the rules of the universe were altered just a bit. Speculative fiction goes beyond the horror of everyday life and takes the reader (and writer) into a world of magic, fantasy, science.

Science fiction has now attained a new level of popularity and even acceptance in the television mainstream, it also finds itself in a difficult position, as Jan Johnson-Smith (2005) indicates, for many of its staple themes are now science, not fiction. Smith (2005, p. 2) argues that the computer, rockets, space travel, robotics - these formerly innovative concerns that provided some of the form's basic iconic trappings have "become an accepted part of life" and "the infinite digital realm of cyberspace is ripe for exploration" and thus pose increasing challenges for science fiction narrative, particularly in terms of its ability to move beyond this new everyday world and to visualize an even more speculative - and perhaps far more spectacular - vision of what the future might hold and what we might yet achieve. This means that visually, as well as speculatively, science fiction has a lot more to compete with, since science 'fact' is fast catching up in popular discourse (Smith 2005, p. 3).

The result is its speculative power, its ability to speak to the wonder and curiosity that are ultimately bound up in our scientific and technological developments, and that have always energized the literature of science fiction. One problem is science fiction's status today. Whether as literature, film, or television, as Telotte (2008) underlines, it has simply become a text of choice for a postmodern world. Because of its generic emphasis on the constructed nature of all things, including human nature, and an increasing willingness to explore new narrative shapes because it is a "self-consciously 'world-building' fiction, laying bare the process of fictional world-making" at every level, science fiction invariably evokes postmodernism's reflexive and rather ahistorical sensibility. The result is that the genre's narratives often seem less a continuation of our own historical circumstances than, to evoke one of the more popular series, a quantum leap to another history (Telotte 2008, p. 4)

3. POSTMODERN SCIENCE FICTIONS ON TV

3.1 POSTMODERN TV SHOWS

Postmodern TV shows are rather more than simply-great entertainment. These are programmes with highly complex narrative structures, back stories of which it may or may not have been aware and which enabled an exchange of information which would then impact upon subsequent viewings. These are programmes which, in many cases, attracted large audiences, spawned fanzines and websites and which garnered extensive column inches in the quality press. These are programmes which clearly played a vital role in the increasingly competitive and volatile television landscapes.

Doug Kellner (2005) discusses how a postmodern turn in cultural studies contested earlier critical models and provided alternative approaches to television studies. He implies that much postmodern cultural analysis is too one-sided and limited, in either restricting its focus on form, on image and spectacle alone, or in abandoning critical analysis altogether in favor of grandiose totalizing metaphors (black holes, implosion, excremental culture, and so on). For Kellner, instead, it is preferable to analyze both form and content, image and narrative, and postmodern surface and the deeper ideological problematics within the context of specific exercises which explicate the polysemic nature of images and texts, and which endorse the possibility of multiple encodings and decodings. As his study indicates, such a multidimensional approach to critical media and television studies is found initially in the Frankfurt School and was developed by many other television theorists in diverse locations and from often conflicting perspectives, ranging from British cultural studies to critical feminism (Kellner 2005, p. 40).

During the 1980s and 1990s, many critics such as Best and Kellner (1997), McGuigan, (1992) noticed a postmodern turn toward cultural populism that valorized audiences over texts and the production, the pleasures of television and popular culture over their

ideological functions and effects, and that refocused television criticism on the surface of its images and spectacle, rather than deeper embedded meanings and complex effects. If for most of the history of television, narrative storytelling has been the name of the game, on a postmodern account of television, image and spectacle often decenters the importance of narrative. Kellner states that it is often claimed that in those programs usually designated 'postmodern' - MTV music videos and other programming, *Miami Vice*, *Max Headroom*, *Twin Peaks*, high-tech ads, and so on. According to him, there is a new look and feel: the signifier has been liberated and image takes precedence over narrative, as compelling and highly artificial aesthetic spectacles detach themselves from the television diegesis and become the center of fascination, of a seductive pleasure, of an intense but fragmentary and transitory aesthetic experience. In respect of Kellner, while there is some truth in this conventional postmodern position, such descriptions are in some ways misleading. In particular, the familiar account that postmodern image culture is fundamentally flat and one-dimensional is problematic" (Kellner 2005, p.41). Kellner highlights that Jameson's expression; "postmodernism manifests the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense - perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the postmodernisms". According to Jameson, the "waning of affect" in postmodern image culture is replicated in postmodern selves who are allegedly devoid of the expressive energies and individualities characteristic of modernism and the modern self. Both postmodern texts and selves are said to be without depth and to be flat, superficial, and lost in the intensities and vacuities of the moment, without substance and meaning, or connection to the past (Jameson 1984). Kellner suggests that a postmodern television studies should rest content to describe the surface or forms of cultural texts, rather than seeking meanings or significance (Kellner 2005, p. 41).

With this structure of postmodern narratives, both Miller (1997) and Chapman (2002) interpellate *The Avengers* (1961-1969) in the light of theories of the postmodern, and Chapman in fact argues that *The Avengers* should be credited as the first postmodern television show, understanding the postmodern in this case as an aesthetic style interdependent with Lyotard's (1979) notion of the postmodern condition, and whose key

feature is a breakdown of until now, assumed cultural distinctions. Specific stylistic features that Chapman identifies include the deliberate pastiche of established cultural practices (greatly aided in this case by the latitude afforded by the series format), pervasive intertextual citation, a dominance of style over content, and a tongue-in-cheek foregrounding of its own conventions (Chapman 2002). One might add to this the instability of identities, a relativisation of narrative through genre mixing, and a whole host of bricolage techniques, chief among which is a recurrent juxtaposition of tradition and modernity. It is in this sense that the series was a postmodern primer.

If *The Avengers* was the first postmodern television text, it was not alone in rousing Sixties' television viewers from their realist slumber. *The Prisoner* (1967-1968) and *The Avengers* can arguably be defined as postmodern primers, but they are clearly playing their games, in this respect at least, at opposite ends of the postmodern arena. Comparisons of this type gave rise to a good deal of discussion on the ideological discourse of the two shows, including their representations of class, gender and age. Whether the current postmodern condition is apprehended as more closely aligned with the village of *The Prisoner* than with the ingenious but flawed trap that fails to hold Emma Peel, at once feminist icon and object of desire. The cult shows can stand alongside postmodern literature on their own merits, and are furthermore strong candidates for more advanced texts and for the complications of postmodern theory.

Postmodern television shows, with a mixture of murder mystery, soap opera, film noir, and the avant-garde, *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991), which is an American television serial drama created by David Lynch and Mark Frost, rewrote the formula for prime-time television drama in the early 1990s. *Twin Peaks* was a character-driven show, sporting a cast of more than one hundred, and used intricately interwoven subplots to keep viewers tuned in. The show further resembles Lynch's previous and subsequent work, in that it is difficult to place in a defined genre: stylistically, the program borrows the unsettling tone and supernatural premises of horror films, and simultaneously offers a bizarrely comical parody

of American soap operas with a campy, melodramatic presentation of the morally-dubious activities of its characters. Finally, the show represents an earnest moral inquiry distinguished by both weird comedy and a deep vein of surrealism.

The issue of hybridization of the genres of postmodernism is in charge here again. This new formula is the gothic soap opera. The soap opera consists of a fixed set of stock characters and sets. Despite its unconventional style and its parodistic elements, *Twin Peaks* moves within the confines of this genre. The gothic has been an important dramatic element in *Twin Peaks* from the very beginning. Gothic elements pervade contemporary fiction, especially in film and television. Lenora Ledwon (1993) even coins the term 'Television Gothic' and Andreas Blassmann (1999) argue that this new 'Television Gothic' utilizes familiar gothic themes and devices such as incest, the grotesque, repetition, interpolated narration, haunted settings, mirrors, doubles, and supernatural occurrences.

And often read as the perfect hybrid of Lynch's cinematic strangeness and Frost's respectable televisual pedigree, *Twin Peaks* poses a series of questions about genre, seriality and auteurism for television studies. Its fantastically playful generic mix-and-match format contributed greatly to its cult hit status, but also provoked some of its problems. Though the question of whether it is possible to create a cult artefact with any degree of deliberation is a matter of debate, *Twin Peaks* may be the nearest the visual arts have got to a successful pre-sold cult show (Williams 2005, p. 38). Dolan (1995, p.35) notes that instead of choosing one consistent narrative mode for all aspects of its scripting, the creators of *Twin Peaks* chose two by letting a serialized detective story (the joint local and federal investigation into the death of Laura Palmer) serve as an expositional framework for the introduction of an off-centre soap opera (the ongoing plots of daily life in *Twin Peaks*, Washington). Yet *Twin Peaks* tears and fears are predicated on its deployment of two of TV's most predictable formats, soap opera and the crime/investigative thriller. Both genres haunt the opening of the startling pilot episode, in which Laura's body is washed up by a river in a small Pacific Northwest town, *Twin Peaks* itself, prompting the series' governing arc-question (which dominates season one at least),

“Who Killed Laura Palmer?” This proved to be a question to whet the appetite of soap and murder-mystery audiences alike (Williams 2005, p. 38). In this way, *Twin Peaks* is not a reflection of postmodernism, nor is it an allegory of postmodernism, it is a specific address to the postmodern condition - a postmodern text - and as such it helps to define the possibilities of entertainment in the contemporary capitalist world.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1997-2003) which was created by Joss Whedon, too, combines a traditionally male-oriented genre, the action or cop series, also horror genre with heavy use of soap opera elements. In meshing the two genres, the series embrace a new type of storytelling that has more in common with art cinema or a novel than with a traditional TV series. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* also fuses two traditional genres together. On one level, it's an action show, about a girl fighting vampires, but on another level it's a relationship drama, that frequently strays into soap opera. What Buffy does is use the action conflicts to physically represent the emotional conflict of the characters. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the way in which the serial text, in structuring the two realms of fantasy and horror and teenage realities, seeks to connect with a teen market within the tradition of youth marketing organised around various depictions of the body, fantastic and real. Within the televisual landscape of reconfigured serial horror, science fiction and fantasy, the teen body is figured as both fantastic and real. Several contemporary, postmodern TV programmes within this history and frame of reference exist within the broad conceptual terrain of genre and seriality and they provide examples of how the fantastic and the real via genre and form are linked to ideology, myth and commerce. In the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode, “Innocence,” Buffy and Angel fight, and through their fighting, Buffy attempts to work out her emotional issues with regards to the new Angel. “While the fight is a necessary element of an action show, it also serves a soap opera element, a physical representation of the characters’ emotional problems” (Meaney 2004). The series also generally display self-awareness of textuality fueled by hybridization of genres (detective, horror, comedy, soap opera, etc.) and paralleled by an awareness of social influences. The social issues are often represented symbolically (monsters such as *Twin Peaks*’ BOB or Buffy’s vampires). This symbolic representation and play of self-reference invoke active television viewing.

Above, in the context of postmodern hybridization, it could be seen how *Buffy* takes soap opera conventions and plays them out using the tropes of an action show. *Six Feet Under* (2001-2005) - an American drama television series created and produced by Alan Ball simply focuses on human mortality and the lives of those who deal with it on a daily basis - uses soap opera conventions too, but without filtering them through an action show lens. *Six Feet Under*, usually begins an episode with a death that is sometimes tragically, but oftentimes comically, portrayed. *Six Feet Under*, though it did not start out this way, became a more explicit version of the daytime soaps, with a compelling narrative and dynamic characters. In the end, both characters find comfort with an ex-lover, who helps them through the pain they are feeling. *Buffy* uses many soap opera conventions, notably extreme serialization of character conflicts, but filters them through an action show lens, creating a hybrid of traditionally male and traditionally female oriented form. However, both series feature episodes set almost entirely in subjective dream worlds, episodes that represent the series transcending their genres, and creating a new kind of television.

As to characterization of these serials, it is seen that they do not follow the conventional way. In *Six Feet Under*, the inner lives of the characters are individuated and linked to dream diegeses. Their occupations, advertising and funeral homes, respectively, are opposite to the heroic tradition of professionalism in the mainstream of TV drama. It was meant to represent social types that the audience could accept as 'real', not quirky types that the audience could accept as 'eccentric' (Smith 2005).

In *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002), which is an American comedy-drama series created by David E. Kelley simply focused on the romantic and personal lives of the main characters, often using legal proceedings as plot devices to contrast or reinforce a character's drama, individual characters may come and go (as the series exhausts its need for them, or as actors move on to other opportunities), the primary group of characters remains fairly stable. Smith (2005, p. 103) explains that "It marshals our allegiances to long-running serial characters and balances them with the more targeted rhetoric provided by guest stars to create a complex appeal to audience attitudes." So that, according to Smith, *Ally McBeal*,

with its strong continuing storylines of character development, almost never shows a case that extends over more than one episode and each serial must determine the appropriate balance of long-term serial character growth and short-term narrative payoff to keep its audience's interest. Social themes, through this kind of characterization, can be found in almost every one of the chapters in *Ally McBeal*. Ally McBeal possessed the familiar markers of feminist representation with its focus on a white, unmarried, professional working woman living in an urban area. Dow (2005, p.389) argues that there are several reasons why Ally McBeal was seen as engaging with feminism: it had storylines that dealt with issues like sexual harassment or gender discrimination, and its characters were consistently embroiled in different skirmishes in an ongoing battle of the sexes. But it was the character of Ally herself that received the most attention from those who wished to analyze the show's relationship to the current state of feminism. Politics necessarily involves matching particular tactics to the needs of a specific time and place. There are no global strategies that apply equally well to all scenarios: Instead of displacing questions of race on to 'aliens' or 'mutants', Ally reframes the question as being about 'eccentricity'. Smith (2005, p. 109) writes:

Eccentricity is a more general notion allowing us to discuss a broader range of people than the more concrete categories of 'race' or 'sexual orientation', just as the cooler term 'difference' allows academics to bypass the particularities of colour to discuss broader patterns of discrimination. On Ally people are discriminated against because they don't fit into set business norms or established romantic expectations. Sometimes these distinctions are based on bodies (obesity, baldness, or simply being funny looking); sometimes they are behavioural (the desire to fly with wings, a foot fetish); at other times they are concerned with identity politics (homelessness, dwarfism).

According to Smith, it could be clearly seen the advantages and limitations of the eccentricity strategy by examining guest characters who are physically "Othered". In many of the guest roles, the problem that brings discrimination has to do with physical appearance. Eccentricity, in view of Smith, in *Ally McBeal*, is a favourite subject of the serial which is allowing us to distinguish different strategies for using eccentric characters.

Another eccentric character appears in *Twin Peaks*. Most television shows are made up of characters that are so pretty, so rich, or so cool that they become dehumanized and unrealistic. However, the characters in *Twin Peaks* are the exact opposite. They are unglamorous, odd, and sometimes just plain silly. *Twin Peaks* are obviously trying to break away from the use of common, stereotypical characters. They were actually taking an old idea and turning it around. Just as the characters on many other shows are so perfect they are unrealistic, the characters on *Twin Peaks* are so odd that they are also unrealistic. Blassmann (1999) discusses that Agent Cooper's constant switch of mode, tone and mental states poses similar questions. The character not only balances between the open, progressive seeker and the reactionary protector of middle class. As a decentered postmodern personality Cooper is, naturally, also able to change his mental state within one single scene. Cooper represents an alternate mode of detection that allows for a widening and expansion of the detective's personality and the detective genre itself. Blassman in his study, analyses that the first aspect concerns the inner seclusion and distance of the classical detective towards the object and the place of investigation. Classical detectives are clearly set apart from the ordinary middle class and live a life in a secluded, serene environment. According to him, the second characteristic trait is firmly connected with the detective's seclusion and isolation. In classical detective stories one often finds an inner division within the detective. With Cooper these schizoid aspects take on a different shape. Cooper adds another element to the resolvent. Although he might be called creative, he can also be considered 'consuming'. He embraces consumer society in an overtly enthusiastic fashion. Cooper registers all information alike, in a serious game of no-difference. Cooper strives for a general openness that allows for various approaches to work. Cooper's obsession with that kind of trivia sets him apart from the rationale of the classical detective. Cooper's first appearance could almost identify him as a character in a commercial evaluating food prices and motel accommodations. His enthusiasm in commenting on commercial products appears as both odd and sympathetic. This already introduces a new element in the detective character: the complete involvement in and identification with the commercial world. It is obviously clean side of postmodernism.

In respect of Pollard's (1993, p. 298) point of view Cooper is essentially a conservative character whose apparent openness for Eastern thoughts and dream visions is basically a means to protect a conservative American consumer society. Pollard implies that "What Cooper sees threatened is the very community that capitalism created" (1993, p. 299). On the other hand, Blassmann emphasizes that Cooper is living in a postmodern world which he loves and wants to protect, yet not change (Blassmann 1999). In this context of postmodernism, *Twin Peaks* was not a typical television show in the early 1990's. It should be evaluated as a postmodern TV show.

Angela Ndalians (2005, p. 96) clarifies that in postmodernist style of narrative, episode and series borders are more readily ruptured, in the process creating a situation that requires that the viewer functions like a puzzle solver or labyrinth traverser: in order to understand the meaning of the whole, it is also necessary to piece together and understand the relevance of the multiple and divergent story fragments that constitute the whole. Postmodern TV shows also can break the rule of 'clear-ending' in the context of narrative. Ndalians (2005, p. 96) keynotes that in the postmodern serials, like *Ally Mcbeal*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, *The Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under*, the episode borders remain in continual states of flux encompassing aspects of all prior prototypes. They are the series as serial, in that throughout the entire series the viewer becomes embroiled in the changing lives and stories of multiple characters. These series therefore retain a sense of historicity and progress through the focus on characters that develop from episode to episode. Often, as with *The Sopranos* and *Six Feet Under*, the series time is potentially infinite with no overall narrative target in place. In respect of Ndalians (2005), the shows are riddled with multiple narrative formations that stress polycentrism within the series itself. According to her, while one story may be introduced and resolved in a single episode, or across a series of episodes, other narrative situations may open up, extending the stories of multiple characters beyond a single episode and across the entire series.

In *The Sopranos* (1999-2007) - an American television drama series created and produced by David Chase that represents the return to humanist values and classic realism that 1980s and 1990s postmodern television sought to undermine - is characterised by both the serial format of the long story arc with open storylines and their combination with the shorter more contained plot-lines that come to an end within one episode. Michael Hammond (2005, p. 76) expresses that the use of this hybrid form affords the programme-maker a number of advantages in developing deeper characterisation through the longer story arcs while maintaining the advantages of shorter, episode-length stories.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, television programming throughout the world is becoming ever more diverse in its formats, styles, and audience appeals. As Brian G. Rose (2008) explicates how, more recently, TV genres have been addressed in a variety of challenging ways, either through detailed individual genre studies or by a reexamination of genre as a complex web of cultural practices involving industry, technology, aesthetics, economics, and reception. Horace Newcomb (2008, p. 32) discusses that when intimacy, seriality, and liminality are merged and concentrated, as in *The Sopranos* or *Six Feet Under*, in *Scrubs* or *The Office*, even, at times, in *Frasier* and *Friends*, television's rich possibilities are exhibited. But Newcomb's primary concern was not simply to organize and categorize; instead, it was to use the notion of formula to build a case for television's original aesthetic qualities. Dreams inform 'reality,' but it is the reality of 'fiction'. Fathers die but continue to appear, playing key roles in the lives of sons and daughters. Also, Newcomb (2008, p. 33) underlines that most significantly, genres blur, lose specific meaning, intent, import. "Formulaic expectations are subverted. Boundaries fail to hold in the narratives Time is altered when days are extended across the television 'season' in twenty-four episodes, playing with and in chronology as in another kind of dream sequence" (Newcomb 2008, p. 33).

3.2 SCIENCE FICTION TV SHOWS

As a TV genre, science fiction dramatizes the social consequences of imaginary science and technology in speculative visions of possible futures, alternate pasts, and parallel presents. The genre's breadth of thematic material and settings includes the exploration and colonization of outer and inner space, apocalyptic world cataclysms and their aftermath, invasion of the Earth by superior extraterrestrials or destructive and monstrous creatures, time travel as well as space travel, human and alien cultures meeting in novel circumstances, and the extension and transformation of human beings through technological and biological manipulation and accident.

Starting with looking over the landmark examples of science fiction on American television is to help have an opinion about the genre. In the 60's, science-fiction was all about cold war anxieties. At that time, science-fiction was about America's national character rather than technology and futuristic themes as in *The Twilight Zone* (1959-64). Rodney Hill (2008, p. 111) states that widely considered the first important science fiction television series for adults, the original *The Twilight Zone* introduced mass audiences to the idea that the genre - which had previously been largely marginalized, especially on television - could present serious subject matter in a well-made dramatic format. According to Hill (2008, 111);

What most distinguishes the show from many others of the period is that it addresses political issues generally considered taboo for the medium at the time - racism, McCarthyism, the threat of nuclear war - by virtue of science fiction's seeming remove from reality. This element also helps explain The Twilight Zone's extraordinary longevity: rather than presenting stories directly related to (and thus limited by) specific social concerns of the time, the show mythologizes those issues, fashioning broader, less time - bound tropes that still speak to the larger American culture of the mid - to late twentieth century. Typically overlooked, though, is the show's frequent reflexive turn, through which it examines the potential of genre TV as an agent of contemporary myth.

Here Hill means "myth in its more positive connotation, as laid out by Joseph Campbell and other scholars, not in the pejorative sense of reinforcing nationalist and bourgeois values of the status quo, as described by Roland Barthes" (Hill 2008, p. 124). Several

aspects of *The Twilight Zone*'s some episodes encourage us to read it simply as a religious or mythical allegory. With a fine grasp of psychological, mythological, and cultural structures and a well-honed understanding of how they might be effectively worked into the flexible structure of the anthology drama format, as Hill implies that creator of *The Twilight Zone*, Rod Serling and company employed them time and again in a determined - and arguably quite successful - attempt to transform the American cultural landscape for the better (2008, p. 124). Ranging across a variety of themes, including alien encounters, space exploration, time travel, futuristic societies, and even genetic alterations, *The Twilight Zone* especially established that those typical science fiction themes could offer an important perspective on American culture. Appearing at the very height of the cold war, it managed to address not only the expected fears and anxieties of that era but also a broad array of social issues - and rather courageously, given the political sensitivities of the time. Among them as Telotte (2008, p. 12) points out: "we might particularly include American culture's generally conformist values, repressed racism and xenophobia, creeping governmental control, and problematic gender relations". Based on its treatment of such themes, its consistently adult level of address, and its overall quality, *The Twilight Zone* clearly deserves Booker's recognition as "the series that marked the maturation of science fiction television as a genre" (Booker, 2004, p. 6).

Many other television series of the sixties, while not explicitly science fiction, nevertheless incorporated elements of space and futuristic technology into their story worlds. By far the most well-known and widely viewed science-fiction series of the 1960s was *Star Trek* (1966-69). Although it set in the 23rd century, the world of *Star Trek* was firmly grounded in the concerns of sixties America. Intermixing action-adventure with social commentary, the series addressed such issues as racism, war, sexism, and even the era's flourishing hippie movement. According to Booker, it projects the ultimate fulfillment of the dreams of the Enlightenment and, in so doing, demonstrates not only the strengths but also some of the essential weaknesses that have informed Western culture throughout the modern era (Booker 2008, p. 195). A moderately successful series during its three-year network run, *Star Trek* would become through syndication perhaps the most actively celebrated program

in television history, inspiring a whole subculture of fans whose devotion to the series led to fan conventions, book series, and eventually a commercial return of the *Star Trek* universe in the 1980s and 1990s through motion pictures and television spin-offs. On the other hand, in the UK at the same time with *Star Trek*, the BBC produced serial, *Dr. Who*, also attracted a tremendous fan following. In production from 1963 to 1989, *Dr. Who* stands as the longest running continuous science-fiction series in all of television (Sconce, 2009).

Starting with the most important serial, *Star Trek* is an American contemporary-progressive science fiction entertainment series. Perhaps the most famous science-fiction program of all is the iconic *Star Trek* and its spin-off shows, comprising the *Star Trek* franchise. The commercial and cultural impact of *Star Trek* demonstrates the important role that mass media images, objects, and texts play in contemporary cultural life. The success of the *Star Trek* series in first-run syndication reflected the changing marketplace of television in the 1980s and 1990s. Popular enthusiasm for television science fiction and popular science fiction films inspired a new kind of fan culture. By the early 1990s, television science-fiction had amassed a sizable enough program history and a large enough viewing audience to support a new cable network. The Sci-Fi Channel debuted in 1992, scheduling mainly old movies and television re-runs, but planning to support new program production in the genre sometime in the future. (Sconce, 2009) Through most of the 20th century, the techniques of making science fiction were expensive and involved a small number of dedicated craft practitioners, while the reusability of props, models, effects, or animation techniques made it easier to keep using them.

The original *Star Trek* television series has spawned four spin-off series *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-94), *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (1993-99), *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001), *Enterprise* (2001-2005) and eleven major motion pictures. It is also widely accepted that subcultures provide influential meanings and practices that structure consumers' identities, actions, and relationships. *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, following the crew of a new Starship Enterprise set almost a century after the original

series; *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *Star Trek: Voyager*, set contemporaneously with *The Next Generation*; and *Star Trek: Enterprise*, set before the original series, in the early days of human interstellar travel. *Star Trek* is a science fiction series set 300 years in the future, in a post-capitalist social and technological utopia. Together these series would provide an elaborate expansion - in both space and time - of the established *Star Trek* mythology: by referring to characters and situations of the other series, by having characters from one series appear in another, by tracing out a history of the United Federation of Planets and the work of its Starfleet, and by elaborating on a number of the most popular motifs and plot threads, such as the menace of the Borgs and the conflict between the Cardassians and the Bajorans. The five *Star Trek* television series and eleven major motion pictures all feature the inter-galactic adventures of various crews of 'Star Fleet Command' space-faring vehicles as they traverse the universe exploring strange new worlds and seeking out new life and new civilizations. Also, the series introduced television viewers to many ideas which later became common in science fiction films: warp drive which is a form of faster-than-light (FTL) propulsion, force fields, wireless hand-held communicators and scanners, desktop computer terminals, laser surgery, starship cloaking devices.

Star Trek stories usually depict the adventures of humans and aliens who serve in the Federation's Starfleet. The protagonists are essentially altruists whose ideals are sometimes only imperfectly applied to the dilemmas presented in the series. The conflicts and political dimensions of *Star Trek* sometimes represent allegories for contemporary cultural realities: *Star Trek: The Original Series* addressed issues of the 1960s, just as later spin-offs have reflected issues of their respective decades. Issues depicted in the various series include war and peace, the value of personal loyalty, authoritarianism, imperialism, class warfare, economics, racism, religion, human rights, sexism and feminism, and the role of technology.

In respect of Siegel (1980, p. 275), as to characterization its romance characterization caused *Star Trek*, to function quite powerfully on the symbolic level. Not only did the individual episodes frequently appear to be moral allegories, but as Tyrrell (1979, p. 289) has argued, the series as a whole must be interpreted as a myth of permanence for the individual and for his world in an age of anxiety about the progressive usurpation of the individual, human domain by bureaucracy and technology. Telotte clarifies (2008, p.15) Gene Roddenberry who created *Star Trek*, set out a formula that has dominated the genre to the present day:

The key injunction offered in its well-known epigraph - 'to boldly go where no man has gone before'- not only readily evoked a new kind of frontier but also easily differentiated the show from Allen's Lost in Space, as it pointed to the starship's purposefully directed travels through space, with its racially and even species-diverse crew tasked with exploring and mapping part of the universe as representatives of the United Federation of Planets. The adventurous exploring, interactions of a wide variety of characters (a variation on the old "ship of fools" motif), and strong sense of purpose or promise would prove to be a significant evolution of the space opera formula and a legacy to the medium"

Karen Anijar (2000) posits that *Star Trek* is a space western with all the cultural and ideological baggage that such a connection implies. Sixshooters are pawned for phasers and the wild frontier morphs into the final frontier. In this context, the "Turner-thesis" was articulated by American historian Frederick Jackson Turner a century ago. Turner's idea was that it was the frontier experience that pushed America to levels of greatness not ever achieved by other Europeans, that is, by other rational white men. *Star Trek's* final frontier, of course, blasts Turner into space. America carries the torch of European reason to the demands of the space frontier. At this nexus rests the foundations of the Star Trek curriculum - a cultural curriculum designed for the entire world. Anijar in her book (2000) illustrates that Kirk is a frontier hero. He has to shoot Indians, because he is a "trigger-happy cowboy". But the world has changed by the time Jean Luc Picard became *Habermasian Captain*³. Picard cruises in a more civilized era. "We can construct a better future. In the words of Jean Luc Picard, *we can make it so!*" (Anijar 2000, p. 195) The canon repackaged in the signifiers of the future can save our children; it can prepare them

³ "*Habermasian Captain*" that I used belongs to Selim Eyüboğlu.

for the twenty-fourth century; it can help them fight off the irrational barbarians at the gate (the Mexican border? Miami? New York City?). Anijar knows that the future is the past and hyperreality is loaded with political landmines and cultural contradictions (Anijar 2000, p. xii).

Once upon a time, in a galaxy long ago and far away, there was the imperialist imperative, which has been translated into a globalized universe - a new world order where the colonization of consumer subjects is necessary to ensure capitalism's unrepentant growth and expansion. Star Trek is just one of innumerable cultural formations reconstructing and reconstituting imperialist ideological imperatives, thus mirroring "the more general process by which television programs work to colonize, represent, and even produce consumer interests" (Fulton, 1994).

The most remarkable ones are shows like the syndicated *Babylon 5* (1994 - 1998), *Stargate SG-1* (1997 - 2007), *Farscape* (1999 - 2003), and also the new *Battlestar Galactica* (2003 - 2009) are in the updated space opera mode of the *Star Trek* franchise, what Gary Westfahl terms the "postmodern space opera" (Westfahl 2003, p. 207), and all depend heavily on digital special effects on TV. In describing the history of the space opera as a literary type, Westfahl underscores its narrative flexibility. As he notes, the form "must continually reinvent itself" so that "as one form of space opera falls out of favour ... another, improved form of space opera emerges for discriminating readers" (Westfahl 2003, p.198). On the other hand, whereas some have rather dismissively described the space opera as a "western in space," Edward James in his history of science fiction more nearly captures the spirit of the space opera as he emphasizes its exaggerated actions and situations, along with the element of awe it can inspire, even though he ultimately terms it a "type of preposterous galaxy-spanning adventure" (James 1994, p. 47).

Babylon 5 (1994 - 1998) is an American science fiction television series created, produced by J. Michael Straczynski. The show centers on the *Babylon 5* space station: a focal point for politics, diplomacy, and conflict during the years 2257–2262. *Babylon 5* has set a new

standard for television, as it is truly epic in proportion and elaborately supported by special effects. As Telotte (2008, p. 25) states that *Babylon 5* follows a preset, five-year narrative arc aboard a space station that is designed to serve as a kind of interstellar United Nations but eventually becomes a political entity in itself and is involved in a series of complex political intrigues and conflicts that ultimately determine the fate of the galaxy. Innovatively conceived as a novel for television - with a distinct beginning, middle, and end to its five-year story arc - *Babylon 5* demonstrates the capacity for television to tell complex stories and to allow characters and situations to change with time. Vint (2008, p. 247) indicates that reading *Babylon 5* as a skillfully crafted contemporary heroic epic that also innovates upon tradition provides insights into its strengths, its weaknesses, and its influential place in contemporary science fiction TV. Vint (2008, p. 248) explains:

Again consistent with its science fiction genre identification, Babylon 5 is set in the future, not the past, but a future figured as historical in its opening monologue, as “the dawn of the third age of mankind,” the new civilization born in the events narrated by the series. Similar to television itself, epics are often episodic in nature, requiring the poet “to think in narrative units that could be detached and would be intelligible and reasonably self-contained in recitation”, but these units always form a single vision, thematically tied to “the wholeness of the epic vision”. Most epics are collaborative efforts, orally composed and performed by bards who may not be their original authors. Similarly, Babylon 5 is united by Straczynski’s vision, but each episode is a collaborative work also made by directors and actors.

According to Vint, as a hybrid of epic and science fiction, *Babylon 5* revises and revitalizes both forms. Much of this value emerges from the complexity of its vision of the future as compared to the static visions typical of many other science fiction programs (2008, p. 248). An intricacy also informs the texture of daily life on *Babylon 5*, which includes multiple social classes and helps, as Jan Johnson-Smith argues, to direct “the sense of wonder ... away from technology and out into the sublime universe, into our experience of it” (2005, p. 236). It is partly through such a complexly imagined world that *Babylon 5* helped promote more serious SFTV, such as the reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* series, often praised for its flawed and thus human characters, long narrative arcs, and focus on political as well as military struggle.

With television series opens up possibilities for multiple narrative modes, *Babylon 5*, as a truly epic story, challenged televisual norms in that it was conceived as a long-term but predetermined epic story. As Tryon (2008, 306) points out television's new narrative complexity is also defined by its interplay between serial and episodic formats with little obligation for narrative closure at the end of every episode. Thus a series like reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* may juggle multiple narrative threads - the romance between Starbuck and Apollo, Boomer's discovery that she is a Cylon, the political conflict between Roslin and Zarek - over the course of several episodes, while the larger mission of battling the Cylons and finding Earth persists throughout the series. In SFTV today the goal is typically for the new serial narrative to avoid the melodramatic and character-driven elements associated with the soap opera. However, those boundaries can become blurred (Tryon 2008, 307).

Going back to the old and the first version of *Battlestar Galactica*, an American science fiction television series, produced in 1978 by Glen A. Larson, is a cult example of science fiction genre. Also, it can be evaluated as a space opera. Besides, in the history of science fiction, in view of Muir (2005, p. 3), *Battlestar Galactica* made basic errors about the realm of outer space, like galaxies and solar systems were continually confused, and was also the most fascistic American science fiction programme of all time, rigorously and mindlessly espousing complete faith in the military 'hawk' point-of-view, treating all peace attempts by a civilian government as misguided and stupid at best and evil at worst. Despite these scientific and philosophical mistakes, the show did boast some rather remarkable and memorable strengths.

Battlestar Galactica, featured a tragedy each and every week: an emotional, family-oriented tearjerker. Central characters were killed off or marooned, heroes lost loved ones, and mankind faced an endless quest in the solitude of outer space. That's why Muir determines that the original *Battlestar Galactica* may have been a "hokey space opera", but it was nonetheless sincere and heartfelt TV. For all of its many weaknesses, it struck a chord as solid TV drama, and resonated with many viewers in a powerful and unexpected

way. Today, it is almost universally remembered with nostalgic fondness by viewers not interested in the carping and infighting of genre critics (Muir 2005, p. 3).

The series was based on a simple premise: In a distant galaxy, 12 colonies of mankind flourish. The Colonies have been locked in deadly war with a race of mechanical devils called Cylons for nearly ten centuries. Following the total destruction of all the Colonies in a surprise attack. Commander Adama of the spacecraft carrier *Galactica* and ace warriors Cpt. Apollo and Lt. Starbuck flee to the deepest regions of space, leading a ragtag, fugitive fleet of human survivors in search of a mythical thirteenth colony. This legendary world is known only in ancient texts as 'Earth'. The Cylon Empire, intent on the final extermination of man, is always in hot pursuit of the *Galactica* and her fleet, forcing the *Galactica* ever further into depths of uncharted territory. The Cylons are led by the villainous Baltar, a human turncoat responsible for the destruction of the human civilizations.

However, *Battlestar Galactica* is worth remembering today. The universe of *Battlestar Galactica* exploited the rich human history of mythology. Savvy series writers made use of many legends and names from various cultures to remind audiences that Earth and these far-off galactic colonies had originated from the same ancient source, a mother world called Kobol. Characters such as Lucifer, Apollo, Athena, Adama, Cassiopeia and Cain shared characteristics with their mythological counterparts, and these significant names added a layer of depth to the weekly events. The references to the Bible, ancient history and Grek mythology supported "*Battlestar Galactica's* Erich Von Daniken-style universe", and successfully afforded the show a larger context and a distinct lexicon. Consequently, the series was not merely space adventure. It was the epic story of mankind's heritage, forever interconnected with American myths, legends and history (Muir 2005, p. 5).

Another noticeable example of science fiction television shows is *Stargate SG-1* (1997 - 2007) that is a Canadian-American military science fiction television series. The show is created by Brad Wright and Jonathan Glassner. Notable for its longevity, *Stargate SG-1* endured for ten seasons, and its spin-off, *Stargate Atlantis* (2004 - 2009), and more recently

Stargate Universe (2009-present) has been on the air since 2009. The story of Stargate is a network of ancient alien devices called Stargates connects a vast multitude of planets within the ‘Milky Way’ galaxy for interstellar travel. Later episodes reveal that this network is capable of spanning not just planets within the Milky Way, but with sufficient power, can provide intergalactic travel as well. *Stargate SG-1* chronicles the adventures of *SG-1*, the flagship team of over two dozen teams from Earth who explore the galaxy and defend Earth against alien threats such as the Goa’uld, Replicators and later the Ori. The series expands upon many Ancient Earth mythologies such as Egyptian mythology, Norse mythology, and Arthurian legend.

Stargate SG-1 takes place in a military science fiction environment, and also can be classified as a mythological science fiction and employs the common science fiction concepts of strongly differentiated characters fighting an unequivocally evil enemy (the Goa’uld). However, states that it links alien races with well-known Earth mythologies, by use of the central Stargate device. “Near-instantaneous interplanetary travel allows quick narrative shifts between the politics on Earth and the realities of fighting an interstellar war” (Beeler and Dickson 2006, p. 267). According to Beeler and Dickson, *Stargate SG-1* gradually evolves the basic premise of the Stargate film into its own unique mythological superstructure, expanding upon Egyptian mythology (notably the gods Apep/Apophis and Anubis as Goa’uld villains), Norse mythology (notably the god Thor as an Asgard ally), and Arthurian legend (notably Merlin as an Ancient ally against the god-like Ori), among others. *SG-1* introduces new alien races (as opposed to alien human civilizations) less often than other science fiction television series and integrates newly encountered races or visited planets in stand-alone episodes into its established mythology while leaving the plotlines accessible for new audience members. Despite the show’s extensive intergalactic mythology and science fiction elements, *SG-1* is an ultimately character-driven TV show (Beeler and Dickson 2006, p. 269).

Stargate SG-1 has also introduced a great variety of starships, all of them of alien origin - even those built by humans, since they have been made from retroengineered alien technologies, usually captured after one of Stargate Team 1's rather destructive world-saving missions. What is perhaps most interesting about the series is that it is set in the present; ordinary humans, not emotionally advanced, future humans with better education and technologies, have to build these ships, fly them, and defend Earth. And when these ships are retroengineered into human technology, they are often clunkier, uglier, and more utilitarian, an experimental appropriation, not a pure design, reflecting our own current level of technology and suggesting just how far we have to go before we are a fully space-faring, starship-born civilization (Holloway 2008, p. 186).

Stargate SG-1 seems particularly well suited to such narrative imperatives, considering Beeler (2008, p. 268) as it is designed around a plausible pseudoscientific concept - a science fiction premise - that encourages the audience to predict the events that will occur while also giving the illusion that each episode is completely new and in some respects unpredictable. Inherent in this description are a number of concepts that drive the continued popularity of the series: travel to the stars, military science fiction, an unequivocally evil enemy, strongly differentiated characters, and a linking of alien races with familiar human mythology. The fascination of science fiction has been built upon the founding concept of space travel to such an extent that the term "space opera" has, for many nonfans, come to be synonymous with science fiction. In view of Beeler (2008, p. 268):

All of these are major contributing factors in the series' long-term success and are consistent with the predictable/novel nature of television's contemporary aesthetic that Eco describes. Consistent pseudoscience allows the viewer to become comfortable with the parameters of the Stargate world; military drama underpins the structure of the episodes through an archetypal struggle between good and evil; a familiar mythology allows the audience to anticipate the introduction of characters, locations, and plot structures; and the strong differentiation of the characters provides a comfortable template for much of the dialogue and action.

And in *Stargate Universe* (2009), we witness the lives and discovery struggle of a group of American mastermind, experts and military crew trained in the optimum level, which

pursue new discoveries from stargates with worm holes in endless depth of the space. The space in this series is still the final frontier. As in all spin offs of *Star Trek*, as *Stargate Universe* too, a Stargate spin off, is still explorer, these series might be considered as progressive science fiction.

3.3 POSTMODERN-SCIENCE FICTION TV SHOWS

The term postmodern science fiction is used to describe certain characteristics of post-World War II literature (relying on fragmentation, paradox, questionable narrators, conflictual characters etc.) and a reaction against enlightenment ideas, big narratives, idealization, gender - sexual and all clear identity definitions implicit in modernism. Postmodern science fiction (mostly called speculative fiction written on the previous chapter), maybe like science fiction as a whole, is hard to define and there is little agreement on the exact characteristics, scope, and importance of it.

Postmodern science fiction can be seen as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic aspects of the postmodern society. It can be a combination of multiple genres to create a unique narrative or to comment on situations in postmodernity. When compared it with modernism, the distinction between high and low culture is also attacked with the employment of pastiche, the combination of multiple cultural elements including subjects and genres not previously deemed fit for science fiction.

Science fiction ongoing generic metamorphoses have been at least partially responsible for the increasing heterogeneity of the contemporary critical enterprise. Science fiction no longer refers only to a literary subgenre: it is also a particularly popular kind of cinema and television; it provides the visual stimulus for a whole range of video games; as Hollinger (1999, p. 261) states that it spills over into slipstream fiction; its aliens and spaceships feed into some of our culture's most acute millennial anxieties. In respect of Hollinger, as both a body of imagery and a field of discourse, it provides particularly apt imaginative portrayals of contemporary technoculture. The late 1980s and early 1990s were remarkable for the

intensity of interest generated by cyberpunk, for instance. “Both the professional and academic communities engaged in contentious debates about the nature of this soi-disant ‘new’ breed of science fiction, while many theoretically-oriented critics saw in cyberpunk, whether for good or ill, the apotheosis of postmodernism” (Hollinger 1999, p. 260). The widespread attention which cyberpunk attracted from outside the science fiction field has been one important factor in its growing prominence as an object of study in a variety of disciplines. “New perspectives in critical and theoretical work - influenced, for example, by post-structuralism, by feminism, by race and gender studies, and by the multiplex of postmodernisms - have also found in science fiction an especially rich source of cultural material.” Also, Veronica Hollinger (2008, p. 233) signifies: “given the inescapable impact of technoscience in our lives today - for both good and ill - it is not surprising that science fiction has increasingly become an object attention for readers and scholars seeking to develop some adequate understanding in Fredric Jameson’s terms, seeking to develop some form of ‘global cognitive mapping’- of our radically complex present moment.” As Best and Kellner (2001) suggests, developments in technoscience are rendering our lives more and more science fictional, and the case has often been made that the ‘science fiction’ now refers not only to a popular narrative genre, but also to a lastingly widespread mode of cultural description and analysis. Science fiction has become “an aspect of the quotidian consciousness of people living in the post-industrial world, daily witnesses to the transformations of their values and material condition in the wake of technological acceleration beyond their conceptual threshold” (Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. 1991, p. 389).

Popular TV show, evaluated as postmodern science fiction, *The X-Files* (1993-2002) is generally acclaimed as the television cult hit of the 1990s. Its excursions into the occult, paranormal, and supernatural have touched a responsive chord in an era when belief in the fantastic, aliens, and government conspiracies is accelerating. *The X-Files* depicts the investigations of two young FBI agents, Fox Mulder and Dana Scully into ‘X-files’, inexplicable cases of supernatural phenomena rejected by the bureau mainstream. The series combines stories of detection and investigation with the iconography and narratives of the science fiction and horror genres, as Mulder and Scully explore reports of alien

abductions, poltergeists, artificial intelligence, human mutations and demonic creatures, as well as becoming embroiled in a government plot to conceal the existence of paranormal phenomena from the general public. The series therefore signals its distinctiveness in part through its generic hybridity, a strategy that Thompson (1997, p. 15) argues is particularly indicative of quality television. Furthermore, Johnson (2005, p. 61) implies that “the series’ sophisticated scripts, complex multi-layered narratives, and visually expressive cinematography, combined with its exploration of contemporary anxieties concerning late capitalism, such as environmental issues, the role of medicine, the threat of scientific experimentation and, most overtly, the duplicity of the US government, is characteristic of quality television.”

The X-Files deploys the aesthetics of postmodernism, drawing on its characteristic representational strategies and thematic tropes, and thus can serve as an example of a popular form of postmodernism that engages in pastiche of plot-lines, genre conventions, iconography, folklore, and bits of history found in the forms of previous media culture. In his reading, Kellner (1999, p. 161) argues:

...its implosion of generic boundaries enacts a postmodern subversion of the categories and aesthetic forms of modern media culture; it mixes a heavy style and high seriousness with irony and parody, and its combination of the standard postmodern aesthetic strategies and themes of postmodern culture produces a pop postmodernism that enables us to interrogate both the aesthetics of television and postmodernism.

Most interpretations of *The X-Files* perceive it as one-sidedly modern or postmodern, failing to see how it negotiates the boundaries between them. In an otherwise illuminating and interesting article, Reeves, Rogers, and Epstein (1996, p. 25) write: “Although the generic sampling and episodic/serial straddle of *The X-Files* could be interpreted as boundary blurring, other aspects of the program are explicitly anti-postmodern”. According to these authors, *The X-Files* is “post-postmodern” because of “the committed and sustained quest for truth on behalf of its protagonists, its seriousness, and its lack of the sort of postmodern cynicism, irony, and play with generic codes characteristic of such popular

programs as Beavis and Butt-Head or Mystery Science Theater 3000” (Reeves and others, 1996, p. 28). But, by contrast, Kellner (1999, p. 165) claims:

...the show does embody postmodern aesthetic strategies, themes, and vision, despite the fact that its characters often exhibit prototypically modern characteristics that inform some of the plots and vision of the series (i.e. questing for truth, a yuppie work ethic and professionalism, belief in scientific rationality, etc.)

Firefly (2002-2003), an American space western television series created by writer and director Joss Whedon and that be could be regarded as a postmodern science fiction TV show, is a western, a horse opera, a space opera, an action narrative, a horror show, and a comedy. Its genre is very flexible. In short, it is the usual Joss Whedon text. However, it can be evaluated as a postmodern Western parody. Joss Whedon’s voyage into television with the genre-blending and - bending *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) and his subsequent turn into the darker fantasy of *Angel* (1999-2004) have established him as a major contributor to the art television provides and the cultural work it does. As the terms ‘horse opera’ and ‘space opera’ indicate, the western and science fiction have a good deal in common: not only plot devices and character types but a common setting on the frontier, a common theme of survival, and a common mechanism in which force is sanctioned as a means of survival.

While *Star Trek* proffer worthy authority figures, *Firefly* suggest that we live in a world with a flawed system (another genre blending). Cochran and Wilcox (2008, p. 5) underlines:

Firefly follows the Western historical pattern in that it is set after the time of a civil war. The Alliance supported Unification of all planets (cf. the Union in the nineteenth-century U.S. Civil War); the border worlds, the frontiers (visually presented as dusty towns in deserts, with horses and cows, Old West-style) fought against centralized government, calling themselves Independents or Browncoats.

Science fiction and western differ considerably in the attitudes they display and the responses they evoke towards the frontier which is their common setting. The western, because its frontier is past, relies on inductive knowledge for its themes and scenic effects,

the sources of its interest and energy. In science fiction, on the other hand, space (in the words introducing each episode of TV's *Star Trek*) is 'the final frontier' ever receding, by necessity a paradigm rather than a generalization. The two genres base many of their plots and themes on the concept of survival. Davis (1985, p. 33) compares that in both, mere physical survival involves becoming a special kind of person; but the western's hero becomes like an Other, a man who seems both savage and civilized at once, learning from experience and from the lore of the aborigines how to secure the necessities of life. According to Davis (1985), the prototypical science fiction hero, on the contrary, uses not his senses but sensory devices to discover whether he can survive in a "non-terrain" environment. The corollary or result of those two propositions is a third. In the western, the outcome of this conflict is in effect decided for the hero by the presence of history, once and for all, in the story's implied future if not in its dramatic present, while the science fiction hero, with all history theoretically before him, is free, or condemned, to define himself by motion. Davis (1985) emphasizes that in the western, moreover, the land and people on the other side of the frontier have been tamed; the frontier is preterit. In respect of Davis, the issue of cultural survival is more important in the western than in science fiction for the same reason that the theme of physical survival is more important in the western. In this context, the western and science fiction share a common setting on a frontier, a common theme of survival, and a common mechanism in which force is sanctioned, the western emphasizes the physical, the individual, the instinctive and unarticulated, and the static and timeless. In contrast, science fiction celebrates the cerebral, the social, the technological, and the changing and developing.

Buffy The Vampire Slayer, (written on it in postmodern shows part) an American television series, mixes horror, comedy, fantasy, teen drama, and more; *Angel*, a spin-off of the television series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* both created by Joss Whedon, mixes horror, noir detective stories, and more; and *Firefly* mixes science fiction and Western and more too. This hybridization of genres is one of the key elements of postmodern science (or science) fiction. In every television series he has created, Joss Whedon has shown himself a master of genre-blending. Each features a creative, surprisingly successful fusion of genres as well

as an inversion of the norms typically associated with them. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, *Firefly* and even *Dollhouse* all employ unusual combinations of two or more genres, and each develops a unique voice through inversion and juxtaposition of genre-driven expectations. Sutherland and Swan (2008, p. 89) signify that in *Firefly*, Whedon locates his cast in the combined world of horror, science fiction, and Western, describing the fictional world of the series as ‘Western noir’ with ‘a kind of a Hong Kong sensibility’. In *Firefly*, Whedon visually and thematically connects the postapocalypse worlds of dystopic film and the frontier plains of the Western. Combining the barren, open imagery of the two genres viscerally underlines the thematic links between two genres that examine the individual on the outer fringe of society. To this mix, in his typical fashion, Whedon also imparts a ‘Hong Kong sensibility’. Sutherland and Swan (2008, p. 91) explains:

The ‘Hong Kong sensibility’ is imparted into the setting of Firefly through the Asian influences in the city scenes. The visual cues suggesting a strong Asian influence are many and various - everything from the animated characters that speak subliminally to River Tam via a giant screen to the kimonos seen on some of the female characters and the repainted lettering of Serenity - reminds the reader of this Asian inspiration.

Concordantly, *Firefly* is not just science fiction. It is also, in its own way, a Western. Espenson (2007, p. 3) in her study, claims that Westerns are the other major genre that tends to work through metaphor. Traditional movie Westerns used the wide-open otherworldliness of the American frontier to stand for everything from the quest for personal freedom, to general continental expansion, to Vietnam.

The time, styles and all plastic side of narratives, just like postmodernism, in speculative or postmodern science fiction can be blur. Nostalgia and retro styles, recycling earlier genres and styles in new contexts, genres, images, typography, colors, clothing and hair styles, advertising images, all these eclectic things might be blended. All stories might set in the future or past. History represented through nostalgic images of pop culture, fantasies of the past. History has become one of the styles; historical representations blend with nostalgia. For example, Lorna Jowett (2008, p. 102) sets *Firefly* within the “steampunk” genre of science fiction and the “retro-fitting” combination of past with future, while investigating

the concatenation of the embodied physical with the technological. As a metaphor for contemporary postmodern/postcolonial nomadic identity, *Firefly* and *Serenity* demonstrate the contentious spaces that one must navigate as a postmodern subject. In her study, Brown (2008, p. 5) examines:

How does this new postcolonial and postmodern diasporic nomadism map onto preexisting constructions of the Other? Is the use of Mandarin/Cantonese/Hindi, South/East/Southeast Asian decor, chopsticks, a geisha/courtesan figure, and Japanese swords simply a boring Orientalism 'gussied up' for the future? Or is it a much more complex re-incorporation and re-reading of the Other than it seems at first glance?

Science fiction novels and films, ideas about human subjectivity and identity have often been established in a comparison between self (human) and other (non-human) characters. In this way, Cornea (2008, p. 275) argues that in terms of the genre's codes and conventions, it is possible to see how the alien or robot of science fiction may provide an example of otherness against which a representation of 'proper' human subjectivity is worked through. "Images of Otherness in science fiction can be understood as a metaphor for forms of otherness within society, or between societies, which have traditionally been built upon gendered divides or upon distinctions based on racial differences" (Cornea 2008, p. 275). In this context, in the Star Trek Universe can be presented with a multicultural, respectful-yet-assimilatory solution to the divisiveness of our world - a solution which incorporated an internal critique but nonetheless held out hope for an ultimate, progressive overcoming of difference. On the other hand, the construction of the *Firefly/Serenity*' verse acknowledges that while the war was lost and the empire prevails, difference has not been solved. Instead, it has been multiplied and made messy.

Another important TV show which is labeled as postmodern, BBC TV's long-running science fiction serial *Doctor Who* offers the cultural historian a valuable window on British popular culture during the years it initially played on television: 1963 to 1989. At the most basic level, the programme shows the influence of the Second World War. Cook and Wright (2006, 52) argues that the Doctor's struggles against the Daleks and other totalitarian invaders served as a stage on which to relive Britain's historical stand against

Nazi Germany. Yet the story of the programme's rise and fall and passing references within the unfolding story line illuminate a second influence: post-war Britain's encounter with the United States. Russel T. Davies's reinvention of the classic British TV series *Doctor Who*, has announced in its themes, settings, and allusions an unusually direct engagement with contemporary politics: specifically, the repercussions of the Al-Qaeda strikes of September 11, 2001. Like American television's *Heroes* and *Battlestar Galactica*, the new *Doctor Who* argues against the totalizing strategies advanced by both sides in the war on terror, denouncing violent modes of pseudo-utopian fundamentalism in favor of pluralist and personal solutions to global problems. Yet it has also remained aware of its own protagonists' potential to succumb to such forms of fanaticism. The character of the Doctor may have defined himself against the Daleks and won but in many ways the programme as a whole defined itself against the United States and lost. According to Cook and Wright (2006), yet America could also be a model, an inspiration and a market. *Doctor Who's* complex relationship with the United States, and its expression in the equivalent series *Star Trek* (NBC, 1966-69; 1987-2005), raise issues within the wider development of British television and British culture and illuminate international questions of American media power. *Doctor Who* was profoundly shaped by the United States. As the home of post-war science fiction, America inevitably provided the cultural model for a British science fiction serial such as *Doctor Who*.

Although the Doctor was supposed to be an alien, his manners and adventures were deeply embedded in the stories that British people told themselves about themselves, the most obvious being the emphasis on law and order symbolised by the outward form of his time/space machine – the Tardis – as a London police telephone box. The character asserted national values and acted out national mythology at a time of great uncertainty. Much of this uncertainty stemmed from the dominance of the United States and the decline of Britain. More especially, *Doctor Who* adventures played directly into Britain's strategies for coping with American power.

Cook and Wright compare *Star Trek*, like *Doctor Who*, if it had any transatlantic elements in its genesis. According to them, *Star Trek* followed very different plot trajectories from *Doctor Who*. For all Roddenberry's belief in a universe built on 'infinite diversity in infinite combination', the voyages of the Starship Enterprise were in many ways expansionist: integrating and coordinating newly discovered worlds into the intergalactic federation. Captain Kirk therefore seemed like an all American hero. *Doctor Who*, by contrast, tended to the conservative as well as the defensive. *Star Trek* offered much: complex ideas, occasional love interest, aliens from the friendly to the psychopathic, planets in various technicolor hues and astonishing special effects (Cook and Wright 2006, p. 58).

Another TV show which can be evaluated in the context of postmodernist narrative style is *Lost* (2004-2010) which is an American live-action television series and created by J. J. Abrahams. It follows the lives of plane crash survivors on a mysterious tropical island, after a commercial passenger jet flying between Sydney and Los Angeles crashes somewhere in the South Pacific. Each episode typically features a primary storyline on the island as well as a secondary storyline from another point in a character's life, though other time-related plot devices change this formula in later episodes. In the context of shifting notions of what constitutes science fiction, while *Lost* often foregrounds many conventions associated with science fiction, it also, like a number of other recent shows, just as often slips away from any easy classification. Certainly the show was a drama, but did not immediately seem to fit with more specific dramatic genres like soap opera, crime drama, or science fiction. *Lost*, in this context of hybridization, is a speculative fiction TV show. It blends adventure, drama, fantasy, science fiction, psychological thriller genres. According to David Lavery (2008, p. 287), *Lost*, of course, has not excluded science from the island. The already mentioned inclination of fans to speculate about secret scientific endeavors follows naturally from the presence of the still mysterious Dharma Initiative and its many research projects: "meteorology, psychology, parapsychology, zoology, electromagnetism, and utopian social experiments" (Lavery 2008, p. 287). Although *Lost* includes time traveling and alternative lives of each character as in science fiction, in the end of the story, it is close

to fantasy more than science fiction. But as a whole, obviously, it is a speculative fiction concern with “what if?” The text of *Lost* is a genre mixture, combining elements from a range of other genres and previous programmes. But unlike previously celebrated genre mixtures like *Twin Peaks* or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Lost* refuses to highlight its own genre references and antecedents. Instead, it forces viewers to speculate on relevant generic frameworks, and then confounds our expectations through twists and reversals. When the castaways discover a research station on the island, the show does not fully convert to the conventions of science fiction to explain this unusual presence, but rather leaves the origins and function of the station ambiguous as to complicate any simple conventions of the genre that viewers might assume could explain the mysteries. Jason Mittell (2009, p.11) notes that the show is plotted as an elaborate mystery, but unlike traditional murder or crime mysteries, part of *Lost*'s narrative design is determining what unknown enigmas lurk beneath the surface, not just discovering the answers to clearly posed questions.

While flash forwards are becoming the norm on *Lost*, another postmodern TV show *Flashforward*, an American television show which began airing in 2009, puts an emphasize on the question of ‘what if?’ The series revolves around the lives of several people as a mysterious event causes nearly everyone on the planet to simultaneously lose consciousness for two minutes and seventeen seconds on October 6, 2009. During this ‘blackout’ people see what appear to be visions of their lives on April 29, 2010, a global ‘flashforward’. Again genre-blending process, that makes the show postmodern, is in charge here: *Flashforward* is a mixture of drama, science fiction and detective story. It appears through using both science fiction, adventure and detective genre characteristics. In the series, the struggles of the people, who see two minutes and seventeen seconds from their future in a disaster occurring as a consequence of a scientific study, through such anticipations is an important factor in the growth and development of the characters. Differences that each character sees for the future, are actually carrying evidences for the fact that the future might both quite optimist and quite pessimist. Even these sophisticated and many-sided and various but interconnected, cyclical future descriptions indicate how postmodern the narration of the series is. Classification of the character as good or bad

may, at first, is distinguished easily. But, the development of the characters, who are plying between hero and anti-hero, is an important curiosity element which indicates the existing popularity and prospective popularity of the series, although it is the first season of the series.

After *Battlestar Galactica*, *Caprica*, debuted in 2010, is an American science fiction drama, set in the universe of *Battlestar Galactica*. Set years before the events seen in *Battlestar Galactica*, *Caprica* tells the story of how Colonial humanity first created the robotic Cylons, who would later plot to destroy humans in retaliation for their enslavement. *Caprica* differs significantly from its parent series, due to creative. *Caprica*, as a postmodern science fiction TV show, applies some film noir elements, dramatic fiction and soap opera as a format. With these considerations and *Caprica*'s storyline already focused on events taking place before the two Cylon Wars, the series has a different identity, with its own tone, content, and style. Whereas the dark, post-apocalyptic reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* series revolved around a final struggle for survival, *Caprica* is concerned with a world intoxicated by success. Ronald D. Moore states: "It's about a society that's running out of control with a wild-eyed glint in its eye." The Twelve Colonies are at their peak: self-involved, oblivious, and mesmerized by the seemingly unlimited promise of technology. Framed by the conflict between the Adamas and the Graystones over the resurrection of loved ones lost in an act of terrorism, the series will explore ethical implications of advances in artificial intelligence and robotics. Set against the backdrop of a society with technology ahead of American culture, *Caprica* is grounded in urban locales rather than in space, and focuses on corporate, political, familial, and personal intrigue. With the troubled relationship between two families at its center, Moore himself has likened *Caprica* to the 1980s prime time soap opera *Dallas*, and it has been referred to as "television's first science fiction family saga" (Caprica Review 2009).

4. BATTLESTAR GALACTICA AS A POSTMODERN-SCIENCE FICTION TV SHOW

4.1 THE CRISIS OF OTHERING AND IDENTITY: THE RENAISSANCE OF BATTLESTAR GALACTICA AS A RECLAIMING GENRE

Analyzing *Battlestar Galactica* (2003-2009), created by David Eick and Ronald D. Moore, gives expression to the questions of identity, othering, culture, and purpose. *Battlestar Galactica* (hereafter BSG) tries to asking us to consider our - especially Americans' - feelings and thoughts about war, insurgency, torture, rape, abortion, genocide, technology, gender roles, identity, sex, procreation, marriage, heroism, service, compassion, hope. Efforts to read *BSG* as political allegory tend to rely on binary oppositions that have become standard in the post-9/11 era. It is facing up to the posttraumatic disorders of contemporary American culture, while also recognizing and confronting the human shortfall of its own critical conception in postmodern western setting. *BSG* presents characters who demonstrated knowledge of philosophy, theology, and science. It even anticipates, or at least represents, the sort of conflict of civilizations.

Battlestar Galactica (1978), created by Glen A. Larson, laid out the general foundation for all subsequent versions - a group of space cowboys' humans flee a deadly robotic enemy after a devastating attack that nearly destroys all of humankind. The problem with science fiction like *BSG* (1978) is that the distinction between good and evil is so blatantly obvious. There were many differences between the original series and reimagined version. The most significant difference between the original and re-imagined versions of *BSG* is the relationship between the humans and the Cylons.

On the other hand, the re-imagined *BSG* series, the distinction between Cylon and human is blurred. Actually, it is a matter of right and good depends entirely on culture, socialization, situation, and perhaps even personal preference. As the reimagined *BSG* continues to blur the traditional lines between good and evil, viewers will find themselves taking on more

responsibility in terms of trying to determine who is and is not acting morally at any given time. It is okay to be confused about the moral status of Cylons because the humans on *Galactica* are confused themselves. In fact, as Steiff and Tamplin (2008, p. 333) states that it is a morally relativist TV series because time and time again, the remake stresses that there is no objective universal morality or truth. Here, what is deemed “right” is dependent entirely on context, whether social, cultural or historical.

Some of the clearest examples of the re-made *BSG*'s moral relativism center on the decisions about when it is necessary to leave behind or sacrifice a comrade, and what represents the “greater good” in such a crisis. (Steiff & Tamplin 2008, p.333). In the miniseries, President Laura Roslin ultimately abandons to the mercy of the Cylons several ships lacking faster-than-light capability. Apollo urges this course of action, advising her it is simply “a matter of numbers;” that it is better she consider the safety of the many, not the few. Roslin agrees, and the vessels with FTL drives jump away from a Cylon attack, leaving unarmed civilian ships (including an agro-ship with a child on board) to be obliterated. In this context, from the very beginning, *BSG* has been morally relativistic and postmodernist narrative style which ends the argumentation of what is good and what is bad. Where the two forces originally represented clear good and evil respectively, the new series positions the Cylons sympathetically as rebellious slaves striking out against their former masters. An analysis of personal identity ultimately demonstrates that both humans and Cylons travel a similar path in developing their narratives of personal identity, and disruptions in that path are not necessarily identity altering. This parallels a similarly active construction in *BSG*: the fragmented identity of the characters of the show. Because the Cylons can look and act human, there is a tension in different characters between their allegiance to the humans and the allegiance to the mechanical Cylons. In order to piece together their identity as either Cylon or human, the characters have to actively construct their loyalty between the two.

In contemporary postmodern thought the self is a constantly changing and unstable entity. For Michel Foucault (1994, p. 305), our concept of our “self is constructed through a

fragmented being of language.” In his writings, Foucault describes how social institutions, such as medicine, psychiatry, and the penal system, determine the way the individual perceives him- or herself. None of these institutions can be separated from the larger power structures of government and culture. For Foucault the “self” is a construction made because of, and through, many different factors. Each of these factors, in turn, is constructed. And this means that identity itself is constructed (Foucault 1994, p. 369). Boomer decided in the first season at first that she was not Cylon. She constructed her identity as human up until shooting Adama. In *BSG*, there’s a constant tension in the characters between different aspects of their identity. Basically, every character has to actively decide which “self” they want to be.

Besides, Hera’s set of identity markers that she is both *human* and *machine*. Hera, Helo and Athena Sharon’s child, is a character that tangibly articulates the differences between human and Cylon and makes obvious the similarities. In this way, as Donna Haraway (1991, p. 150) has pointed out in “A Cyborg Manifesto: we are all cyborgs, because we all exist with different aspects commingling in ourselves”. Cyborgs are made up of human parts and machine parts. Being a cyborg, however, is not just about being part human and part machine; the metaphor can extend farther. In fact, Cyborg is a strong figure, and it is one that has penetrated many a science fiction story and often helps us question what it means to be human or machine. According to Haraway (1991), cyborgs are a perfect representation of the condition of the hybrid self in postmodern identity. Paul Booth (2008, p. 23), in his article, indicates that “this is made obvious, for example, in the way we name our ethnicities: British-American, Franco-Jewish, Caribbean-British, African-American, and human-Cylon. Each hyphenate word describes the balance between identities”. And much as it is difficult to separate out the two ends of the hyphenate, so too is it difficult for the Cylon to figure out the distinction between machine and human. Caprica Six, Gina Six, Boomer Sharon, and Athena Sharon are examples of how the Cylon identity must be actively constructed. These characters have to reconcile their mechanical parts with their organic.

Fredric Jameson (1982, p. 152) argues, the science fiction industry's "deepest vocation is over and over again to demonstrate and to dramatize our incapacity to imagine the future": most science fiction "does not seriously attempt to imagine the 'real' future of our social system. Rather, its multiple mock futures serve the quite different function of transforming our own present into the determinate past of something yet to come". As Jameson writes about science fiction in general, postmodern science fiction films tend less to imagine the future than to "defamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present" (Jameson 1982, p. 152). *BSG* established a series of mirrors or doubles both between the show and real life and between various characters. The series continually offers reflections of twenty-first-century America. Not only the differences with the old versions, the reimagined *BSG* has many references to the world we live in. There are many subtexts of the series including theological references, human polytheism, divine texts, Cylon monotheism which all concerns American society. *BSG* deals with 9/11 and the war on terror more critically than most U.S. fictionalized treatments or even news coverage, by addressing what is unspeakable about 9/11, namely, Americans' complicity in propagating violence which can be turned back against them.

In its first two seasons, *BSG* vividly depicted the post-9/11 clash of civilizations. As Dinello (2008, p. 186) indicates that the robotic Cylons, religious fanatics who justify mass murder as a means of carrying out God's will in the face of human corruption, implied a fierce parallel with radical Islam's global jihad. Humanoid Cylon sleeper agents struck from within human society - one detonated himself in a failed suicide attack, another almost assassinated Admiral Adama. As survivors of a genocidal attack, the humans on *BSG* suggested a tough, heroic America courageously defending itself despite shaky leadership. President Laura Roslin - though more than a stand-in for George Bush - was an unprepared chief executive who turned to Holy Scriptures as a guide in a time of war. At one point, she said, "The interesting thing about being president is you don't have to explain yourself to anybody," a paraphrase of a Bush quote (Dinello 2008, p. 186).

About this issue that is visualized and emphasized in the series, especially with the war in Iraq, Eric Greene (2006, p. 6) tells that many Americans fear that they have both been betrayed and that they have betrayed themselves. They wonder who they are, where they are going, and what they have become. According to him, *BSG* taps into that unease and, rather than soothing it, explores it by pulling its audience into a world of divided loyalties, mixed emotions, and shattered assumptions that reflect the instability of American identity in this time of uncertain ends and questionable means. And Greene adds that Moore's two key innovations, that the Cylons are a human creation and that they can replicate and infiltrate humans, opened up new and powerful resonances in the aftermath of 9/11 when they saw that foreign policy could have domestic consequences, realized that the anti-Soviet guerrilla fighters they had supported in Afghanistan had transmogrified into the Taliban (Greene 2006, p. 6).

The question of McHenry (2008, p. 227) asks is about gender identity. He argues that Bush frightened Evangelicals into believing their families were in danger because Gay and Lesbian Americans were seeking the right to marry. But at no point did he articulate how granting these citizens the right to marry would destroy Christian, heterosexual marriage. To put himself in power, he amplified the ignorance and prejudice of one group at the expense of another for whom he had no regard or felt any responsibility. According to McHenry, for Roslin, religion is a uniting principle, a vehicle of hope and inspiration and solidarity. For Bush, it is a weapon of division, a tool for drumming up fear and hysteria. Yet if Roslin's use of religion - in her campaign and her presidency - is admirably moral, it still does not win her the election. She sticks to her beliefs and is open with the people, but she is unable to convince them to stay the course and re-elect her (McHenry 2008, p. 227).

As the show progresses, however, with some Cylons portrayed sympathetically, determining just who is innocent in the complex history of Cylon-human relationships becomes a matter of perspective. These connections are made through religion and politics - two fundamental qualities of a society. For Shipman (2008, p. 156) "the Cylons have developed a monotheistic religion which appears to be, on the surface, very close to

Judaism. These expressions of faith hew much more closely to human beings' own background than the humans' paganism." Indeed, the humans worship what appears to be the ancient Greek pantheon; gods of a dead religion that is relegated to myths. In the eyes of the viewers' culture, the humans appear ignorant relative to the Cylons. Similarly, in the New Caprica storyline, the Cylons are clearly meant to be analogues for the occupying forces in Iraq. These forces are, like the series' viewing audience, largely US and UK citizens. Though the act of occupation is not shown in the series to be in any way forgivable, the Cylons are positioned as the viewer, while the humans occupy the space of the Iraqi insurgents, the 'other' or enemy in the current conflict (Shipman 2008, p. 156).

According to Bukatman (1993, p. 301), "the discourses of science fiction and philosophy have constructed a metaphorical subject redefined to permit its situation as a biological being within an electronic world." *Terminal Identity* is an attempt to explore some of the pressures, and some of the resistances to those pressures, which go into the constitution of the postmodern self, that dispersed, fragmented, processual, indeterminate, and problematized subject which is, at least in part, the product of an increasingly pervasive technology (Bukatman 1993, p. 302). On the other hand, *BSG* has prompted us to think about ourselves and our relationships with technology in new ways. The series rests on a strong science fictional foundation, its literary genealogy a clear line from *Frankenstein* to *Metropolis*, to *The Terminator*, *Blade Runner*, and *The Matrix*.

Cylons within their human forms, they often attempt to lead real humans astray, most often tempting them through sexuality. Even when those temptations are not overtly homosexual (Cylons seducing or attempting to seduce the same gender, as Gina Six does with Admiral Cain in *Razor*), the Cylons can be read as constant representations of queerness through their seductive technologies. Fears of technologies overlap with fears of new forms of reproduction, and these fears are embodied in cyborg figures. At the same time though, their reproductive methods, portrayed as unholy and unnatural, can be seen as representing larger fears - not only about queerness and fear of the "other," but also involving neuroses about technologies. (For example, it can be seen obviously advancing robots in Washington

DC in the last scene of the final episode of re-imagined *BSG*.) As suggested by Bukatman (1993), the Cylons are “representations of technophobia”, such as Terminator films and the TV series, *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles* (2008-2009). Science fiction provides an excellent record of our anxieties about the machine. In this case, though, they represent one specific technological fear: the fear of non-sexual reproductive practices that have become increasingly prevalent in the society. New reproductive technologies have created new avenues for anxieties: cloning, sperm donation, fertility drugs, and other technological advancements have begun to make heterosexual reproduction seem outmoded and far less relevant than it used to be. Shira Chess (2008, p. 88) argues that the characters in *BSG* were obsessed with legitimizing forms of queer, and alternate reproductive practices. *BSG* neatly enfolds homophobia into technophobia, and homosexual reproduction into technological production. Ultimately, the series reveals both the neuroses of technologically obsolete humans and reproductively unnecessary heterosexuality. Shira Chess (2008, p. 88) claims that the Cylons are not necessarily queer, but as “technoqueer: a technological representation of queerness as a means to work through these complicated and dizzying neuroses...” and then Chess adds (2008, p. 88):

We are all cyborgs: glasses, braces, prosthetics, vaccinations, and plastic surgery are all ways that we combine ourselves with technology, blurring our own lines between ourselves and our machines. But our cyborg-ness does not stop there, and every day we are coming up with new technologies to improve ourselves, change ourselves, and make our bodies more efficient. As more reproductive technologies have become available in recent years, each generation of humans are subsequently born with a little less organic and a little more machine.

In the light of the argumentation of Chess, queerness in this configuration becomes the ‘other’ and the Cylons of *BSG* embody this technoqueerness, and ultimately reject the heteronormativity that the humans on the show embrace.

The war between the Cylons and the human survivors moves the plot forward, frames the narrative, and bounds the storytelling possibilities of *BSG*. The Cylon threat is part of a long science-fiction tradition of looking to the Other as a symbolic device through which to explore questions of tolerance, diversity, and inclusion. With respect to this, as the terms

“*horse opera*” and “*space opera*” indicate, the western and science fiction have a good deal in common: not only plot devices and character types but a common setting on the frontier, a common theme of survival, and a common mechanism in which force is sanctioned as a means of survival. More interesting than theoretical differences is what happens when the western and science fiction genres are consciously combined. Assertions that *Star Wars*’ and a host of other science fiction plots are actually westerns in disguise ignore a number of crucial differences. *Star Trek* worked because of the way in which a mass audience has turned the concept of “the frontier” to space exploration.

Westerns as a genre dramatically portray the moment just before the incorporation of the “frontier” into the material, administrative, and, ultimately, ideological systems of the United States. The object of the cultural theorist Richard Slotkin’s (1992) *Gunfighter Nation* is to trace the development of the system of mythic and ideological formulations that constitute the myth of the frontier, to offer a critical interpretation of its meanings, and to assess its power in shaping the life, thought, and politics of the nation. According to Slotkin, when history is translated into myth, the complexities of social and historical experiences are simplified and compressed into the action of representative individuals or “heroes.” Slotkin calls this mythological process “*regeneration through violence*,” and in locating the “frontier” as the source of the American myth (Slotkin 1992, p. 14). The American frontier, where civilization has not yet established itself and law and order are weak, allows villains to prey on the innocent and requires men and women to develop the strength and self-reliance to survive. In view of Slotkin, the frontier tests resources, not only against the harshness of nature, but also against the ruthlessness of others that emerges when law enforcement is weak or nonexistent. The Western genre appeals to American individualism. As Slotkin analyzes it, the Western myth focuses on the image of a “natural” hero, a man located somewhere between civilization and savagery, a common man with a “natural” aristocratic authority. This is a man “who knows Indians”- that is, a man who, alone, can save civilization because he has the special, insider knowledge of the savage enemy (Slotkin 1992, p. 642).

Reimagined *BSG* does not approach divinity with the black-and-white clarity of the original series. Also, it can be evaluated as a postmodern “space opera”. Right and wrong are not clear forces. Cylons speak truths as well as lies. They are machines but have desires. That the most prominent Cylons in the story are women plays on our sympathies. Cylons have murdered humanity gregariously but seldom do we see them torture individual humans like we see the torture of human-looking Cylons, especially Sharon (Eight) and Six - beaten, shot, and sexually abused. In this respect, American culture thrives on moral and spiritual ambiguity the likes of which are represented in *BSG*, an ambiguity which Americans would not have tolerated in a 70’s science fiction morality tale.

Also, it can be said that *BSG* is reinvented the science fiction genre, much in the way Sergio Leone and Sam Packinpah reinvented the Western in 1960’s by turning all the set pieces and iconic characters inside out. Just as *The Wild Bunch* reverberated off the Vietnam War, *BSG* reverberates off of post September 11 America. In this sense, Western genre is at the stage of going through a structural evolution. Currently in this postmodern world where the end of modernism is a mention, neither the bad characters are completely bad nor are the good characters completely good anymore. And this world now has its saviors as many as it has of its postmodern enemies. In this respect this causes vagueness in distinguishing one from the other due to displaying the weaknesses of all the characters. In *BSG*, in a criticizable way, it is left for the watchers of the show to support the character they like without knowing whether if it is a human or a Cylon. *BSG* represents its philosophy to its watchers in a different background and infrastructure whilst evaluating the existential discourses of religion, politics, democracy, militarism and human emotions. The *BSG* characters are left in despair by the binary oppositions where they become like the others and also barbarize to reach the uncontrollable other.

Adam Roberts (2000, p. 28) notes that by saying “science fiction is about the encounter with difference”. So, in this context, *BSG* uses the key issue. Roberts (2000, p. 147) also suggests that “although technology is ubiquitous in our everyday lives, the machine still occupies the place of the Other in science fiction because we are unfamiliar with how

technology works and cannot keep pace with its constant evolution” With regard to Giandina (2006, p. 46), one of the recurring obsessions of Western societies since the industrial revolution has centered on our relationship with the mechanical - “its place in our lives, our role as creators, and the fate of our inorganic offspring. In short, we are uneasy in our relationship with technology: we fear its virtuality its transformative power, and its imperviousness to the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.”

As Giandina (2006, p. 48) points out that specifically *Battlestar Galactica* continues using the classic science fiction theme of “machine as other,” with its portrayal of the war between human and Cylon, but the series challenges the assumptions behind the binary opposition of flesh and machine, not in the relationship between the human characters and the Cylons, but in the relationship between the Cylons and the viewing audience. It keeps the opposition, but uses the Cylons to show us how much like machine we already are, thus demonstrating the fallacy of calling the machine “Other.” Nevertheless, *BSG* explores the possibility that compared to the moral ambiguity and corruption of the humans, the Cylons may be, in fact, more angel than devil.

“*The crisis of ingenerating otherness*”⁴ is what lies beneath *BSG* which is a postmodern science fiction TV series with mainly reclaiming genres. In this direction the main myth of new style Western frontier is being unable to find the frontier and being unable to ingenerate otherness. The Western myths are re-created, in reimagined *BSG* and in this sense; *BSG* is perfectly a postmodern science fiction by using western components as are TV shows like *Jericho* (2006) that is most willing to be western and postmodern western parody *Firefly* (2002). At the same time, questioning the erosion of the binary oppositions in *BSG* has a structural postmodern epistemological role.

Following the destruction of the Twelve Colonies, the surviving humans become pioneers seeking a new home. This is a familiar trope in American science fiction, which often

⁴ In this thesis, the part that I use “*the crisis ingenerating of otherness*” belongs to Selim Eyüboğlu.

recontextualizes Western myths as a way to explore the human condition, especially in relation to self-improvement, technology, or freedom. The journey itself is dependent on technology (though not necessarily on science), but even assuming the fleet finds new (or old) worlds to settle, starting again may preclude scientific research and development for some time. The humans whose colonies have been destroyed are left without no choice but escaping as a result of the Cylon attack. Thus the humans set out for a space journey to discover the thirteenth planet “The Earth” as a last resort to protect *BSG*. Moreover the never ending attacks of Cylons do not discourage them. Also watching the *BSG* crew and the colony people from the ruler to the worker, from upper class to lower class going after a lost frontier, seeing their aim of being contented with only the Earth gives the audience the impression that they are not actually searching for something. In most parts of the show where there are binary oppositions in a point that the myth ends, the audience not knowing with whom to identify witnesses their journey, jumping from there to there in the infinity of space, their search, their endeavors of surviving. *BSG* endeavors to win a myth that is lost again and again. As well as demonstrating how barbaric the Cylons and the humans could get, both of the nations (Cylons and humans) go through a journey where they put themselves on trial while they are defining and situating their civilizations. Even though there could be found a frontier in a universe where the other cannot be made other, another “other” cannot be found. *BSG* systematically shows both the humans and Cylons searching for a thing that is already lost which they do not think that it is a lost frontier. The subjects of the show are taken into consideration in cyclic style, not in a linear-progress way.

The lost colony of Earth is central to *BSG*. The *BSG* characters reach to the Earth in collaboration with the Cylons. But they encounter a devastated world in the planet that they land which causes to a great disappointment. Actually neither the Cylons nor the humans know that this planet is the Earth that is mentioned in the myths. So together, they begin searching for a new home. Their attempt to find a new home – a world goes on being a reason of disagreement between them, until they decide to constitute a life together in a real

world that they will have found. Characters in *BSG* seek for a “*hypothetical home*”⁵. Earth is portrayed a home as an ideal for both human and Cylons. While they reinvent this myth again and again, thus, the show becomes postmodern.

Susan Hayward (2006, p. 301) argues what is significant is that the term postmodern is consistent with the way in which Western contemporary society defines itself - that is, in relation to the past (postcolonial), but also in relation to social practice (modernization, consumer) and technology (media). According to Hayward, in its consistency with Western definitions, the postmodern looks back, is retrospective, is not defined as other, but as postmodern, as coming after. She also implies that in its lack of history (defined only in relation to the past), it rejects history, and because it has none of its own - only that of others - the postmodern stands eternally fixed in a series of presents. This reading places postmodernist culture as ahistorical (Hayward 2006, p. 301). On the other hand, Linda Hutcheon, (1989) in *The Politics of Postmodernism* characterises postmodernism in terms of irony, denaturalisation, and a commitment to doubleness and duplicity. She is most interested in the politics of representation, and postmodernism’s doubleness in relation to it. Her position is informed by Althusser’s view that ideology is both a system of representation and always a part of a social totality. In particular, she is interested in a confrontation she thinks key to postmodernism’s view of representation and the way in which we construct ourselves and our “selves” (Hutcheon 1989, pp. 27-29). *BSG*, demonstrates modern interpretations of the double motif by incorporating devices like cloning, alternate realities within the mind, and trauma leading psychological doubling to illustrate the splitting of the self.

Searching for that “home/Earth” that they will keep on living their lives in collaboration with the Cylons or sharing this aim with them are reflected many times in the show. The finale of the show leaves it to the audience to think whether everything that has happened will occur 150.000 years later or not. When doing this, *BSG* is willing to disturb the audience by demonstrating the scientific and high-tech developments of our time. Because

⁵ The term “*hypothetical home*” belongs to Selim Eyüboğlu.

the Cylons were created by the human beings just like in Caprica City to take advantage of all the possibilities that science and technology offers to people to facilitate our lives. From this respect, each Cylon models and the main character of the show could be evaluated as postmodern allegorical figures.

Being Cylon means literally replaced by someone who looks like us - may not produce the same fears it would have in the nineteenth century. Even more importantly, Cylon figures often give us an opportunity to question “human” attributes that we take for granted such as gender, race, and sexuality. Also, they represents that entirely, striking much closer to home - if we have both good and bad parts inside us, if we are neither completely good nor bad, how do our choices frame who we become? The show reminds that we integrate those two parts of our identity in a meaningful way.

On the other side, the subtext that both *BSG* (1978) and (2003) present us with respect to self-knowledge is a special one. In a world in which people we know, or not, it depends on discover that they are “other” such as being Cylon. However, probably the most significant difference between the original and re-imagined versions of *BSG* is the relationship between the humans and the Cylons. Where the two forces originally represented clear good and evil respectively, the new series positions the Cylons sympathetically as rebellious slaves striking out against their former masters. Yet the series complicates this positioning by further introducing a subtext of class oppression, slavery, and eugenics within the Cylon culture. On the other hand, in the years since they separated from the humans, the Cylons have created a multi-layered hierarchy where all are bound together by their connection as Cylons, but kept apart by race and class differences which they deliberately constructed. The Cylons have built a society that is as repressive towards their own kind as the humans were to the Cylons. By establishing the Cylons as oppressive eugenicists, the subtext of the *BSG* series undercuts the sympathies that the series builds for them.

In this context, human-Cylon relationship can be evaluated by Homi Bhabha's (1994) "ambivalence". Bhabha defines a phenomenon called "ambivalence" - a complex, unstable mixture of attraction and repulsion between the colonizer and the colonized (1994, p. 86). His notion of *ambivalence* is one of the more enduring concepts in post-colonial studies and he reads a Western text with a non-Western eye. Both colonizer and colonized fear and desire the other, both are attracted to and repulsed by the other. As each begins to vacillate on this axis of ambivalence, *difference* and *sameness* begin to intersect and identities become unstable. Neither colonizer or colonized remain static in their prescribed roles, which makes the colonial family romance start to crumble (Bhabha 1994, p. 86). Bhabha argued for hybrid identities and claimed that the malleability of identity could open up a third space in which the two binaries would form a mixed identity. In contemporary multicultural societies, hybrid identities are much more prominent. Immigrants and people of mixed race often feel torn between the different social identities they ought to belong to. In Bhabha's (1994) view, these subjects are examples of the need to reevaluate traditional binary oppositions, since the identities prescribed by the colonizer/colonized dialectic no longer apply to them. The Cylons are such a threat to the Colonial Fleet in *BSG*. Like many indigenous peoples and slave populations on Earth, they rise up against the humans' double bind (ambivalence). The Cylons reject the humans as colonial parents and they will not be like human in the way human want Cylons to be, as unwitting slaves. And, in their evolution, the Cylons take human form and Cylons become like human so that they become menacingly indistinguishable from human.

This ambivalence is readily apparent in the image of *BSG's* Cylons. In the series, the Cylons have recently defeated the majority of human society. The Cylons are depicted as horrifying, cold-blooded killers, but simultaneously often melodramatic and pitiable. When contamination is discovered, like Gina Six on Pegasus, bodies are beaten and abused in an attempt to physically mark the distinctions between bodies. Through her torture and rape, Gina Six's body is marked as "other," as a body which is not human and outside of human society. Based on the actions of her torturers, she did not deserve any treatment or dignity that apparently is only deserved by human bodies. Hybridity, for both Haraway and

Bhabha, is not an identity without essence but with multiple essences, identities that must be kept intact and distinct. But *BSG* indulges us in the fantasy, or the nightmare, of true hybridity, as the specter of the human-Cylon child, Hera. Hera's set of identity markers - that she is both human and machine. The characters in *BSG* are also obsessed with the fate of the machine-human hybrid: as Brooth (2008, p. 23) mentions many times throughout the show, it is the 'destiny' of the two races to be melded together. The child was not dangerous: what was dangerous was the knowledge of this hybrid identity. Hera is a character that tangibly articulates the differences between human and Cylon - and makes obvious the similarities. And Hera, the child born to human and Cylon parents, Rennes (2008, p. 72) emphasizes that generates the most ambivalence and threatens to rewrite the "colonial family romance". According to Rennes, since Hera is the first fruit of miscegenation, the firstborn of Empire, she is also the greatest threat of sameness. So to admit Hera's complicated identity - human and Cylon, girl and machine, colonizer and colonized, an object of fear and attraction, enslaved and emancipated - is to acknowledge the truth. And truth defies fiction: it "signifies the rejection of the colonial family romance" (Rennes 2008, p. 75). The series titillates us with the sexual tension between one of us and one of them - the exoticized Cylon. And yet it asks us to prick our own skin and see how our blood is different from any other human being's (Rennes 2008, p. 76).

The humanoid Cylons exist in tension between their existence as machines and their existence as organic life forms. They are perfect examples of cyborgs, both physically and theoretically - and as such, are a perfect representation of the condition of the hybrid self in postmodern identity. The original *BSG* was justly famous for having more strong female characters than any other science fiction series before or since. There were female warriors and female officers along with more traditional roles. As to the reimagined *BSG*, the best part about its view of gender relationships. It has thus far portrayed women and men on equal footing in most of the areas of the show, the power struggles between the genders reflecting more on the personalities involved than on the genders.

Porter, Lavery and Robson (2008, 167) claim that *BSG* shows us what a gender-equal society (as much as it is possible) might be like. According to them, the series has been called groundbreaking for mirroring our world as it is, but it also may be groundbreaking because, like the best of science fiction, it shows us what our world may become, not just in the sphere of science and technology but in the relationships between men and women. *BSG* presents a world in which women are “on top”, and not just during sex, although that seems to be a favored position. They also take control in politics, the military, and the home just as much as in their sexual encounters, romantic relationships, and rivalries. But so far, their world is far from wonderful. Nevertheless, despite their growing visibility, deep ambivalences circulate images of active, violent, powerful women (Porter, Lavery and Robson 2008, p. 168).

The film and TV industries stand charged with innumerable instances of perpetuating that mythical history, from the Western to the science fiction space opera. Activity in film and television, as many feminist authors have asserted, is an almost exclusively male preserve. Men direct the narrative, the camera, and the gaze, while women exist as window dressing staged for the heterosexual male eye. The new *BSG*, seemingly new territory has been claimed: a woman is playing what was a specific man's role. Other ‘sex changes’ in this series include Boomer and Admiral Cain. Consequently, whenever a woman steps into the active role traditionally occupied by a male she embodies a challenge to such assumptions, although the extent of such a challenge remains debatable. Despite the Utopian nature of much science fiction, which tells us we can imagine the future differently. For many, this casting implies the worst of imagined feminist platforms come true: there is literally no difference between men and women. There is no doubt that Starbuck is a tough girl. Characters like Kara Thrace “Starbuck” represent attempts, in fictional form, to engage with a range of pertinent issues: the gendered grammar and iconography of action heroism, the increasing visibility of women in the armed forces, dreams of a utopian/dystopian future where gender becomes irrelevant, sexual difference and its impact on human desire, interpersonal relationships, and the workplace.



Figure 4.1: Kara Thrace “Starbuck”

BSG provides an often ambiguous, frequently contradictory engagement with such themes. The series employs traditional conventions of gendered representation, while conspicuously mobilizing them for thematic ends. Starbuck is permitted a considerable degree of agency and authority, but equally *BSG* works to contain her transgressive potential. Focusing on the ace fighter pilot, counterterrorist expert, super fist fighter, sharp cardplayer, alcoholic and suicidal. Starbuck throws light on broader representations and constructions of gender within *BSG* and the media. Three seasons later, the show is highly acclaimed, and the fact of Starbuck's female sex, beyond a few overtures in the first few episodes, has not been made an issue, either by producers or media outlets. Starbuck, from what these first three seasons have shown us, is not afraid of being on either end of the “toughness” binary exhibiting strength and vulnerability, a humanity that successfully move women characters onto new ground. Starbuck seem to be characters able to break down the simple binaries that delineate much of society's thinking about what appropriate female behavior. In the world of *BSG*, one exhibits toughness when one consistently fights back against oppressors, Cylon or otherwise; when one returns to a battle zone to save one’s child; when one faces

one's feat about dying and about what lies beyond. Starbuck, because she is tough in so many ways, slips out of the double bind for tough women more successfully than most.

What emerges is a complex and contradictory picture of men and women, gender and sexuality, humans and Cylons. Like much science fiction, *BSG* expresses a fascination with the possibility of human/mechanical hybridization. As indicated by the coupling narratives of Sharon/Helo, Caprica Six/Baltar, and, potentially, Tyrol/Cally, Cylon/human love, sex, and interbreeding.

Within the world of *BSG* feminism does not exist, and gender politics are never an explicit issue. Its social structure appears to see no distinction between the sexes. Bathroom facilities are unisex, as are crew quarters. Restrictions on promotion are class, not gender-based. Kirkland (2008, p. 337) notes this situation:

...no mention is made of the political struggle which made this gender-egalitarian ideal a reality, no evidence of feminist heroines or historical landmarks, no hint of outdated sexism in the older statesmen of the battlestar's regime. While Roslin's advocacy of abortion rights bears traces of feminist rhetoric, her politics are otherwise free of gender concerns. The education secretary's suitability for high office is questioned throughout early episodes on grounds of experience, not femininity.

Kirkland adds that Adama's authority to lead is never seriously questioned throughout the series except by dubious media liberals and questionable political activists. His regime is stoically masculine, demanding all crewmembers, male or female, adhere to traditionally male codes of behavior, values, and aesthetics. A default masculinity informs *BSG*'s seemingly gender-free universe, constructing the feminine as alien and other (Kirkland 2008, p. 337). According to Kirkland, *BSG* is a dangerous place for women. The show features many female characters who die before their time, arguably because they do not fit standard gender roles. But Starbuck is a different character from the other female characters. In this respect her character is more positive and progressive. Starbuck clearly confounds traditional representations of women as objects frozen by the sexualizing male gaze, as weepy victims begging male protection, as passive spectator unequipped to engage in serious narrative events. That Starbuck never bows to male superiority, never has to

defend her engagement in unladylike activities, and is central to many major events throughout *BSG* ought to be acknowledged as positively addressing broad feminist complaints against mainstream media narratives and representations (Kirkland 2008, p. 347).

While commentators on science fiction prior to the 1970s detect little or no awareness that science is situated within society, such representation can be identified in many science fictions, from *The X-Files* to *Enterprise*. Joseph Tabbi (1995, p.1) points to the “unprecedented potential for science and technology to assist forms of social, political, and economic control as reason enough for this change”. *BSG* similarly presents science as functioning in tension with competing interests from politics and the military, so it is never a pure branch of knowledge. Aylish Wood (2002, p. 177) calls this “technoscience,” the appreciation of “science and technology as systems of knowledge and institutions that are constituted within and through a specific social, economic, and cultural context”.

BSG explores how science functions within our social structure by negotiating stereotypes of science and scientists, often via the character of Dr. Gaius Baltar, but also through the Cylons. Given that two of the basic premises of the show, human-model Cylons and the destruction of the Twelve Colonies, call into question notions of identity based on ostensibly civilized human society, it is hardly surprising that Baltar’s identity as a scientist is fluid and contingent. The first premise also demonstrates that science can produce wonders or threats: the Cylons function as both and, as self-replicating beings, allow science to reinforce itself. The second premise, forcing humans into a quest for survival, challenges the importance of science in constructing identity and community. Thus, both the use and the value of science are addressed. Baltar’s character arc explodes the opposition of science and religion. *BSG*’s key representative of science might seem to work against the notion of science as integrated into society. Baltar’s key scientific role in the fleet is Cylon expert.

Baltar epitomizes the notion of science as aloof, distant from other human concerns. In the episode; Epiphanies (2.13), President Laura Roslin believes he is ‘brilliant’ but “unleavened by compassion”, though any simplicity in this view is challenged by the fact that he has just saved her life (and that of unborn Cylon-human hybrid Hera). In fact, Baltar saves Roslin only because he actually wants to save the life of Sharon’s baby and simply show how brilliant he is. On some level, it’s simply an act of narcissism. His presentation as a civilian expert contributes to his isolation from other core characters. While he manages to become an elected representative of the people as Caprica’s delegate, later vice president, and finally president of the Colonies, political office serves to further isolate him, as is demonstrated by the memorable long shot of him alone in Colonial One at the start of his presidency as in episode Lay Down Your Burdens, Part 2 (2.20). Further, his presidency is overshadowed by the Cylon occupation. Baltar’s isolation is reinforced through humor in early episodes since he exhibits another aspect of the stereotypical scientist: poor social skills. Just as Baltar’s character mediates various stereotypes of the scientist, the show negotiates popular ideas about science, particularly the notion of science as an instrument of destruction or a path to civilization. There are very few people as human as Gaius Baltar, because he’s just trying to survive.

Baltar displays some of the characteristics of science as opposed to nature, but he is also very human, and he is compromised because of his physical appetites. He becomes sexually involved with two Cylons (Six and Three) and a variety of sexual partners are shown or implied during his time with the human fleet and on New Caprica. His (traditional) identity as a male heterosexual scientist is integral to the success of the Cylon plan of attack since it makes him vulnerable to Six’s seduction. It also reinforces the notion that he successfully attracts women not because of his personal charms, but rather because of his status and position (as when he becomes president or messiah).

When Baltar decides to run for president against Roslin, he denigrates her religious faith (which is ridiculed by other characters at times too), and their election contest is inflected by the way science and religion are perceived as distinct and opposing ways of interpreting

the world. Baltar's decision to stand against Roslin comes during a crisis about abortion, always an issue for U.S. elections. To this point in the series, religious authority on issues of life and death has largely been superseded by that of science. In the episode, *The Captain's Hand* (2.17), Tom Zarek tells Baltar that many in the fleet "crave the assurances of cold science as opposed to the superstitious ravings of the Geminese. As a scientist, you offer hope" - another version of science as progress, despite the harsh reality of life on New Caprica (Jowett, 2008, p. 74).



Figure 4. 2: Gaius Baltar

Baltar's identity as a scientist radically revises the character from the original series, yet it shifts as science becomes less important to the remnant human population and, by the episode *Crossroads Part 1* (3.19), Baltar has moved from scientist, through politician, to scapegoat and even religious icon. He is an isolated figure, set apart from or even against the human community, and his role as scientist and betrayer highlights anxiety about the uses science is put to, its potential for destruction. Politics, war, and religion continually enmesh Baltar because these, along with science, are major discourses that govern the

society of *BSG*. Even in the beginning, Baltar was not simply an eccentric scientific genius, he was “a media cult figure, and a personal friend of President Adar’s” and his scientific, political, and religious roles demonstrate the interconnectedness of these areas. Human-model Cylons and a remnant of humanity seeking a new home both ensure that identity will not be fixed in *BSG*. Apparent oppositions between science and religion, or between intellect and physicality, break down under close scrutiny. Science and scientists are never really isolated from the rest of us, and Baltar is (so far) part of the human community whether anyone likes it or not. Learning to live with the consequences of our scientific and technological development is what *BSG* is all about. And despite R. Moore’s statement about valuing people over technology, the two are intertwined for all of us (Jowett, 2008, p. 75).

In a manner that is clear, the postmodern *BSG*’s mythos seems to have the threads of mythology heavily weaved into its central narrative, giving the viewer a greater understanding of who the central characters are based on the gods and goddesses that they call upon in times of trouble or use as their call sign while in flight. *BSG*’s characters’ faith assumes history is cyclical: *All of this has happened before and all of this will happen again* - is an utterance repeated by both humans and Cylons. Humans and Cylons alike appear to heed a recurring theme of renewal: humans believe in the fates and the significance of recurrence. The Cylons, too, however, take the saying quite literally upon death, experiencing a near-instant ‘reincarnation’ and rebirth of their psyches, via download, into other, and identical bodies. Such a concept not only undermines the conception of linear time, it relegates questions about progress through science and technology as subordinate to a larger spiritual quest.

5. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, while this thesis has analyzed reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* as a postmodern science fiction TV show, the fact that the series incorporates speculative fiction characteristics has been uncovered too. Within the scope of this thesis, it has been discussed that the series used the characteristics of other genres in terms of content, format, style, narration and discourse. Thusly, *BSG* has been defined as a postmodern science fiction, which benefits from postmodern western and postmodern mythological science fiction, post modern new age science fiction sub-genres, uses multi-genres with its own unique style, carries dystopian concerns, develops in the inevitability of soap opera and has powerful sub-texts. It has been revealed that, through reflecting many sensibility and concerns at the same time, it surpasses outdated genres and updates science fiction concepts. *BSG*, as a whole, has re-defined the future, religion, democracy, social order, cyborg and “the other”. As emphasized in the final episode of the series, the series tried to give the message that events shown in the series might materialize in the near future. All these said, as in the content of the series, have been shown as the equivalent of postmodern sensations of us. Hybrid identities, postmodern characters and lives have been portrayed. *BSG* incorporates numerous concerns of science fiction. In fact, everything that is said by *BSG* for science fiction, represents our own concerns and fears as a society and represents the whole society in shape of micro-societies. *BSG*, which has developed through considering our postmodern sensibilities, enables the uncovering of the concerns of the society and enables the society to face with these concerns thanks to soap opera. Through establishing mythological ties, *BSG*, in particular, draws an allegory of the fears of American society (war, loss of democracy, Al-Qaida, technology, et.) and of how they cope with such fears.

The replacement of self and the other too much and identifying with Cylons most of the time is already enough to make *BSG* a postmodern series. While doing all these said, *BSG* has re-defined science fiction and other genres used through borrowing and re-updated these genres under the umbrella of science fiction genre. Traditionally space opera is best

known for spinning vast mythic tales centered on fantastical galaxy spanning battles between arrayed forces of good and not-so-good. *BSG* is a cross between reinvented space opera and post apocalyptic drama. It presents what is more of a cross between a cautionary futuristic military science fiction drama and a post-apocalyptic tale of survival that happens to be set in space. One of the other descriptive and illustrative postmodern attributions of *BSG* is the mixture and description of bounds of certain genres. *BSG* borrows some classic TV and Hollywood film types such as action, science fiction, drama and western and reproduces it in its own originality by making differences to the codes, then offers them again. In this thesis, *BSG* is considered as a postmodern science fiction through reclaiming genre.

BSG that is supported by Western elements also claims that there cannot be real saviors in those limited areas where the USA (industrialized-developed communities) re-creates itself again and again by searching and finding a lost frontier myth and making it a myth again. *BSG* goes with a scheme that is based on endurance, resorting to violence in a moral vagueness, indirectly causing the audience to sense that violence-murder is the only way to reach an aim, heroes and testing. Moreover, we get to see the creation of individual masculine identification that we see in every Western film and the violence that is necessary to expose this, and the attractiveness of the style that comes up while this happens. Furthermore the places, the incidents and character motivations are narrated in a way that throws discredit upon the familiar Western clichés of the *BSG* too. Being this century's society's tragic figure of impossible individualism, a Western hero is also a romantic that escapes from the industrialized civilization. *BSG* emphasizes that neither in the USA that has a cinema tradition full of heroes nor in the industrialized communities there will be saviors anymore. In *BSG* we are likely to find guides that we can define as postmodern like Starbuck or Caprica Six.

BSG allegorically introduces the representation of the unrepresentable, the effects of technology on the human beings, governmental and military actions, democracy, politics and beliefs system and the dynamics of the dispensation of the current individual identity.

Introducing postmodern allegory with binary oppositions again and again helps the audience question the dominant values and foundations; it might improve the awareness of criticizing. In *BSG*, the colonies that live in spaceships can be founded with infinite places and plural surfaces; the time is exiled to inertial area. Sloth in the universe will close on the people of *BSG* in a closed feedback cycle. *BSG* has revitalized science fiction television with its considerations of politics, religion, gender, even what it means to be human. This is the most distinctive feature of the serials which differ it from the other science fiction television shows.

In his essay “Battlestar Galactica: Naturalistic Science Fiction, or Taking the Opera out of Space Opera,” executive producer Ronald D. Moore (Hatch 2006, 84) outlined his plans for the reimagined show:

Our goal is nothing less than the reinvention of the science fiction television series. We take as a given the idea that the traditional space opera, with its stock characters, techno-double-talk, bumpy-headed aliens, thespian histrionics, and empty heroics has run its course and a new approach is required. That approach is to introduce realism into what has heretofore been an aggressively unrealistic genre. Call it ‘Naturalistic Science Fiction.’ This idea, the presentation of a fantastical situation in naturalistic terms, will permeate every aspect of our series...

Moore then proceeded to outline the ways in which his new television series would achieve this goal. This new naturalism was to be achieved in a variety of ways: through a documentary-style filmmaking technique, by adherence to believable science and realistic character portrayal, and by the crafting of a very specific look and feel in sets and costuming contrived to convey unprecedented believability.

Science fiction is a genre about asking difficult questions about humanity and the present, as much as speculating about possible futures. This divided sense of genre enables the show’s political and social engagement. It is the presence of fantastic elements such as malevolent robots that makes possible a level of social commentary that cannot be achieved anywhere else on modern television. The series moves well beyond the simple reflection of Western culture’s religious, economic, and gendered organizations, toward a dialogic

relationship, informed by questions, debate, and analysis, representing the world not merely as it is, or as it should be. *BSG* comments on contemporary culture by imagining dystopic alternatives, and by doing so it invites the viewer to interrogate notions of self, nation, and belief that are often taken to be nonnegotiable both on television and in American life.

Also, *BSG* simultaneously exploring some of the meanings and questions with which audiences are implicitly asked to engage, whether the Cylons are read as metaphors for current human society or for speculative figurations of artificial life. Cylons are like us; we are like Cylons. This could have been a liberating symmetry, an escape from the old notion of the self as something undivided, and distinct from other selves. *BSG* is compelling human drama and transcends the science fiction genre, blending the science fiction subgenres such as new age and mythological particulars with its character-driven and therefore it become postmodern. The science fiction elements give *BSG*'s characters unprecedented freedom to explore the same grand even controversial themes that routinely appear in mainstream dramas. *BSG* is a challenging genre and it changed the future of science fiction genre. It creates plenty of tension in a variety of setting, the conflict between Cylons and humans is only one untapped source of drama. Science fiction conjures the invisible forces such as technological, social, economic, affective, and political, those surround us. It makes those forces visible and tangible, and brings us face to face with them, however frightening and unexpected they may be. The appeal of *BSG* for many viewers and critics is that, while we can enjoy the show as action – adventure escapism, the producers also ably exploit the science fiction genre to create scenarios that pose uncomfortable questions about real social and political conflicts. There is no single political subtext. The show has all the subtexts at once. What *BSG* says about identity, the feminine, masculinity, and technology is consistently both ambiguous and - perhaps because of that very ambiguity - it challenges and reclaims science fiction genre. This postmodern show serves to rewrite, reconfigure and re-purpose ideas of science fiction genre design, making it one of the most complex television series in recent years. *So Say We All...*

Following this study, recent series which are indicated as the recent postmodern series can be evaluated in terms of sub-texts, style and genres. For instance, *V*, *Flashforward*, *Lost*, *Stargate Universe*, *The Prisoner*, *Torchwood*, *Defying Gravity* and *Family Guy*, *South Park*, etc., might be analysed and discussed in terms of differences and innovations and genre in the recent TV shows in a further study. Yet more, how these series are perceived by its followers in Turkey or the reflections of these series which drew great attention all around the world might be the departure point of a comprehensive study. And maybe, a comprehensive sociological media study on why examples of science fiction genre are not available or cannot be produced in Turkey could be taken into consideration.

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Battlestar Galactica (1978– 1980). Glen A. Larson Productions/ABC. Creator and writer: Glen A. Larson. Producer: John Dykstra. Cast: Richard Hatch, Dirk Benedict, Lorne Greene, Herb Jefferson Jr., Maren Jensen.

Battlestar Galactica (2004– 2009). R&D TV/USA Cable Entertainment/ Sci-Fi Channel. Creator: Glen A. Larson. Developed by: Ronald D. Moore, David Eick. Producers: Paul M. Leonard, Trisha Brunner. Cast: Edward James Olmos, Mary McDonnell, Katee Sackhoff, Jamie Bamber, James Callis, Tricia Helfer.

Caprica (2010-present). Syfy. Creators: Remi Aubuchon, Ronald D. Moore, David Eick. Cast: Eric Stoltz, Esai Morales, Paula Malcomson, Alessandra Torresani, Magda Apanowicz.

Doctor Who (1963– 1989, 1996, 2005– present). BBC/BBC Wales/Canadian Broadcasting Corp. Creators: Sydney Newman, Donald Wilson, C. E. Webber. Cast: William Hartnell, Patrick Troughton, Jon Pertwee, Tom Baker, Peter Davison, Colin Baker, Sylvester McCoy, Paul McGann, Christopher Eccleston, David Tennant (Doctors).

Farscape (1999– 2003). Jim Henson Productions/Sci-Fi Channel. Creator and writer: Rockne S. O'Bannon. Cast: Ben Browder, Jonathan Hardy, Claudia Black, Anthony Simcoe, Gigi Edgley, Virginia Hey, Wayne Pygram.

Firefly (2002). 20th Century-Fox Television/Sci-Fi Channel. Creator, writer, and executive producer: Joss Whedon. Cast: Nathan Fillion, Gina Torres, Alan Tudyk, Morena Baccarin, Adam Baldwin, Jewel Staite, Sean Maher, Summer Glau, Ron Glass.

Flashforward (2009-present). ABC. Creators: Brannon Braga, David S. Goyer, Cast: Joseph Fiennes, John Cho, Jack Davenport, Zachary Knighton, Peyton List.

Heroes (2006– present). NBC Universal Television/NBC. Creator and writer: Tim Kring. Cast: James Kyson Lee, Hayden Panettiere, Masi Oka, Sendhil Ramamurthy, Ali Larter.

Jericho (2006– 2008). Junction Entertainment/CBS Paramount Network Television. Executive producers: Jon Turteltaub, Carol Barbee, Stephen Chbosky. Cast: Skeet Ulrich, Ashley Scott, Sprague Grayden, Kenneth Mitchell, Darby Stanchfield.

Lost (2004–2010). Touchstone Television/Bad Robot/ABC. Creators: Jeffrey Lieber, J. J. Abrams, Damon Lindelof. Writer and executive producer: J. J. Abrams. Cast: Dominic Monaghan, Evangeline Lilly, Matthew Fox, Jorge Garcia, Naveen Andrews, Josh Holloway.

Lost in Space (1965– 1968). 20th Century-Fox Television/Irwin Allen Productions/CBS. Creator, writer, and producer: Irwin Allen. Cast: Guy Williams, June Lockhart, Jonathan Harris, Mark Goddard, Billy Mumy, Angela Cartwright, Marta Kristen.

Max Headroom (1987– 1988). Lorimar Productions/Chrysalis/Lakeside/ ABC. Producers: Phillip DeGuere, Peter Wagg, Brian Frankish. Cast: Matt Frewer, Amanda Pays, William Morgan, Chris Young.

Six Feet Under (2001-2005). HBO. Creator: Alan Ball. Cast: Peter Krause, Michael C. Hall, Frances Conroy, Lauren Ambrose, Freddy Rodriguez.

Star Trek (1966– 1969). Desilu/Paramount Television/NBC. Creator and producer: Gene Roddenberry. Cast: William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, Nichelle Nichols, James Doohan, George Takei, Walter Koenig.

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (1993– 1999). Paramount Television. Creator: Gene Roddenberry. Writers: Gene Roddenberry, Rick Berman, Ira Steven Behr. Executive producers: Rick Berman, Ira Steven Behr. Cast: Avery Brooks, Rene Auberjonois, Cirroc Lofton, Alexander Siddig, Colm Meaney, Armin Shimerman.

Star Trek: Enterprise (originally Enterprise; 2001– 2005). Braga Productions/ Paramount Television/Rick Berman Productions/UPN. Creator: Gene Roddenberry. Writers and executive producers: Rick Berman, Brannon Braga. Cast: Scott Bakula, Jolene Blalock, John Billingsley, Dominic Keating.

Star Trek: The Next Generation (1987– 1994). Paramount Television/CBS. Creator and executive producer: Gene Roddenberry. Cast: Patrick Stewart, Jonathan Frakes, LeVar Burton, Brent Spiner, Marina Sirtis, Michael Dorn.

Star Trek: Voyager (1995– 2001). Paramount Television/UPN. Creator: Gene Roddenberry. Executive producers: Rick Berman, Brannon Braga, Kenneth Biller, et al. Cast: Kate Mulgrew, Robert Beltran, Robert Duncan McNeill, Jeri Ryan, Ethan Phillips.

Stargate Atlantis (2004– present). Sony/MGM Television/Sci-Fi Channel. Creators, writers, and executive producers: Brad Wright, Robert C. Cooper. Cast: Torri Higginson, Joe Flanigan, David Hewlett, Rachel Luttrell.

Stargate SG-1 (1997– 2007). Sony/MGM/Showtime/Sci-Fi Channel. Creators, writers, and producers: Jonathan Glassner, Brad Wright. Cast: Richard Dean Anderson, Michael Shanks, Amanda Tapping, Christopher Judge, Ben Browder.

Stargate Universe (2009-present). SyFy. Creators: Brad Wright and Robert C. Cooper. Cast: Robert Carlyle, Louis Ferreira, Brian J. Smith, Elyse Levesque, David Blue.

The Avengers (1961-1969). ABC Weekend Television. Creator: Sydney Newman. Cast: Patrick Macnee, Diana Rigg.

The Prisoner (1967– 1968). Everyman Films/Associated Television. Creator, writer, and executive producer: Patrick McGoohan. Cast: Patrick McGoohan, Angelo Muscat, Peter Swanwick, Leo McKern.

The Twilight Zone (1959– 1964). Cayuga Productions/CBS. Creator, writer, and executive producer: Rod Serling. Producers: Buck Houghton, William Froug, Bert Granet, Herbert Hirschman. Cast: Rod Serling (narrator).

Twin Peaks (1990-1991). American Broadcasting Company (ABC)/ Lynch-Frost Productions. Creators: Mark Frost and David Lynch. Cast: Kyle MacLachlan, Michael Ontkean, Mädchen Amick.

The Sopranos (1999-2007). HBO. Creator: David Chase. Cast: James Gandolfini, Edie Falco, Michael Imperioli, Lorraine Bracco, Dominic Chianese, Steven Van Zandt.

The X-Files (1993– 2002). 20th Century-Fox Television/Ten Thirteen Productions/Fox. Creator, writer, and producer: Chris Carter. Cast: David Duchovny, Gillian Anderson, Mitch Pileggi, Robert Patrick.

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