

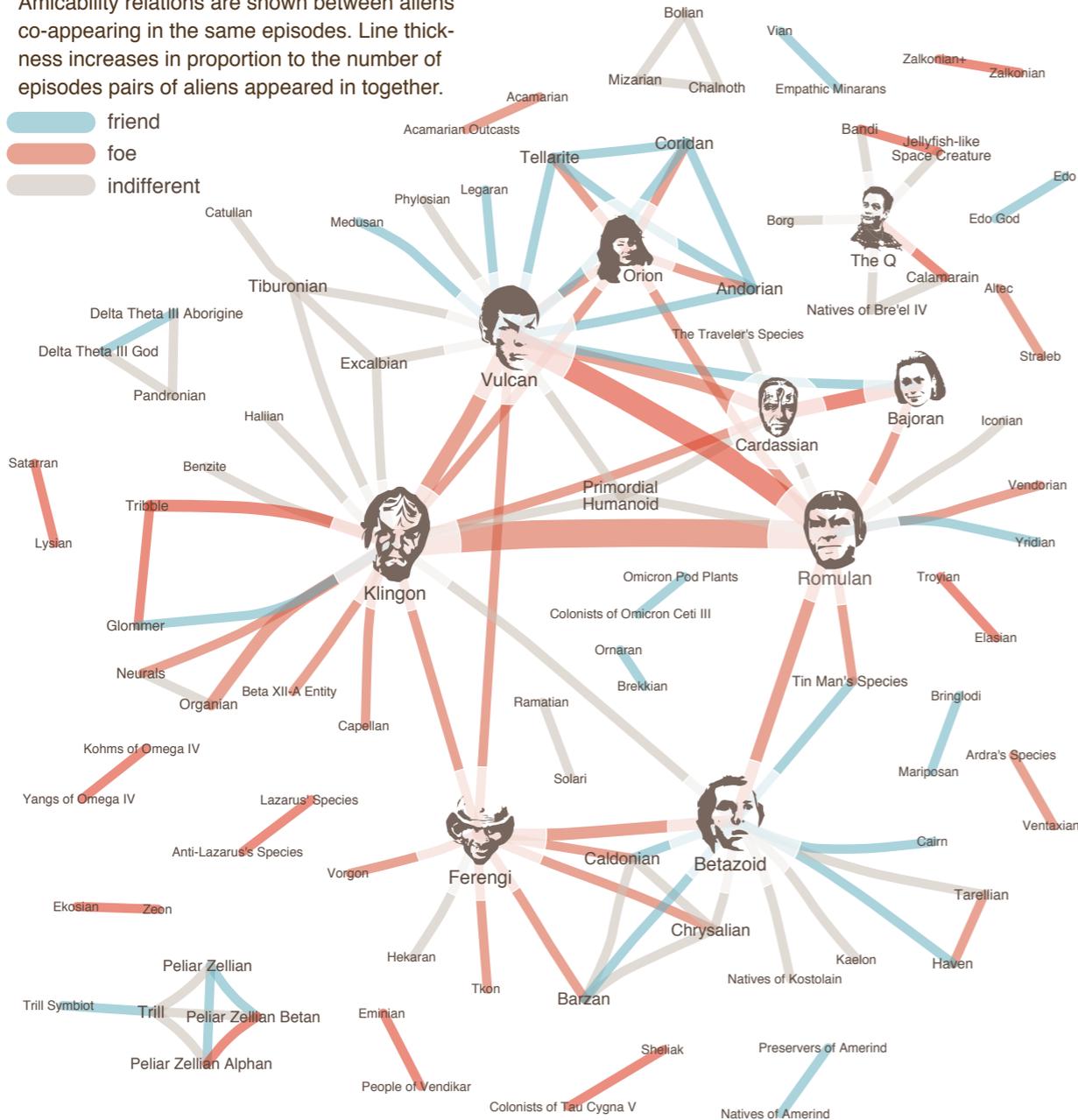
The Aliens of Star Trek

No science fiction franchise has imparted a more iconic cast of aliens on modern culture than Star Trek. It has given us the logically-minded Vulcans with their pointy ears, the warlike Klingons who value tradition and honor, and the Borg to whom resistance is futile. In this chapter we present a systematic review of the Star Trek alien universe.

The Alien Amicability Network

Amicability relations are shown between aliens co-appearing in the same episodes. Line thickness increases in proportion to the number of episodes pairs of aliens appeared in together.

- friend
- foe
- indifferent



The Star Trek Universe

The Star Trek franchise is founded on the notion that Humans are but one of many humanoid species in a galaxy teeming with life. In this fictional universe, Humanity is a founding member in the Federation—a group of confederated alien races, united under the common principles of humanoid rights, equality, and interstellar cooperation. But the Federation way of life does not go unchallenged. Hostile alien forces are themselves organized into competing interstellar political orders that come in conflict with the Federation over territorial ambitions and ideological agendas. Stories are told from the point of view of Humans, who, in the course of exploring the galaxy in the starship Enterprise, habitually encounter both familiar Federation adversaries and strange alien civilizations that have values systems in conflict with their own. The Humans must apply Federation ideals to resolve difficult ethical dilemmas that arise out of these encounters.

Frequently Recurring Alien Races

The core alien races are mainly stereotypical human humanoids with some kind of interstellar presence in the galaxy. They are stereotypically human in so far as the members of a given race comport themselves within the normal spectrum of human behaviours, except for a single basic human emotion, which the race is intended to personify. Humanoid, as anyone familiar with the franchise will know, pertains to each race being depicted as more or less human, save for signature cranial wrinkles or funny ears. In all we find nine core alien races:



There is among them one notable exception to the stereotypical human humanoid paradigm. The Borg do not abide by anything resembling normal human behavior. On the contrary, they are a collection of technologically unsurpassed cyborgs that function as drones in a collective mind with the ultimate goal of imposing its dystopian notion of perfection on the galaxy. As such they pose an existential threat to the prevailing galactic order in which the different alien civilizations behave much as

the nation states of our present age with the Federation serving the role of an ideally functioning United Nations.

Alien Civilization of the Week

In addition to the core alien races we find a cornucopia of humanoid civilizations appearing in only single episodes. Contact is frequently initiated when the Enterprise is dispatched to visit a planet on Federation orders; other times the planet is discovered purely by happenstance. In either case, a landing party typically beams down to the surface to be received by representatives from some kind of alien monoculture with a distinctive greeting gesture and unvaried mode of dress that is unified under a global governing authority. The ensuing encounter sees the crew faced with a conflict arising from a feature of the alien society that serves to allegorize a contemporary cultural reality.

The Alien Menagerie

What we have thus far recounted still only scratches the surface of the Star Trek alien world. To bring order to this veritable menagerie, we painstakingly classified all the aliens according to certain key attributes.

Taxonomy: First we group aliens on the basis of shared characteristics. At the highest level they are:

- Artificial
- Humanoid
- Otherworldly
- Earth-life inspired
- Inorganic
- Parasitic

Depiction Grade: We record not only when aliens appear in episodes, but also times when they are mentioned, depicted, suggested, or even implied.

Personality Scores: For many humanoid species we rate selected personality traits on a scale between bipolar adjective pairs. The Betazoids, for instance, are portrayed as a nice and beautiful race that value tradition.

Formidability Level: We rank each alien species by its ability to defend itself. When it is an alien civilization in question the ranks closely corresponds to technology levels. The categories are tribal, civilized, industrialized, spacefaring, high-warp (Federation), overpowering, and transcendental.

Conservation Status: Lastly we classify aliens by how likely they are to go extinct in the near future.

- Lower Risk**
 - Least concern (LC): Widespread in galaxy.
 - Near threatened (NT): Confined to single planet.
 - Vulnerable (VU): Existence precarious.
- Threatened**
 - Endangered (EN): Direct existential threat.
 - Critically endangered (CR): On the brink of being destroyed.
- Extinct**
 - Extinct in the Wild (EW): Scattered in galaxy.
 - Extinct (EX): No known individuals.
 - Data deficient (DD): No data to assess status.

Descriptions and complete classifications for all the Star Trek aliens is found in the appendix.