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Esquire

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**WHAT WOMEN
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THE NEW SPOCK**

By JJ Abrams &
Bernard-Henri Lévy

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PLUS

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APPEAR MORE
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(without getting a bowl
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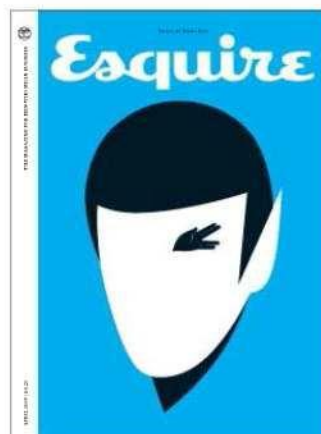
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Zachary Quinto in character as Spock in Star Trek

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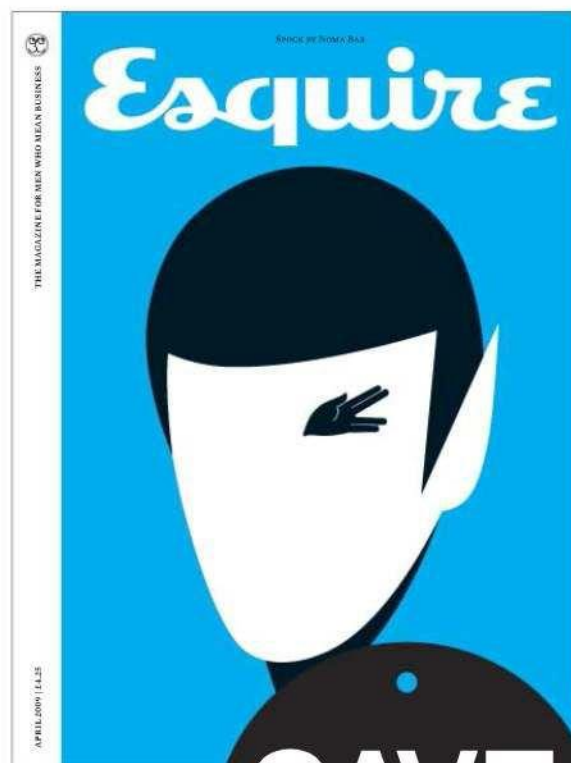
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MASTERING THE UNIVERSE

From cult space-western beginnings to all-pervading cultural influence, Star Trek is more than just another Hollywood franchise. JJ Abrams explains how he energised the legend while the world's leading boffins teach us how to be more logical. "Fascinating," as our pointy-eared friend would say



STAR TREK IS AN acquired taste. Many people can enjoy it in one of its various forms — Gene Rodenberry's original series from the Sixties with William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy; the 10 (yes, 10) feature films made over the past 30 years; the spin-off series such as *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine*, *Voyager* and *Enterprise*. But for others, the effect of Star Trek is closer to anaphylactic shock. They hate it. All the flimsy sets, silly gadgets, sillier aliens and the hours of boring space talk. And that's without even getting into the rarefied world of Star Trek conventions, where your fluency in Klingon provokes admiration, rather than the question of why you didn't choose to apply those same energies to, say, French or Spanish (to which the answer is, of course, "*taH ghosTa' tlhej SoH*").

But whatever you think about it, on 8 May Star Trek is back. This will be the 11th feature film, but as far as we're concerned it's the first. Not only does it take us back to the dawn of Starfleet, when Kirk was not yet Captain and Spock was not yet his biggest fan, but it paints the Star Trek universe bigger, bolder and better than ever before. The adrenalin shot comes courtesy of its director, JJ Abrams, who created *Lost* and *Alias*, directed *Mission Impossible III* and *Cloverfield*, and knows a thing or two about bringing excitement, intelligence and wit to a screen. In the following pages he explains how he learned to love the *Enterprise*, and why, as we look for ways to undo the mess we've got ourselves into, its adventurous, harmonious, optimistic crew might not be such bad role models to emulate.

There's more. Zachary Quinto, the talented actor who donned Spock's pointy ears and performance fabrics for the film — and for our cover — talks about taking the baton from the legendary Leonard Nimoy, while Lord Drayson, the Minister for Science, explains what Star Trek has taught us and why we could do with more Spocks of our own. Finally, philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy gets deep on the intellectual, spiritual significance of Trek before we end on an altogether shallower note by presenting 21 ways to appear more intelligent. Read on and prosper.



ABOVE, FROM LEFT STAR CHECK: ANTON YELCHIN AS CHEKOV, CHRIS PINE AS JAMES T KIRK, SIMON PEGG AS MONTGOMERY "SCOTTY" SCOTT, KARL URBAN AS DR LEONARD MCCOY, JOHN CHO AS SULU AND ZOE SALDANA AS UHURA

EARS BY RICE KRISPIES, HAIR
BY PLAYMOBIL, EYEBROWS
BY FIONA BRUCE: ZACHARY
QUINTO AS SPOCK



DIRECTOR
JJ ABRAMS MAKES
**THE
CASE
FOR
STAR TREK**

I AM YOU. I am the person who's not a *Star Trek* fan. I'm the person who loves movies and adventure, loves romance and excitement and terror and laughter, but was not necessarily a *Star Trek* fan. I remember it existing. I tried it, I'd watch it, but it was like a drug that doesn't work for you. You're like, "Aargh, I don't like that, I don't want to do it." It didn't click for me. I didn't get it.

I always liked something that was a bit more of a visceral, exciting ride. As a kid, I loved the *Batman* TV show, which was very comic booky. I don't mean to sound like a dolt, but *Star Trek* was a show that had a lot of conceptual arguments about ways to approach an enemy. It was very "talky". I never got to see the adventure and energy and action that I thought those guys should experience. It all felt a little cerebral.

I said yes to the movie because I'd never seen *Star Trek* done the way I would like. If someone ever said (and

they wouldn't), "Here, go direct a Bond movie," or "Go direct a *Star Wars* movie," I'd say, "No, I should not do that." Because I've already seen them done the way they should be done. With *Mission Impossible III*, I had not seen a version of Tom Cruise's character where he's a real person who lives a regular life. That was an exciting way in. The way into *Star Trek* was: how do you come to care about these people despite the fact they're on spaceships and have powder-coloured clothing on? I felt getting inside how Kirk and Spock got to be friends was a fun way to explore.

The story of this movie transcends the clichés. It's the story of Kirk, a young man who is lost in his life and ends up being challenged to step up and become someone. It's the story of this group of unlikely characters coming together that for fans of *Star Trek* will be familiar, but the beauty of the film is you never have to have seen *Star Trek* or to have heard anything specific about it to appreciate the story.

I've been an effects fanatic for years. I started making stuff when I was eight. I have a note from Doug Trumbull, who did the effects for 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, that says, "Dear JJ, I started making movies at 12, and I hear you're doing great at 11. Keep it up." On *Star Trek*, I worked with an extraordinary visual effects supervisor in Roger Guyett. He's terrific. You'd like him. He's British. There's a sequence on the snow planet that's really fun, but my favourite sequence is when everyone first leaves Earth and gets on the *Enterprise*. There's something about the rhythm of it.

I've tried to make this movie feel intimate and human. And also massive. I feel that we have a story that shows the *Star Trek* characters in very relatable ways: you see who they are and where they come from. *Star Wars* was a big influence, and the great thing about that universe is that it's so huge but you knew where you were. The great triangle with Han, Luke and Leia — those were characters that made you feel something, so you could go through that whole world and feel like your hand was being held. With the recent three *Star Wars* films, it's almost so big now I have a hard time knowing what's what. With the ability to create those 3D worlds and characters it's like looking at confetti. That was really important to me on *Star Trek*. How do you show this world where there are other species? How many aliens do you show? I'm working with George Lucas's company, ILM, which can do anything and do it brilliantly, so it's more of a question of: now you can do anything, what are you going to do? How do you limit it so you're not just throwing everything against the wall to see what people remember?

We definitely benefited from a terrific troupe of actors. Spock came early. When we met Zachary Quinto he looked like a normal guy, but it was clear that it was going to be... ridiculous. When Leonard Nimoy met with him, Leonard's wife Susan was like, "This is eerie." The Kirk role was the hard one to cast because it's Shatner and you can't hide behind the hair and the ears. It was about finding someone who wouldn't necessarily look like Shatner, but would have the swagger



FROM LEFT SOMEONE BEAMS UP ABRAMS' HAMBURGER ON SET, MUCH TO ZACHARY QUINTO'S DISMAY; FILMING ON THE ENTERPRISE BRIDGE; WOO WOODOO, WOO WOO WOO WOO WOO — THE GOOD SHIP ENTERPRISE; A DECIDEDLY COOLER MR QUINTO SANS BOWL CUT AND POINTY EARS

and attitude and then come up with his own version. I didn't want them to impersonate the actors. The parody of Kirk is always the cadence with which Shatner delivered lines. The pause. Between. Words. That he. Would Say. That's a whole other thing we didn't do. Chris Pine was a revelation. He's so good. Then there are people like Winona Ryder, Ben Cross, Eric Bana and of course Leonard Nimoy, and Simon Pegg, who I worked with on *Mission, as Scotty*.

"Space... the final frontier" is a pretty cool notion. Star Wars was a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, but Star Trek is a version of our future. The idea that we could explore new worlds and that all these people are working together, human or not, is optimistic. I remember getting my telescope when I was little and looking at the moon, and the thing that was so obvious was that we're on this planet and we're floating in space. You take for granted the wonder of it. You get so caught up in day-to-day myopia that you forget the big picture, and Star Trek kind of reminded me of the big picture.

The faithful will probably be upset no matter what. We've tried diligently to do something that will make them happy too, but I honestly don't know if I wanted to make a movie only for those fans. For the audience out there who wants to have an incredibly fun, emotional, unexpected and spectacular-looking space adventure, this movie is for you. If you happen to be a Star Trek fan that's great, but this movie was not made for Star Trek fans — it was made for future Star Trek fans.

STEP FORWARD
ZACHARY QUINTO

THE NEW MISTER SPOCK

There aren't many 31-year-old actors who can boast having not one, but two, action figures made of themselves. Pittsburgh-born Zachary Quinto can, having been miniaturised and plasticised first as Sylar, the brain-snatching psychopath he plays in cult TV show *Heroes*, and now as the young Spock, whom he portrays in JJ Abrams' new Star Trek movie and on *Esquire's* cover. "If you took both of the action figures and put them together in one, that'd be the best likeness," he says. "But what are you going to do? It's a rubber head, you know?"

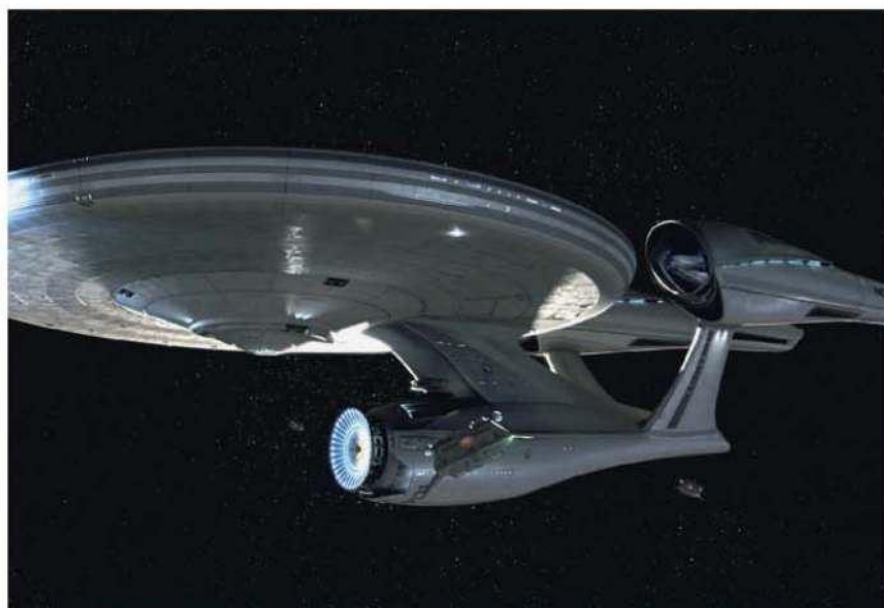
Quinto took an unusual approach to expressing his interest in the Spock gig (for which he had his eyebrows shaved and that signature bowl cut: "It wasn't the most comfortable six months of my life," he admits). "I was starting to appear on *Heroes* and was doing a lot of press for that. During the first interview I gave, the journalist asked if there were any other parts I was interested

in. I'd just heard they were making the [Star Trek] movie, so I started to talk about it." The story was picked up, JJ Abrams got wind of it, they met, end of.

Well, almost. There was the small matter of the original Spock, Leonard Nimoy, who was also going to be in Abrams' film and who had to approve the actor playing the younger Vulcan. Nimoy gave Quinto the go-ahead after seeing his audition tapes. "When we met, the first thing he said to me was, 'You have no idea what you're in for, kid.'"

Certainly, Star Trek is a leap again for Quinto. Though he's acted since he was a kid (including a turn as the Modern Major-General in a school production of *The Pirates Of Penzance*, though he declines to give a rendition: "It's early here!"), he has had doubts. "I was about to be 30 years old and was really just wondering what the hell was going on. Then *Heroes* came along and changed everything." He must be pretty glad he held out? "I would concur," he says, with Spock-worthy certainty.

Now Quinto is looking for a chance to return to his favourite discipline: theatre (he's on the board of directors for the Ojai Playwrights Conference and names Chekhov as one of his favourites). His schedule is a problem — after the publicity tour for Star Trek he'll be on standby to film season five of *Heroes*, NBC willing — but he's open to ideas. Perhaps he could be lured over here as one of Kevin Spacey's Old Vic Hollywood imports? "I'd love to do something in London! Do you have some strings you can pull for me?" Kevin, if you're reading this, you know what to do.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE QUINTO | RETNA

21 WAYS TO LOOK MORE INTELLIGENT

1 | Choose your words carefully. The boffins at American Heritage Dictionaries list the five most intelligent-sounding words as epitome, finagle, gregarious, panacea and perfunctory.

2 | It's not just the words, but how you say them. Michael Ronayne, director of the College Of Public Speaking, says, "A clear, well-paced voice is a sign of confidence".

3 | Failing that, speak faster. "The faster characters speak, the more intelligent the

It's not just the words but how you say them. A well-paced voice is a sign of confidence

audience feel they come across," says psychotherapist Tom Barber.

4 | Make the right first impression. Life coach Dan O'Neil says, "People determine your perceived intelligence from your immediate physical appearance".

5 | Look after your looks. "Attractive people tend to appear better adjusted, more popular and intelligent," says Dr Liam Barker. "It's what psychologists refer to as 'The Halo Effect'."

6 | Pay attention to your teeth. In a recent study, people who had undergone cosmetic dentistry were assumed to be more successful and intelligent. "We have seen a big increase in clients asking to have their teeth improved before interviews," says James Russell of The London Smile Clinic.

7 | Learn to listen. "Emotional intelligence is as important as IQ," says life coach Jude Jennison. "Listen and ask open questions

such as how, what and when."

8 | Work on your memory. "Much of what is considered intelligence is simply the ability to remember," says dating coach David Wygant.

9 | Go for brains as well as beauty. When asked about the women you love, drop Nigella Lawson and Helen Mirren in alongside the more obvious Megan Fox and Eva Green

10 | Ask for help. "Get someone to show you how to do something. That's how you learn," says Professor Robert Hampson, Royal Holloway University of London.

11 | Start wearing purple. "Purple is a colour that suggests intelligence. Mix it with grey, a power colour for men, to exude confidence and a deep intelligence," says colour therapy specialist Julianne Bien.

12 | Wear glasses. A study conducted at the University of Melbourne's Centre For Eye Research concluded a relationship between intelligence and short-sightedness.

13 | Breathe in. To appear more confident you should "take deep breaths to send oxygen to the brain", suggests body language expert Peta Fletcher.

14 | Be confident. "People trust a confident person because they seem more assured," says behaviour analyst Leah Butler-Smith.

15 | Fix your posture. The majority of social communication is body language. "If you have a tendency to slouch, people will think of you as lazy, shy or stupid," says life coach Rebekah Fensome.

16 | Broaden your mind. "Intelligence involves openness to a variety of views," says Dr Keith Frankish of The Open University. "Don't just listen to people you agree with, read varied subject matter and select books you wouldn't normally choose."

17 | Talk about yourself in the third person. "People don't realise the power that comes with it," insists stand-up comedian Mike Birbiglia. "It turns whatever you say into fact."

18 | Confuse your audience with double negatives. "Whether you are enlightening them or not, they'll not dare question you and you won't not sound intelligent in any situation," says comedy coach Steve North.

19 | Say you're smart. "If you tell people you're intelligent they'll start to think of you that way. It's called the self-fulfilling prophecy," says psychologist Rose Aghdami.

20 | Fade to grey. Everybody knows grey hair equates intelligence, so ditch the dye.

21 | Stop swearing. "People have a tendency to find conversation peppered with bad language less valuable," says psychologist Roberta Galluccio Richardson. Which is obviously a royal pain in the shitter.

LORD DRAYSON, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE, EXPLAINS

WHY WE NEED MORE SPOCKS

One of the most memorable days of my life was in the summer of 1997 when I successfully floated PowderJect, the biotechnology company I founded, on the London Stock Exchange. Among all the press coverage that day, one story included a photograph of me holding a PowderJect device next to a photo of the first Dr McCoy (DeForest Kelley) from Star Trek, clutching a "hypospray". The headline? "It's a jab, Jim, but not as we know it."

PowderJect was responsible for the world's first technique for injecting medicines as fine particles — dispensing with the requirement for needles. The technology has significant potential to enable a new generation of DNA vaccines. And it's not so many parsecs away from that hypospray familiar to Trekkies, the one that Bones so often used to treat the crew of the Enterprise.

It's actually quite remarkable to reflect on the extent to which science and technology have caught up with the gadgetry used by Kirk, Spock and the Enterprise crew in the original shows I watched.

For phasers, we now have taser guns. For handheld communicators and tiny earpieces, think mobile phones and Bluetooth. At the more speculative end of the spectrum a few scientists have suggested that one can theoretically travel faster than the speed of light — without breaking the laws of physics, Captain! And we've already achieved teleportation — of a single photon, at least.

But my love of Star Trek is about much more than warp drives and teleportation. I was fascinated by the interplay of the leading characters. Looking back I also now realise that much of the drama that took place on the Enterprise mirrored what happens in real-life science: the raw emotion of

Scotty versus the cold logic of Spock.

Whenever the dilithium crystals were on the point of giving out, the chief engineer and first officer would have different ways of averting disaster.

As a science entrepreneur, and now as Government minister with overall responsibility for the science conducted in this country, I know that while cutting-edge research relies on rigorous methodology, human feeling can never be divorced from that process.

This is true, in part, because science is going to save our skins (quite literally in the case of treating melanoma) but equally in terms of addressing the most pressing global challenges that we all face: climate change, terrorism, ageing populations and the need for renewable energy. That requires passion as much as brainpower, a real desire to make a difference.

Working in science is all about being comfortable with operating at the edge of knowledge; of noticing things that haven't been noticed before, and asking "why?" and "how did that happen?" and then dedicating your life to finding out. It's also exciting and wonderfully unpredictable, just like Star Trek itself.

The world needs people like this right now, which is why I'm really keen for trained scientists, mathematicians and engineers, who may have previously taken jobs in financial services, to look again at other career possibilities in science. We need more Spocks, with his intriguing combination of Vulcan and human qualities, in our classrooms, our laboratories and our boardrooms.

There are many reasons why Star Trek endures in popular culture. People of my vintage may remember that the show broadcast the first interracial kiss on television (Kirk and Lt Uhura). We were all stopped in our tracks when Sulu landed suddenly in the jungle on *I'm A Celebrity*. And though I'm an old-school fan, I still find the later series and more recent films consistently imaginative.

But above all, Spock and the rest are bound up with my dreams of exploration and science as a child, and of going into space — something I still want to do.

I'd like to think another generation will find the same inspiration from Star Trek as I did and will hopefully follow the advice of that most famous of split infinitives: "to boldly go" — into science. (sciencesowhat.direct.gov.uk)

BERNARD-HENRI LEVY, FRENCH
INTELLECTUAL, PONDERES

THE MEANING OF STAR TREK

THERE IS A stroke of genius within Star Trek — the same genius that Marcel Proust praises in Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* and from which he draws inspiration for his own human comedy, *A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu* (In Search Of Lost Time) — it's essentially about the continual return of characters and the way that their reappearance weaves the fabric and ties the knots of the plot.

There is a narrative tradition to which Star Trek subscribes, and which undoubtedly explains its longevity and enduring popularity — a tradition that started with Lucien de Samosate's *Histoire Véritable* (one of the first ever works of science fiction, where the characters travel to the moon) in the second century and extends all the way to Thomas More's *Utopia*, or the fantastic fables of Jonathan Swift, or even Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

And then there is ultimately a message in Star Trek — a purely metaphysical questioning that the philosopher in me cannot ignore: is the universe finite or infinite? Is there just one or are there many worlds? Where does the possible end and the impossible begin? Is reality real? Is this the only reality? And what about man? Is he the last word in history?

The superhuman, if he ever comes into being, will he be a variation on the human, a collapse into the inhuman or a progression of humanity? Who, in other words, was right — Nietzsche or Darwin? Or perhaps Leibniz in his *Monadology*? Or Spinoza and his theory of substance? Or even their ultimate heirs, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault (who, incidentally, would have both liked Star Trek) betting on the "death of man"? What, finally, of the mind in Star Trek? Of its relation to matter? Must one resign oneself to see them forever as separate? Is reason compatible with intuition? Where does the first stop and

the second begin? What bridges the two and what keeps them apart?

I like this speculative fiction. I like this *mise en abyme* (placing into infinity) of reality that continues from film to film. I like this interstellar odyssey that has lasted since... how long, exactly? I don't know. I grew up with Star Trek. I grew older with Star Trek. From year to year I accompanied Spock, the new Ulysses, on his adventures. I saw him, at the bridge of the grand ship Enterprise, stationed at the very front, the appointed "look-out", reminding us that the first function of intelligence is not to reason, but to see. I saw and I pondered all of that, and the truth is that I have never, as expected, seen time passing. The question today is to understand what is left.

To be precise, it is to find out if this philosophy of weightlessness, this faith in the future, this life to be lived in future centuries, dovetails in any way with the age of crisis we have just entered and which may last for a long time. Are we too obsessed with humans now to worry about Vulcans? Do we have too many worries about this world to ask ourselves what

Spock at the bridge of the Enterprise reminds us that intelligence is not to reason but to see

hides beyond its frontiers?

All of us in the real world — the poor, cannibalised social body, devoured and blown to bits by the insane traders of Wall Street and the City of London, by the irresponsible hedge-funders and their greed and diabolical intelligence — are we any longer in a state to tolerate this kind of delicious delirium?

Spock has gotten older: does that mean he will die? Spock returns: is this his swan song? Tune in for the answer on 8 May.

Personally, I have my own idea — that I propose at my peril: just like the characters of Proust and Balzac, I believe in the *eternal return* of Mr Spock. ☺

Article translated from French into English by Sara Phenix and Anne Boller. *Left In Dark Times: A Stand Against The New Barbarism* (Random House) by Bernard-Henri Lévy is out now

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