

**“Newly Human and Strangely Literal”:
Embodiments of Haraway’s Simian, Cyborg, & Woman in
*Buffy the Vampire Slayer***

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“Monsters share more than the word’s root with the verb ‘to demonstrate’;
monsters signify.” – *Simians, Cyborgs, & Women* (226).

[1] The title quote to this paper is taken from a scene in Season Five of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (“Into The Woods” B5010) where the character Anya Jenkins, former vengeance demon, is expressing an ironically 'human' concern about how the rest of the central characters see her and what they might say about her behind her back. A few of the characters are talking in the Magic Box, the shop which Anya and Giles run, and Anya suggests that to shift a surplus stock of chicken feet they could do a "holiday promotion", giving "one free with every purchase!". The others proceed to laugh and make jokes at Anya's lack of awareness that a chicken foot is not the ideal festive stocking-filler, and she becomes self-conscious and upset, responding, "That's so very humorous. Make fun of the ex-demon! I can just hear you in private. I dislike that Anya. She's newly human and strangely literal." This quote has remained in the forefront of my mind as I've investigated the collision of Donna Haraway's philosophy with key characters in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* because it succinctly articulates the central themes in both which so neatly tie the two texts together. Anya's description of herself as "newly human", and the show's ability to portray her as such due to its fantasy genre, allow for the embodiment of one of Haraway's central themes - that of humanness as a category which is not as clean-cut, or possibly even as important, as we imagine. With the words "newly human", Anya expresses her interaction with human identity in a way which suggests it can be a phase sortal, something able to be taken on and off, and in ways which do not necessarily coincide as expected with her behavior. Anya displays affection, sexual desire, romantic and platonic attachment to other humans, pain, anger, and in this case, social insecurity. She is a well-functioning, economically successful member of society, efficiently running the Magic Box and forming close, rewarding bonds with those around her. She is compassionate and, most centrally, she loves. Her love for Xander, in fact, is the central story line for her character, which is vital not only because love is so frequently cited as 'the' key characteristic of humanity, but because her love does not dissipate upon her restoration to her previous demon state after Xander jilts her in Season Six. What does it mean that Anya still loves Xander when she has her demon identity reinstated? Or that her ability to wreak bloody vengeance as she once did proved severely impaired following her period of 'living as human'? The questions raised by characters like Anya in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and the more complex portrayal in the show of identities like humanness, which has been used as backdrop

to countless ethical positions and debates, throws the category into question in a way which Haraway, I would argue, would thoroughly approve of. The central thread throughout much of Haraway's theory asserts the productivity and necessity of taking categories and dichotomies which underpin patriarchal, racist, and capitalist structures in society and pulling them apart, examining their roots and realities and ultimately either rejecting or thoroughly reimagining them. The categories Haraway addresses in this way most centrally are that of nature and culture (natureculture), material and semiotic (materialesemiotic), knowledge/truth (situated knowledges), and human and non-human (cyborg), and these dichotomies and categories are addressed and called into question through characters in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* throughout the series. This presence of Harawayan themes and questions within *Buffy* makes it a text which can successfully concretize and embody her theory, illuminating the significance and power of the figures she utilizes by reading specific examples of those figures within what is a widely popular and present piece of culture.

[2] Due to the interdisciplinarity of Haraway's work, attempting to place her within one field is both difficult and counterproductive - while her early work focused on feminism within science as an institution, the *Cyborg Manifesto* marked a move towards feminism in the context of human interaction with technology, and her most recent work discusses the relationship between humans and other animals. Haraway's work, then, is placed within different fields according to era, traversing science studies, feminism, and species theory. However, there is a common thread to be found across these seemingly separate areas of interest, that being the importance of rejecting stagnant binaries and embracing hybridity. For clarity, this article will be organized in line with the title of the core Haraway text I will be reading *Buffy* through, divided into three sections focusing on the figure of the Simian, the Cyborg, and the Woman, and discussing how *Buffy* epitomizes and validates Haraway's thinking over other theorists' within the fields these figures inhabit. Haraway's writing on the Simian is located not far from the inception of science studies heralded by Thomas Kuhn's 1962 *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which began the discipline's central questioning of the linear and objective nature of scientific practice. Kuhn was the first to argue that science is not something entirely found but to a significant extent something made, reliant upon the acceptance of a set assumed paradigm for each new scientific era. Kuhn's line of thought was followed in 1979 by Latour's development of the idea of scientific knowledge as not objectively true but socially constructed, and was evolved further towards the moment of Haraway's entrance with Actor Network Theory, which proposes both the contribution of nonhuman actors within the networks of society, and the relations between material (literal) and semiotic (conceptual) factors in interactions. Those working closest to Haraway within science studies are likely Sandra Harding and Evelyn Fox Keller, both of whom contributed similarly to the development of "the permeability of [the] putative boundary between science and society" (Schneider, 29) and of a better awareness of the ideological bias and implications of science as core ideas within science studies. The theorists I will read Haraway alongside in the Cyborgs and

Women sections of this paper will be Sadie Plant and Luce Irigaray, respectively. Plant's work in *Zeros and Ones* falls nearby Haraway's in terms of their shared conviction in the positive power of the Cyborg for feminism, but diverges where Plant's conviction is rooted in an essentialist understanding of the relationship between women and technology. Similarly, while Irigaray's writing on aesthetics and myth also lands in line with Haraway's, both placing great political significance in aesthetics and great aesthetic significance in myth, they are separated sharply from one another by Irigaray's rejection of technology as a tool for the rewriting of patriarchal mythology. Where Haraway insists upon the necessity of using technological advance for feminist advance despite its roots in patriarchy, Irigaray does not accept the potential for good in these tools, instead harking back to an essentialist woman-as-nature concept which Haraway argues does not and cannot exist. While the field of *Buffy* Studies is an understandably narrow one, the convergence of Haraway's work with themes raised in *Buffy* has been written on before, highlighting the remarkable affinity I will argue there to be between the two texts. Haraway's relevance to *Buffy* has been specifically raised by both Marina Levina (*When Cyborgs Bite*) and Michael Palmer (*Scoobies, Cyborgs, & Women*), but the most central *Buffy* Studies scholarship I will be using in my reading of the series will be the work of Rhonda Wilcox and Zoë Jane Playden, both of whom address the wider feminist significance of *Buffy*. Through the following readings of Haraway's core figures of the Simian, the Cyborg, and the Woman as embodied in characters within *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, I will argue for the concretely significant potential these figures hold for feminist advance, and for the value of reading embodiments such as these into particularly texts as abstract as Haraway's. Having been criticized for seeming fruitlessly inaccessible and inapplicable to reality at times due to its highly stylized and conceptual nature, I would argue that Haraway's work benefits greatly from being read through pop culture in this way, as this kind of reading serves both to illuminate the content of the theory and to form imaginings of its potential real world presence and ramifications.

Simians

“Reality has an author. The author always has a proper name, but it has a way of disappearing into declarative sentences or even graphs embedded in published papers issuing from well-funded laboratories.”

– *Simians, Cyborgs, & Women* (77).

[3] The Simian in Haraway's work is a creature about whom knowledge is a deeply contested and valuable commodity. As the animals most closely related to humans, the imagined relevance of the Simian's life – its biology, sociology, and history - to ours makes it a figure of great power and makes the field of its study a politically charged and consequently politically skewed one. In *Simians, Cyborgs, & Women*, Haraway insists that primatology (and science in general) can never be objective, but that we are able to work towards it being a field less steeped in

patriarchal and racist agenda, firstly by acknowledging how these agendas have shaped past and present primatological practices and ‘knowledge’, and secondly by acknowledging how our own history and context will determine our primatological rewritings. The characters which I locate as Simians in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* are demons, which places the field of primatology as parallel to the study of demons, or ‘demonology’, in *Buffy*. We can see the mirrored examples of primatological laboratories in the Initiative (the covert government demonology project of Season Five) and The Watchers’ Council (the organization responsible for locating Slayers and allocating them Watchers for supervision and training purposes). The parallels between primatology and demonology begin with a shared investment in establishing clean-cut boundaries to humanness, and are played out in the distortion and oversimplification of demon nature within demonological writings, which serves to maintain the illusion of human nature as discrete or pure in opposition. In maintaining this illusion, institutions such as The Watchers’ Council even go so far as to erase details like the origin of the Slayerline from their writings; the first Slayer was created by the nonconsensual ‘merging’ of a woman with a demon soul, giving her monstrous strength in order that she could fight demons, but Buffy only discovers this sinister origin of her power through a mystical object passed down to her covertly from a past Slayer (“Get It Done” B7015). The erasing of this kind of history within the fictional field of demonology is closely representative of Haraway’s account of the bias and tampering with of primatology and history on the whole by institutions whose writings are rooted in patriarchal ideology and therefore invested in perpetuating the idea of ‘pure’ humanness as superior and safe.

[4] On the topic of primatology, Haraway also asserts that “in a strict sense, science is our myth” (42), going on to explain that although it is possible to conduct effective scientific investigation of other animals and nature in general, it is crucial to “remember how historically determined is our part in the construction of” (42) these scientific objects once we name them as such. This collision of and relationship between science and myth is explored in Season Five through Buffy’s interactions with the Initiative. While Buffy has long understood and accepted the less scientific, more mystical and inexplicable aspects of the demon world, Professor Walsh (who runs the Initiative) considers herself to have a far more ‘textbook’ or objective approach, remarking upon meeting Buffy that they had dismissed the story of the Slayer as a myth:

Walsh: “We thought you were a myth.”

Buffy: “Well, you were myth-taken.”

(“A New Man” B4012)

The storyline of the Initiative and their interaction with the Scoobies highlights the incompatibility of this kind of entirely clean-cut, objective approach with actually fighting evil, much as Haraway utilizes her study of primatology to highlight the impossibility of entirely objective scientific practice. Morality, even in *Buffy*, is not so

straightforward, and because Buffy and the Scoobies recognize this incapacity for ‘objectivity’ and uncomplicated margins of good and bad, they are better equipped to fight the good fight.

[5] The parallels between Haraway’s primatology and Whedon’s demonology become increasingly evident through the brutal testing on and misrepresentation of the ‘Simian’ of *Buffy* (the Demon) at the hands of the Initiative, which mirrors the treatment of the Simian in historical primatology as narrated by Haraway. The Demon interacts and co-creates alongside the humans of *Buffy*, and varies considerably from its historically expected behaviors, despite the vastly documented chronology of demonology, similarly again to the simians of Haraway’s primatology. This documentation, by the Initiative and The Watchers’ Council in particular, of the demons’ lives and how they ought to be treated is skewed by the overarching patriarchal fear in these institutions of acknowledging that certain categories - good and evil, human and demon - are not as discrete as they seem. There are humans that inhabit ethical spaces further from our concept of humanity than some of the demons we encounter in the series, and demons who become lovers, family members, and allies, and the questions raised by these category-breaching characters are explored in depth in *Buffy*.

[6] The two key characters in *Buffy* who embody Haraway’s figure of the Simian are Angel and Spike, both vampires who undergo various identity shifts throughout the show. The categories of human and demon begin to be complicated by Angel’s character in Season One due to his identity as vampire with a soul (which he loses and then regains), and are confused even more so by Spike in later seasons, as he is first implanted with a chip which prevents him from harming humans, and then in the final season also regains his soul. Of all the stock demons and monsters, the vampire is arguably the most evidently applicable to Haraway’s philosophy, firstly due to the parallel position of vampires as closest to human in the demon world (similarly, the Simian is the closest in the animal world to human), and secondly through the history and nature of the vampire in fiction, as discussed by Haraway herself in *Universal Donors in a Vampire Culture* (and in her later discussion of *Universal Donors in How Like a Leaf*). In focusing on vampires, Whedon has already chosen a monster which complicates standard definitions of human and demon (because vampires begin life as humans) and which necessarily brings about a Harawayan bodily category blurring (through the drinking of blood). This physical boundary breaching, which historically has been used to induce terror¹ is in *Buffy* made yet more complex – the “paradigmatic act of infecting whatever poses as pure” (150) by Whedon’s vampire is not just a case of drinking blood, but often of sexual consumption also – most notably, it is with Angel that Buffy has sex for the first time.

¹ In Haraway’s own words, historically we typically find the vampire portrayed “as the one who pollutes lineages on the wedding night; as the one who effects category transformations by illegitimate passages of substance.” (150).

[7] The character of Angel is introduced early in Season One as Buffy's tragic love interest; he is a more than two-hundred-year-old vampire who rampaged all over Europe for decades gaining a reputation as one of the most brutal vampires in history, before incurring the wrath of a Roma tribe after raping, torturing, and murdering a daughter of the tribe. The Roma sought vengeance by cursing Angel with the restoration of his human soul to his vampire body and to his now deeply bloody history and memory. The torture Angel suffers from this point on as the weight of his demon self's deeds come to reckoning with his restored soul plagues him indefinitely, and forms the core premise of spin-off series *Angel*. When he arrives in Sunnydale, Angel has been laying low for decades avoiding both humans and demons, and is only just contemplating his potential for redemption through fighting alongside the Slayer ("Becoming, Part 1" B2021). Angel and Buffy inevitably and almost immediately fall in love, and struggle with trying to resist the obviously impractical relationship until eventually, halfway through Season Two, they consummate their love on the eve of Buffy's seventeenth birthday. This episode ends with Angel fleeing the bedroom in a panic in the middle of the night, clearly in physical pain and distress ("Surprise" B2013). In the following episode, the next scene in their storyline finds Angel writhing around in the alley behind his apartment, before regaining control and then feeding off a nearby prostitute, after which he exhales a plume of smoke from the cigarette she had been smoking, in a twisted image of the post-coital smoke which introduces the viewer to what will become a theme of Angel's brutality as parallel to his sexual nonchalance. His complete change in character is developed as a mirror of the stereotypical switch in a male human 'the morning after' when Buffy finally finds him the next day:

Buffy: You didn't say anything; you just left.

Angel: Like I really wanted to stick around after that.

Buffy: What...?

Angel: You got a lot to learn about men, kiddo... although I guess you proved that last night. [...] Lighten up, it was a good time, it doesn't mean like we have to make a big deal. [...] I'll call you.

("Innocence" B2014)

His behavior is in fact portrayed as so typically human, and typically human male, that Buffy herself does not realize he's reverted to his pure demon state until he attacks and threatens to kill her friend, Willow. This depiction of Angel's sudden, radical change in character as plausibly just cruel human behavior serves to resist straightforward readings of human and demon nature, and of the soul as that which makes for goodness in a character, an issue which will be further illustrated through Spike in later seasons.

[8] The explanation for his behavior is that Angel has in fact lost his soul due to a clause in the Roma curse which caused him to regain it to begin with – "Angel

was meant to suffer, not to live as human [...] one moment where the soul that we restored no longer plagues his thoughts, and that soul is taken from him.” (“Innocence” B2014) – but until one of her prophetic dreams causes her to question Jenny Calendar (who is secretly a descendent of the Roma tribe), Buffy is unaware of this clause because demonology has failed to properly chronicle Angel’s life once his soul is reinstated. He is no longer of demonological interest after he is cursed, because he has fallen out of the simplistic categories which demonology relies on to perpetuate the binary divisions of human/demon and good/evil. It is also of note that the magic used by the Roma tribe to curse Angel is not something valued or preserved within institutions such as the Watchers’ Council – “those magicks are long lost, even to my people” (“Innocence” B2014) – even though being able to restore vampire’s souls would presumably be very helpful in battling evil. These traditional institutions do not seek that kind of magic, because they require demons to be seen as straightforwardly evil in order that the category of human can be built in opposition to it – the kind of thinking which maps neatly onto Haraway’s depiction of stagnant, traditional scientific practices which are likewise unwilling to develop through explorations of hybridity.²

[9] The one example we do see in *Buffy* of a demonological institution attempting to reduce the threat of a vampire through some kind of hybridization (and without killing it) comes in the form of a chip implanted in Spike’s brain by the Initiative which causes him intense pain if he tries to physically harm a human. This part of Spike’s storyline comes after he has been caught and detained for ‘analysis’ by the Initiative, who refer to him as “Hostile 17”, one of many demons they have caught and imprisoned in their facility for the purposes of indeterminate and seemingly sinister ‘research’. Up until this point, Spike has already been somewhat neutralized in terms of being seen as a danger to the group. Despite being an infamous vampire who initially arrived in Sunnydale determined to kill Buffy, Spike’s danger is softened by humor and by his love for Drusilla from his very introduction to the show. His Season Two storyline culminates in him deciding to help Buffy and the Scoobies thwart Angel’s plan to raise demon Acatla, because, he reluctantly admits, he does not actually want the world to end:

“We like to talk big, vampires do. ‘I’m going to destroy the world!’, that’s just tough guy talk. Strutting around with your friends over a pint of blood. The truth is, I like this world. You’ve got – the dog racing, Manchester United, and

² In a similarly Harawayan turn of events, it is tech-savvy witches (“techno-pagans”) Jenny Calendar and Willow Rosenberg who eventually succeed in restoring Angel’s soul and regaining him as a powerful ally, utilizing both technology and magic to find, translate, and perform the spell to restore his soul – before she is killed by Angel, Jenny manages to write a computer program which translates the ancient text of the Roma curse, which Willow later finds on a floppy disk and uses to perform the ritual (“Passion” B2017).

you've got people: billions of people walking around like Happy Meals with legs. It's all right here." ("Becoming, Part Two" B2022)

This kind of rational forethought is not something typically attributed to demons, and certainly not something a group like the Initiative would expect a demon to display, but Spike is at home in the human world; he even enjoys soap operas.³ It further emphasizes Spike's more human characteristics that an implied ulterior impetus behind his betrayal of Angel is the latter's repeated flirtations with Drusilla, Spike's long-term partner to whom he is incredibly devoted. This propensity for love also lends itself to the dulling of his apparent threat. Spike is capable of deep, devoted love before he even has the chip curb his violence; he was a passionate and affectionate man before he was sired (turned into a vampire), and this characteristic carries on into his age-long love for Drusilla, who eventually leaves him heartbroken. However, it is the chip which the Initiative implants into Spike in Season Four which facilitates his increased involvement with the Scoobies and shift onto the side of 'good'; his inability to bite humans almost seems just the excuse Spike needed to abandon the demon world and live a more human life. In the episode "The I In Team" (B0413), one image highlights acutely the disparity between the Initiative's treatment of Spike and his actual threat: we see Spike get shot with a tracking device by Initiative agents while strolling along, cigarette in one hand and paper grocery bag in the other, looking no more threatening than any other person on their way home from the supermarket (the only difference being, of course, that Spike's groceries consist solely of pigs' blood and cigarettes). It is at this point that Spike goes to the Scoobies for help; they oblige and soon after recognize his capacity as an ally, something the Initiative fails to do despite knowing that he is unable to feed off humans. This failure to recognize Spike's more 'human' characteristics and his potential for good again serves to highlight the stagnantly binary-centric ideals which demonological institutions are built upon in *Buffy*, and the hindrance to progress caused by this stagnation.

[10] This sequence of events surrounding the chip also leads to Spike becoming romantically involved with Buffy, and eventually seeking out a shaman in order to earn back his soul, a plotline which facilitates even more challenging questions about morality and human nature. Spike's love for Buffy seems initially to be something obsessive but fairly shallow (he does, after all, have a robot replica of her made to have sex with), but as Seasons Six and Seven progress, it becomes clear that he is in love with her as opposed to just sexually fixated on her. When she eventually breaks off their secret relationship, however, he becomes crazed and tries

³ Spike: ...and don't make a lot of noise. *Passions* is coming on.

Joyce: *Passions*? Oh, do you think Timmy's really dead?

Spike: Oh! No, no, she can just sew him back together. He's a doll, for god's sake.

Joyce: Uh, what about the wedding? I mean, there's no way they're gonna go through with that. ("Checkpoint" B5012).

to rape her, before taking off to an unknown location, ostensibly in order to have his chip removed: “Make me what I was, so that Buffy can get what she deserves.” (“Grave” B6022). However, we discover at the end of Season Six that he has in fact been fighting to have his soul returned to him, not his ability to harm humans – Spike believes that Buffy deserves someone with a soul, and so he undergoes horrendous trials, almost getting himself killed, in order to get his back. But this calls into question the actual value of the soul itself – if Spike is capable of enduring so much torture and hardship in order to earn his soul and be ‘good’, it seems he was already capable of incredible strength and goodness. The degree to which Spike engages in the human world and to which he loves (long before his soul is restored) calls into question the discreteness of human nature or just what it is that makes humans special, if anything. In *The Uniqueness of Humans*, Robert Sapolsky discusses and dismisses various possible facets of human nature which might be considered unique to human beings, before concluding that while all of the standard characteristics associated generally with humans are visible in various forms throughout nature (empathy, non-reproductive sex, awareness of other minds, etc.), it is the “sheer complexity and magnificence of human culture” which sets us apart. But the phenomenon of human culture is something we already know Spike participates in and enjoys, even down to interests in television, sport, and fashion. Spike is a key instance of the kind of boundary-crossing character which is used in *Buffy* to toy with and at times utterly demolish the binaries between human/demon and good/evil. The overwhelming popularity he gained in the show (causing his character to be kept on for six seasons despite being intended as only a brief ‘baddie’) is a testament to how well these characters, and the themes they raised, were received by *Buffy*’s audience. The Demon in *Buffy*, and Whedon’s incarnation of the vampire in particular, provides an apt science fiction parallel of the Simian as narrated by Haraway in her writings on primatology. The portrayal of binary-dependent institutions such as the Initiative and The Watchers’ Council serves well to represent the flaws which Haraway finds in historical primatology, exposing these organizations in their oppressive authorship of reality. In terms of characters, vampires such as Angel and Spike who move between the human and demon worlds provide viewers with embodiments of the boundary-blurring principles raised by Haraway, allowing for the translation of her more abstract thought processes into concrete imaginings of “refiguring possible worlds” (66).

Cyborgs

“What might be learned from personal and political ‘technological’ pollution?”
 - *Simians, Cyborgs, & Women* (173)

[11] Described by Haraway as “trickster figures that might turn a stacked deck into a potent set of wild cards for refiguring possible worlds” (66), the figure of the Cyborg is one of a feared and misunderstood, or sometimes trivialized and mistreated, boundary being whose story and perspective is vital in advancing human thought.

Contributing to the discussion on robotics and technology at around the same time in the 1980s, Hans Moravec wrote that “in the present condition we are uncomfortable halfbreeds, part biology, part culture,” (4), but this halfbreed condition is not something uncomfortable for Haraway, or if so, it is a productive discomfort. Haraway sees the Cyborg - by which she means any significant co-being or interaction between human and machine - as a crucially useful creature due to its blurring of species boundaries and consequent split perspective.⁴ This split vision, she argues, provides a deeper understanding of the world by widening the being’s perspective; they can see and understand more because they can look from different and new angles outside of just one species positioning. In *Zeros and Ones*, Sadie Plant raises similar themes to those Haraway addresses in the *Cyborg Manifesto*, discussing the relationship between women and technology and the possibilities for feminist advance therein. There are plural points of contact between Haraway and Plant; their highly stylized writing being one, their shared acknowledgement that “as long as human was the only thing to be, women have had little option but to pursue the possibility of gaining full membership of the species” another (Plant, 58). However, where Haraway’s Cyborg was seeking a figure which was non-essentialist, which “didn’t rely on birthing and definitions of women as natural” (Sofoulis, 93), Plant’s argument for the intimacy between woman and machine expressly relied upon such ideas. She argued that women would find power in the increasing presence of technology because “while man connected himself to the past, woman was always in touch with the virtual matter of her own functioning” (Plant, 6-7). Located within Haraway’s much quoted cyborg/goddess opposition, Plant’s figure would likely land midway, as a cyborg constructed of goddess and machine; embracing the technology but reluctant to relinquish the presence of a ‘divine feminine’. Both Haraway and Plant have been criticized within the wider cyberfeminist field for alleged merging through the figure of the cyborg of “those cybergirls of the rich nations with Third World women producing the equipment” (Sofoulis, 99). This accusation, in terms of Haraway at least, seems to overlook a fundamentally established basis of Haraway’s work, that being her concept of Situated Knowledges – perspectives which are “partial, with inevitable blind spots, and very much part of the field [they examine]” (Haraway, 84) – it is an oversight to suggest Haraway’s writing amalgamates these disparate groups when she so carefully caveats all of her writing with the acknowledgment of her own situatedness as a white, middle-class, Irish-Catholic US socialist-feminist woman. Despite their differing generations and genders, the situated-ness from which Haraway writes is similar to Joss Whedon’s in several other ways (another white, middle-class, Irish-American feminist in California), which allows for some transference of this disclaimer onto *Buff*y when embodying her cyborg philosophy in his cyborg characters. It is this potential embodiment of

⁴ “The split and contradictory self is the one who can interrogate positionings and be accountable, the one who can construct and join rational conversations and fantastic imaginings that change history. Splitting, not being, is the privileged image for feminist epistemologies of scientific knowledge.” (Haraway, 193).

Haraway's figure of the Cyborg within the cyborg characters of *Buffy*, alongside a comparison of Haraway's and Plant's understanding of the Cyborg, which this section will explore.

[12] The contrast between Plant's and Haraway's understandings of the cyborg can be read most fruitfully through *Buffy* characters April and the Buffybot, both introduced in Season Five. In Plant we can find a helpful lead in to these characters, as the 'eve 1' fragment of *Zeros and Ones* provides us with an overview of the evolution of the category of being they both fall into: the female robot or 'living doll'. Plant tracks the development of this figure from Charles Babbage's 'clockwork dancer' with which he was fixated, through to fictional imaginings such as Future Eve's 'Halady', the robot double for Maria featured in *Metropolis*, and the creatures of *The Stepford Wives*, and *Buffy*'s April would indeed not look in the least out of place in Stepford. April is a 'sexbot' made by future Trio ringleader Warren Mears, who creates her to be the 'perfect girlfriend', programmed only to love him, but then leaves her when he finds a human girlfriend, hoping her batteries will run flat. Needless to say they do not, and she spends days wandering around looking for Warren, as all she has been programmed to do is love him. April meets her end in a bizarrely heart-wrenching 'death scene' where Buffy sits with her and comforts her that she was a good girlfriend until she finally runs flat ("I Was Made To Love You" B5015). Remarkably, it does feel very much like a death scene, and the injustice and unsustainability of a being made only to love, with its evident parallels to feminist rejections of this kind of role being imposed upon women, is acutely felt despite the fact that April is not a woman, but a robot. In April, then, we find a being who falls outside the remit of Plant's idea of female 'nature' as she is not a 'natural' human woman, and who is yet subject to the same brand of patriarchal oppression, eliciting significant audience empathy as a result. April thus demonstrates aptly the more Harawayan cyborg, as she challenges the essentialist demarcation of 'natural womanhood' according to physical embodiment, and by extension Plant's conviction in the 'inherent ties' between woman and machine as automatic means for liberation.

[13] The second of these more traditional cyborg characters in *Buffy* is the Buffybot, also created by Warren Mears, this time not for himself but for Spike who is at this point unrequitedly infatuated with Buffy. She starts out as a mostly comic character, with sources of humor in her inability to effectively replicate Buffy's wit, as well as in the tropic confusion over her being mistaken for Buffy. When Buffy dies, however, the role of the Buffybot changes, raising profound questions of cyborg possibility. The capacity for a machine to function 'as human' or 'as woman' can be seen acutely in the first two episodes of Season Six (immediately following Buffy's death), where the Buffybot is being used as a decoy so that the monsters of Sunnydale do not know the real Buffy is dead, and also going to PTA meetings in Buffy's place. The use of the Buffybot as a replacement for Buffy's slayer functions in particular highlights how, as Zoë-Jane Playden points out, Buffy is "a woman who is objectified as a function – 'The Slayer' – and controlled to serve ends which are not her own. She

is a constructed woman, a kind of ‘cyborg’.” (121). This objectification of Buffy as Slayer is made manifest through the Buffybot as her literal cyborg replacement in these episodes in a far clearer way than previously, demonstrating the signifying power the cyborg can hold. But what’s also made clear is the Buffybot’s capacity to replace Buffy as guardian and leader. The Buffybot effectively stands in for Buffy at the aforementioned PTA meeting (doing a better job, it is suggested, than Buffy herself would have) and we even find her being an emotional placeholder for Dawn’s guardian. Dawn is seen sleeping next to the Buffybot while the latter is charging in Buffy’s bed, clearly facilitating the deferment of her mourning process while she is unable to accept her sister’s death. Furthermore, as with her robo-sister April, when the Buffybot is killed it is a brutal death scene, this time with undertones of sexual assault to compound the parallels with human female oppression. Her death is deeply upsetting, to Dawn and Spike as well as to the audience, despite the fact that she is not human (“Bargaining, Part One” B6001, “Bargaining, Part Two” B6002).

[14] Similarities aside, the differences between April’s and the Buffybot’s storylines can be used to further convey Haraway’s non-essentialist ideas about technology in contrast with Plant’s essentialism. While Plant suggests that technological advance is inherently revolutionary due to the parallels she draws between ‘womanhood’ and ‘technology’, Haraway does not have “faith that the technologies of the information ‘revolution’ automatically produce liberatory effects” (Sofoulis, 87). She instead follows the ‘social constructionist’ viewpoint that the effects of technologies “will vary according to the social practices surrounding them and the political contexts in which they are deployed” (Sofoulis, 87). This variance can be seen in the difference between April’s brief, tragic existence and the Buffybot’s similarly tragic but undoubtedly more constructive life. Despite them both being not only the same ‘species’ of creature but even made by the same man, the Buffybot manages to supercede the existence laid out for her in her programming with the help of the Scoobies, being reprogrammed by Willow to carry out Slayer duties and serving alongside the ‘good guys’, however temporarily. This argument for the capacity for good in even technology made by or within the patriarchy (which Warren Mears can be read as an embodiment of with very little effort) feeds more widely into Haraway’s image of the Cyborg. Being “squarely against those who would interpret every technology developed or used within ‘white capitalist patriarchy’ as inevitably playing out a white, capitalist, and/or patriarchal logic” (Sofoulis, 88), Haraway describes her Cyborg as having the capacity to be “exceedingly unfaithful to their origins” (151), a phrase very fitting for the Buffybot’s reprogramming and reappropriation by the Scoobies as a tool for good. April and the Buffybot are ‘purely machine’ in a physical sense, but the sympathy invoked in us for them calls into question whether ‘humanity’ is a label which can only be applied to homo sapiens, and whether this label even factors into the significance a being can hold for us, in a key example of how questions and ideas raised in the *Cyborg Manifesto* are frequently and productively embodied in *Buffy*.

[15] The ‘social constructionist’ idea which Haraway follows regarding the Cyborg’s capacity and character as variable according to its context can be read further through two Cyborg manifestations found in Season Four; Adam, and the Giles-Willow-Buffy-Xander hybrid of “Primeval” (B4021). Adam is the ‘big bad’ villain of Season Four and is probably the most recognizable trope Cyborg to be found in *Buffy*. He is constructed by Professor Walsh out of various demon, human, and machine parts to be the ultimate soldier but, in a stock Frankenstein scene, he kills Walsh the minute he gains animation and goes on a voracious killing spree, conveying that Cyborgs can be powerful forces for evil as well as good (“The I In Team” B4013). Interestingly, Adam’s physical hybridization is eventually overpowered not by Buffy alone, but by a subtler and stronger kind of Cyborg than himself. The final fight scene between Buffy and Adam involves a powerful spell being cast by the Scoobies in order that all of their best characteristics are mystically embodied in Buffy’s being. In order to defeat Adam, they required Giles’ intellect, Willow’s magical capacity, Buffy’s physical strength, and Xander’s ‘heart’ (his capacity for loyalty). And having performed the spell to unite their essences thus, the Scoobies succeeded in killing him despite his having been designed and built to be the ultimate warrior (“Primeval” B4021). This as a perfect articulation of the nuance of Haraway’s Cyborg; she doesn’t mean simply splicing things together physically to form the most physically capable being. The Cyborg for Haraway is powerful because it combines the knowledge and perspective of multiple beings, which, as the Giles-Willow-Buffy-Xander cyborg successfully demonstrates, can give an advantage over even the most daunting opponent.

[16] Although these more traditionally recognizable Cyborg characters do feature in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* a number of times in fruitful ways, Haraway also sees Cyborgs as emerging in more subtle incarnations which are likewise present in the *Buffy*, in minute hybridizations between human and machine which lead to a widening and improving perspective. In Season Two, for example, Buffy defeats a character called the Judge⁵ through a loophole in the mystical context of this creature. The mythology surrounding the Judge states that “no weapon forged” can defeat him, but by the final battle it has occurred to Buffy that these mystical texts were written an awful long time ago, and perhaps some weapons forged more recently by machine can in fact defeat him. She hikes a rocket launcher up onto her shoulder and blows The Judge to smithereens, in a fine example of a Cyborg interaction between her human problem-solving skills, her demon-forged Slayer strength, and the advance of technology (“Innocence” B2014). Further examples of successful Cyborg actions and interactions in *Buffy* are played out in the concept of ‘TechnoPaganism’ (which as a term even looks as though it could’ve been coined by Haraway herself) as introduced

⁵ A character who, incidentally, raises interesting questions as to the nature of humanness himself, as his method of killing is through ‘burning the humanity’ out of beings; the ‘humanity’ he finds to burn in Spike is one of the early hints at the theme of humanity as inherently linked to the capacity to love.

by the character Jenny Calendar in Season One. Jenny uses the term TechnoPagan to describe to Giles the unique combination of magic and 21st century technology she and other modern witches use, and Willow seems also to embrace this category, taking up Jenny's unfinished task of restoring Angel's soul when she finds the translation program saved on a floppy disk, and often using her advanced computer skills alongside her developing aptitude for witchcraft as the show continues after Jenny Calendar's death. In these aspects and many others, Whedon acknowledges the pervasive presence of and increasing reliance upon technology in late 20th century/early 21st century United States in *Buffy*, and raises questions as to the positive and negative impact it may have on our lives through the Cyborg characters and interactions he depicts. However, the height of Harawayan Cyborg figures in *Buffy* arguably comes right at the end of the series, through the actions of characters that also embody the Harawayan figure of Woman to a remarkable extent.

Women

“We both learn about and create nature and ourselves.”

- *Simians, Cyborgs & Women* (42)

[17] The figure of Woman in Haraway's writing is that of the late 20th century woman, struggling for equal rights in a society predominantly convinced that feminism is no longer necessary. She has been devalued and oppressed from all angles, by science and history and law, and is seeking new imaginings of herself as possible tools to overcome this oppression. In many ways, the figure of the Woman is written about primarily indirectly by Haraway, through the Simian in the figure of the feminist scientist paving the way to a better primatology, and through the Cyborg as a new partial identity option for strengthening the knowledge and power of the feminist movement through boundary-crossing interactions with technology. But the overarching picture Haraway gives us of feminism at the approach of the 21st century is as in the process of rejecting binaries and boundaries at every angle in order to advance; “The cyborgs populating feminist science fiction make very problematic the statuses of man or woman, human, artefact, member of a race, individual entity, or body.” (178). Haraway's tools for escaping these binaries and identities are through re-authoring and boundary-blurring, and the women in *Buffy* act out these opportunities often throughout the series, with sometimes incredible success. In this section, I discuss key examples of Haraway's re-authoring and boundary-blurring found in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, and further explicate Haraway's feminism through its relation to Luce Irigaray's writings, particularly on aesthetics and myth.

[18] Haraway's interdisciplinarity makes it difficult to place her within wider feminism; she has been categorized variously as a cyborg-feminist, a postmodern-feminist, an ecofeminist, and a socialist-feminist, the latter being how she most often refers to herself. Irigaray is also most frequently identified in her feminism as a postmodernist, and the crossovers between these two feminist philosophers can be

seen when discussing many of the issues raised by *Buffy*, centrally: the role of aesthetics in feminism, the aesthetic status of myth, and the position of pop culture phenomena like *Buffy* as modern mythology. One of the first challenges in any writing on an artifact of popular culture such as *Buffy* is justifying the relevance of such media to academic study, and both Haraway and Irigaray argue convincingly for its significance. Although for Haraway this line of thought is very clear – she has specifically heralded science fiction as a very powerful medium for feminist progression – Irigaray’s writing can be applied more indirectly but to the same end. In Irigaray’s writing on myth, she is discussing “mythical representations of reality” (1993a: 24) and the cultural and philosophical importance thereof. She argues that to consider the meaning of these representations “as merely incidental is concomitant to repressing and destroying certain cultural dimensions that relate to the economy of difference between the sexes” (24). Definitions of the word ‘myth’ generally include both myth as the origin stories of a society, and myth as a widespread untruth⁶, a definition by which I argue cult and pop phenomena like *Buffy* can be categorized as such. *Buffy* and other science fiction television shows like it represent modern mythology in that they discuss and often attempt to explain the “natural or social phenomenon” of modern culture and society, utilizing the narrative device of “supernatural beings or events” in order to do so.

[19] This conception of *Buffy* as a work of modern feminist mythology allows for a reading of it through Irigaray’s and Haraway’s closely related stances on the significance and power of myth in building or breaking down the patriarchal structures of society. Although they diverge where Haraway steers to avoid essentialist readings of womanhood, the two meet on the fundamental importance of these patriarchal myths. In Haraway’s language, “We have all been colonized by those origin myths, with their longing for fulfilment in apocalypse.” (175); in Irigaray’s, “myth is not a story independent of History, but rather expresses History in colorful accounts that illustrate the major trends of an era” (1994: 101). Haraway and Irigaray also converge in their belief in the power of rewriting these myths as a route to feminist advance; Haraway states that through retelling these “origin stories” of patriarchy, “cyborg authors subvert the central myths of origin of Western culture” (175). In *Poethics as Embodied Writing*, Margaret E. Toye discusses how Irigaray also values the power of art in refiguring matters of ethical concern such as feminism. She points out that “for Irigaray, a revolution in ethics would also involve a revolution in aesthetics: ‘the production of a new age of thought, art, poetry, and language’ (Irigaray 1993: 5).” (9), highlighting that Irigaray “stresses the aesthetics component of creating new theories” (9). But while Irigaray’s conviction in the feminist potential of art is not explicitly applicable to pop phenomena such as *Buffy*, Haraway’s focus on science fiction involves “destabilizing hierarchies between high and low culture as

⁶ *OED* entry: “1a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events. 2a widely held but false belief or idea.”

well as what counts as theory and thought” (Toye, 10), meaning that locating embodiments of Haraway’s figure of the Woman within *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is by no means a stretch.

[20] The feminist significance of *Buffy* has been discussed in depth by fans and academics alike since the show’s inception in 1997; as far as ‘mainstream’ feminist concerns go, *Buffy* offers a female protagonist, depiction of women as having their own sexual desires, female characters who display both physical and psychological strength, and the inclusion of central characters with body types outside of the Western 21st Century beauty standard, to name a few of many. But *Buffy* also raises some more nuanced, less mainstream feminist ideas of the kind found in Haraway through characters and storylines throughout the series. The key examples of embodiments of Haraway’s figure of the Woman which I will discuss in this section include the rewriting of patriarchal myth through renaming, and the re-authoring of the mythology of the Slayerline. The first of these, renaming as mode of re-authoring and subverting patriarchal myth, is epitomized by protagonist Buffy Summers in her interactions with the mythology of the demon world, a history and mythology which engulfs her in her role as Slayer but which she consistently resists imbibing as the kind of ‘objective truth’ which Haraway argues is in itself a myth in the second sense (“widespread untruth”). As Wilcox emphasizes in *Why Buffy Matters*, “Buffy, role model for independence, opposes essentialism with the idea of existential self-determination through the symbolism of naming.” (47). This symbolism of naming is one way in which this power struggle between Buffy herself and the patriarchal structures of demonology surrounding her role is depicted. While the Watchers’ Council and the similarly masculinist Initiative are shown as having the authority on naming in an official sense, this authority is undermined by Buffy’s failure to obediently and reverently study demonological history, and particularly to learn the names of her myriad demon opponents, a failure which betrays both an adolescent disrespect for authority and a Harawayan redistribution of power. To further explicate the latter, when Buffy refers to ancient vampire “Kakistos” as “kissing toast” (“Faith, Hope, & Trick” B3003), to name one example of many, she is not just providing comic relief: she is diminishing the unfair advantages these opponents bring to battle by refusing them their history. By withholding their proper names, Buffy refuses to recognize the weight of these creatures’ lengthy pasts, thereby evening the playing field somewhat with the comparatively meager sixteen years of history she brings to battle herself.

[21] Even further undermining of the patriarchal authority of naming is a scene in Season Four finale “Restless” (B4022), where Buffy’s dream sequence shows Initiative soldier Riley and cyborg Adam’s former human incarnation attired in business-wear seated at a long empty conference table. Buffy approaches them and Riley tells her, “Buffy, we’ve got important work to do. Lots of filing, giving things names.” In response to this Buffy addresses Adam’s human self, asking, “What was yours?”, to which human Adam replies with the hugely loaded, “Before Adam? Not a

man among us can remember.” The symbolism of Eden here, marked both by Adam’s name and the reference to “giving things names” as Adam named the creatures, is read by Wilcox as recalling the lost memory of “a prehistoric, pre-patriarchal age” (14) and by Playdon as connecting Buffy to “pre-biblical, female-centered mythology” (14) – a time which “not a *man* among us” (my emphasis) can recall, but women might manage to. Following this exchange, however, Buffy reaches into her weapons bag to defend herself from approaching demons and finds her hands groping instead through thick, wet mud, in yet another richly symbolic moment, this time arguably alluding to the weaknesses of essentialist woman-as-earth conceptions of the Woman which this “pre-biblical, female centered mythology” is in danger or arriving at. The symbolism in this scene can be tied together remarkably well in Harawayan terms with a passage of similar symbolic substance from *The Cyborg Manifesto*:

“The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust. Perhaps that is why I want to see if cyborgs can subvert the apocalypse of returning to nuclear dust in the manic compulsion to name the enemy.” (151)

Buffy and Adam alike cannot fathom or recall Eden from their 21st century positioning within Western culture, and yet the reverberations of that mythology, of the naming power of Man, of the erasure of feminine deity, are still felt in the power of the patriarchal structures surrounding the mythology of the Slayer. She does not recognize Adam’s naming power, but Buffy also “is not made of mud”; she is as far from the essentialist readings of woman-as-earth as the Cyborg is, she is the “illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism” (151) just like cyborg Adam. But, while with Adam the apple does not fall far from the tree in terms of patriarchal militarism, Buffy instead consistently challenges, rejects, and reworks the mythology of both the current structure of the Watchers’ Council and, as our next example will discuss, even the origins of the Slayerline itself.

“But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential.” (151)

The rewriting of the mythology surrounding the Slayerline is possibly the most powerfully feminist and Harawayan storyline found in *Buffy*. Established from the start of the very first season as the central piece of mythology, around which the entire structure of the Watchers’ Council and the Slayer’s role and lifestyle is built, the definition of the Slayer is thus: “In every generation there is a Chosen One. She alone will stand against the vampires, the demons, and the forces of darkness. She is the Slayer.” But despite the consistent reinforcing of this statement at the start of every episode, instead of revering it as the given facts of her destiny, Buffy destabilizes the mythology of the Slayer even from Episode One. Standing in the library of Sunnydale High upon her arrival at the new school, watcher and librarian Giles begins to recite the Slayer narrative to Buffy, who interjects “to stop the spread

of their evil blah blah I've heard it, okay?" ("Welcome to the Hellmouth" B1001). Her lack of reverence for the tradition of her calling is evident, then, from the very beginning, and as the seasons continue this lack of respect develops into gradually increasing rebellions both incidental and intentional regarding the protocol of the Slayerline.

[22] The most significant early change Buffy makes to the Slayerline is accidental – the Master kills her at the end of Season One, but Xander then resuscitates her ("Prophecy Girl" B1012). As the activation of the next Slayer is triggered by the current Slayer's death, this sequence of events leads to the coexistence of two Slayers at once for the first time in history, thereby altering the Slayerline forever. The first more intentional disruption of the tradition of the Slayer comes in the next episode when Buffy not only begins to forge close friendships (something not usually afforded a Slayer), but even allows her friends to know about and become involved in her Slayer duties ("The Harvest" B1002). This theme, of Buffy being one of very few Slayers to ever maintain personal relationships around her duty, is continued right through to Season Four's "Restless" (B4022), where Buffy turns away from the vision of the First Slayer which she encounters in her dream sequence, adamantly asserting her rejection of the historical Slayer narrative: "I walk. I talk. I shop. I sneeze. [...] There's trees in the desert since you moved out, and I don't sleep on a bed of bones. Now give me back my friends!" This kind of rejection of Slayer tradition and of the role assigned to her by the Watchers' Council makes Buffy a female figure who strongly embodies the kind of refiguring which Haraway so convincingly proposes. As Anderson points out, "both Irigaray and Haraway rely upon the possibility of refiguring myths as a way out of conventional, philosophical accounts of subjectivity." (111). However, while Irigaray rejects the possibility of science and technology as tools in this refiguration process, seeing them as "the distinctive, dominating features of patriarchal reality against which feminists struggle" (111), for Haraway there is no innocent tool, no prelapsarian era to which we can hark back in order to begin to rebuild – if cyborgs can be "exceedingly unfaithful to their origins", so can Slayers. For Haraway and Irigaray both, though, the myths of patriarchy cannot be simply rejected. They must be acknowledged and then rewritten; "the passage from one era to the next cannot be made by simply negating what already exists" (Irigaray 1993a: 24). In this sense, the rewriting of the Slayerline in Season Seven follows in line with both philosophers well; it is only once she has encountered the First Slayer directly, and the Shadowmen (who created the First Slayer), and learns how the Slayerline was forged, that Buffy is able to alter its course and change the rules.

[23] The rewriting of the Slayerline is one of the most significant final plot points in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, coming in the series finale "Chosen" (B7022) and changing a fundamental premise of the world of *Buffy* in a way which goes on to shape the entirety of the later comic-based seasons. Having met the Shadowmen and learned that the First Slayer was created by the forcible 'merging' of a young human

woman with part of a pure demon's essence, and having rejected their offer of a sort of reenactment of this origin in order to prepare her for the final battle with the First, what fragile fragment of respect Buffy might have had for the traditional Slayer narrative is irrevocably dissipated. And it is soon after this discovery that Buffy realizes that by breaking these traditions in a very deliberate way, they may be able to win the battle despite being absurdly outnumbered and having only potential (not 'active') Slayers for an army. In "Chosen", she addresses the potential Slayers to explain the radical plan:

"In every generation, one Slayer is born, because a bunch of men who died thousands of years ago made up that rule. They were powerful men. This woman is more powerful than all of them combined. So I say we change the rule." ("Chosen" B7022)

Utilizing the essence of the Slayers' scythe and Willow's incredible magical capacity, the Slayerline is irrevocably altered so that instead of each new Slayer gaining her powers upon the death of the last, every potential slayer gains them when she is mature enough to learn how to use them. In an immaculately Harawayan rewriting, these women study and acknowledge the history from which their power originates, and then utilize the tools of the Slayer tradition (the scythe) to form a more balanced and sustainable, less brutal life for Buffy and for each of the other hundreds of Slayers which are now dotted around the globe due to the spell. In a macrocosm of Buffy's evening of the playing field by refusing to allow demonology its authority, the greater playing field of demon versus human has been evened hugely by this rewriting of what always felt a remarkably imbalanced arrangement (one Slayer against the entire demon world). Buffy has thus thrice over rewritten the narrative of the Slayer: she is no longer a chosen "one", she is not "alone", and she is not a "girl" – through her refiguring of herself as Slayer and rejection of the isolated life prescribed to her, Buffy has managed to live into adulthood, far outlasting the life expectancy of a Slayer (with the help of her multiple resurrections, of course).

Conclusion

[24] In *This Sex Which is Not One*, Irigaray expresses the decidedly Harawayan sentiment that "(Re-)discovering herself, for a woman, thus could only signify the possibility of sacrificing no one of her pleasures to an-other, of identifying herself with none of them in particular, of never being simply one." (30-31). For Haraway, "never being simply one" is the core crucial tool for the advance of feminism and the other liberation movements she engages with. Inhabiting more than one identity makes Haraway's figures strong because it gives them partial perspectives from multiple angles, allowing for a level of understanding and development which characters inhabiting one side of a stagnant binary could not fathom. The character of Anya represents this crossing of identities possibly more clearly than any other in *Buffy* through the fluidity of her humanness, and also

conveys well the possibility which Haraway narrates in building an identity independently of patriarchy from within a patriarchal structure. Anya enters the series as a standard 'baddie' in Season Three, causing death and destruction which is only reversed by destroying her talisman, an act which renders her stuck in the human form she affected in order to wreak havoc. The way she behaves as she tries to adjust to human life for the next few seasons, with the title quote and opening reading of this paper exemplifying this adjustment, gives the viewer the impression that Anya has always been a demon and that this is the reason she struggles with social cues and human relationships. However, the viewer learns much later that she in fact started life as a human woman, who struggled similarly to make friends and was similarly insecure. In Season Seven's "Selfless" (B7005), the viewer sees a flashback of when Anya was approached by demon D'Hoffryn about becoming a vengeance demon. She tells him, "I don't talk to people much. I mean, I talk to them but they don't talk to me. Except to say that 'Your questions are irksome.' and 'Perhaps you should take your furs and your literal interpretations to the other side of the river.'" It is only here we learn that Anya's strangeness and literalness do not actually relate to her newly restored humanness at all and are instead just a part of her original human character. Anya, then, becomes a character who confuses the binary of human/demon even further than already established. She represents the presence in *Buffy* of true embodiments of Haraway's boundary-blurring beings, and the real possibility for feminist advance found in these hybrids. Anya's development as an anti-patriarchal figure begins with her vengeance career, where she spends hundreds of years punishing men for their poor treatment of women; however, this kind of extreme response to mistreatment is not heralded in *Buffy*, and the reality of the violence she has committed is addressed when she returns to her demon identity after being jilted by Xander. She finds it impossible to hurt people again, despite having the motivation of her own heartbreak, and as a result of the loss of this identity as well as her human one, Anya finally seeks an identity independent of her relation to men - no longer defining herself by either love or hatred of the patriarchal figures in her life. Anya's death following this point in her character development, then, might at first consideration seem somewhat sinister; has she been punished for emancipating herself? I would argue instead that death for Anya is not a punishment, but a release. She has lived for over a thousand years, and come full circle in terms of her storyline, having her heart broken once again by a man but this time responding by seeking independence instead of vengeance. By choosing to fight in the final battle, Anya sought redemption for her years of killing and found it in a death which was extraordinarily apt for her character - she is abruptly and cleanly cut in half, exiting the series on a tableaux of the division between worlds which she so perfectly encompassed ("Chosen" B7022).

[25] Characters like Anya who provide these kinds of embodied portrayals of the hybridity which Haraway advances are present throughout *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, making the show a perfect world in which to explore the intricacies and possibilities of Haraway's thought. There is so much rich material for reading

Haraway within not just *Buffy* but most of Joss Whedon's wider work as well that this paper hardly scratches the surface of the marriage of these two thinkers. A particularly promising area in which Whedon embodies Haraway's later thought is in the theme of post-human families, which are represented well in *Buffy* through the Scooby Gang and in much of his other television work also. Having explored the connections between the figures Haraway writes and the characters Whedon brings to life in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, I would conclude that the widening of the audiences of both of these texts by this kind of reading is a potentially highly valuable exercise. Reading popular culture texts such as *Buffy* through Haraway not only brings a significant cultural phenomenon to an academic audience, but can also serve to bring Haraway's work to a wider audience outside of academia, offering the possibility of narrowing a gap which is in great need of being bridged, particularly in an era when academia (and the humanities especially) are being charged with irrelevance to wider society.

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