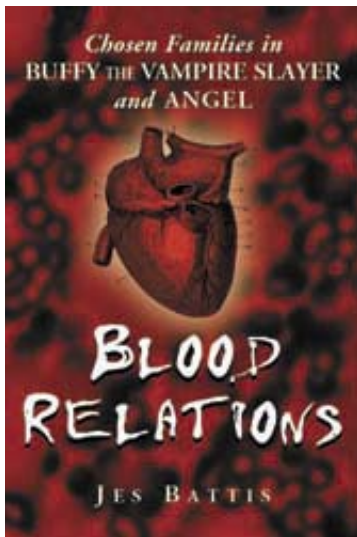




Jes Battis

Demonic Maternities, Complex Motherhoods: Cordelia, Fred, and the Puzzle of Illyria



"In fact it is not a question of a human incapacity for a state of absolute happiness, but of an ever insufficient knowledge of the complex nature of the state of unhappiness."

Primo Levi, *If This Is a Man; and, The Truce* (23)

"I am only bothered because I am bothered."

Illyria, "Timebomb" (5019)

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Cordelia Chase has what is perhaps the most exotic story arc of any character within *Buffy* or *Angel*. She begins as a self-centered, acerbic, and popularity-obsessed teenager in the first season of *Buffy*, and finishes her tenure on *Angel* as a "higher being", whose last favor to Angel is to remind him that he is capable of leading his extended family without the nefarious resources of Wolfram and Hart. In many ways, Cordelia defines herself in opposition to Buffy, and in just as many ways she resembles the Slayer, and shares her role as mystical protector. Her relationship with Angel, which begins as a slightly predictable romance, deepens over the course of five seasons into a complex familial attachment based on mentorship and unconditional love. And we, as the audience, get to watch Cordelia evolve from the catty teenager who ruthlessly teased Willow, Xander, and even Buffy herself, to the functional "heart" of Angel Investigations, as well as a co-parent to Angel's son, Connor—a relationship whose incestuous elements are indicative of the erotic flexibility that "family" continues to possess within both shows.¹ More than any other character, Cordelia reminds the crew that they are, indeed, family; and, more than any other character, she criticizes, upbraids, and pushes her family-members beyond their

alleged limitations.

(2) This chapter intends to interrogate Cordelia's role as a mother-figure on *Angel* by juxtaposing what I call her "radical ethics of care" against the ambivalent familial position of the character who seems, to me, to be her opposite: Fred. Beginning the series as a socially awkward and painfully shy exile from another dimension—and it really is sentences like these that make me love my job as a cultural critic—Fred's transition into the character known as Illyria, a former "pure" demon with a coldly analytical mind and a strange curiosity for human affairs, is not just a masterwork of acting on Amy Acker's part, but moment of profound fracture within the show. It is one thing for the crew to lose Cordelia, who clearly has duties on a higher plane to fulfill; but it is quite another thing to lose shy, retiring Winifred Burkle, and to lose her so completely, to a consumptive demonic force who still physically resembles the family member that she has effectively murdered.

(3) Both Cordelia and Fred are given storylines that involve aspects of biological motherhood. Cordelia is impregnated by a demon near the beginning of the series ("Expecting," 1012), which serves as a narrative gesture to her more substantial pregnancy in season 4. This pregnancy is the opposite of Darla's—rather than the case of an "inhuman" creature (Darla) producing a healthy human infant, Cordelia is a healthy human who produces a destructive and supernatural offspring. Similarly, Fred's body becomes a site of gestation for Illyria, who uses her as a sort of human cocoon. Both births are monstrous, in that they harm (and, in Fred's case, kill) the mother, while producing something radically different from her in a strange *ex nihilo* fashion, something that wants to destroy her even as it is physiologically nurtured and carried to term by her.

(4) The potential for discussing these monstrous births within a psychoanalytic framework is almost overwhelming, but I don't want to fall into the trap of sketching out fascinating psychological models for these characters which completely divest them of narrative context or emotional significance. I would propose, therefore, a kind of orbital psychoanalytic reading of Cordelia and Fred as mothers—a reading that incorporates some relevant psychoanalytic criticism while staying focused on the *shows* rather than on their instrumental value to Freudian traditions, which really have received enough legitimation through western academic criticism and don't need *Angel* to help them out.

(5) What I want to explore with this discussion is not how these characters might contribute to the towering canon of clinical writing on motherhood, but on how the alternative motherhoods that they represent offer both challenges to, and hybrids of, various critical writings on maternity and mothering within psychoanalytic and literary traditions. I am more interested in exploring the social rather than the psychoanalytic underpinnings of these radical mothering spaces, given that *Angel*, as a television show, draws more self-consciously on previous televisual narratives than it does on the dense and exclusionary writings of Lacan, Jung, or Freud. I would like to propose, then, using the works of Julia Kristeva as a sort of theoretical bridge here, given that she attempts to link textual criticism with clinical psychiatric practices.²

(6) Lest this chapter appear as merely a recapitulation of Chapter 3 on *Buffy* and motherhood, I should stress once again that mothering on *Angel* relies on very different models than on *Buffy*, and that it generally goes to darker and riskier places—with Fred's own fatal labor as a case in point of this. I do not want to suggest that motherhood on *Angel* is somehow more "adult," given that *Angel* itself is supposed to

represent a show about adult relationships. Destructive and ambivalent versions of motherhood should not cohere as adult simply because they are grittier and more interesting, just as it would be insulting to suggest that teen motherhood does not have radical and life-altering consequences. This chapter's goal, then, is to query why biological motherhood is presented primarily as a negative and harmful principle within *Angel*, whereas symbolic and extended-family motherhood—as personified, for example, by Cordelia's role as the crew's unofficial "mother"—is presented as positive and life-affirming.

(7) I do not think the answer is as simple as the fact that *Angel* and *Buffy* both value non-biological family connections over biological ones. It has to be the intersection of generic elements, narrative structures, individual character histories, and audience reception that produces these negative and, at times, frightening simulations of motherhood. And it remains to be seen whether they are, in fact, wholly negative. Although her "birth" effectively results in the death of Fred, the character of Illyria becomes an ambivalent, and at times positive, force within the Angel Investigations crew. And, in a nostalgic sense, Fred's sudden and violent death, like Tara's on *Buffy*, forces the crew to re-cohere as a family.

(8) Her absence is filled in a most interesting way by Illyria, who, despite her homicidal legacy as a kind of fascist demon-princess, is now completely alone, bereft of subjects, stranded on an alien world with her powers severely limited—in many ways, she is as lonely and frightened as Fred must have been when she first landed in the hostile dimension of Pylea.³ What begins as a derision towards human cultural customs on Illyria's part develops, over time, into a knowledge gap that frustrates her, just as Fred's social awkwardness was a site of both frustration and desire in that it forced her to watch from the outside, to linger, a bit like Angel himself, looking in on the warm human dynamics of an extended family she didn't quite know how to penetrate. Illyria's outsidership, although it manifests itself as icy posturing and imperialism-writ-large, is no less predicated on loneliness than was Fred's.

(9) Cordelia is known in both shows for her particular brand of incisive honesty, and Janet Halyfard suggests that her very name is "an ironic equivalent to the Shakespearean Cordelia's unrelenting honesty" (Halyfard, "Greatest Love of All" 2). It is often a self-serving honesty, though, as she tells people what *she* needs them to hear, not necessarily what *they* need to hear. In the early *Buffy* episode "Killed By Death" (2018), Cordelia tells Giles that "tact is just not saying true stuff. I'll pass." In this, she is the opposite of Giles, whose careful speech conveys the brand of civilized liberalism that was discussed in the previous chapter. Later, in the first season of *Angel*, she elaborates on this personal philosophy by stating that "I think it, I say it. That's my way" ("The Bachelor Party," 1007).

(10) Cordelia's truth-telling abilities are interesting, particularly because they have more to do, I think, with cultural entitlement than with a pressing need for honesty. Unlike the character of Drogyn, who is mystically required to tell the truth—a fact that annoys Spike to no end—Cordelia simply chooses to tell the truth (most of the time) because she feels it is her "way." She uses this entitlement to openly criticize Angel, Wesley, Gunn, and, to a lesser extent, Fred and Lorne, using creative epithets ranging from "lunkhead" to "proto-loser." I have to wonder where this entitlement comes from, and how it aligns with Cordelia's later role as a mother. Does her ability to craft honest and unsparing speech in any way presage her ability to produce a child? Are the two related? And how does this compare to Fred's halting, unclear, and

hesitant relationship with "true" speech-acts?

(11) I suppose the question I'm really asking here is whether *veracity*, traditionally held up as a "masculine" model of speech, has some influence on these characters as mother figures—that is, whether their varied uses of speech somehow make them vulnerable to the destructive forces that invade their bodies, and whether this invasion is not, after all, a silencing of their speech.

(12) In the first few seasons of *Buffy*, Cordelia's above-mentioned entitlement is more of a license to ridicule, and its origins seem somewhat obvious. Her first comment to Buffy in "Welcome To The Hellmouth" (1001) is that "you'll be okay here. . . if you hang with me and mine," and later, upon seeing Willow's plain outfit, she 'compliments' her on having "seen the softer side of Sears."⁴ That Cordelia so casually harnesses the language of advertising here to ridicule Willow is, I think, testament to her secure knowledge that the advertising itself is on *her* side. Cordelia's entitlement, then, is implicated with her status as an upper-middle-class teenager who can afford to shop at Bloomingdales rather than Sears, and who conceptualizes L. A. as a Mecca of shoes rather than a haven for vampires. She has, like most teenagers who have never experienced poverty, conflated her economic status with her license to deliver the truth.

(13) In this instance, it is more the truth about people's outfits than any sort of sweeping moral observations, but it remains disturbing that Cordelia's knowledge of what it means to be "true" is inextricably bound to her knowledge of what it means to be rich, so that her searing critiques of other people's lives and lifestyles emerge squarely from her visible privilege. She is therefore at her most classist when she upbraids Xander and Faith, who are constructed as opposing working-class models⁵, and who visually as well as culturally clash not just with her concept of "cool," but with her idea of what a legitimate "person" could be.

(14) When Cordelia discovers that her new L.A. apartment is infested with cockroaches—as well as, we learn later, a nasty poltergeist—she laments to Angel that "my apartment. . . is like the barrio—or the projects or whatever, and I live there! I'm the girl from the *projects*" ("Room With a View," 1005). Two things are clear from this statement. The first is that Cordelia has probably never been to a poor Latin-American or African-American neighborhood, and that her knowledge of the terms "barrio" and "projects" are limited to what she has seen on television. The second is that her white, middle-class sensibilities have allowed her to conveniently conflate one racialized space for another, primarily because she, as a privileged white woman, sees no reason to differentiate between the two. The "projects" are as exotic to her as any of the strange dimensions that Angel or Wesley have told her about, and her chances of entering that neighborhood are about as slim as her chances of leaping into the Hellmouth.

(15) Angel, who spent his days as a human pretending to be an Irish working-class man—when he was actually an aristocrat wasting his father's money on drinking—seems to have no problem with Cordelia's appropriation of these loaded terms. In actual fact, the two come from quite similar economic backgrounds. The only difference between them is that Cordelia moved from the financial stability of her parents' home to the (relative) financial stability of Angel Investigations, whereas Angel himself has experienced material poverty to the point that he had to forage through dumpsters and feed on rats.

(16) I am raising the issue of poverty here because I think that *Angel*, unlike *Buffy*, is

more thoughtful in its presentation of financial instability, and that Cordelia remains a sort of middle-class core standing in opposition to these sub-stories of economic inequality and differential access. It is clear that Angel, like most people who have directly experienced poverty or who regularly live below the poverty line, has internal as well as external poor-bashing⁶ to deal with. His drive to remain financially viable through Angel Investigations, as well as his desire to financially provide for Connor, is in part a result of internalized critiques around poverty, and his inexpressible shame at having been, however many years ago, hungry and homeless. Unlike Gunn, who seems to have been poor for most of his life, but has responded to this poverty by mobilizing communities of access and aid throughout his neighborhood, Angel has taken the 'disavowal' tact and chosen to concentrate on reacquiring financial stability rather than building bridges with other poor communities.

(17) I am aware that this statement might sound a bit heavy-handed. Who, after all, is Angel supposed to reach out to? Other poor vampires? Working-class demon communities? It may seem like I'm criticizing him for not being some sort of outreach worker when, in fact, nothing within the show's narrative points to the idea that he *should* adopt such a role. This is, after all, a fantasy show—not a documentary about poverty in L.A. But the fact remains that L.A., unlike the mythical Sunnydale, is a real locus of economic inequality, and a space within which multiple poor neighborhoods compete with each other, while spectacularly rich neighborhoods define themselves in visual opposition to what they conceptualize as the "barrio" and the "projects."

(18) Gunn and Angel are the only characters on the show who have any idea of what outrageous material inequalities actually exist within such a metropolitan space, yet Gunn's poorness is a 'matter-of-fact' signifier that becomes troublingly conflated with his blackness⁷, while Angel's poor history is something that he only talks about or revisits against his will—as in the dream sequence between Angel, Faith, and Angelus, when Angel's dark counterpart ridicules "poor Angel" by saying that "his fingers never smelled of anything but rat! I'm so sorry. I give up. I'm gonna live in a sewer!" ("Orpheus," 4015). He is referring here to the image of Angel wandering, homeless, through the streets of L.A., but he also connects Angel's poverty with "hiding," which is yet another erasure of real poverty in favor of what Anya might call "metaphor poverty." The only characters in *Angel* who have experienced poverty, then, almost never complain about being (or having been) poor, while Cordelia, who has never actually been poor, complains about her lack of financial stability all the time. This comes back to her cultural entitlement as a middle-class white woman to manipulate "truth," which, in this case, is an appropriation of actual lived poverty for the purpose of feeling "barrio," of feeling like the "helpless" that Angel Investigations is supposed to be helping, despite the fact that all of those "helpless" who walk through the door seem to have the financial means to pay for the crew's services.

(19) Why this digression into Cordelia's co-option of poor narratives, or poor experience? And why just Cordelia? Fred, after all, comes from a firmly middle-class background, a white nuclear family that both emotionally and financially supports her, and that background should link her to Cordelia's experience of privilege. Yet both characters "perform" their privilege in very different ways, and Cordelia is much more vocal about her cultural entitlements than Fred is. I want this discussion of poverty, background, and home-life to provide a framework for treating both Cordelia and Fred as mother figures who experience quite different "births." I think that their arcs as

characters, and their exits from the show, are critically informed by the spaces of privilege that they have been allowed to occupy, as well as their means for articulating that privilege—relentless verbosity, in the case of Cordelia, and embarrassment or guilt in the case of Fred.⁸

(20) These characters' middle-class backgrounds, their whiteness, and their unique discursive strategies all combine to make them appropriate mother-subjects for a correlatively white, middle-class audience. They are coded as "acceptable" mothers, even if their progeny are supernatural and destructive, and to replace them with a working-class, African-American mother, or—even more unlikely on network television—a working-class Latina mother, would be an unacceptable and indeed unwatchable prospect to that same audience.⁹ Their backgrounds, then, are cultural scripts that allow them access to televisual motherhood, but that motherhood has very different manifestations for them which align with their different experiences, and articulatory strategies, of privilege.

(21) Cordelia, who is a vocal advocate of her own privilege, creates a fully-formed supernatural being, Jasmine, who attempts (shockingly) to control the world. Fred, on the other hand, who internalizes her own privilege and cannot express it except in terms of insecurity and social awkwardness, has her body devoured from the inside by the demon Illyria, and ends up metamorphosing into the character who, I think, represents the staunchest and most objective critic of humanity and human affairs on *Angel*. But why in this symbolic framework does *acceptance* of privilege produce a destructive side-effect, namely Jasmine, while allowing Cordelia to live, but *ambivalence* around privilege results in the death and subsequent "evil" transformation of Fred?

(22) I should state here that I have not presented these poles—acceptance vs. ambivalence of privilege—as master guidelines for discussing Cordelia and Fred as characters, or even for discussing them as mother-figures. Both have complex narratives, as well as inconsistent and therefore human practices of social interaction, and neither are reducible to their race or economic background. But I do think that *Angel* sets up a serious paradox in the background with these arcs, suggesting, however unconsciously, that the character who embraces her privilege (Cordelia) gets to become a higher being and exit *Angel* as an overwhelmingly positive force, whereas the character who is conflicted about her privilege—and who finds herself in an interracial relationship (with Gunn)¹⁰—ends up getting possessed by a millennia-old demon who wants only to enjoy the imperial and luxurious existence that she had thousands of years ago. Cordelia's essence, her soul, remains coherent, while Fred's soul is "consumed by the fires of resurrection" ("Shells," 5016). Only Illyria is left—Illyria, who is morally, as well as visually, the opposite of Fred's essential "Fredness." And yet, the two maintain a connection with each other, and can even appear, at times, as the same person. The message here is more than a little baffling, to say the least.

(23) As I have stated earlier, these "births" are both negative, in that they produce destructive forces rather than healthy offspring. Therefore, it is not as if Cordelia's birth, as a result of her experience of privilege, is somehow rewarding—it does, after all, land her in a coma. In some ways, we can even see the "birth" of Illyria as a kind of reward, given that Fred, although she is radically different, gets to "live on" through Illyria, whereas Cordelia is taken outright from the show, and receives no interesting blue-haired reincarnation with a penchant for wearing tight leather armor.

But it is still the case that Cordelia's offspring, Jasmine, is never meaningfully connected with the "real" Cordelia. The pregnant Cordelia who schemes against Angel Investigations, who drives a wedge between Angel and Connor, and who even kills Lilah¹¹, effectively vanishes the moment that Jasmine is killed and "true" Cordy wakes up from her coma. Illyria, on the other hand, is a living reminder that "true" Fred is gone, and that only this false and malevolent copy remains. Fred/Illyria become a joined mother/daughter subjectivity, a dual being whose constituent essences are inseparable; Cordelia is never so intimately connected with her evil child, and is remembered as the healthy, vibrant Cordy that everyone knew best. She has no protracted and wrenching death scene like Fred, and her exit is classically cinematic—she simply vanishes—in stark opposition to Fred's physically violent struggles with a cancer-like illness that liquefies her internal organs.¹²

(24) In fact, it is Jasmine's body that becomes the symbolic register for these images of corruption, contagion, and illness. It is Jasmine whose physical beauty masks a putrid and decomposing reality, and whose physical fight with Angel allows her to be visually destroyed, and thus contained, in a way that Fred's illness can never be. Jasmine becomes a metonymic substitute for Cordelia's negative qualities, her selfishness, her cruelty, and thus allows Cordelia to effectively be reborn as a true "higher being," while all of the literal, as well as symbolic, darkness within her is expunged through the birthing process and then eradicated through Jasmine's death. The prospect of a black woman, Jasmine, being not just the supernaturally evil "child" of an enlightened white woman, but also being a site of abjection and scapegoating for white negativity, is as disturbingly racist as it is infuriatingly common within white literature and cultural production. The black body has historically been a locus of traumatic transfer, a site for the breakdown and dispersal of white anxiety around erotic, as well as ideological, scripts, and this symbolic exchange is evident within all sorts of media.

(25) Hazel Carby describes this process at length in her book *Race Men* (2002), and locates it as a complex psycho-historical project of the "western" world that has been operating practically from the first moment of European contact. We can see it visualized clearly in white cultural production—for example, the miscegenation fears in a 'classic' text like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*; the disturbing sex/death imagery that surrounds the black serial killer in the 1990s horror film *Candyman*; and the more recent cinematic offering *O*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*, whose eponymous black character begins the film as a successful and highly eroticized athlete only to become a destitute murderer before the last reel. All of these media encode the "negrophilia/negrophobia" binary discussed by Kobena Mercer, which is an "aesthetic idealization and erotic investment in the racial other that inverts and reverses the binary axis of the fears and anxieties invested in or projected onto the other in 'negrophobia'" (Mercer 191). Thus, the necessary white containment of black bodies in visual media, as well as text, must always carry with it an equalizing "scopophilia" of the black body, a hyper-eroticizing or hyper-finessing of it, which serves as a surface fixation and visual incarceration of the bodies that are deemed most threatening to white corporeality.

(25) This "idealization/anxiety" clearly operates around the character of Jasmine, who is fetishized for her supernatural beauty, and whose enthralling of scores of white people—including the Angel Investigations crew—constructs her as the stereotypically

seductive black woman who uses her beauty as a discursive weapon. That she even manages to "seduce" Gunn, a black man, is a kind of ironic testimony to her powers of thrall, as well as a suggestion that Gunn's blackness is, as it has been historically constructed by white audiences, is a kind of moral weakness rather than a form of racial solidarity. Jasmine states that her followers are "my eyes, my skin, my limbs, and, if need be, my fists" ("Sacrifice," 4020), summoning up the image of a monstrous mother who has organically absorbed her "children," and who, even more threateningly, is able to strike out at "normal" people—being constructed here as 'not Jasmine,' and hence, by extension, as 'not black'—by co-opting their very bodies and inciting revolt. This idea of an organic, as well as an ideological, invasion by an "othered" character is made all the more troubling by the fact that a white woman produces this other, and a white man (Angel) ultimately destroys her. Both characters act like normalizing white bookends to Jasmine's chaotic and vitiating black presence, her monstrous maternity that is threatening to destroy the world through enforced love and servitude.¹³

(26) Both Jasmine and Cordelia are 'essentially' mothers, which complicates things, since we have a mythical scenario of a mother being impregnated by another supernatural person (Connor), and then producing a full-grown and seemingly maternal "child." If we try to mobilize Julia Kristeva's theories of motherhood and abjection (*l'abjection*) here, it seems that Jasmine represents a frightening collision of idealized speaking-subjectivity with maternal and consuming "pre-speech," and thus needs to be contained and destroyed in order for the characters around her to continue on with their rational existence—otherwise, they might be swept into the ominous space of Jasmine's "love," which serves, in Kristevan terms, as a site for the dissolution of "speaking" subjectivity and the reassertion of a more poetic, flexible, and prenatal space, a consciousness before official consciousness.

(27) This is not the space that a character like Angel, clearly in possession of his rational faculties, would ever endorse, although the show's privileging of emotional connections and interpersonal relationships actually gestures towards a valorization of this poetic mothering space. Perhaps this is why Jasmine needs to be destroyed—so that *Angel* can continue to celebrate mothering-connections while firmly distancing itself from the possibility that it might ever become "just" a show about mothering, or "just" a series of emotional and affective narratives.¹⁴

(28) I have previously quoted Kristeva as describing the process of abjection, of distancing oneself from a seemingly horrifying presence, as "above all a revolt against an external menace from which one wants to distance oneself, but of which one has the impression that it might menace us from the inside. The relation to abjection is finally rooted in the combat that every human being carries on with the mother" (Kristeva, *Interviews* 118). In a western world that privileges literary communication, coded historically as masculine and described by the semiotician Jacques Derrida as "grammatology"—the valorization of written narratives over other forms of extra-linguistic communication, including oral traditions and body language—the mother continues to psychologically represent an erasure of language, a return to prelinguistic consciousness, which brings with it an unbalancing of this narrative privilege. We distance ourselves from "non-rational" modes of communication, from a sort of maternal dialogism, not simply because we believe in the efficacy of the narrative sign, but because we cohere as humans in part *because of* the narrative sign. If we lose our narrative, we lose our humanity, and that humanity needs to

preserved textually in order for it to be culturally legible, and valuable, within the confines of western historical and literary production.

(29) When Jasmine says scathingly to Angel, "look what free will has gotten you" ("Peace Out," 4021), it is clear that the unconditional love and support that she offered needs now to be recontextualized as coercion and confinement. The only legible sort of love and support that remains within the show's universe is the imperfect and sometimes faltering love of the crew itself, who buttress and hold each other in their own flawed and unique ways. Jasmine's rationalization that "I murdered thousands to save billions" is, in a crucial way that the show never examines, an analytical re-presentation of Angel's own mission statement.

(30) The crew, after all, kill "bad" demons to save "good" humans, and often have to rationalize who gets to live and who has to die on a utilitarian basis of what outcome will produce the most "good." Much of what Jasmine wanted to do is actually in line with Angel's own moral code, and she is right to suggest that he has "eaten" his fair share of people, just as she has. But Jasmine's vision of paradise on earth remains highly flawed, while Angel's musings on the possibilities of a world protected by heroes, a world where the helpless can actually be helped, remains somehow coherent and positive. It is, I think, the disavowal not merely of Jasmine's principles, but of her foreign and dangerous body, that allows Angel's moral compass to reassert itself, and which effectively resignifies the efficacy of his "helping the helpless" project by defining it in opposition to Jasmine's project—which we might as well call "eating the helpless." In the process, Angel gets to expel the black woman who doesn't belong, Cordelia regains consciousness—never giving a lot of thought to such questions as, *how did I produce an evil cannibalizing black woman?*—and normalcy reasserts itself. Normalcy, of course, whose final expression is Cordelia's canonization and death, thus erasing all trace of the foreign other by reasserting the privilege and efficacy of the white mother.¹⁵

(31) While Cordelia's stint with motherhood results in an ultimate absence, Fred's is the exact opposite, producing an overabundant and exotic surplus of presence in the form of Illyria. This "Old One" is one of the original demons, a pure-blooded monster who walked the earth millennia ago and amused herself by murdering and torturing just about anyone that she met. "I walked worlds of smoke," she tells Wesley, "and half-truths, intangible. Worlds of torment and of unnamable beauty. Opaline towers as high as small moons. Glaciers that rippled with insensate lust" ("Underneath," 5017). Her formal and coldly aristocratic language is an inversion of Fred's stammering speech, her fixed glare an inversion of Fred's wandering eyes and crinkled smile, and nothing that she says, with its echoing and authorial tones, can come close to the warm sincerity of Fred's breathless first address to Angel: "handsome man saved me from the monsters" ("Through the Looking Glass," 2021). Later, when the "true" Fred is gone, and Angel finds himself up against the impossibly old and far-reaching evil of the Order of the Black Thorn, he wistfully repeats her words to Spike. Their grammatical inconsistency, their strangeness, nonetheless contain a crucial truth that Illyria's speech can only emulate without ever reproducing.

(32) I should admit that I have a bit of an infatuation with Illyria as a character. Fred took a long time to grow on me, and I didn't especially appreciate her role among the crew until she was abruptly stripped of it, taken away, leaving being something that nobody—not even the most dedicated of spoiler-loving fans—could expect. I was fascinated by Illyria, however, the moment that I first saw her, emerging from the

ground where Fred had just died, looking slowly, curiously, at her hands, and saying with an air of cruel dispassion: "This will do" ("A Hole In the World," 5015). That Fred, lovely Fred, was, to Illyria, simply something that would "do", something to fit her essence temporarily, is a horrifying idea. Yet, who can argue with this strange blue-haired person standing where Fred used to be, speaking in a cold register that Fred herself could never have managed while alive, and looking more resigned at her new body than surprised, or even disoriented?

(33) Of course, *Buffy* and *Angel* have a long history of introducing characters whose rehabilitation, or rather, re-humanization, seems impossible (Spike, Anya, even, at times, Angel), only to grant them human-status after a long, uphill battle. But I could tell, and I'm sure that most of the audience could tell with me, that this was a rather different situation. Illyria was not, was never, going to be anything close to Fred. She was not going to renege on her evil ways and join the crew in their good fight, at least not in a way that was morally simplistic. This was something that neither show had ever done before—killing a character and replacing her with a completely different character who was her absolute opposite, but who could look and behave just like her as a sort of vindictive simulation of the "shell" that had given birth to her.

(34) There is a moment, before Fred dies, when Spike, gazing at the Deeper Well which leads all the way to the center of the earth, observes that "there's a hole in the world. Feels like we ought to have known." In truth, both have known that hole, and known it intimately—both have felt Buffy's death, grieved for her, and then come to accept her return in unique ways. But this is a different sort of hole. This is the staggering possibility that someone, a loved someone, could disappear and not come back—or come back wrong. It is a terrible inverse of Buffy's resurrection, only, instead of bringing back some phantasmal after-effect ("Afterlife," 6.03), what comes back is a seemingly corrupted version of Fred herself. Both vampires know, in this moment, that they've lost. That Fred is gone. But what remains?

(35) When Wesley first speaks to Illyria, she is astonished at his boldness. "I thought the humans would have long died out by now" ("Shells," 5016) she says, duplicating the demonic hubris—and critical underestimation of human resilience—that many creatures before her on *Buffy* and *Angel* have been guilty of. Wesley tries to use this arrogance against her, telling her that "humans rule the earth. . . crying and sweating and puking their feelings all over you. Go back. Sleep." But, as with future conversations that she will have with Wesley, Illyria sees through his attempts at deception. It does not take long for Illyria to become a version of Cordelia, giving everyone the cold and honest truth whether they want it or don't. Unlike Cordelia, however, who knows who she is and what she has to do, Illyria is directionless. She is actually in much the same position that Buffy was in when she first returned from the grave, not knowing what is expected of her, not understanding what she's supposed to say or do, and experiencing the world as a kind of assault. Buffy describes her waking life as "hard and bright and violent" ("Afterlife," 6003), and Illyria describes it as "too small. . . it's too small. I can't breathe" ("Underneath," 5017).

(36) My connection with Illyria here is more than scholarly. I have dealt with depression for most of my life, and I understand very well what it feels like to be rootless, directionless, unable to cope with the world because it all seems like a violent intrusion, as if even other people's kindness is unbearable. Buffy says that, although she doesn't "know about theology, or dimensions," she does know that "I was happy. At peace . . . I was warm . . . and I was loved. . . and I was

finished" (6003). That is, until her friends brought her back to earth, where nothing makes sense anymore. Buffy's strange and disorienting apathy after being brought back from this place, her detachment from the people who matter most to her, is a process that most people with depression, clinical or otherwise, can relate to. But Illyria's detachment, her almost existential anxiety, is also a stage of depression. It is one of the deepest and most difficult stages to escape from, where feeling has literally run out, and there is only an absence, only a "hole in the world," left. Illyria's modulated voice, her rolling eyes, her cold posture and visible disengagement from everyone and everything around her, all reflect a critical kind of depression that is difficult to explain to people who haven't experienced it, and which serves as a terrible reminder to people who have.

(37) I am not suggesting here that Illyria's demonic angst at having been torn from her millennia-long slumber is somehow equal to the experience of clinical depression. But I am suggesting that her disconnection, her apathy, like Buffy's when she is initially brought back to life, remains something that people who have experienced depression can relate to. I connected first with Illyria not because she was impressive or beautiful, or even because she was somehow still Fred, but because she was sad. And the more I thought about that sadness, the more I wondered if it had not, after all, existed in Fred to begin with—if it had not seeped slowly into her physiology, her genetic makeup, and thus been somehow transmitted "in utero" to Illyria.

(38) I suggest this because I know that Illyria isn't sad for having killed Fred, and I suspect that the depth of her dispassion cannot be explained away as a hatred for the human world, or a longing for her previous life as an omnipotent demon. No—I think that Illyria, after a fashion, becomes a mirror for Fred's own living sadness, her outsidership, her social awkwardness that could never be suitably smoothed away by Wesley, Gunn, or even Angel.¹⁶ And she also reflects the grief of Fred's family, who come to fixate on Illyria, to hate her even as they desire her, because she looks and seems so much like what they have lost.

(39) Once she asks Wesley for help, saying that "I must learn to walk in this world" (5017), Illyria begins her transformation into what I think of as a surrogate Cordelia. By virtue of her outsidership, she is given license to ask questions, difficult questions, that even Cordelia wouldn't have approached. She has the experience, the unnaturally long life, that Cordelia was never given, along with the detachment and curiosity to ask even morbidly inappropriate questions at, generally, the worst possible time. This is somewhat like Anya's questioning as well, only Anya's tends to be innocent and bemused, while Illyria's questioning is direct and interrogative, unconcerned by human attachments or proprieties. When Joyce dies, Anya confesses that she can't comprehend human grief, saying that "I don't understand how all this happens. . . Joyce will never have any more fruit punch ever, and she'll never have eggs, or yawn or brush her hair, not ever, and no one will explain to me why" ("The Body," 5016). Yet Anya's question becomes a plea. She has stakes in the answer—she cares. Illyria's interest is entirely clinical when she asks Wesley if there is "anything in this life but grief?" (5017). Wesley answers to the best of his ability, but Illyria remains skeptical. She has the luxury of skepticism because she doesn't need, or want, to believe in anything more powerful than herself.

(40) I am tracing Illyria's evolution as a critical force on *Angel*, here, because I think that it relates to both Cordelia and Fred's positions and tenure within their extended family. If Illyria is indeed a replacement for Cordelia, who can actually push Cordelia's

line of questioning farther, who can interrogate humanity because she has never known what it is to be human, then her "birth" seems to represent a kind of closing of the family circle. Illyria is the strange fused knot that replaces Fred and Cordelia, the presence left behind who is flexible and ambivalent enough to fill both of their absences, however incongruous that might seem. She unlocks all of the doubt, the sadness, the incomprehension, and the fundamental sense of exile that existed in Fred's character all along, giving it the sort of voice and entitlement that only Cordelia could manage. She is, thus, a hybrid of both dead characters, a version of Fred who speaks like Fred never could, and a version of Cordelia who continues to describe her own privilege, her own sense of specialness, while remaining divorced from human concerns and interactions in a way that Cordelia never could.

(41) This leaves us, then, with two ways of classifying Illyria as a hybrid character. Given that Fred didn't say enough about her entitlement as a white, middle-class woman, and that Cordelia said *too much* about her privilege, we can see Illyria as the logical balancing act to these competing models of privilege. Fred, in this sense, is the only likely candidate to produce someone like Illyria, because her shyness, her ambivalence around her own social position, serves as an unspoken threat to middle-class values. Illyria is the containment of this threat—the living embodiment of the privilege that Fred could never quite articulate, and the "finished" model of imperialist entitlement, given a demonic register to operate within so that it avoids any complicit connection with actual human avarice. Illyria, like Jasmine, gets to act as the absorption site for western anxiety around racist colonial scripts, made clear by her demeaning classification of humans and her self-aggrandizement as demonic royalty. Fred *has* to produce Illyria, because Illyria represents her privileged shadow, the parts of her that she has disowned, whereas Cordelia has already accepted, even embraced, those parts. Thus Cordelia creates a monster that can be contained, whereas Fred produces a monster that still *is* Fred, that cannot be destroyed because it is intimately a part of her.¹⁷

(42) If we accept this hypothesis, then Illyria is, in a sense, Fred's punishment for being an ambivalent middle-class citizen. The corporate elements of Cordelia's personality are rewarded, since she gets to leave in a blaze of glory—still uncorrupted—while Fred must remain trapped in the monster that she has somehow created, the demon that her body has nourished, and the psychic manifestation of all her most negative and harmful qualities. As if this were not enough, she, Fred/Illyria, must exist between worlds, not a "true" demon but nowhere close to human, suffering from mortal vulnerabilities but possessed of a demonic consciousness, an Old One's context, which encompasses worlds and dimensions that poor Winifred Burkle could never understand. Illyria is a specter, a shade, a vestige of everything that Angel and family try to disavow on a daily basis, but can't. And now she is one of them. Her reintegration into the crew represents a reincorporation of divested hostility, an acceptance of anger, shame, and doubt, that must ultimately make the crew stronger. So it really is a closing of the family circle after all.

(43) But I also believe that Illyria has another, less abstract purpose as a character, another equally important role to fill. She embodies loss. She is a living absence, a representation of the confusion and debris that death leaves behind. Just as we often see aspects of someone who has recently died in the people who remain, so do Cordelia and Fred's family see constant reminders of their loved ones whenever they look at Illyria, whenever they hear her voice, or watch her walking away. "You are a

summation of recollections" ("Origin," 5018), she tells Wesley, and her comment is more accurate than she knows, for Illyria has become a memorial archive to both Cordelia and Fred. She is the material absence of what their deaths left behind, the excess that can't be rationalized or dealt with simply.

(44) But she is also a space of hope, because she does, after all, learn. She does approach an understanding of humanity, and a curious appreciation that only someone not sure if they even want to *be* human could possibly experience. There is something of Fred still inside of Illyria, and that teaches her, more than Wesley can, about the wonder of feeling, of engaging with the world, of asking questions and *caring* about the answers. It is not a birth, but more of a growing up, a growing into being human, that allows Illyria to experience the inverse of Cordelia's transformation—she transitions from an omnipotent force into a vulnerable human, rather than the other way around. The miraculous thing is that, although it confuses and terrifies her, part of Illyria is pleased by what she is becoming.

(45) When Wesley tries to bring Fred back—in effect destroying Illyria—his plan backfires. Still, he asks her, almost conversationally, "does it sting you. . . my betrayal?" ("Timebomb," 5019). Illyria's reply is fascinating: "I am only bothered because I am bothered." Emotional engagement comes slow to her, and she has never before experienced the sensation of being bothered by something, of being connected to something rather than existing in a state of cold dispassion. She is, in a sense, going backward even as she goes forward, "growing up" by reaccessing the confusing turmoil of emotions that only really exist in adolescence. She calls Wesley her "guide," but he is really a father-figure, seemingly educating her about cultural customs and earthly ephemera when, in reality, he is actually trying to teach her how to be human. At first, it is a uniquely *human* failing of Wesley's that motivates him to do this, because he hopes that the process will somehow bring Fred back. But in the end, he continues to teach Illyria for reasons that he cannot entirely fathom, just as she continues to listen, to learn, for reasons that she can't quite put into words.

(46) "You are what I don't understand," she tells Wesley ("Not Fade Away," 5022). And that is an apt summation of their relationship. When he discovers that Illyria can change her form to appear exactly like Fred, he angrily tells her: "Don't be *her*. Don't ever be her" ("The Girl In Question," 5021), yet he still sees Fred in Illyria, still acknowledges that she is what's left. He insists that "the first thing a Watcher learns is to separate truth from illusion" (5022), but is the audience so adept at this? Is it really possible to separate Illyria from Fred, to avoid the tempting thought that Fred could somehow still return, or that Illyria could be suitably rehabilitated into something more human, something tender and compassionate and wholly new? This uncertainty, this hesitation, is what makes Fred's death even more difficult to deal with than Joyce's, because Joyce was gone—even when it seemed like Dawn might resurrect her, the result never cohered; even when a likeness of her appeared later in the episode "Conversations With Dead People" (7007), it was still clear that she was gone. But Fred is never really gone, never *gone gone*, as Buffy might say, because Illyria remains as her ambiguous substitute. She is the materialization of grief that forces the Angel Investigations family to process their sadness, but she is also an illusion, a temptation. And the audience must let go of this illusion, just as Wesley must. Her presence exhorts us to labor, and we cannot fully appreciate her as a character until we accept that Fred is, indeed, *gone gone*.

(47) Still, it is an illusion that Wesley requests as he is dying, and Illyria delivers it.

"Would you like me to lie to you now?" (5022) she asks quietly, and Wesley replies "yes. Thank you. Yes" with a smile. This is no simple lie, though. As Illyria transitions smoothly into Fred's old form, smiling that Burkle smile, Wesley knows that it is not *just* Fred that he is seeing. He knows that it is both Illyria and Fred, and that he must say goodbye to both of them, because he has grown close to Illyria, intimate even, in much the same way that he grew close to Fred. Their attachment is more complex, but it is an attachment all the same. Wesley does not say "I love you Fred," but simply "I love you," speaking to Illyria and Fred at the same time. And Illyria responds to Wesley's death in a way that is both human and demonic—when Vail, the demon-mage who killed Wesley, tells her to "take your best shot," she calmly, but with a look of unmistakable satisfaction, drives her fist through his skull.

(48) Does Illyria become human? Or "sort of" human? Her last words are "I wish to do more violence," which doesn't suggest that she has embraced an ethic of compassion. But this violence, unlike passionless demonic violence, has an emotional source: her grief over Wesley's death. Her reaction, then, is a seamless hybrid of demon/human, a rationalization that violence must follow grief, and that killing will somehow expunge the leveling power of sadness that she feels. It is the feeling itself that she wants to kill, not the monsters, or the Order of the Black Thorn, or any other corporeal adversaries. It is grief that she wants to do violence to, and even Illyria, confused as she is about her own evolving humanity, knows that this is impossible. But her urge to try, to flout impossibility, to revolt, is also uniquely human. So perhaps Wesley did teach her something after all—something that stuck.

(49) I admit that this chapter has meandered more than a little. I wanted to discuss the mothering roles of Cordelia and Fred, as well as what I conceptualized as the specific spaces of privilege, and their relation to those spaces, that influenced what sort of "births" they would experience. My original idea was that Cordelia, by virtue of her acknowledged and comfortable privilege, was able to create a monster that could be easily subdued, whereas Fred, whose relationship to her own privilege was more ambivalent, needed to create something that ultimately consumed her. Illyria was thus, within this framework, a punishment for Fred's inability to articulate her position, her shyness, her instability as a middle-class subject. Both characters were coded as suitable candidates for motherhood, given their backgrounds, but both needed to produce very different progeny as a result, with Fred's conception being also a containment of her threatening ambivalence, and thus a spectacular corporealization of imperialist values which could then be deferred onto Illyria's phantasmal and negative body.

(50) But the more we look at these births, the more complex they seem. That Cordelia produces a black woman, Jasmine, who must then be contained and destroyed, is to me a troublingly racist ideation that needs to be explored more fully within a framework of critical race studies. It remains peculiar that both characters are unconventional mother-figures, with Cordelia often being more vindictive than maternal, and Fred often being too reserved and inarticulate to express her true loyalty to the crew. Yet both manage to produce powerful and confusing "children" who end up ultimately destroying the vessels that gave them life. If there is a message here, it seems to be that motherhood is a prospect that destroys the maternal body, and that physiological birth—as in the case of both Cordelia and Darla—can only lead to death.¹⁸ On the flip side, "death" itself, or a destructive force like Illyria, is able to gestate within Fred's body, using her up, and emerging stronger

because of her.

(51) I don't think that these are the only options, or that *Buffy* and *Angel* conceptualize birth as an immediate presage of death. I do think that both shows like to create anxiety that is as complex as possible, and that the only thing that could make dealing with a characters' death more difficult is to introduce the idea of birth, to suggest that they might not really be dead. As Joss Whedon says when discussing the episode "The Body," "grief is boring." It is about getting through each hour, each day, and on the outside it appears simple, but on the inside it remains a constant negotiation of wonderful illusions with cruel and edged realities. These "births" are not just wrenches thrown into the works in order to complicate what is already a complex situation in itself—the removal of a beloved character—but the necessary realization that birth and death are intertwined, that life continues, stubbornly, after someone has died, and that the very process of living through grief is often a strange one, creating new fractured subjectivities, new ways of looking at the world, and even, in a sense, new lives.

(52) My corporate analysis of Cordelia and Fred, then, is accompanied here by a more esoteric analysis, a more instinctual reading. Call it a hybrid analysis if you will. I do think that, for every purely analytical and academically-informed reading of *Buffy* and *Angel*, there is an equally visceral, gut-informed, soulful reading that has nothing to do with the specters of Marx or gender analysis or psychotherapy. The trick is not letting one subsume the other, and placing them side by side in order to produce a responsible and fully informed treatment of the shows. I am endeavoring to do this, and I apologize if the result skips at times, or becomes less than coherent. I blame it on Illyria.

(53) The next chapter will discuss *Buffy* and *Angel's* relationship to academic, comparing the family models present in both shows to the "families" within academic communities. *Buffy* has some of the most obsessed and loyal fans of any television show—really, any cultural artifact—in history, and many of those fans are also dedicated academics, working at universities and writing on popular culture. What I want to explore, in this final chapter, is what, precisely, makes *Buffy* and *Angel* so attractive to fans (academic and non), and why the families presented in both shows tend to subsume the biological families of the fans themselves. At the heart of this question is the more complex question of why we love *Buffy* at all, and what we take the show's various and radical families, as well as what they take from us in return.

Endnotes

1. Cordelia sleeps with Connor in the episode "Slouching Towards Bethlehem" (4004), thereby completing the circuit of erotic incest within *Buffy* and *Angel* by becoming a mother who sleeps with her "son." I am aware of the outrageously visible oedipal connections here just begging to be discussed, but will avoid that particular psychoanalytic road, given my preoccupation with sociological and family-based criticism (rather than psychoanalytic theorizing).

2. Kristeva describes her own career-long project as a bridging of psychiatric practices and literary discourses, describing how, initially, she wanted to "analyze the acquisition of language and psychotic language as critical discourses. For neutral description or observation is not enough: I had to involve myself in order to understand how the people I hear are contributing to the transformation of a

relationship" (Kristeva, *Interviews* 147). For her, the psychiatrist who is also a linguist represents the ultimate conjunction of analytical techniques, and psychoanalysis remains the necessary ground from which all literary analysis must emerge.

3. Fred's exposure to, and subsequent enslavement within, a hostile dimension represents a parallel of Illyria's experience, for both are rendered "slaves" of a sort, stripped of their essential subjectivity and marooned within a world that disdains or threatens them. And, just as Fred was duped by a professor (see the episode "Supersymmetry," 4005) who she trusted and used as part of his science experiment (which results in her being transported to Pylea), so was Illyria, in a sense, violently resurrected by her last surviving follower (the character Knox) and transported into a world that has no place for her.

4. This is based on a Sears advertising campaign that ran in 1997, and was designed, one presumes, to highlight the mega-department-store as a fashionable clothing outlet rather than simply a place for buying VCRs and ride-on mowers. As a bizarre conjunction of *Buffy*, advertising, and family, I should admit that my mother works for Sears, and that she remembers this ad-campaign well, given how much her family ridiculed it. "Seen the softer side of Sears lately, mom?" I often asked her, to which she would roll her eyes and insist that she didn't write the advertising copy.

5. Xander is the poorest member of the Scoobies, although he still lives in a modest house and gets an entire basement to himself before moving into what looks suspiciously like a luxury apartment. Faith's economic background is uncertain, but her speech resembles a kind of Boston working-class vocabulary, and her aggressive characteristics, I think, are uncomfortably linked here with her speculative poverty. Either way, *Buffy* clearly demonstrates that characters who aren't middle-class, or who are living somewhere on the borders of middle-class economic security, have far less stable family atmospheres and backgrounds.

6. Jean Swanson, in her book *Poor Bashing*, describes the extent to which people living in poverty internalize critiques leveled at them by various media sources. This leads them to feel ashamed about their living situation, rather than realizing that it is an unequal capitalist economy—which encourages competition among the poorest of the poor—that creates this situation, not the poor themselves. (Swanson 1-10).

7. This book treats the character of Gunn only peripherally, and I hope that forthcoming scholarly articles and book-chapters by writers of color will discuss him in greater depth. As a white scholar, I feel myself coming up against the limits of experience when trying to discuss Gunn's blackness. I have thus opted to create a space of criticism around his character, without fully trying to explore his multiple perspectives as the sole recurring person of color within either *Angel* or *Buffy*. For a more detailed discussion of Gunn, see "From Rogue in the Hood to Suave in a Suit: Black Masculinity and the Transformation of Charles Gunn," Michaela Meyer's troublingly-titled chapter in Stacey Abbott's forthcoming *Investigating Angel* collection (IB Tauris).

8. We should bear in mind that Fred actually leaves her supportive family (who find her after years of searching) because she feels more at home with Angel and company ("Fredless," 3005). Cordelia doesn't appear to have much of a family to go home to, and her choice to stay in L.A. is originally a career decision—she wants to become an actress—rather than a result of feeling "at home" in the city.

9. Robinson and Skill point out that, even as late as 1995, the percentage of white families on television was 80.5%, and that, while Hispanic and African-American

families had an extremely peripheral presence, "Asian or American Indian families were less likely to be found in a series featuring a family than was a family with an alien boarder from the planet Melmac" (148; 158).

10. As with *Buffy's* "matter-of-fact" queer relationship between Tara and Willow, wherein the characters experienced no real homophobia or discomfort among their friends, Gunn and Fred's interracial relationship is de-politicized by *Angel* and presented as merely a quirky romance. I am not suggesting that a televisual romance, because it is interracial, must deliberately make reference to the historical criticisms from white audiences that such relationships have received, both on television and in film. But I do think that, in their attempts to maintain narrative rather than political coherence, both *Buffy* and *Angel* often sidestep critical issues around race, gender, and sexuality that ought to be addressed, unless we are willing to accept that these characters live in a utopian world without violence, homophobia, racism, sexism, and poverty (which they clearly do not, given that these material, as well as discursive, inequalities, find their way into both shows through various channels).

11. Lilah's entrepreneurial individualism, her intense ambition, and her subsequent disconnection from any coherent group of family and friends, makes her a troubling and fascinating character. Her death codes her, in a way, as a failed New Woman, whose greed and ambition end up destroying her, while her only redeeming characteristic seems to be her emotional connection with Wesley. I don't think that *Angel* intends to construct Lilah as an irredeemable super-bitch who "just once" experiences something close to love with a heterosexual man, but the stereotype does stick. For a more nuanced reading of the Lilah/Wesley relationship, along with a discussion of "female agents" in *Angel*, see Jennifer Stoy's chapter "'And Her Tears Flowed Like Wine': Wesley/Lilah and the Complicated(?) Role of the Female Agent on *Angel*," in Stacey Abbott's *Investigating Angel* collection.

12. Amy Acker's performance in this death-scene is tremendous, and also critically interesting because her character seems to hover between a child and adult state. She insists that her death be as painless as possible for both her biological and extended families, even choosing to die in her bedroom, with Wesley, rather than in a hospital. But her final words, "Please, Wesley, why can't I stay?" ("A Hole in the World," 5015) are the plea of a terrified child. Wesley is both her partner and her caretaker, here, and thus fulfills his ultimate role as Watcher by being the only witness to Fred's death and Illyria's subsequent birth.

13. I attended a panel at the *Slayage* conference on racial representation within *Buffy*, and was more than a little anxious to discover that it was a room full of white scholars. I was made even more anxious when *nobody* mentioned this fact, and found myself sinking into an uncomfortable silence during the presentations, angry at myself for not being able to say anything—and, furthermore, not being quite sure what I *wanted* to say. The whole situation rose all sorts of uncomfortable questions about white scholarly investment in racial representation. Ewan Kirkland delivered a self-critical paper on the cultural entitlements of whiteness within the series, and was careful to mention the potentially ridiculous idea of a white scholar talking about whiteness to a room full of white people at a panel on *race*. Jeffrey Middents, who identified as Mexican-American, gave a paper discussing themes of minstrelsy and racial stereotyping within the "Once More With Feeling" musical episode, and included demographic information on the racial breakdown of California, pointing to the fact

that Hispanic audiences, given the size of the Hispanic community within California, were severely underrepresented in *Buffy*. At one point, the sole woman of color in the audience, who never introduced herself, criticized Jasmine's depiction as a tyrannical ruler because the idea of a black woman controlling the world seemed frankly unrealistic. I was extremely relieved when I heard her speak, but I also knew that part of this relief stemmed from my own white guilt around the voyeuristic nature of discussing non-white representation in a room full of white people. Much, much more work on *Buffy*, *Angel*, and race needs to be done in scholarly, as well as popular, media.

14. Despite *Angel*'s careful reinscription of its narratives as action-based in Season 5, the show was still cancelled, which leads us to believe that sometimes a cultural vehicle can "have it all" and still not satisfy the networks. As a reminder of this, Joss Whedon's *Firefly*, which now has a huge and devoted cult fan-base, was cancelled because, in its first (and only) season, it seemed to be more a show about character development and emotional connections than a show about space-ships, train heists, and explosions.

15. Given that Cordelia gets to be both saint and mother as a result of this storyline, I wonder if the creation of Illyria is not, after all, some kind of exchange for *Cordelia*'s specialness, rather than a punishment of Fred's ambivalence. As Spike reminds Willow and Xander after Buffy has been resurrected, "that's the thing about magic. There's always consequences" ("Afterlife," 6003), and perhaps Illyria is a kind of consequence.

16. Kristeva, describing the insider/outsider binary within academic communities, says that "I think it's a question of an individual fighting spirit—almost animal-like—for someone to remain vigilant while being on the inside" (*Interviews* 125). In much the same way, I think, Illyria becomes an "animal-like" vigilance on the inside of *Angel* Investigations, maintaining her essential outsidership while criticizing the human relations that she sees as damaged, flawed, or inexplicable.

17. On a more abstract level (could I possibly *be* more abstract?), Illyria also represents the theme of exile and outsidership that pervades the narratives of both *Buffy* and *Angel*, the feeling of not belonging anywhere. Dawn is similar to Illyria, in that she is not quite human, yet wants to be part of human intimacy and interaction. Willow is the same, knowing that she has the power to destroy the world, yet wanting desperately to fit in and be loved by the people who knew her when she was an awkward and inarticulate nerd. I don't think the message here is as reductive as *nobody fits in anywhere*, but I do think that certain characters in *Buffy* and *Angel* operate at a fundamental remove from everyday society for very specific reasons having to do with gender, sexuality, and cultural background, which I have attempted to discuss throughout this book.

18. For another troubling example of maternity producing a hybrid child, and resulting in the death of the mother, see the character "Blade"—a vampire hunter who is part vampire himself. Blade began as a comic-book character, created by Marv Wolfman and Gene Colan, and was adapted into a hit series of films beginning with *Blade* in 1998 (Stephen Norrington, director; David S. Goyer, writer), and culminating in the soon-to-be-released *Blade: Trinity* in 2004 (written/directed by Goyer). Fascinating intersections of race (Blade's/Wesley Snipe's eroticized and hyper-masculinized black body), technology, and inventive vampire traditions (such as the 'corporatization' of vampire families) have produced a lot of interest within academic

communities. For a critical exploration of mysticism vs. technology within *Blade*, see John J. Jordan's article " Vampire Cyborgs and Scientific Imperialism: a Reading of the Science-Mysticism Polemic in *Blade*," in the *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol 27, no 2, Summer 1999: 4-15.

