A Grammar of Consubstantiality:
A Burkean Feminist Rhetorical Analysis
of Third-Person Identity Constitution in Science-Fiction Television

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Rhetoric and feminism have historically been seen as having little to do with each other. This dissertation seeks to illuminate commonalities between rhetoric and feminism by demonstrating how Burkean identification operates as a pivotal link between the two. It argues that Burkean identification allows for an articulation of how to use the claims we make about who we are to create the kind of transformation feminism is interested in encouraging. It does so by elucidating the relationship between feminist rhetorical principles and Burkean thought through the analysis of third-person identity constitution—a three-step process through which the audience is encouraged to identify with a third-person Other. Each step of that process is demonstrated through the rhetorical analysis of science-fiction television series that use third-person identity constitution to constructively transform the perception of the third-person Other and to encourage the audience to adopt the feminist rhetorical principles that led to that changed perception. These analyses reveal the significant role Burkean identification can play in developing a constructively transformative and feminist rhetoric as well as the important tool science fiction can be for feminist rhetoric.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“Rhetoric needs identity because it can help to explain how in the claims we make about who we are we might also come to transform the world.”

—Dana Anderson, *Identity’s Strategy: Rhetorical Selves in Conversion* (13, emphasis in the original)

Andrea Lunsford and Cheryl Glen’s 2015 anthology *Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and Feminism* opens with the following claim: “Rhetoric. Feminism. For millennia, these words seemed to have little in common” (1, emphasis in the original). What I hope to accomplish in this dissertation is to further the important work that anthology does illuminating the emerging commonalities between rhetoric and feminism by demonstrating how *Burkean identification* operates as a pivotal link between the two. I argue that identification’s ability to account for how those “claims we make about who we are…can come to transform the world” allows for an articulation of how to use such claims (and how such claims have been used) to create the kind of transformation feminism is interested in encouraging. I find this to be an important task because within the academy and beyond there exist some misgivings about assuming Burkean and feminist rhetorics can be aligned. What I seek to do through this dissertation is to ease those misgivings by elucidating the relationship between feminist rhetorical principles and Burkean thought through the analysis of what I term *third-person identity*. 
constitution—the creation of a third-person Other in the text with whom the audience is encouraged to identify. Therefore, although this project is fundamentally concerned with theoretical issues, the chapters that follow also consist of rhetorical analysis: each chapter analyzes science-fiction television series due to their use of third-person identity constitution to constructively transform their audience’s perception of an Other from antagonistic to consubstantial and to encourage their audience to adopt the feminist rhetorical principles that led to that changed perception. Through these analyses, I hope to illuminate how the use of third-person identity constitution by these science-fiction television series demonstrates the significant role Burkean identification can play in developing a constructively transformative and feminist rhetoric as well as to illuminate the important tool science fiction can be for feminist rhetoric. Before delving into my primary texts, however, this introduction begins by exploring why such misgivings concerning Burkean thought and feminist rhetorical principles exist and attempts to resolve them—starting with demonstrating how a desire for transformation motivated Kenneth Burke and how that desire and the theories it produced align with feminist rhetorical thought.

Burke, Transformation, and Feminism

Much like feminist rhetoricians and theorists, Kenneth Burke developed his rhetorical theories in response to the oppression and violence he saw in the world around him. In Burke, War, Words: Rhetoricizing Dramatism (2008), M. Elizabeth Weiser contextualizes Burke’s 1945 A Grammar of Motives in that very way, tracking how
Burke’s desire for transformation, one of the motivating forces behind the “timeless theory” that is dramatism, operates as a “time-bound response to the war” (xvi). According to Weiser, through the work that would eventually become *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke sought to provide the world with a methodology with which the antipathies that motivated WWII could be transformed through transcendence. This focus on transformation through transcendence came from Burke’s understanding of his “dramatic metaphor” as “a translation model” that could lead to “greater tolerance”: he thought that “responding to others’ worldviews and their desire for permanence meant persuading them toward one’s own perspective—while being open to the possibility that one’s own pieties might be similarly changed” (21). Like much feminist thought, Burke’s conception of transcendence is grounded by a principle of risk: one must be open to other perspectives and be willing to risk changing one’s own perspective due to that openness.

This more feminist construction of transcendence was possible because, unlike other theorists who have tended to focus on “opposing forces,” Burke recognized that the different perspectives that lead to transcendence do not need to be considered necessarily opposed to one another (Weiser 107). For Burke, Weiser notes, it is only once that common notion of dichotomous necessity is eliminated that multiple perspectives can be taken together and can contribute to a transcendent perspective (107). This ability to see perspective as not inherently dualistic was due to Burke’s belief that, in Weiser’s words, language “artificially” created “a dichotomous perspective” and that “it was the job of the language critic to uncover…underlying natural unity” (107). Due to that belief, Burke continuously took stances in relation to differing perspectives that, Weiser explains, “fell
on the bias—not simply in the middle, not finding some common ground between them
in a relativistic kind of ‘compromise,’ but cutting across their positions, envisioning an
alternative that was parts of each as well as new” (1). Whether called *falling on the bias*
or *transcending*, this very feminist approach—envisioning alternatives that acknowledge
and incorporate all perspectives—became the heart of the approach Weiser claims Burke
advocated as “the primary method to overcome fruitless debate, or, as he put it…to purify
war” (1). That endeavor—*ad bellum purificandum*—became the epigraph Burke used for
*A Grammar of Motives* as he struggled to make his contemporaries understand that his
methodology concerning those multiple perspectives was not just theory but also an
actionable response to the war—and, although he did not put it this way, a very feminist
one.

Dramatism’s inception as an actionable response to real conditions grounds
Burkean thought in reality in a way that many other theories are not. Although this
grounding is not always as evident throughout his work as Weiser makes clear that it is in
*A Grammar of Motives*, that grounding remained pivotal to Burke throughout his career,
and, thus, when the second world war ended, his interest in transcendence did not. In fact,
the work Burke did due to the war helped him recognize that the forces he saw as
motivating war—*identification* and *division*, key terms in his next installment, *A Rhetoric
of Motives*—were innate to the human condition. This recognition led him to theorize that
a linguistic approach was needed if humanity was ever going to be able to develop the
tools needed to constructively transform the world around us. Thus, as *identification* and
*division* became more explicit elements of Burke’s methodology, he became better able
to articulate how that constructive transformation could be achieved as well as how it could be taught.

This focus on transformation through actionable methodology can be seen, according to Gregory Clarke’s 2004 *Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke*, in Burke’s 1955 essay “Linguistic Approach to Problems in Education.” There, Burke advocated an approach that sought to achieve those goals by focusing “critically on the power of language to create the realities that people individually and collectively perceive” (Clarke 77). As Clarke explains, Burke believed that “full recognition of the consequences that can follow from rhetoric…. will prompt people…to recognize the extent of their entanglements with each other as well as enable them to interact with each other much more carefully” (78). This perspective reflects what Weiser notes to be one of Burke’s key insights about language use: the choices we make concerning which terms to use affect “not only the attitude of one’s audience but one’s own attitude” and choosing “more positive terms” moves “one toward inclusion” (16). Throughout his career, Burke remained interested in that kind of transformation—one focused on inclusion, the recognition of a plurality of perspectives, and the role language has in mediating them—and it is that focus that aligns him well with feminism.

As briefly noted before, recognizing an alignment between Burkean theory and feminism is not necessarily an overwhelmingly held stance. As Ross Wolin notes in his 2001 *The Rhetorical Imagination of Kenneth Burke*, some feminist rhetorical scholars have “criticized Burke’s view of rhetoric as too aggressive and uncooperative” (177). Wolin explains that these critiques tend to be due to Burke’s use of images and anecdotes
concerning violence or “slaughter,” especially in the early part of *A Rhetoric of Motives* when Burke introduces the concept of identification (177). Additionally, Wolin notes that some of these critiques also push back at Burke’s firm belief that hierarchy is inevitable and that division is essential to rhetoric, seeing these aspects of Burke’s theory as being at odds with the goals of feminism (178). I would argue that these, along with the feminist responses I will discuss later in this chapter—ones that are almost directly opposite critiques, considering Burke to focus too much on similarity at the expense of difference—represent what Wolin calls misunderstandings of Burke.

Such misunderstandings may be the result of an emphasis on select parts of Burke’s overwhelming body of work. When the most commonly read passages from Burke are read in isolation, Burke’s metaphors of slaughter and sacrifice can appear as a problematic use and reliance on violent imagery. When these commonly read passages are separated from the lesser known passages that more clearly reveal Burke’s vested interest in articulating the means with which symbols are used both constructively and destructively (his is a descriptive rhetoric), Burke’s hope that the thorough analysis his methodology can produce could allow us to recognize, intervene in, and hopefully prevent further destructive symbol-use is often lost. Thus, when these commonly read passages are considered alongside the rest of Burke’s extensive writing as well as alongside the contextualization about Burke’s life that scholars such as Wolin, Weiser, and William H. Rueckert provide, many assumptions about Burkean rhetoric, such as the concern that feminism and Burkean thought are at odds with one another, are revealed to be potential misunderstandings. In fact, Weiser argues that her contextualization of Burke
reveals not an antagonistic relationship between feminist principles and Burkean thought but a consubstantial one:

Burke’s emphasis on the transcending power of “babel,” the poetic dialectic of multiple voices falling across each other on the bias in a mutual search for commonalities that maintains ironic differences…is echoed in Krista Ratcliffe’s and Gemma Corradi Fiumara’s studies of rhetorical listening…as well as [in] Donna Haraway. (xvi)

This revelation leads Weiser to conclude that Burke’s stances “may well be closer to feminist epistemology…than we usually acknowledge” (148). Weiser’s acknowledgment of that compatibility not only represents a correction of a common misunderstanding concerning Burke, but, I argue, also represents a necessary recognition for the field: in order for feminist rhetorical theory to continue to move beyond its fruitful articulation of ideal principles and goals to a more rigorous articulation of the means with which to achieve them, feminist rhetorical theory may benefit from making use of some of the tools developed by traditional rhetoric, including Burkean identification.

I argue that Burkean identification should be considered one of those tools because, like Dana Anderson, whom I quote at the beginning of this chapter, I believe our ability to transform the world is rooted in “the claims we make about who we are.” This focus on identification, however, does not make me unique. Identification is a concept that has received plenty of attention from the field in many diverse ways: its origins have been investigated by scholars like Diane Davis;¹ its relationship to other key terms in the

¹ See Diane Davis’s “Identification: Burke and Freud on Who You Are.”
field has been investigated by scholars like Richard Graff and Wendy Winn; its relationship to other key terms within Burkean theory has been investigated by scholars like Bryan Crable; and so on. In fact, these wide-ranging contributions to understanding the theory of identification itself represent only one avenue with which the field has and continues to engage with the concept: one of the most common ways in which identification is currently being used by the field is to broaden the purview and understanding of rhetoric through the application of identification to different kinds of texts, such as American tourism in the case of Gregory Clarke’s *Rhetorical Landscapes in America* and works of public memory in the case of Joshua Reeves’ “Suspended Identification: *Atopos* and the Work of Public Memory.”

Despite this range of ways in which identification is being investigated and applied by the field, Burkean identification—as previously noted—has rarely been explicitly tied to feminism in general or rhetorical feminist theory in particular. This project seeks to do just that and argues that a prime way to demonstrate that relationship is to continue to broaden rhetoric’s purview by applying Burkean identification to another set of texts that are not commonly analyzed by the field: science-fiction television. It is my argument that the science-fiction television series I analyze in the following chapters can be seen as advocates for Burkean identification as an essential feature of feminist

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2 See Richard Graff and Wendy Winn’s “Kenneth Burke’s ‘Identification’ and Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca’s ‘Communication: A Case of Convergent Evolution?.”

3 See Bryan Crable’s “Distance as Ultimate Motive: A Dialectical Interpretation of *A Rhetoric of Motives*.”

4 This is not to suggest that no feminist rhetorical scholars find feminism and Burkean thought compatible but rather that it is more common to find misgivings or resistance to that idea than to find acceptance and support of it.
rhetorical theory. Therefore, my project is twofold: on one hand, to demonstrate the compatibility between feminist rhetorical thought and Burkean thought; and, on the other, to reveal that compatibility through the application of Burkean identification to science-fiction television series that have feminist goals at their core.

**Feminist Rhetorical Theory and Its Underlying Assumptions**

Feminist rhetorical criticism and theory has largely been divided or silent on the role Burkean concepts play in feminist rhetoric. This occurs for two main reasons. The first has to do with the plurality of feminism: since what each feminist means by feminism varies, the kind of feminism being practiced—radical feminism, eco-feminism, cultural feminism, first-wave, second-wave, etc.—influences whether or not Burkean concepts like identification must be considered at odds with feminist ones. The second reason has to do with the particular trajectory of the development of feminist rhetoric itself: as it currently stands, the branch of feminist rhetoric—feminist rhetorical theory—that would reflect on the suitability and worth of central tenets of rhetoric, including Burkean identification, remains underdeveloped. I argue that the consideration of these two issues in relation to one another reveals the reason for misgivings concerning Burkean identification: feminist rhetorical theory has been unnecessarily limited by its origins in a kind of feminism—difference feminism—that would necessarily consider itself at odds with any and all tenets of traditional rhetoric, including Burkean ones.

In order to understand those misgivings and how to correct the misunderstandings they have produced, it is important to understand the underlying assumptions of
difference feminism that have been incorporated into some feminist rhetorical theory. This requires understanding feminist rhetorical theory’s origins. Those origins—at least in terms of feminist rhetorical theory becoming an active part of the discipline—lie with Sally Miller Gearhart’s “The Womanization of Rhetoric” (1979). Gearhart’s influential article not only launched the sub-discipline but also tied it to difference feminism’s essentialism concerning the consideration of women as fundamentally different from men and, in Gearhart’s case, superior to them. Due to this essentialist understanding of the relationship between men, women, and the attributes associated with them, Gearhart rejected the central tenets of rhetoric outright as patriarchal and argued that humanity would be unable to avoid continuing down a destructive path unless the principles she saw as connected to womanhood were used to re-envision traditionally patriarchal practices, including rhetoric. For Gearhart, the definition and practice of rhetoric needed to be entirely rewritten. Despite the field’s fundamental understanding of rhetoric as a better tool than physical violence to solve various conflicts, Gearhart considered persuasion to amount to force and violence because it seeks to change others, and she longed for a time when rhetoric would operate more like a womb and less like a weapon. Gearhart’s ideal womanization of rhetoric, then, proposed that alternative: Gearhart believed that the womanization of rhetoric would result in the nurturing of environments that would encourage self-directed change. This alternative consideration of rhetoric attempted to destabilize the foundations of that two-thousand-year-old truism—that words are better than weapons—and made explicit in the process that the truism was not entirely true: it elides the way in which words can be used as weapons and often have
been—particularly when it comes to the oppression of the Other in any of its forms, including that of the woman in regards to the patriarchy. Gearhart’s recognition of the way in which rhetoric’s patriarchal foundations allowed patriarchal principles and assumptions to influence seemingly unbiased rhetorical principles brought forth feminist rhetorical theory and set it on the path to creating alternatives with values more like her own.

Despite the important role Gearhart’s article played in the history of the discipline, her concerns about the patriarchal nature of rhetoric (and the concerns of others like her) represent a line of inquiry that has not been fully developed by the field. Recent rhetoric primers, in fact, no longer tend to include feminist criticism as its own enterprise (as they did in the 1990s), replacing it instead with gender criticism. Additionally, the tradition that Sonja Foss, Karen Foss, and Cindy Griffin delineated in their 1999 Feminist Rhetorical Theories is ill-defined outside of those gender-studies approaches that focus on recovering and discovering historical women rhetors and current and historical women’s rhetorical practices. Whereas these gender-studies approaches and criticisms have been highly effective and fruitful—and generally include within them theoretical concerns—feminist rhetorical theory itself appears more as a historical moment than as an active part of the discipline. However, before gender criticism largely superseded feminist rhetorical theory as an enterprise, Gearhart’s questioning of rhetoric’s central tenets did influence the creation of a body of prescriptive feminist rhetorics, including Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin’s invitational rhetoric and, as
Weiser pointed out, Krista Ratcliffe’s *rhetorical listening*—both of which represent potential ways in which the womanization of rhetoric can and does take place.

While feminist prescriptive rhetorics like *invitational rhetoric* and *rhetorical listening* do not themselves articulate the kind of essentialism Gearhart did, their response to Gearhart’s call carries with it that underlying essentialism: they do not modify or fully interact with traditional rhetoric; they propose discrete alternatives. Carrying forward Bonnie Dow’s argument from her 1995 article “Feminism, Difference(s), and Rhetorical Studies,” I argue that this separatism stems from the assumptions of Gearhart’s difference feminism. Just as traditional rhetoric has been limited by its foundations in the patriarchy, so, too, has feminist rhetorical theory been limited by its foundations in the essentialism of difference feminism. However, unlike feminist rhetorical theory’s recognition of the shackles that bind traditional rhetorical theory, feminist rhetorical theory has often failed to fully acknowledge and interrogate how the assumptions of difference feminism have affected and potentially limited it. In fact, it is that lack of critical awareness about such assumptions on the part of feminist rhetorical theorists that Dow criticizes and sees as the culprit behind feminist rhetorical theory’s limited disciplinary effect.6

5 A fuller list of prescriptive rhetorics, both based in difference feminism and not, would include Arabella Lyon’s *deliberation* and *recognition*, Catherine Lamb’s *negotiation* and *mediation*, Wayne Booth’s *rhetoric of assent*, *rhetorology*, and *listening rhetoric*, and Maxine Hairston’s *Rogerian argument*. 6 For further perspective on these critiques of such feminist rhetorical theory, their basis in difference feminism (what Celeste Michelle Condit calls *dichotomy feminism*), and why a “gender dichotomist” approach limits them, see Condit’s “In Praise of Eloquent Diversity: Gender and Rhetoric as Public Persuasion.”
Among the limitations of these unacknowledged assumptions is, I would argue, that Burkean identification is often excluded from feminist rhetorical theory. Since Burke is considered to be part of mainstream rhetoric, feminist rhetorical theory—due to that foundation in difference feminism—tends to either largely ignore Burke or consider his work to be deficient for articulating feminist rhetorical principles. *Invitational rhetoric*, for example, falls into the first category. Although Foss and Griffin do cite Burke and other mainstream theorists and critics throughout their body of work, they do not engage with that main body of rhetoric to develop their theory of invitational rhetoric and end up, as Dow points out, not engaging with the discipline fully (Dow 113-114). Ratcliffe, on the other hand, does acknowledge Burke’s identification as in line with her work on *rhetorical listening*, but finds Burkean identification deficient and limiting because she sees it as operating at “the expense of difference” (53). Since the role difference feminism has played in the development of feminist rhetorics has been left largely unaddressed, Gearhart’s original concern about the patriarchal nature of rhetoric has not been clearly settled, leaving concepts like identification to be treated with suspicion. I would argue, then, that it is this unease about rhetoric being essentially patriarchal that has led feminists to sometimes dismiss or attack identification, seeing it as potentially motivated by and capable of erasing difference and, therefore, as a patriarchal force that may occlude revealing and intervening in issues of privilege and complicity.

An example of such feminist suspicion concerning identification can be seen in two responses to the 2012 “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign: one from an academic and one from a young activist. The first occurred in May 2012, when feminist rhetorical
theorist and philosopher Arabella Lyon was the speaker for the Ohio State University's Corbett Lecture held by the Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy program. During her lecture on deliberation, Lyon summed up this feminist concern about identification and rhetoric with a simple phrase that echoes Gearhart: “Persuasion is force; identification, violence.” During the graduate workshop seminar the next day, Lyon had the participants consider the “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign as an instance of erasure of difference and erasure of identity. For Lyon, white, middle-class identification with Trayvon Martin was a necessarily violent act that denied the reality of differences between the activists and Martin. Similarly, a self-proclaimed activist and “little white girl”—from here on out referred to by her username, 13emcha—posted a video on YouTube on March 31, 2012 that went viral called “I AM NOT TRAYVON MARTIN.” In this video, 13emcha indict identification claiming that “wanting to identify with the victim is weak and immature when it is not an accurate representation of reality,” seeing the “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign much as Lyon did: a naive act that erases difference and complies with the hierarchical system that has given white men, in particular, privilege.

The concerns of both these women are not ill-founded: we must be careful how we engage in rhetoric; we must be careful that we do not speak out of turn for someone who occupies a very different place in life than we do; we must, as 13emcha urges, subvert stereotypes. Make it harder for others to buy into the bullshit…we're fed our whole lives about race, class, gender, and other people by identifying and critiquing these messed up norms. Force adults to confront these norms, and raise children without indoctrinating them with the same old bullshit. Use…privilege to actively dismantle this messed up system. Listen to marginalized people like Trayvon's family… and insure them access to the discourse.
However, despite the exigency of concerns like 13emcha’s and Lyon’s and the importance of the work they are championing, I do not consider either woman’s indictment of identification as a necessary step in the endeavor to uncover hierarchical oppression, expose it, and replace it with something better. In my reading of both 13emcha and Lyon’s responses to the “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign, both women appear to misread the intention of the “I am Trayvon Martin” activists by considering the verb *to be* as a literal equals sign—one that can and must erase difference. I would argue that both of these women, in their acute recognition of the problem of such identification, fail to acknowledge the potential need for a campaign like “I Am Trayvon Martin” in addition to the more action-oriented activism or more carefully-articulated campaigns they might prefer. In fact, I would argue that the need for a campaign like “I Am Trayvon Martin” can be seen by the very outcome of the trial held against Trayvon Martin’s assailant, where George Zimmerman—the white man who was charged with the murder of Trayvon Martin—was judged not guilty. This verdict, I would argue, demonstrates that the “white, middle-class bodies” that wore those hoodies—which I would argue proclaimed that the line in the sand was in front of them, that if someone was going to say it was okay to kill Trayvon Martin then they had to be willing to say it was okay to kill them too—were making a necessary argument. I would argue that those individuals recognized similarity despite insurmountable difference—differences of race, class, background, and experience—and that that recognition of similarity was one of the things that the jury and the white men and women who still do not see what Zimmerman did as
wrong needed to see: they needed an argument about perspective, and Burkean identification can provide that.

Therefore, although I understand and am sympathetic toward such concerns about identification and about the patriarchal foundations of rhetoric itself, I believe that if feminist rhetorical theory and criticism is to continue to reach beyond revealing and intervening in gender oppression to revealing and intervening in oppression of all kinds (like the oppression which led to Travyon Martin’s murder)—we will need Burkean identification in our toolbox. Although Lorde’s famous line about the master’s tools may seem apropos here, I believe that we must consider these tools as Burke did: not as something that belongs to the master but as something that belongs to all of humanity, which, unfortunately, includes the many masters that have used those tools destructively. Burke believes these tools necessarily belong to everyone—that these tools can produce rhetorics ranging from Hitler’s Mein Kampf to Ratcliffe’s rhetorical listening and that these tools can help future generations engage in rhetoric constructively. If we can consider the tools of rhetoric as Burke did—not as instruments of the patriarchy but as instruments that have often been used poorly by those in power—we can abandon the blueprints without necessarily abandoning the tools themselves. If we can envision new ways in which to use such tools while remaining critically aware about the ways in which those tools can be and often have been misused, we can use them to help feminist rhetorical theory come into its own more fully. For if it is to come into its own more fully—if it is to not only articulate ideal goals and principles but also the means with which those goals and principles can be achieved—it must, as Dow argues, engage with
the discipline more fully—including, as I argue, considering Burkean theoretical concepts without dismissing them as necessarily or damningly patriarchal.

I believe that such engagement with the discipline is important because I believe feminist rhetoric has much to offer traditional rhetoric. Feminist rhetorical theory and the more fully developed branch of feminist rhetoric that focuses on gender criticism have articulated many ideal principles for the field to consider adopting. For instance, in Glen and Lundsford’s previously mentioned anthology alone, many such principles appear: principles such as the creation of an atmosphere of collectivity, an emphasis on mutual respect, an insistence on inclusivity, a recognition of the power and role of listening, an insistence on ethical conduct, an encouragement of an atmosphere of invitation, an insistence on recognizing alternative perspectives, a recognition of the necessity and inevitability of negotiating meaning, the creation of understanding for the sake of cooperation, an insistence upon reciprocity and collaboration, a willingness to risk change, a willingness to embrace vulnerability, the necessity of equality, a focus on possibility, an insistence on the empowerment of all, the recognition of the immanent value of all, a focus of encouraging self-determination, an embrace of a stance of openness, and the necessity of deliberation to constructive negotiation. In fact, looking even only at that subset of essays, it is clear that feminist rhetoric has more to offer the field than it can concisely articulate, and that is precisely why rhetoric needs feminism: feminism is a creative force that offers rhetoric a chance at constructive transformation. As Glen and Lundsford argue,
feminists today are attempting to build an alternative to traditional agonistic rhetoric through their strategic use of speech, silence, and resistance guided by nonviolent principles, a thoroughly feminist rhetoric that can account for embodied, performed rhetorical practices. Such a rhetoric and the multiple practices it will evoke, render, and embody can help women and men, disenfranchised and powerful alike, in the U.S. and everywhere, break the links between traditional rhetoric and dis/empowerment, between power and violence. Such a rhetoric of invitation, listening, and empathy can transform the rhetoric tradition from one of persuasion, control, and discipline (on the part of the rhetor) to one of inherent worth, equality, and empowered action (for rhetor and audience alike). Rhetors using such a rhetoric will be embodying/performing rhetoric in ways that will reject combat and dominance in favor of sharing perspectives, understandings, and power. These are the goals an interanimating connection between rhetoric and feminism can—and must—achieve. (13-14)

Like Glen and Lundsford, I believe that that “interanimating connection” is necessary, and I believe that if we can recuperate aspects of traditional rhetoric, we can achieve that inter-animation. Furthermore, I believe that if we want to transform modern conceptions of rhetoric such that they are of invitation, listening, and empathy, such that they focus on inherent worth, equality, and empowered action, such that communication is not about combat and dominance but rather about sharing perspectives, understanding, and power, we need more than feminism—we need Burke too.

The Necessity of Burkean Identification to Feminist Rhetorical Theory

In order to more fully understand why feminist rhetoric needs Burkean identification, it is important to understand how and why identification is so crucial to Burke and how that criticality aligns with feminist concerns. Burke begins to explicitly unpack that significance in The Philosophy of Literary Form (1941) when he explains why identification can occur despite difference:
Situations do overlap, if only because men now have the same neural and muscular structure as men who have left their records from past ages. We and they are in much the same biological situation. Furthermore, even the concrete details of social texture have a great measure of overlap. And the nature of the human mind itself, with the function of abstraction rooted in the nature of language, also provides us with “levels of generalization” ... by which situations greatly different in their particularities may be felt to belong in the same class (to have a common substance or essence). (2)

For Burke, identification can occur because of physical and social reality: the physical and biological makeup of our minds and bodies. These he sees as capable of marking us as *consubstantial*, or sharing “a common substance or essence,” wherein that commonality is not an indication of sameness or the collapse of individuality but the temporary recognition of those shared situations.

Burkean identification is not at odds with feminism due to that understanding. Looking back at the example of the “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign, Burke’s understanding of identification could not result in the erasure of difference or the erasure of identity that feminists like Lyon and 13emcha fear (wherein people identify as *Trayvon Martin*) because Burke does not think we identify as someone else but with those shared situations and through those shared physical and social realities. Identification with *Trayvon Martin*, then, represents a recognition of the situations and physical and social realities that the activists *do* share with Martin, and that recognition does, as Lyon and 13emcha observe, step the conversation away from the specific causes and symptoms of discrimination. Therefore, it is not that Lyon and 13emcha are wrong: identification with *Trayvon Martin* does focus on ways in which he is similar to persons who are not being discriminated against instead of focusing on the differences between
them for which he is being discriminated and for which they are granted privilege; however, that focus on similarity does not exist at the expense of a focus on difference. Identification with Trayvon Martin is the first step in a larger and longer argument. Similarity has to be recognized before discrimination can be overcome because it is not difference that can or should be overcome but our frequent inability to recognize similarity in the face of difference that needs to be. For Burke, that we are different is a given—no need for proof or argument—but Burke believes that we can understand our differences (the particularities of our situations) in the abstract and that those abstractions are necessarily similar to others—they form classes or types or taxonomies due to the very nature of abstraction—and it is our ability to recognize our similarities that motivates us to act ethically toward persons who are, as Lyon and 13emcha so fervently recognize, importantly different from us.

In fact, the very fact that it is a given that we are each different marks us as similar: we share an understanding of individuality and can understand arguments about difference due to the fact that we share the belief that we are each individuals. This, too, makes Burkean identification an important tool for feminism: it requires us to recognize the danger of complacency and the need not only for vigilant re-evaluation of our treatment of others but also for vigilant maintenance of the bonds that bind us together. Because of the strength with which we are and believe ourselves to be discrete, identification can only occur from the moment similarities become apparent until they cease to seem significant: we only recognize consubstantiality for as long as we feel similar; sustaining identification requires regular maintenance. This understanding of
identification needing to be continually renewed in order for it to be sustained not only
demonstrates the necessity of understanding identification and how to create and
maintain it but also allows us to account for very different types and lengths of
identification—everything from momentary teamwork to life-long friendship. In fact, the
seemingly endless variety of ways in which we end up identifying with one another is
part of how Burke defines identification in “The Calling of the Tune,” a later essay in The
Philosophy of Literary Form:

By “identification” I have in mind this sort of thing: one's material and
mental ways of placing oneself as a person in... groups and movements; one's ways of sharing vicariously in the role of leader or spokesman;
formation and change of allegiance; the rituals of suicide, parricide, and
procicide, the vesting and divesting of insignia, the modes of initiation and
purification... that are involved in the response to allegiance and change of
allegiance; the part necessarily played by groups in the expectancies of the
individual...; clothes, uniforms, and their psychological equivalents; one's
ways of seeing one's reflection in the social mirror. (227)

Identification, therefore, can be considered to be the physical, social, and psychological
ways in which we demonstrate consubstantiality between who we are and some part of
the rest of the world: if identity is how we represent our differences (our individual
characteristics) in order to express who we are, identification is the way in which we use
that expression of identity to mark ourselves as similar to some set of others (and,
inevitably, different from another).

This understanding of the role and function of identification, then, is why I would
argue that feminist concerns about identification in regards to the threat of erasing
difference represent a misunderstanding of Burkean thought: as noted earlier, Burke does
not think difference can be erased; in fact, as Barbara A. Biesecker argues in her 1997
book *Addressing Postmodernity: Kenneth Burke, Rhetoric, and a Theory of Social Change*, difference is built into the Burkean system. According to Biesecker, the “action/motion differential” in Burke accounts for the inevitable and ongoing presence of difference between individuals (46). As she explains, Burke’s attribution of “motion” to the physical realm (and thereby to our biological estrangement from one another) underwrites his rhetoric with “an ineluctable economy of difference that simply cannot be overcome” (100). In fact, as Biesecker argues, it is that very economy of difference that is “the condition of possibility for any symbolic action” (100). Without the “impossibility of closing the gap between the self and the other,” we would lack the impetus to continue to be “engaged with one another, talking to one another, [and] courting one another” (100). Similarly, James L. Kastely argues in his 2013 “Love and Strife: Ultimate Motives in Burke’s *A Rhetoric of Motives*” that difference is necessary and inevitable to rhetoric. He claims that Burke sees humanity as dialectical creatures and that the “dialectical tension” driving our ultimate motives is that of “love and strife” (172). According to Kastely, this tension manifests in a cycle of human interaction wherein “humans are drawn to one another and seek to distinguish themselves from one another” (172). In both Biesecker’s and Kastely’s understanding of the relationship between identification and division, neither identification nor division can ever be dominant: as Burke famously

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7 Kastely thinks this puts him at odds with Biesecker (since he finds the division to be within the ultimate motives of the dialectical being and she in the action/motion differential). I find both of these articulations of the origins of the principles of identification and division to be true and necessary to our understanding of how the principles work. Not only did Burke express each, but I do not see them to be conflicting (since one concerns how the principles function in the physical realm and one in the symbolic). As is often the case with Burke, I believe he would say that it is “both and.”
states, they are “compensatory” to one another. I would argue then that it is Burke's insertion of the principle of identification into rhetorical theory that elucidates a relationship between similarity, difference, and agency and that marks Burkean theory as congruent with feminism: his insertion of identification recognizes rhetoric as pluralistic—an understanding that difference cannot (nor should) be done away with and that any identification is necessarily temporary.

It is this recognition of the role of identification in persuasion that leads to the understanding put forth in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950) for why identification is fundamental to rhetoric and, as I argue, to feminist rhetoric in particular. As Burke writes,

> In pure identification there would be no strife. Likewise, there would be no strife in absolute separateness, since opponents can join battle only through a mediatory ground that makes their communication possible, thus providing the first condition necessary for their interchange of blows. But put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins, and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric. (25)

This invitation to rhetoric is not only the crux of Burke’s understanding of how argumentation functions, but it is also why it is so important to Burke for identification to be affirmed. As he states in *A Rhetoric of Motives*,

> A doctrine of *consubstantiality*, either explicit or implicit, may be necessary to any way of life. For substance, in the old philosophies, was an *act*; and a way of life is an *acting-together*; and in acting together, men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them *consubstantial*. (21, emphasis in the original)

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8 “Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity” (*A Rhetoric of Motives*, 22).
We need a doctrine of consubstantiality because, as Burke makes so clear, humans are distinct: we are factional; we divide ourselves from one group to affirm our relationship with another. Without recognition of consubstantiality, we remain apart and able to act as if the other we encounter is truly Other and not someone with whom consubstantiation could occur. For Burke, identification with other people in at least the most basic way—through the recognition of our shared humanity—is necessary because the mistreatment of others (from degradation to discrimination to exploitation to murder to genocide) is grounded by a failure to identify with at the very least our shared situation as homo sapiens. As Burke puts it,

> It is not a great step from the purely professional poisoning of harmful insects to the purely professional blasting and poisoning of human beings, as viewed in similarly “impersonal” terms. And such inducements are particularly there, so long as factional division (of class, race, nationality, and the like) make for the ironic mixture of identification and dissociation that marks the function of the scapegoat. (34)

Recognizing others as wholly different—whether that difference be seen through race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, or something else—is beyond problematic. A failure to identify with makes way for the ability to dehumanize, and Burke rejects categorical difference—not only as false but also as dangerous.

For Burke, that notion of falsity and danger is most apparent through the scapegoat mechanism since it is a clear representation of how men are “at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another” (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 21). Having previously shown how people can become identified with one another such that, to paraphrase Burke, the individual is part of a collective, the particular part of the general,
and the one part of the many, Burke also explains that the opposite move must also exist, such that

…the synecdochic relationship whereby a part can be taken as consistent with the whole…is no longer felt to apply; and instead we encounter the divisive relationship, the genitive transformation of something which is “a part of” a larger context into something which is “apart from” this context. (*A Grammar of Motives* 107)

This is the compensatory relationship between identification and division, and it is what Burke sees as functioning most clearly through the scapegoat. According to Burke, the scapegoat is “profoundly consubstantial with those who, looking upon it as a chosen vessel, would ritualistically cleanse themselves by loading the burden of their own iniquities upon it” (*A Grammar of Motives* 406). This consubstantiality is due to the fact that the scapegoat can only be “curative” if it “represents the iniquities of those who would be cured by attacking it,” thereby being made able to perform “the role of vicarious atonement” (*A Grammar of Motives* 406). In essence, those who rely on the scapegoat must identify with it: otherwise, it would be incapable of performing its vicarious role. However, by being “curative,” the scapegoat also represents “the principle of division in that its persecutors would alienate from themselves to it their own uncleanlinesses” (*A Grammar of Motives* 406). Thus, the scapegoat must also be something which is identified against (as opposed to with) or else it would be unable to bear away with it the iniquities now ascribed to it. Therefore, in the scapegoat, we can begin to see the falsity and danger of treating something as wholly other: despite how it is looked upon and treated, the scapegoat is both similar and different—not just different—and by treating it as essentially different acts like murder can be justified as sacrifice.
The scapegoat mechanism is not only a prime example of the danger of considering someone or something as essentially different: it is also a prime example of how recognition of similarity can result in destructive instead of constructive transformation (particularly when the scapegoat is seen as operating as a sacrifice based on love). As Robert Wess acknowledges, “A rhetoric of inclusion can perpetuate exclusion. One cannot valorize any rhetoric of inclusion absolutely; one must always consider its real effects in a concrete situation” (99n). Similarly, James Kastely cautions that, although it can be “tempting simply to align oneself against strife and to promote the advantages of love,” such a temptation should be resisted for two reasons: 1) strife (or division) plays an important part in establishing identity and in rhetoric’s ability to function at all; and, 2) “love that is not dialectically qualified or philosophically criticized can easily lead to injustice, and it would be an injustice that misunderstood itself as just and as reflecting the natural order of things” (192). Like many feminists, Kastely recognizes that such a situation could “lead to a world that would oppress difference” and that the “elimination of difference…would destroy the possibility of identity” (192). Kastely notes that Burke refers to such situations as *Ersatzmystiken*, or “substitutes for mysticism,” and that he understood that “one can commit the worst of injustices while believing that he or she is acting justly” (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* 331; Kastely 195). Kastely argues that Burke addressed this problem by arguing that we must “love the world appropriately” (195).

Burke’s argument that we must “love the world appropriately” is grounded by his recognition of the baser instincts and actions that lead to our impulse to scapegoat and
more: Burke sees the equation between the poisoning of insects and the killing of people; for Burke, both require us to see the Other in impersonal terms. It is because of this that Burke thinks that it would take “sustained rhetorical effort” in order for us to “fully sympathize with people in circumstances greatly different from our own” (34). Without a way in which to see those individuals who represent factional divisions different from our own as similar, we are able to treat them as fundamentally different from us and, therefore, not in possession of the same rights. It is this human proclivity to see people or groups only impersonally and not to consider them in their particularities—not to consider them in the ways in which they are consubstantial with us (as rational, loving, familial, vengeful, etc.)—that allows individuals to engage in the dehumanization and objectification of others. Only identification with such individuals can help us avoid such inhuman treatment and action; only identification with such individuals can make us consider them in personal terms—can make us feel compassionate empathy for them. It is, therefore, Burke’s recognition of the need for “sustained rhetorical effort” to produce such feelings and actions that marks identification as necessary to our ability to use rhetoric for the good both Burke and feminist rhetoricians realize it can be used—the way, I would argue, it can be used to achieve what communication theorists Josina Makau and Debian Marty advocate as cooperative argumentation: a mode of deliberation and argumentation that recognizes our fundamental interdependence, plurality, and the necessity of perspective-taking. For as Timothy Crusius concludes in his 1999 book *Kenneth Burke and the Conversation after Philosophy*, “Burke argues that we must treat one another as persons, [that is] as beings capable of choice and action,” and, I argue, it is
the principle of identification that allows for the transformative moments that encourage such treatment to occur (231).

Understanding the Rhetorical Strategies of Identity and Identification

Before I move on to showing how such transformative moments can occur by applying Burkean identification to science-fiction television, it is important to first be clear about how identity and identification can be and have been used critically by the field since Burke and how they can be used to accomplish feminist goals. The first of these terms, identity—as well as the problem that the field has faced defining it rigorously—has been well articulated by rhetorical theorist Dana Anderson. In fact, in his 2007 Identity’s Strategy: Rhetorical Selves in Conversion, Anderson seeks to bring “identity’s rhetorical functions more clearly into the critical foreground” by developing a “framework for discussing…how identity is made” and “exercised toward persuasive ends” (5). Although Anderson acknowledges that few rhetoricians will find the idea that identity is rhetorical to be “novel,” he, nevertheless, recognizes that, despite the frequency with which the term identity and its corollary identification appear within the field, there is not an “established or consistent framework” guiding inquiry into their “rhetorical potentials” (13). Thus, to begin his analysis of conversion narratives as a site of the “rhetorical strategy of identity,” he defines that strategy as “the influencing of others through the articulation of our sense of who we are” (4, emphasis in the original). For Anderson, then, “identity matters less as something that one ‘is’ and more as something that one does in language; or, more exactly, identity matters as something that
one does to an audience through the expression of who or what one is” (4, emphasis in the original).

In order to articulate how identity functions in this way, Anderson grounds his analysis in Burkean rhetorical theory since Burke is not only largely responsible for identity’s insertion into rhetoric, but as Anderson argues, Burke also “embraces” the “problem of identity” rather than shying away from it as others do (32). According to Anderson, for Burke,

Identity…is a terrain of dialectical transformations, a place where our identifications with and divisions from aspects of the world commingle as we daily define who we are (our substance) and, consequently, how we should act (our motives). As such, the persistence of our refashionings and renamings is a sign to Burke not of identity’s theoretical wrongheadedness but of its social indispensability, its generative role in language and human relations. (32)

Because Burke recognizes the fluid nature of identity and its role in the social drama of human existence, Burke’s “problem of identity” is not something to be solved but rather is a problem that “asks for something more ambitious than solutions. It asks for our continued interest in probing human symbol use to find the spots where this ‘problem’ arises, where grammatical, rhetorical, and symbolic transformations of identity can and do transpire” (Anderson 33).

In order for such transformations of identity to continually occur, identity must be considered not ontologically but rather experientially, as “a word not for what a person or self ‘really’ is but rather for a person’s ability to articulate and to act or perform a sense of self or self-understanding” (Anderson 6). In this way, identity is doxastic: a “commonsense understanding” that grounds “both rhetoric’s need for the term and
rhetoric’s responsibility to the activities that happen in its name” (7). Taken then as doxa, identity names “the commonly held belief that human selves are capable of—and arguably incapable of functioning without—some sense of self-definition, some answer to the question of ‘who I am’ in the culture, society, and world they inhabit” (9).

However, as Anderson goes on to argue

…this self that is a person’s interpretative object in creating identity is as culturally, doxastically governed in meaning as is identity; accordingly, those features that a culture holds as foundational or intrinsic to selves—gender, race, ethnicity, or family relationships, for example—often most powerfully influence the ongoing process of self-interpretation that informs one’s identity (9).

Because of this, Anderson argues that these influential cultural features must be reflected in identity: they are “the norms” of what he says Charles Taylor defines as the “undamaged human personhood,” which Anderson says John Perry argues consists of the “attributes [that] the person finds it difficult or disturbing to imagine himself or herself without” (Anderson 9; Taylor 27; Perry 190). This understanding of identity makes it something that is “sometimes a matter of choice” and “sometimes a matter of acceptance,” seeing as it is both something that the agent can choose to express and something that the agent has been persuaded he or she should or must express (9).

Anderson’s recognition of these two different ways in which aspects of identity come about accounts for the two major ways in which identity and identification have been developed by the field, neither of which, I will argue, are wholly suitable for feminist rhetoric (9).
Second-Person Identity Constitution

The first way that identity and identification have been developed by the field aligns with identity being treated a “matter of acceptance” and is, using my terminology, *second-person identity constitution*, otherwise known by the field as *constitutive rhetoric* (a term I conceive of more broadly). This type of rhetoric was theorized by Maurice Charland in his 1987 article “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois.” For Charland, constitutive rhetoric is that which calls its audience “into being,” and Charland argues that it is able to do so by accomplishing three ideological effects (134). The first ideological effect is the process of “constituting a collective subject” with which the audience will be able to identify themselves or their future selves as (139). Charland’s example of this is the *Peuple Québécois*—the people who will be the citizens of a sovereign Quebec if it is established. In order for that collective subject—that which the independence movement created—to be effective, however, the potential sympathizers must be able to identify themselves as part of the *Peuple Québécois*. For Charland, that identification becomes possible due to the second ideological effect: the “posing of a transhistorical subject,” or, in other words, the suggestion that consubstantiality exists between the collective subject and the audience (140). In the case of Charland’s example, this consubstantiality is established via the shared ancestry of the *Peuple Québécois*, the original French settlers of the area, and the current citizens of Quebec (140). If the audience is receptive to this suggestion of consubstantiality, they will have identified themselves as the collective subject (in this case, the *Peuple Québécois*), or, put in another way, they will have identified *with* what Edwin Black posits as the *second*
persona. Unlike with the “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign, here is an instance of rhetoric purporting to operate using identification as instead of identification with; however, that use of identification as is largely illusory: because of the relationship between the collective subject and the second persona, I would argue that in order for second-person identity constitution to work, the rhetor’s attempt to persuade the audience to identify as someone or something must result in the audience identifying with that someone or something. In this way, identity as “a matter of acceptance” meets identity as “a matter of choice”: the rhetor successfully persuades if the agent chooses to identify, which reveals identification as (at least insofar as it is a rhetorical move) to largely be merely a difference in semantics from identification with, albeit—importantly for me and for feminist rhetoric—one that problematically obfuscates the power and agency of the audience.

The final ideological effect that Charland argues must be accomplished has to do with that obfuscation of the audience’s agency in relation to what action the rhetor desires the audience to take. In order for the audience to respond the way the rhetor wants, Charland claims that the rhetor must create the “illusion of freedom” (the third ideological effect). What Charland means by the “illusion of freedom” is that the audience must feel that the collective subject—and, therefore, the audience themselves—chose the rhetor’s desired course of action even though it had already been established for them by the rhetor (141). For Charland, then, in order for such rhetoric to be successful, the rhetor’s “narrative consistency” concerning the end of the story must be maintained by the audience through their performance of the “certain set of acts” the rhetor hoped to
persuade them to take up (141). In this way, Charland accounts for the relationship between identity, identification, and persuasion: By relying on the rhetorical strategy of identity to express the substance of the collective subject and then, through the demonstration of consubstantiality, persuading the audience that they, in fact, represent that subject, the rhetor is able to use identification with the collective subject to persuade the audience to act. Thus, if each step in the process is successful, the rhetorical strategy of identity leads to identification which leads to persuasion.

This clear relationship between identity, identification, and persuasion helps clarify how these three concepts relate to each other in situations where identification as becomes identification with. As already stated above, I see that shift from as to with blurring the concept of identity as a “matter of choice” and identity as a “matter of acceptance,” but I do recognize that second-person identity constitution, at least as it is defined by Charland, is predominantly a rhetoric that demonstrates how identity expression can be seen as the result of the rhetor treating identity as if it is a “matter of acceptance” only. In essence, second-person identity constitution creates an identity for the audience to accept as their own (or, rather, as a part of their own). Although second-person identity constitution helps find common ground between a “self” and an “other,” due to how that “matter of acceptance” creates the illusion that power and agency belong solely to the rhetor, second-person identity constitution does not align well with the principles of feminist rhetoric.
First-Person Identity Constitution

The second major way that the field has developed the concepts of identity and identification, however, explicitly accounts for rhetorical situations that do not include among their persuasive steps identification as. Therefore, first-person identity constitution, or the self-constitutive act, which was introduced by Anderson in his 2007 Identity’s Strategy: Rhetorical Selves in Conversion, is not problematic in that same way. Anderson’s scholarship analyzes how conversion narratives work, which demonstrates that, unlike second-person identity constitution, first-person identity constitution does not include a collective subject that the audience identifies as. In Anderson’s first-person identity constitution, the individual instead chooses their identity: they start at any given moment with an idea of who they are and choose when and if to transform that understanding of themselves. Unlike with second-person identity constitution, this transformation of identity is driven by the self. Anderson argues that first-person identity transformation results when “conflicts between the principles that individuals embody” must be resolved, leaving those individuals to choose on their own which principle best represents them in any given situation (52).

The manner in which such identity transformation occurs and can be seen as persuasive can be seen through Anderson’s analysis of autobiographical conversion narratives that recount how and why their authors chose to adopt transformed identities. According to Anderson, these autobiographical conversion narratives explore how a “converted political zealot” might tell the story of their identity transformation in ways that would “transform the audience or situation the text addresses” and “perhaps” seek to
“win further converts” (14). In such a scenario, the first ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric—the collective subject—is replaced with the rhetor: the rhetor presents who he or she was prior to conversion. The second ideological effect—the demonstration of consubstantiality—is also different from second-person identity constitution: there is no identification as since the rhetor is not creating an identity for the audience to adopt but is instead presenting themselves in a way that they hope the audience will recognize as consubstantial. Because of this, the audience chooses whether or not to identify with the rhetor due to whether or not the audience sees themselves and the rhetor as sharing significant similarities. In this scenario then, the final ideological effect—the illusion of freedom—is not an illusion: although there is a pre-determined narrative end for the rhetor in the text (conversion), there is not necessarily an explicit call-to-action, and, therefore, there is no specific resultant action that functions as a way to definitively evaluate whether or not the text has successfully persuaded its audience. Thus, due to the role of choice, the rhetor who relies on first-person identity constitution is more aligned with feminist rhetoric than the rhetor who relies on second-person identity constitution is: in rhetoric involving first-person identity constitution, identity for both the rhetor and the audience is a matter of who they chose to be—the agency of the audience is not obfuscated.

In this way—when the rhetorical strategy of identity is treated as a “matter of choice” and not a “matter of acceptance”—identity and identification operate in a way that is similar to how feminist scholars like Gearhart have traditionally desired rhetoric to work. Rather than “coercing” the audience toward a particular action, belief, or identity,
rhetors who rely on the rhetorical strategy of identity and consider identity constitution to be a “matter of choice” invite their audience to consider another person’s perspective, which may or may not produce resultant action (and is not judged as effective or ineffective by whether or not any direct action results). By not explicitly trying to control the audience’s response, the audience and rhetor are placed on equal ground: both are treated as capable of choosing how to act and who to be.

In this way, first-person identity constitution appears to be ideal for feminist rhetoric: it is invitational; it is focused on perspective-sharing; it makes way for understanding a “you” that is substantively different than “I”; it acknowledges mutual power and freedom of choice. However, unlike second-person identity constitution, first-person identity constitution does not help us navigate the relationship between self and other (since it merely presents the self), and feminist rhetoric needs something that does—otherwise we have no versatile tool with which to come at issues of discrimination, oppression, and more. Second-person identity constitution is more ideal, then, due to that: at the grammatical level, it is about “you” and “I.” However, due to the way it functions, second-person identity constitution is only ever really trying to navigate the relationship between the like-minded (wherein that “you” is chosen as the addressed because that “you” is already considered consubstantial to the “I” in some way), and feminist rhetoric specifically needs a way in which to navigate the relationship between

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9 This is not to suggest that first-person identity constitution cannot reflect and achieve the goals of feminist rhetoric: it can, does, and can be exceedingly good at doing so. What first-person identity constitution cannot do, though, is provide rhetoric with a methodology with which a rhetor who is not already a participant in a situation but who desires to engage in it in ways that align with feminist principles can intervene. I argue that feminist rhetoric needs that.
the oppressed and the oppressor, the majority and the minority, the privileged and the not. Therefore, although first- and second-person identity constitution on their own can each achieve part of what feminist rhetoric requires, both are insufficient. So, if both first- and second-person identity constitution are not fully suitable, what is left?

Third-Person Identity Constitution

In the current dichotomy established by Charland and Anderson, the rhetor constitutes the audience (second-person identity constitution) or the self as rhetor constitutes the self (first-person identity constitution), neither of which, I have argued, can wholly accomplish feminist rhetoric’s goals. What I argue, then, also needs to be accounted for is third-person identity constitution: rhetoric wherein the rhetor constitutes an Other that is neither the self nor the audience in order to, explicitly or implicitly, negotiate the relationship between them. Not only do I ultimately see this type of rhetoric as most promising for accomplishing the goals of feminist rhetoric, it is also the type of constitutive rhetoric that many rhetors attempting to accomplish feminist goals often rely on. So, if third-person identity constitution appears to be our best bet (and our most relied on method—outside of using first-person identity constitution to serve as witness), how does it work?

Like first- and second-person identity constitution, third-person identity constitution relies on the three persuasive steps outlined by Charland. Depending on the goal of the rhetor, the second and third of those persuasive steps varies, but regardless of the goal, the first step is the constitution of that third-person Other. The second step,
depending on whether or not the rhetor desires the audience to identity with or against the third-person Other, can either be the demonstration of consubstantiality between the Other and the audience or it can be the opposite. The third step, again, has two options: it can function like Charland’s version of second-person identity constitution wherein there is a specific action that the rhetor is trying to produce and that the effectiveness of the rhetoric will be judged by, or it can function like Anderson’s version of first-person identity constitution wherein there need not be an explicit call-to-action. Therefore, due to the various ways in which the steps can be taken (and, as discussed below, the various ways in which the constitution of the Other can occur), third-person identity constitution (and, indeed, first- and second-, seeing as only one example of each has been considered) can either align with feminist principles or not.

The misalignment that often results, I argue, stems from third-person identity constitution most often consisting of constituting a real third-person Other that is different from both rhetor and audience (or at least from the rhetor). In the worst-case scenario when third-person identity constitution is used, the rhetor may constitute a third-person Other as a scapegoat. In more benign situations, the rhetor may unintentionally express an identity for a third-person Other that that Other may then feel forced to accept, leaving third-person identity constitution to function much like Philip Wander’s third persona (the alienated audience). And even in scenarios wherein the rhetor has the best of intentions concerning Other-constitution—wherein the rhetor is pursuing feminist goals—the rhetor may express an identity for that third-person Other that remains problematic due to inaccuracy and/or presumption.
The “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign, again, represents an example of how third-person identity constitution, when it attempts to accomplish feminist goals, often still falls short and ends up relying on identification and persuasion in ways that feminist scholars are often uncomfortable with. As 13emcha made clear, the “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign constitutes Trayvon Martin’s identity in a way that does not fully represent Trayvon Martin, that uses identification to highlight only the aspects of his identity that allow for like-mindedness, and that uses his identity to accomplish its own goals (which may or may not be goals that Trayvon would have shared and may or may not be goals that will suitably address situations like Trayvon’s). Although, as stated before, I do see good in the “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign and do think its goals are necessary (albeit insufficient), I do also recognize the problems that make Lyon and 13emcha so stridently oppose identification. In rhetoric such as the “I Am Trayvon Martin” campaign, the third-person Other ends up being spoken for rather than being allowed to speak, and their identity is constituted for them rather than constituted by them: despite good intentions, power and agency are still—perhaps even more so than in the case of second-person identity constitution—stripped from them. In this way, third-person identity constitution represents many of the concerns feminist rhetorical scholars such as Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Jacqueline Joyce Royster identify and seems to solidify why Burkean rhetoric and feminism are often considered to be misaligned.

So if this is the case, if even in our best-case scenarios we engage in rhetoric problematically, how can we use it to accomplish feminist goals? How can we use identification to produce feminist rhetoric? How can we create an atmosphere wherein
ethical communication between persons with different value systems, perspectives, and goals can take place? How can we ensure that individuals are invited to see each other in terms of their particularities without skewing those representations? How can we ever constitute an identity other than our own without taking power away from those we seek to serve? And how can we ever become unshackled by any of these questions and others like them? The only answer seems to be that we cannot, or that first-person identity constitution is the only way despite its limits. But I think that we need more than first-person identity constitution. I think, despite the issues outlined above, that we do need third-person identity constitution, and so, then, my solution is science fiction.¹⁰

The Rhetoric of Science Fiction and Science-Fiction Television

Although it may seem a jump, science fiction provides an answer to those questions. In science fiction, the third-person Other need not have a referent—it need not be the rhetor, the audience, or an unintended audience—because, in science fiction, the Other can be conceptual. In science fiction, that conceptual third-person Other cannot speak on its own because it does not exist. By not having a specific referent in reality,¹¹ the third-person Other in science fiction can function in many ways like Anderson’s

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¹⁰ In general, I would prefer that throughout this text, science fiction were read as science fiction and fantasy, but for the sake of readability, managing the scope of the project, and because it better reflects the nature of most of the television shows later used, I use the term science fiction alone. I see both science fiction and fantasy (and, to some extent, horror) as subsets of a larger genre—the fantastic—and I see the fantastic as generally operating in the rhetorical manner I describe in this project (and fantasy, actually, as embodying it most consistently).

¹¹ Science fiction that operates simply as allegory (where individuals or groups are meant to specifically reference real individuals or groups in the world—such as a race of aliens being purposively representative of the Japanese) would generally carry with it all the concerns of non-science-fiction third-person identity constitution. The texts I will be examining do not engage in allegory in this manner due to the Other operating conceptually.
autobiographical conversion narratives since, in such science fiction, the third-person Other is not an explicit construction of an identity for the audience to adopt. In this way, science fiction can be invitational; it can be focused on perspective-sharing; it can make way for understanding a “you” that is substantively different than “I”; it can acknowledge mutual power and freedom of choice; and, unlike other rhetorics, it can be used to imagine possibilities. The negotiation of identity and consubstantiality in science fiction does not need to represent how things have been or are: it can represent how things could or might be. Due to this, I argue that third-person identity constitution in science fiction is not only an answer to how we can produce rhetoric that may be able to accomplish feminist goals less problematically but that it is also, in doing so, proof of why Burkean identification need not be considered violence and that any persuasion that results need not be considered force.

I argue that science-fiction narratives are able to accomplish this type of persuasion because they rely on cognitive estrangement to create an understanding of the present through their presentation of a novum,¹² or a new strangeness, that marks their storyworld as different from, and yet similar to, our own. This relationship between the

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¹² Darko Suvin’s concept of the novum is based on science fiction’s investigation of the what if. According to David Seed, science fiction “compels the reader to revise presumptions of plausibility,” using the unfamiliar to defamiliarize the ideas and concepts it discusses (4). This defamiliarization, Suvin argues, allows science fiction to revise these presumptions by causing cognitive estrangement: science fiction sees the “norms of any age, including emphatically its own, as unique, changeable, and therefore subject to the cognitive view” (7, emphasis in the original). Narrative theorist Carl Malmgren argues that science fiction approaches reality with those “what ifs” by calling into question “the uses (and abuses) of technology and power relations in general,” providing “venues for ‘thought experiments’ which can have cautionary value,” and fostering “adaptability and tolerance in its readers” by acknowledging and appropriating the inevitability of change (171). These “thought experiments” are spawned by Suvin’s novum: the “strange newness” caused by changed premises that challenge reality through innovation while still being considered “not impossible” by the audience (4; viii).
genre’s rhetoric and reality—this sameness and difference—creates a space wherein controversial issues can be considered apart from the value-systems, perspectives, and goals that might usually pinhole an individual’s response to them. In fact, due to this use of nova, science-fiction narratives are able to rhetorically engage with a myriad of issues—everything from technology to sexuality. This remarkable argumentative and conceptual range is due to the different levels of the storyworld at which a novum can be inserted to transform, as narrative theorist Carl Malmgren argues, the actants, social order, topography, and natural laws defining that storyworld (16). This range and power allows such narratives to reflect on the issues of their time subversively through defamiliarization, such as in the case of the reimagined *Battlestar Galactica*, which Tiffany Potter and C.W. Marshall argue reflects the fears and concerns of a post-9/11 America, allowing its audience a way to process and explore those fears and concerns without bringing in the trauma or politics of the real event. It is, thus, the very nature of science fiction that makes it rhetorical and that creates the possibility for an atmosphere wherein ethical communication can be modelled and can occur.

Although all science-fiction narratives are rhetorical, the science-fiction narratives that most closely engage with Burkean identification are science-fiction narratives where the novum comes at the actant, or character, level. Much of the focus in these narratives is on the conceptualization of the Other and on humanity’s relationship to that Other. In such science fiction, the new actant tends to fall into one of three

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13 The manner with which science fiction operates—the relationship between sameness, difference, the novum, and the way in which defamiliarization encourages the audience to transform their ideological beliefs—marks the genre as a bit atopan. For more information about how atopan rhetoric functions, see Joshua Reeves’ “Suspended Identification: *Atopos* and the Work of Public Memory.”
categories—monster, alien, or machine—and the narratives focused on actant-based nova tend to concern issues of first contact or sustained encounter and have consistently grappled with the binary distinction generally made between self and other. This binary distinction, so often relied on in human thought, has traditionally led to problematic envisionings of the relationship between different individuals or groups. The attempt to encapsulate the relationship between such entities as binary—exclusive and based fundamentally on difference—tends to result in an oversimplification of the complexities of one or both entities, resulting in stereotype, discrimination, or misunderstanding. Some science-fiction narratives explore the emotions and ideas that cause those tensions and problematic relationships by allowing that distinction to remain oversimplified. In films such as Ridley Scott’s *Alien* and James Cameron’s *The Terminator*, the Other is kept fully Other—its subjective experience and motivations left opaque—and the anxiety surrounding confrontation with the Other is what is primarily examined.14 Much science fiction, however, furthers that investigation of the relationship between the self and the Other by attempting to remediate the often problematically defined pairing by encouraging the audience to identify with the Other as a being with similarly understandable motives, desires, and inclinations as the self.

Just as in the case of third-person identity constitution of real Others, these science-fiction narratives can be problematic. Because allegorical relationships can be drawn between reality and science fiction, science-fiction scholars such as Isiah Lavender and Jessica Langer have noted that, while these texts can powerfully illuminate issues of

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14 As each franchise expanded, however, the presentation of the Other became more complicated.
discrimination in our own time, they often do so while failing to fully consider the implications of how they represent the Other. Scholars such as these tend to focus on revealing the problematic nature of such rhetoric by demonstrating the relationship between characters (Other and not) and specific issues of race, class, gender, and so on.

A prime example of such scholars’ concerns can be found in Star Trek: The Original Series since the impulse to imagine the relationship with the Other ideally and sometimes uncritically is at the heart of the Star Trek universe. Gene Roddenberry's Star Trek has this impulse at its heart because it attempted to embody a secular humanism more liberal than the cultural mores of its time. From its multicultural and gender-inclusive crew, including an African-American female communications officer despite Civil-Rights tensions, a Russian weapons officer despite Cold-War tensions, and a Japanese helmsman despite World-War-II tensions, to the oft-cited first interracial kiss on network TV, Star Trek offered to his viewers a progressive vision of the future in response to the identity politics of its time. However, looking back at Star Trek critically through an identity-politics lens, it is clear that Star Trek failed to fully encapsulate that secular humanism and that, through its idealism, it fails to engage in issues of race, class, gender, and more in fully unproblematic ways. For example, although Uhura may be part of the bridge crew, her role on the bridge lacks the weight of the rest of that crew—she appears as a token minority—black and female.¹⁵ And although Starfleet may give equal

¹⁵ More recent prequel additions to the Star Trek franchise have, in many ways, addressed this issue. In both Enterprise (2001-2005) and the J. J. Abrams movies (2009; 2013), the role of the communication officer is made more evidently substantial: because technologies such as the universal communicator have not been fully developed, the communication officer’s language skill and ear-training are crucial to most every encounter—both with other humanoids and with technologies. Also, it is
opportunities to both men and women, Kirk's escapades and the predominant treatment of women by him and his crew reveal a patriarchal, although often reverential, understanding of woman as wholly Other. In fact, even that oft-cited first interracial kiss is problematic: its occurrence is the result of force, not love or passion. However, unlike many identity-politics critics and theorists like Lavendar and Langer, my goal is not to criticize *Star Trek*. The reason I am not particularly concerned about specific critiques scholars such as Lavender and Langer have made about the ways in which race, gender, sexuality, class, and other identity-politics issues have been portrayed in science fiction is because, although these concerns are valid, important, and necessary, my particular interest lies less with how well each text deals with the specifics of identity politics than I am in how its focus on the conceptual Other can transcend the cultural mores of the time. My argument is that science fiction’s use of the conceptual Other can provide feminist rhetoric a way with which to model how to approach difference ethically—even if we cannot imagine what each new difference that will become important to identity politics will be.16

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16 In this way, the conceptual Other functions much like Burke’s rhetoric does. For although Celeste Condit thought it necessary to go “post-Burke” in order to account for our current society’s identity and cultural issues, Robert Wess recognizes that Burke can account for these because he sees them all as properties of the individual and society: “Conceived in Burke’s culture sense, properties function in identifications of varying sorts, not only class, but also ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation…” (188). For, according to Wess, Burke’s rhetoric “does not theorize in advance where to expect the lines in the sand to be drawn—race, gender, the economy”—rather it “prepares us to be ready for anything” (38).
This interest in the conceptual Other and how science fiction models ways to approach difference ethically brings us back to the second reason for this project: that science fiction, in general, and the science-fiction television shows I analyze here, in particular, can be seen as advocates for Burkean identification as a necessary component of feminist rhetoric and as prime examples for how argumentation based on identification can be used and created in a feminist manner. The television shows I will be analyzing are ones that attempt to remediate humanity's relationship with that conceptual Other—a relationship that has been traditionally defined problematically. These television series shift the terministic screens\(^{17}\) concerning the antithetical pairs human-monster, human-

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\(^{17}\) Terministic screens are a descriptive concept Burke introduced in the chapter “Termistic Screens” within his book *Language as Symbolic Action*. He describes how each individual necessarily relies on a set (although not static) terminology—governed by their culture, upbringing, individual experiences, field, religion, and the like—which determines their perception of reality and delimits their responses to it. He describes the effect these screens have on an individual’s perception of reality as being akin to filters influencing the perception of objects in a photograph:

> When I speak of “termistic screens,” I have particularly in mind some photographs I once saw. They were different photographs of the same objects, the difference being that they were made with different color filters. Here something so “factual” as a photograph revealed notable distinctions in texture, and even in form, depending upon which color filter was used…

(45, emphasis in the original)

These linguistic filters are made up of terminologies that, like a photograph, reflect reality but also necessarily function as a “selection of reality” and, because of that, “a deflection” of it (45, emphases in the original). As such, “the nature of our terms affect[s] the nature of our observations,” directing “the attention” toward some aspects and away from others (46, emphasis in the original).

Furthermore, Burke argues—as is pertinent to my discussion of the terministic screens concerning antithetical pairings such as human-monster—that “All terminologies must implicitly or explicitly embody choices between the principle of continuity and the principle of discontinuity” (50). A key example he uses to demonstrate this phenomenon is the perception of man's nature by Darwin and by a theologian: Darwin sees man as different in degree from other animals; the theologian, as different in kind (50). The first’s terministic screen involves the principle of continuity, focusing Darwin’s observations on the similarities between different kinds of animals, which leads to his theory of humanity’s evolution; the second’s terministic screen involves the principle of discontinuity, focusing the theologian’s observations on man’s differences from animals, allowing for his similarities with the divine (50). Due to these opposing terministic screens, both will have difficulty seeing things from the other’s perspective. However, the analysis of such terministic screens—by revealing the “kinds of observation implicit in the terminology”—can allow for better understanding of differing perspectives and for better chances at negotiating them (47).
alien, and human-machine into at the very least dialectical pairs, stripping some of the animosity and hierarchy from the sets of terms by encouraging the audience to identify with the third-person Other. What these science fiction shows are especially good at recognizing and demonstrating about identification is the same thing that Burke makes clear about it: “to begin with ‘identification’ is…to confront the implications of division” (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 22). To identify with someone or something is to at the same time to identify against something or someone, as can be seen in one of the promotional materials for the popular science-fiction film *District 9*: a sign reads “For Humans Only: Non-Humans Banned” with the image of a “prawn,” the derogatory terms for the aliens in the movie, crossed out. When science fiction confronts that division by inviting its audience to identify with, for example, the “prawn” Christopher Johnson and his son, what it is asking its audience to do is to recognize themselves as consubstantial, or of the same nature and essence, as that Other. In *District 9*, for instance, this happens in two main ways. The first way is by creating commonplaces between the audience and the Other. The alien Christopher Johnson and his son are shown to be similar to human fathers and sons: they engage in normal domestic activities, demonstrate affection, and behave as a family unit. The audience is invited to sympathize with them due to these commonplaces and due to the focus put on telling their part of the story. This invitation to sympathize is then furthered by the human bureaucrat Wikus being transformed into a “prawn.” Wikus, as a stand-in for the human audience, is very literally made consubstantial with the Other: he becomes it. At the beginning of the film, Wikus, who was put in charge of relocating the aliens, treats the “prawns” as if they are pests,
disregarding their wants and needs entirely. However, once he gets sprayed with a fluid that transforms him into an alien as well, Wikus comes to understand that this treatment is more than cruel. After being treated as a “prawn” by his own people, Wikus joins forces with Christopher Johnson and his son and helps them escape their internment. Once such consubstantiation has occurred between Wikus and Christopher Johnson, the link between the human and the alien in the movie has been transformed such that it is no longer necessarily antagonistic: Wikus, Christopher Johnson, and the child belie and undermine that necessity.

The series I analyze here are interested in doing the same and are ultimately able to do so because, like District 9, they invite their audience to imagine the life of a non-human Other. However, unlike films like District 9, these series have the added benefit of asking their audience to not only imagine that life but also to consider that individual as someone with whom they look forward to inviting into their living room each week. Although much of what I will say in this project concerning these particular science-fiction television series applies to other science-fiction narratives as well—especially to feminist science-fiction literature, which in many ways acts as a progenitor for many of these series—I focus on these television series for that reason: due to their serial\textsuperscript{18} nature, 

\textsuperscript{18} When I use “serial” here, I am not using it in opposition to “episodic,” but rather to refer to the recurrent and segmented nature of the programs only. Although distinctions could be made in regards to each series’ narrative mode (in most cases, though, it would be most prudent to refer to the series analyzed here by using television scholar Jason Mittell’s term “narratively complex” since they balance serial and episodic elements), I do not consider such distinctions to be fundamentally important to this project since the narrative mode does not necessarily impact whether or not remediation of the Other can occur. For example, although the original Star Trek is considered an episodic series, for those who watched not for the weekly adventure but for the relationship between Kirk, Spock, and Bones, the series would have operated more as a serial, developing characters and remediating the idea of the alien through the revelation of Spock over time as worthy of human acceptance both due to his own complex individuality and his
there is an implied level of intimacy as well as a natural focus on character development. By inviting viewers to watch as these characters’ lives unfold each week, these series encourage viewers to feel connected to beings who are, on the surface, very different from themselves—an act which relies on and encourages the development of feminist principles—and which, ultimately, I argue, marks such science fiction as a species of invitational rhetoric that is functional due to its reliance on identification. In the following chapters, I hope to show how each the series I analyze here operates in that way.

**Conclusion**

Through my analysis of how the following science-fiction television series rely on third-person identity constitution to create and model principles of feminist rhetoric, I hope to continue the work of scholars like Anderson and Charland by broadening our understanding of “the range of constitutive acts by which we can, and often do, transform ourselves and the world” (Anderson 37). In order to do so, I ask three questions concerning the function and nature of third-person identity constitution in these series, which line up well with the questions Anderson poses as well as with Charland’s three ideological effects: 1) how is the identity of the Other made in the text, 2) how is that Other’s identity marked as consubstantial, and 3) in what ways is identification with that Other used to persuade (4). Furthermore, in addition to asking those questions concerning the means with which these television shows persuade, I also focus on the goal or friendship with Kirk and Bones. In essence, I do not find the narrative mode to be a limiting factor: single episodes, character development across episodic series, narratively complex series, and full serials can all exhibit the type of rhetoric I am exploring (although it may be the case that some types of narrative modes do so more consistently than others).
purpose of that persuasion such that the ways in which Burkean identification aligns with feminist rhetorical principles are revealed. I define these principles much as Glen and Lunsford do, arguing, as they do, that a rhetoric that rejects “combat and dominance in favor of sharing perspectives, understandings, and power” does so through focusing on “inherent worth, equality, and empowered action (for rhetor and audience alike)” (14).

In order to answer those questions and to address how those principles are revealed, I rely on close readings of several science-fiction television shows, wherein each set of close readings has been chosen to specifically showcase an answer to each question as well as to demonstrate one of the identified principles that is representative of feminist rhetoric. The first three chapters, therefore, first begin by revealing the role and function of third-person identity constitution. Each of these chapters focuses on one of the three steps of third-person identity constitution I have identified and analyzes a science fiction text(s) to reveal the means with which that step of third-person identity constitution occurs, what feminist principle(s) it espouses, and how this step aligns Burkean identification with feminist rhetoric. The first chapter does so by analyzing several of Joss Whedon's television shows, including *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, in regards to the terministic screens used to constitute the identity of the Monster, showcasing how varying types and transformations of terministic screens that name can be used to argue for and reinforce the importance of recognizing and upholding the feminist principle of equality for all. The second chapter does so by analyzing portrayals of the Alien in science-fiction texts, including *Farscape*, in relation to how a grammar of consubstantiality can be used to demonstrate the feminist principle of inherent worth.
while also allowing for identification with the Other to occur. The third chapter focuses on the importance of self-determination, especially in regards to recognizing the audience's agency, and does so by looking at how the re-imagined *Battlestar Galactica* serves as an exemplar of how the final step of third-person identity constitution—which I refer to as the invitation-to-perspective—operates in science fiction. Taken together, these three chapters illustrate instances of third-person identity constitution, how it can function, what feminist rhetorical principles it can espouse, and what Burkean concepts create and help identify and analyze it.

After demonstrating how Burkean analysis of what I term the third-person identity constitution in these texts reveals their feminist principles and highlights the efficacy of using Burkean concepts to produce and analyze feminist texts, I argue in the final chapter that such science-fiction texts are a species of invitational rhetoric. Unlike the traditional formation of invitational rhetoric, however, these texts do not ignore or avoid the problem of identification but use identification with the conceptual Other to help foster identification across difference by creating common ground—in essence, I argue that these texts reveal the power of recognizing and affirming the role of Burkean identification in an invitational approach by showing how Burkean identification can strengthen and extend invitational rhetoric by creating common ground so that identification and understanding with real others may be more likely to occur. Furthermore, the last chapter posits that understanding such science fiction as both a Burkean and feminist rhetoric may prove a useful tool for feminist rhetoricians as they engage in and nurture constructive conversations about the many differences between us,
seeing as it can be used as a lens that can operate across identity politics, allowing it to potentially operate as a tool in many different areas of rhetorical study. It is my hope that when science fiction and Burkean identification are considered in this a way that they may prove to be a tool that can be useful to feminist rhetoricians regardless of their research, teaching, and/or advocacy area, especially for those who are unable to serve as witness themselves and must seek other non-patriarchal methods for intervening in and mediating conversations concerning difference, hierarchy, and oppression.
In order to understand how third-person identity constitution functions and, in particular, how it can function in a constructively transformative way, it is important to get a clear sense of how the rhetorical strategy of identity leads to identification and, ultimately, to persuasion. In other words, it is important to understand how third-person identity constitution functions as a type of constitutive rhetoric—how it consists of similar persuasive steps to Charland’s example of the Peuple Québécois: identity is made in the text, consubstantiality is established by the text, and there is an attempt to persuade the audience to think or act in a particular way. Although there are many ways in which these three steps can be achieved, in actant-based science-fiction narratives they often occur in a similar manner. This is particularly the case in regards to the first step—the original constitution of identity—since this constitution, in all its varied forms, is always of the same type: it is the constitution of a particular instance of the conceptual Other. Since the conceptual Other of science-fiction narratives can generally be abstracted into three main categories—that of monster, alien, and machine—commonplace understandings of those taxonomies tend to inform the original presentation of the conceptual Other’s identity. Therefore, in order to understand the manner in which that identity is made and potentially transformed, it is important to understand the function and malleability of that taxonomy, or, in other words, it is important to understand the
way in which the terministic screens governing our understanding of the Other function
and shift. Being able to articulate not only what terministic screen is being used, but also
how it is or can be transformed highlights the ways in which Burkean concepts like the
terministic screen can be generative for feminist rhetoric: in the following examples, the
identification and transformation of terministic screens regarding the labelling of others
reveals the problematic nature of Othering and, ultimately, the necessity of recognizing
equality—both of which represent fundamental goals of feminist rhetoric.

This chapter, then, focuses on that first step, examining the way in which such
terministic screens are used to constitute and transform the identity of the Other and, in so
doing, reveals the problematics of Othering and the fundamental need for both
recognizing equality and treating others as equals. Although many texts could be used to
demonstrate how terministic screens are used to constitute the third-person Other, this
chapter analyzes the pre-Avengers television oeuvre of Joss Whedon due to the fact that it
presents a uniquely visible example of how identity is made and transformed. The
transparency evident in these texts concerning that first step comes from the fact that each
of the shows in Whedon’s pre-Avengers television oeuvre constitutes the conceptual
Other—in this case, the Monster—in not only different ways but in ways that depend
upon how the Monster had been constituted in Whedon’s previous texts. In essence,
Whedon’s pre-Avengers television oeuvre can be seen as an extended argument wherein
several different ways of constituting the Other lead to the final more feminist terministic
screen that Whedon had been working toward all along. Since, as Burke explains in his
1966 *Language as Symbolic Action*, terministic screens are not only a “reflection of
reality” but also a “selection” and “deflection” of it that directs the “attention” by determining what part within all that is seen the viewer will focus on or “at,” Burke’s conception of the terministic screen is pivotal to understanding the means with which Whedon manipulates such screens to direct and redirect that “attention” in regards to the Monster (45).

Therefore, in this chapter, I will be looking at the four primary ways that Whedon’s texts constitute the Monster and how that varied constitution of the Monster leads to the final transformed terministic screen concerning it. Through the various ways in which the Other is constituted in these texts, I argue that the audience is provoked to acknowledge that the most commonplace understanding of the term monster as not only problematic but also is, ultimately, a term that, when used, actually labels the self. In other words, I argue that Whedon’s pre-Avengers television oeuvre demonstrates the problem of labelling an individual as a monster rather than labelling the particular behaviors or actions of that individual as monstrous: Whedon’s texts reveal the problems inherent in Othering through labelling or naming. Due to this, Whedon’s pre-Avengers television oeuvre is not only a prime example of the first step of third-person identity constitution, but it is also a prime example of the way in which Burkean concepts can be effective tools for accomplishing feminist rhetoric’s goals while also showcasing the way in which science-fiction narratives function as feminist rhetoric and model feminist rhetoric’s principles for their audience.
Whedon’s Ethos and the Metaphor of the Monster

Before analyzing the various ways in which the Monster is constituted in these texts, the specifics of why Whedon’s oeuvre is a prime example of the first step of third-person identity constitution will be discussed since part of what makes it such a strong example of that first step is Whedon’s ethos. Over the past couple decades, through his various roles on projects as director, producer, and writer, Whedon has become, as Scott Kurtz’s popular webcomic PvP argues (and people wearing the t-shirt derived from it evince), the “new master of nerds.” Before gaining this level of ethos within the community, however, Whedon had a fairly successful career working as a scriptdoctor and writer on mainstream projects such as Roseanne (1988-1997), Speed (1994), Toy Story (1995), Twister (1996), and Alien Resurrection (1997), while also writing comics for Marvel. Recently, however, Whedon’s career has skyrocketed, starting with the attention he received from winning numerous awards, including an Emmy, for his internet short Dr. Horrible’s Sing-a-long Blog (2008) and culminating in him being hired to direct the first Avengers movie (2012). This recent success has allowed him to delve into more obscure projects such as the ur-horror film Cabin in the Woods (2012) and a modernized Much Ado about Nothing (2012) that was filmed entirely at his home. These more unconventional projects represent a return to the type of work that brought Whedon success and gained him ethos through his original television oeuvre. In fact, despite the takeoff of Whedon's career in 1989 with his start as a writer on Roseanne, even Whedon considers the beginning of his career to be Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1997). As he told Entertainment Weekly in 2007, Buffy “was the first time I told a story from start to finish
the way I wanted” (Jacobs n.p.). Once Whedon acquired the opportunity to tell his stories from beginning to end in totality, he not only became, as Scott Kurtz argues, the “new master of nerds,” he also became the auteur he is so well known for being.

That auteurship and the ethos associated with it has led Whedon and his original television oeuvre to gain a level of popularity akin to that of Gene Roddenberry’s *Star Trek*—not only in terms of cult status and industry recognition but also in terms of academic output and interest. In fact, scholarly output investigating Whedon's work has occurred in such mass that the Whedon Studies Association (WSA) was officially formed in 2009 to bring under one banner the scholars who have been engaging with Whedon’s work since 1999. In addition to gathering these scholars together, the WSA houses journals and conferences devoted specifically to scholarship on Whedon's work: *Slayage*, the online international peer-reviewed journal that was established in 2001; *Watcher Junior*, an online peer-reviewed journal for undergraduate work in Whedon Studies that was established in 2005; and a biennial conference that was first held in 2004.19 Although focal points in Whedon Studies scholarship such as Whedon's use of language20 and his feminist approach21 can be identified, the scholarship falling under the WSA's purview is

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19 Before that biennial conference was established, other conferences featured scholarly work concerning Whedon's oeuvre. The first *Buffy*-centered conference was held in 2002, and, since 2002, conferences such as the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association (PCA/ACA) have regularly put out CFPs specifically on Whedon’s shows.

20 There is, for example, a book-long investigation of the lexicon used in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* by linguist Michael Adams that was featured on PBS’s *Do You Speak American?*. In *Slayer Slang: A Buffy the Vampire Slayer Lexicon*, Adams demonstrates how slang is created in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, how that slang is reflective of the current state of the English language, and how that slang has influenced the English language. Adams also provides a glossary of terms, citing examples of their use within the storyworld and outside it.

21 For example, American Studies scholar Lorna Jowett wrote a gender studies primer based on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. In *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the Buffy Fan* (2005), Jowett
eclectic and calls upon a variety of disciplinary focuses and methodological approaches including disciplines as disparate as musicology\textsuperscript{22} and law.\textsuperscript{23} Despite this range, much of Whedon Studies scholarship shares a central focus: Whedon's use of metaphor—from that of comparing high school to hell to the metaphor of the Monster itself. In fact, most Whedon Studies scholars agree, according to literary and philosophical scholars J. Douglas Rabb and Michael J. Richardson in “Myth, Metaphor, Morality and Monsters: The Espenson Factor and Cognitive Science in Joss Whedon’s Narrative Love Ethics” (2009), that what is found in Whedon's work is a “narrative ethics developed by metaphor,” particularly in terms of monsters and monstrosity (n.p.).

Like many Whedon Studies scholars, I, too, am interested in the way in which Whedon uses the metaphor of the Monster, particularly since, as Richardson and Rabb observe, Whedon uses the Monster to challenge “stereotypes assumed by the audience” in order to engage with the “ethical issues [that] usually arise when we attempt to deal with the more complex marginal members of radial categories” (n.p.). In essence, Whedon uses the Monster to accomplish rhetorically feminist goals: to engage with the ethical issues that arise in situations involving Others and Othering. In challenging these stereotypes about monstrosity—that which informs the default terministic screen

\textsuperscript{22} For example, Neil Lerner’s “Music, Race, and Paradoxes of Representation: Jubal Early’s Musical Motif of Barbarism in ‘Objects in Space’” (2008) investigates how timbre and melodic gestures are used in \textit{Firefly}'s soundtrack, particularly focusing on how the bass clarinet is used whenever the character Jubal Early is on screen and how this use reflects a characteristic representation of villainy in correlation with race in movie and television soundtracks.

\textsuperscript{23} For example, in “Choosing Laws, Choosing Families: Images of Law, Love and Authority in \textit{Buffy the Vampire Slayer}” (2003), law professor Anthony Bradney argues that \textit{Buffy the Vampire Slayer} “offers a sophisticated interpretation of the nature of law and the role that law plays in people’s lives” (n.p).
concerning the Monster—Whedon ultimately engenders compassionate empathy for the Monster by humanizing it. Through his use of Burkean identification to gradually transform the audience’s terministic screen concerning the relationship between monster and mankind, Whedon is able to demonstrate that the evil generally externalized to the Monster is in actuality an intrinsic aspect of human nature. As Religious Studies scholar Jana Riess notes about Buffy the Vampire Slayer in “The Monster Inside: Taming the Darkness Within Ourselves” (2004), Whedon's work is “all about confronting our dark sides and learning to live comfortably or at least to co-exist non-violently—with our monster selves,” or, in other words, Whedon’s work is all about recognizing our consubstantiality with those we might otherwise see as utterly Other (n.p.). In this way, Whedon’s work concerning the Monster makes his texts that use it implicitly rhetorically feminist: they renegotiate the relationship between the self and other in a way that attempts to avoid discrimination, oppression, inequality, and domination.

Although the Monster is widely recognized by Whedon Studies as a pivotal concept in Whedon’s work, since Whedon’s original television oeuvre is rarely treated as a unit, the way in which Whedon gradually develops his argument about the relationship between humanity and monstrosity over the course of each of his series has not been fully investigated. This chapter seeks to begin to do just that. By looking at Whedon’s oeuvre as an extended argument beginning with the first episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer and ending with the final episode of Dollhouse, I shift focus away from the individuality of each manifestation of the Monster toward an investigation of Whedon's broader rhetorical agenda. However, although any of Whedon’s television series on their own or taken
together could be used to investigate all three steps of third-person identity constitution, this chapter only focuses on the first step—the constitution of identity—since Whedon’s pre-Avengers television oeuvre is a prime example of that step. It is my hope that, through this examination of identity constitution, I will be able to demonstrate how these four series invite their audiences to recognize the ethical issues involved in labelling and naming others that are so important to feminist rhetoric.

In order to achieve that goal, this chapter focuses on the four primary methods with which Whedon’s texts constitute the Other: the first method, the constitution of the Other’s identity through the presentation of what I term the default terministic screen, is featured most prominently in Buffy the Vampire Slayer; the second method, the constitution of the Other’s identity through the qualification of that default terministic screen, can be seen in both Buffy and Angel through the characters of Angel and Spike; the third method, the constitution of the Other’s identity through an inversion of the default terministic screen, is displayed most clearly in Angel; and, finally, the fourth method, the constitution of the Other’s identity through the transformation of that terministic screen—in this case, by removing the term monster as a noun—begins in Firefly and is fully realized in Dollhouse. By looking at these various ways in which Whedon’s texts constitute increasingly dissonant constructions of stereotypical representations of the Monster (and, in turn, of humanity), I hope to show how this extended argument culminates in the final terministic screen proffered by Dollhouse: a terministic screen wherein the term monster has been eliminated as a category of being and the potential within all individuals to behave in monstrous ways has been revealed. In
essence, I argue that the final understanding of monster is that there are, unequivocally, no monsters—metaphor or not—but that anyone who chooses to behave in a manner that fosters or creates inequality—including using terms to Other—is behaving monstrously. In essence, Whedon’s extended argument reveals the problem in limiting anyone’s identity—even those who are behaving badly—by identifying them and not their behavior as Other. Due to that re-conceptualization of the term monster and, as is implied by the series, other terms like it, I argue that, ultimately, these texts achieve both of my project’s goals: 1) they provide striking models of how third-person identity constitution is exemplary of both Burkean and feminist rhetoric by showcasing the power of using a Burkean concept like the terministic screen to articulate how identity is constituted and can be transformed in constructive ways; and 2) they teach their audience to think in a manner that is consistent with feminist rhetorical theory by showcasing the importance of questioning the terms we use to describe others and by advocating equality for all.

**The First Method: Presenting the Default Terministic Screen**

The first method used by Whedon is the most common and least rhetorically feminist when used alone since the default terministic screen presents the term only as it is already understood. Whedon, however, does not use this method in isolation; rather, he uses it as the beginning of an argument. In order to convince his audience to define monster differently than they would by default, Whedon uses an entymematic approach: he begins with an unstated commonplace and uses a structure similar to a truncated syllogism in order to reach his desired conclusion—an understanding of monstrosity that
runs counter to the original, assumed premise. By first meeting the audience where they are—with that commonplace understanding of monster—Whedon creates common ground from which to argue. He, then, challenges his audience’s default terministic screen concerning monster by qualifying, inverting, and transforming it. Through these challenges to the default terministic screen, Whedon makes way for the second and third steps of third-person identity constitution—identification with the Monster and persuasion in regards to that identification with the Monster. Therefore, understanding what the default terministic screen concerning the Monster is and where it comes from is fundamental to understanding not only how to transform it (the focus of this chapter), but also how to create the groundwork for the second step (discussed in chapter three) and the third step (discussed in chapter four).

The Default Terministic Screen Concerning the Monster

So, what is the default terministic screen concerning monster and where does it come from? Although default terministic screens can arise from many different situations and environments, in terms of those that define the conceptual Other, they usually arise from common popular-culture representations of that Other (whether it be monster, alien, or machine). Therefore, we can get a sense of what the general understanding of a term like monster is by looking at recent commonplace representations of that conceptual Other. A prime example of a very pervasive representation of the Monster is Lord Voldemort of the Harry Potter franchise, particularly in regards to the films. If we look at

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24 For further examples of science-fiction narratives that operate in this way, see Ellen Peel’s 2002 book Politics, Persuasion, and Pragmatism: A Rhetoric of Feminist Utopian Fiction where she demonstrates how several instances of feminist science-fiction literature also operate in this manner.
the markers that indicate to the protagonists and the audience that Voldemort is to be considered a monster, we find those markers manifesting both through his changed physical appearance and his deeds. This can be seen by tracking Voldemort’s life chronologically, the majority of which is provided in the film version of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. To begin with, through backstory, the audience learns that Voldemort was once the fairly handsome and promising young student Tom Riddle. As the audience catches glimpses of Tom Riddle’s gradual change of identity into that of Lord Voldemort, they witness him become less and less human in appearance as his deeds become increasingly immoral. By the time Voldemort is re-embodied (after having split his soul into eight pieces through acts of murder and then having lived an incorporeal existence while he regained back his strength), he no longer resembles the misguided boy he once was: his body now betrays him as a monster. This understanding of the relationship between physical appearance and deeds makes Lord Voldemort an exemplar of the default terministic screen concerning the Monster, wherein *monster* is that which demarcates the limits of man: the Monster’s body is marked as not human (or no longer human) and that bodily difference betrays moral difference.

This default terministic screen is not only representative of popular culture’s understanding of the Monster but is also representative of traditional understandings of it. For example, German professor of literature Beate Ochsner’s historical analysis of the term’s etymology and its philosophical uses reveals that the term *monster* has traditionally named those who have been treated as apart from mankind due to the suspected immorality that their physical appearance supposedly betrays. In practice, this
has meant that monsters have represented the boundary between human and the Other (physically and morally) by granting evil an external form that can serve as a warning for mankind. Although this means that the term *monster* has functioned as a way to distinguish and discriminate against difference—marking who or what is not understood as an unknowable and irretrievable Other—both the actually embodied monster (historically, the physically or mentally deformed or handicapped) and the imagined monster (that of story) have traditionally functioned on a more figurative level as well.

This more figurative level is revealed through Oschner’s discussion of Montaigne, the philosopher whose understanding of monstrosity comprises Oschner’s contemporary understanding of it. According to Oschner’s reading of Montaigne, the actual “one and only true monster” is the ego, and it is the ego that creates all other monsters (247). Oschner suggests that in general practice, people have found that “the continuous creating of new monsters… guarantees a reassuring feeling of having them under control” (248). He argues that humanity's long history of both creating monsters and classifying others into that category, therefore, “demonstrates how we keep in check the inner monster by domesticating and (at least visually) fixing the monsters on the outside” (248). Although the idea of keeping the inner monster in check may sound ideal, the very attempt to externalize monstrosity—especially when practiced in real life—is a monstrous act in and of itself. Even though granting evil an external form may be an attempt by man to exorcise the monstrous, the Othering inherent in that taxonomic move
marks the person doing that taxonomic work as the individual who is behaving monstrously.  

A prime example of how this process works can be seen through one of the quintessential monsters of the genre: the creature of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, who though unnamed, is often mistakenly called Frankenstein. That misidentification of Frankenstein as the name of the creature and not the name of scientist who created him suggests the very quandary that Oschner describes: in the original text, who is the monster? The creature our culture now thinks of as the quintessential monster or, as popular culture's misnaming suggests, Victor Frankenstein himself? Certainly, naming Frankenstein's creature as the monster aligns with the default terministic screen: the creature is recognized as a monster first because of its physical appearance and later because of its deeds. However, as Oschner suggests, although the term *monster* functions as a way to distinguish and discriminate against difference, the designation of others as monsters can be used to demonstrate that the designation itself is actually projection. In fact, in the original *Frankenstein*, Victor demonstrates that his creation is an externalization of his ego, what Oschner calls the “inner monster,” when he deems himself responsible for the deeds of the creature he created. Although it is true that in actuality the creature’s actions are its own (especially since many of its earliest actions make evident that it could choose to act morally), Victor retains ultimate responsibility for the creation of a monster (and not just a creature) because before the creature itself

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25 A similar claim could be made concerning the scapegoat mechanism in rhetoric, and Burke does make it through his notion of transformation, purification, homicide, and suicide—particularly in regards to their relationship to narrative.
proves to be immoral, Victor has considered it to be so. By categorizing the creature as a monster at the moment of re-animation, Victor symbolically created a monster where before he had only physically created life, and that symbolic creation—that other-imposed taxonomic act—is the monstrous one: Victor acts as a monster because he does not recognize what harm his “inner monster” has done to another creature by projecting the undesirable aspects of humanity upon it. In essence, Victor Frankenstein represents a more accurate understanding of what it means to be a monster: by naming and treating another individual as Other, Frankenstein behaves monstrously.

The Default Terministic Screen & the Vampires of Buffy the Vampire Slayer

This more accurate understanding of what it means to be monstrous represents the more feminist definition Whedon ultimately advocates for; however, before he attempts to persuade his audience of that definition, he begins his argument at the start of Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1997-2003) by acquiescing to that default terministic screen. The tension that drives Whedon’s ultimate argument is found between the show itself and its mythos, which sets up clear boundaries: “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.” As that mythos and the series’ title suggests, the Chosen One is Buffy Summers, a high-school girl in Sunnydale, California who struggles to balance her desire to be a normal teenage girl with the weight of her Slayer responsibilities, and the main example of the forces of darkness are the vampires she slays. In regards to these vampires, Whedon initially relies on a similar understanding of the Monster to that of Lord
Voldemort to set up the dichotomy between human and monster: the vampires in *Buffy* have two different faces they can display— their human face and their vampire face. When Whedon's vampires are behaving monstrously, such as when they feed off of humans, their human faces morph into the faces of the monsters they are behaving as.

The teaser of the pilot episode “Welcome to the Hellmouth” sets up this dichotomy well: Darla, a seemingly innocent schoolgirl, is led into the local high school at night by a teenage boy. Claiming that she is scared that they will be caught, Darla has the boy make sure no one is around. After he verifies that they are alone, Darla's face morphs into that of a vampire, and she bites him. Although Darla appears innocent at first, once she acts monstrously, her body betrays her nature just as Voldemort's did.

This use of the default terministic screen regarding the Monster is further elucidated when, later in that same episode, Darla reports back to the Master, and the audience sees for the first time the oldest living vampire in Whedon's storyworld. Whedon uses the character of the Master to cement his use of the traditional construction of the Monster: the Master's face no longer has the flexibility to change like Darla's does. Although other vampires in Whedon's storyworld can hide their monstrous nature and move among humans camouflaged, the Master must keep hidden in order to not be recognized as a vampire.\(^{26}\) In this way, Whedon constructs the Master as a vampire who has become too monstrous to look otherwise: his face now reflects only that of the demon inside of him; the human he must once have been no longer exists. As the characters of

\(^{26}\) This marks the Master as a being similar to the purely demonic übervamps that are introduced near the end of the series.
Darla and the Master both make clear, Whedon's initial use of the vampire does not challenge the default terministic screen. However, Whedon quickly begins to undermine that default terministic screen by applying tension to it by qualifying it, and, in doing so, begins to build a more feminist argument that will define *human* and *monster* as neither mutually exclusive nor categorically self-evident.

**The Second Method: Qualifying the Default Terministic Screen**

The next step in building that argument begins when Whedon qualifies that default terministic screen by introducing two vampires that challenge the audience’s and the characters’ understanding of the term *monster*: Angel and Spike. This process begins almost immediately in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. For although the mythos of *Buffy* sets up clear boundaries between *human* and *monster*, Buffy’s task becomes immediately more difficult than just slaying the evil that pours out of the Hellmouth located beneath her school. By the seventh episode of the show, “Angel,” Buffy discovers that, although she is not supposed to do anything more than slay the creatures she has been told represent an uncomplicated evil, she must be judge as well as executioner. The need to discern which monsters deserve to be killed and which do not comes with the entrance of the first vampire that qualifies the terministic screen concerning *monster*: Angel.

*Qualification through Ensoulling Vampires: Angel*

The entrance of Angel qualifies the terministic screen because Angel, unlike any other vampire in the history of the show at this point in the narrative, has been given a token of humanity: a soul. In the storyworld of *Buffy* and *Angel*, vampires are humans
that lose their soul once they are sired (turned into a vampire by another vampire).

Angel’s story begins much like that; however, unlike other vampires in Whedon’s storyworld, Angel was cursed by gypsies more than a hundred years prior to the start of the series and was forcibly given back the soul he had lost. By re-ensouling Angel—magically restoring his forfeited soul—the gypsies cause Angel to feel remorse for the crimes he committed over the course of a hundred some years. However, by re-ensouling Angel, the gypsies also unwittingly restored Angel's humanity to him (by which they mean his conscience). Due to this, at the beginning of Buffy, two hundred some years since Angel was first sired, he fights against and not with other vampires, seeking redemption for his past crimes. Therefore, although categorically a monster, Angel’s actions are akin to Buffy’s, and that qualifies the audience’s and the characters’ terministic screen concerning the Monster.

This qualification happens when Angel's classification as a monster becomes contestable, and the original terministic screen governing the storyworld begins to destabilize. By giving Angel a soul—that token of humanity—Whedon demonstrates to the audience that the terms human and monster are not as self-evident as the show's mythos suggests. Angel occupies a liminal place between human and monster: his actions are those of a man, but his markings are those of the vampire that the demon within him causes his body to manifest. Before the gypsies restored Angel's soul, he was called
Angelus, and anytime over the course of either *Buffy* or *Angel* when that soul is lost, the vampire/demon Angelus resurfaces as the dominant personality in Angel's body. By giving Angel this dual identity, Whedon puts stress on the notion that humanity and monstrosity are mutually exclusive categories.

The rhetorical significance of the juxtaposition of Angel's dichotomous nature becomes particularly evident in “Orpheus,” an episode from the spinoff series *Angel*. In the arc leading up to “Orpheus,” Angel's soul is magically extracted in order to temporarily release Angelus for questioning. However, things do not go as planned, and Angelus escapes before Angel’s soul can be reunited with him. In “Orpheus,” Angel’s friends attempt to re-capture Angelus, so that they can restore Angel's soul to his body. In order to restrain Angelus long enough to lock him up, the team has Faith, another vampire slayer, take a psychedelic drug and then allow herself to be bitten. Once Angelus is under the influence of the drug from Faith's bloodstream, the rest of his friends are able to cage him while they work on restoring Angel's soul to his body. The psychedelic drug in both Faith and Angelus's bloodstream traps both of them in Angel/Angelus's fevered mind. While under the drug's influence, both Angelus and Faith are forced to witness moments from Angel's life when he was first struggling to reconcile his desire to feed on humans with the conscience his newly restored soul had granted. During these flashbacks, it is quickly made clear to the audience that the moments both Angelus and Faith are witnessing are only new to Faith: Angelus is reliving moments he was

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27 This happens first in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* when Angel feels a moment of “true happiness” and breaks the gypsies' curse. Later in *Angel*, his enemies, who want to release Angelus, attempt to discover ways to extract Angel's soul.
previously made to witness. Whedon uses Angelus's disgust with having to watch Angel once again save puppies and feed on rats to demonstrate to the audience for the first time that Angelus has always been present within Angel. The juxtaposition of the very separate man (Angel) and monster (Angelus) within one body undermines monstrosity and humanity's mutual exclusion. In “Orpheus,” Whedon demonstrates that although Angel's soul allows him to act like a man, it does not banish the monster inside him, thereby demonstrating that humanity and monstrosity can co-exist within both those who look like men and those who look like monsters.

*Qualification through Ensoulling Vampires: Spike*

Although Angel's soul is what acts as the switch to determine who is in charge of Angel/Angelus's body, Whedon uses Angel's dual nature to foreshadow his upcoming argument that choice is what actually determines whether monstrosity will be acted upon. Whedon begins to make this argument over the course of both *Buffy* and *Angel* with the character of Spike, the only other vampire in Whedon’s universe to ever become re-ensouled. Spike, in many ways, represents the quintessential bad boy: he has greased-back platinum-blonde hair, wears a trenchcoat, and has both a well-muscled body and a punk-rock attitude. He enters Sunnydale during the second season of *Buffy* with the intent of killing Buffy, and, seeing as he is one of the few vampires to have killed multiple slayers already, Spike represents a significant threat. That such a vampire acts as a qualification to the default terministic screen is especially challenging to it, then, and is at
the heart of this portion of Whedon’s argument: that monsters can act as men if they choose to.

During the fourth season of *Buffy* (1999-2000), Spike's role as a qualifier regarding the term *monster* begins. During this season, he is captured by the Initiative, an arm of the U.S. Military whose mission is to capture demons and run experiments on them in an effort to learn to fight them better and to develop weapons based on each demon's natural capabilities. When the Initiative captures Spike, they implant a cerebral microchip in his brain that makes it impossible for him to hurt humans without experiencing debilitating pain. Although this chip does not change Spike’s desire to feed off of humans, it effectively inhibits his ability to do so. The Initiative's chip, then, works as a device to demonstrate that the actions of a monster and the body of a monster can be incompatible. However, because the Initiative's chip, unlike a soul, is not a token of Spike's humanity, it does not make Spike want to be less monstrous or look less monstrous, instead, it merely suppresses his ability to behave that way.

That change, however, does happen once Spike escapes from the Initiative. When he discovers that he is incapable of keeping himself fed, he seeks sanctuary from Buffy and her friends—who have adopted the name “The Scoobies” to describe themselves—and barters his knowledge of the Initiative for their protection. This co-existence leads to Spike tenuously joining the “good guys”—especially once he discovers that the chip only inhibits violence against humans and not against demons. However, after working with the Scoobies for about a year, Spike's rationale for fighting alongside them switches from wanting to fight something—anything (even if it is just other monsters)—to wanting to
be a good man. Throughout the fifth season of *Buffy* (2000-2001), Whedon dramatizes this change in Spike by having him fall in love with Buffy. By that point in the series, Spike believes himself to be redeemable; however, Buffy thinks that he is incapable of love because he is soulless (“Crush”). Over the course of seasons five and six (2000-2002), Spike, nevertheless, pursues a relationship with Buffy. When her eventual scorn and his self-contempt become unbearable, he leaves Sunnydale on a quest to prove that he is a man worth loving by seeking to earn his soul back from the demons it was forfeited to when he became a vampire. Throughout the fifth, sixth, and the final season, Spike tries to prove to Buffy through his actions that he is more than a monster—that he is a good man. This culminates in the final episode of the series where Spike sacrifices himself to save the world. At that point in time, Buffy deems him to be a man worthy of her love despite the physical markings that betray his existence as a monster.

*Qualification through Ensoulling Vampires: Angel vs. Spike*

Although both Angel and Spike separately qualify the audience’s and the characters’ terministic screen regarding *monster*, that qualification is made most fully when the two ensouled vampires are compared. During the final season of *Angel* (2002-2003), Whedon does just that, juxtaposing Spike's relationship to monstrosity against Angel's to demonstrate the importance of choice. This begins to take place once Spike is magically brought back to life on *Angel* after *Buffy*'s finale. His re-corporealization results in chaos, allowing one of the antagonists to trick Spike and Angel into believing that the presence of two ensouled vampires where, according to the Shansu prophecy,
there should only be one, is tearing apart the bounds of reality. Spike and Angel are then convinced that the only way to re-stabilize the world is for one of them to drink from the Cup of Perpetual Torment and prove himself to be the ensouled vampire of whom prophecy speaks. Since both Angel and Spike want to be that vampire—because it would mean eventually becoming human again—they fight, and Spike makes explicit to Angel and to the audience what the difference between each of their re-ensoulments is:

You had a soul forced on you as a curse [to] make you suffer for all the horrible things you'd done. But me? I fought for my soul. Went through the demon trials—almost did me in a dozen times over, but I kept fighting 'cause I knew it was the right thing to do.

In that episode (“Destiny”), Whedon uses the character of Spike to remind the audience that Spike did not need a token of humanity in order to act human even though Angel did. Although the possession of a soul makes both Angel and Spike potential candidates to fulfill the Shansu prophecy and someday lose the external markings and limitations of the Monster, what really makes both of them not monsters in the eyes of the other characters and the audience is the choice both have made to not act monstrously.\(^\text{28}\) In both *Buffy* and *Angel*, Whedon uses the character of Spike to prove that a monster can suppress his monstrosity and choose to behave with humanity all on his own.\(^\text{29}\)

Furthermore, since, as Spike makes clear, it was his conscious choice to seek a soul, this ultimately also proves that Buffy was not only wrong about him being unable to love without one, but that she was wrong to consider him a monster when he no longer

\(^{28}\) For more on the role of choice in Whedon’s body of work, see Rabb and Richardson’s 2007 *Existential Joss Whedon: Evil and Human Freedom in Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Angel, Firefly and Serenity*.

\(^{29}\) This is especially evident once the chip fails and is removed.
considered himself to be one. As Mary Alice Money argues in “The Undemonization of Supporting Characters in Buffy” (2002), all the characters in Buffy and Angel exist on a continuum between monstrosity and humanity that is not static. She suggests that Whedon's monsters become less monstrous “by loving, by changing, [and] by choosing” and that his humans become less human “by disregarding love, by becoming inflexible, [and] by operating as a machine without choice, knowledge, or wisdom” (102). Her analysis of Whedon's continuum demonstrates that the very terms human and monster are operable only when applied statically and without regard for the ability of the Other—human or monster—to choose to be different than he or she is.

In the case of Spike, it turns out that Spike has often chosen to act as a man and not a monster: when Spike first entered Sunnydale, he did so with his romantic partner Drusilla, the vampire who sired him. Although other vampires besides these two do have relationships, Spike's commitment to Drusilla is considerably different than others. In the season two finale, Spike makes a deal to join forces with Buffy in order to stop the apocalypse so that he can continue to live with and love Drusilla, proving that, unlike other vampires, he prizes love over blood and sport. Ironically, this move on Spike's part dooms his relationship with Drusilla, who eventually leaves him because she thinks his deal with the Slayer makes him not “monster enough” (“Lovers Walk”). Heartbroken, Spike returns to Sunnydale and kidnaps Willow (one of the Scoobies), demanding she make a love potion for him to use on Drusilla (“Lovers Walk”).

Because of his feelings for Drusilla and the actions he takes due to them, Spike has always been (according to Money's continuum) a man: before being re-ensouled and
before having a chip surgically added, Spike's first priority was love. Even other demons recognize this about Spike: for example, during Spike's first arc on the show, the Judge, another demon, claims that Spike “stinks of humanity” because he shares “affection and jealousy” with Drusilla (“Surprise”). Furthermore, it is revealed that Spike has never truly been fully monster in Money’s terms: in flashbacks, it is revealed that, when Drusilla first sired the foppish poet that Spike was, his first act as a vampire was to sire his mother to save her from dying (“Lies My Parents Told Me”). From his first episode—in fact, from the point of his siring itself—Spike reflects Money's human characteristics (loving, changing, and choosing), thereby not only strongly qualifying the terministic screen governing the term monster but also demonstrating the problem inherent in labelling him as such and pushing the audience’s terministic screen regarding the monster toward a more feminist understanding of it.

**The Third Method: Inverting the Default Terminus Screen**

When Whedon demonstrates through Spike and others like him that monstrosity is a choice and not an unavoidable biological distinction, he showcases that monsters have the option to behave monstrously or not. This qualification of the terministic screen—from the default wherein the Monster’s body is marked as not human (or no longer human) and that bodily difference betrays moral difference to an understanding that the Monster’s body does not necessarily indicate moral difference—encourages the audience to identify with characters that cannot expel monstrosity, but, like Angel and Spike, can choose to control it. Such a qualification, then, prepares the audience for the
third method for constituting the third-person Other being discussed in this chapter: an inversion of the default terministic screen. Like with the qualification of that screen, this process begins with Angel—this time, not through the character himself, but through the characters he interacts with.

As mentioned earlier, Angel (1999-2004), Whedon's next series that ran concurrently with Buffy, features Angel as the show's main protagonist. Beginning where the end of the third season of Buffy left off—with a blurred understanding of the relationship between physical appearance, immorality, and monstrosity—it also begins where the plot left off: with Angel leaving Sunnydale for Los Angeles. Once in L.A., Angel meets up with Doyle, a half-demon who sees prophetic visions of people in trouble, and Cordelia, a girl who went to high school with Buffy. Together, Angel, Doyle, and Cordelia form Angel Investigations, a detective agency that “helps the helpless.” The premise of the show centers around that agency, whereby, with the help of Doyle's visions, Angel positions himself between the humans of L.A. and its monsters, seeking—like Buffy—to defend humanity from the forces of darkness.

Over the course of the series, Angel Investigations employs humans as well as demons who have chosen to protect humanity instead of harm it. Just as the characters Angel and Spike qualified the default terministic screen, these demons begin the process of inverting it. For example, Doyle, much like Angel and other vampires, is able to transform his physical appearance between human and demon while refraining from inhuman action. However, unlike vampires, Doyle is part demon not due to his humanity being taken from him but because he was born that way: his mother was human (and he
was raised as human), but his father was a demon. Additionally, unlike Angel and Spike, Doyle never has to fight against urges to harm others. In fact, Doyle largely rejects his demonic heritage altogether: although that heritage provides him many affordances—superior strength, heightened senses, and more—he rarely chooses to rely on any of these because they require transforming into his demon-side. Half-human and half-demon, Doyle showcases, then, like Angel and Spike, that acting monstrously is a choice—even if you are biologically a Monster and not a person who was transformed into one.

Doyle’s effect on the terministic screen is limited though. His half-human heritage functions much like Angel’s soul: it is a token that indicates his similarity to the audience rather than fully challenging that audience to engage with a character that is being presented as fully Other. Lorne, on the other hand, another demon who eventually joins Angel Investigations, does not have such a token. His green skin, red eyes, and horns mark him as visually in-human and are features that are unable to be hidden. Like Doyle, Angel, and Spike, though, these physical markings give the wrong impression: Lorne is a peaceful individual, a lover of music, and someone who has physically separated himself from his family and culture because he recognizes himself as being at odds with that heritage. By the time he joins Angel Investigations, Lorne engages in behavior that is entirely in opposition to his family and his people: saving humans from demons. In doing so, Lorne inverts the expectation concerning the term monster by remaining physically monstrous even while operating as a hero. In this way, Angel Investigations—through characters who are part or all demon—strengthens Whedon’s more feminist argument by
further showcasing that the physical markings of monstrosity do not necessarily indicate its presence.

During the course of *Angel*, that argument is furthered even more so, however, when Angel Investigations finds itself at odds with the L.A. law firm Wolfram & Hart. On the surface, Wolfram & Hart appears to be a normal law firm; however, Angel and his team discover that Wolfram & Hart caters to and is ultimately run by exactly the kind of clientele Buffy worked against—“vampires, demons, and [other] forces of darkness.” This revelation inverts the idea that those who appear human are good and those who are physically different are monsters. This inversion of *monster* relies on a similar technique to that which grounds *Buffy*. As Whedon Studies scholar Tracy Little argues in her article “High School is Hell: Metaphor Made Literal” (2003), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is built around the literalization of metaphors teenagers use to describe their high-school experience—such as a boyfriend literally becoming a different person after his girlfriend sleeps with him. In *Angel*, Whedon uses this same strategy to literalize metaphors commonly used to describe the lawyers at Wolfram & Hart, such as “they made a deal with the devil.” In fact, almost all of the lawyers at Wolfram & Hart are humans that knowingly work for demons—and not demons like Doyle or Lorne but rather demons who are seeking to bring about horrors—and their clients who have similar agendas.

Just as the demons that work with Angel at Angel Investigations demonstrate that the physical markings of monstrosity on their bodies do not indicate monstrous intentions or actions, those who appear human at Wolfram & Hart demonstrate that monstrosity need not be physically displayed at all in order for it to exist. Two lawyers from Wolfram
& Hart, for example—Lilah and Lyndsey—are both not only fully human but also generally considered physically attractive by the other characters. Therefore, nothing about their physical appearance or their heritage reveals their capacity to act monstrously. Nevertheless, they—and the other attorneys at Wolfram & Hart—do engage in monstrous work on behalf of their more stereotypically monster clientele (and under the guidance of the senior partners, a cabal of demons). In this way, through characterizing “monsters” like Doyle and Lorne as heroes and humans like the lawyers at Wolfram & Hart as villains, Whedon’s Angel inverts the terministic screen such that monster no longer refers to markings on or within the body but rather only to the immorality such markings were once supposed to indicate, revealing the issues inherent in normative categorization.

The Fourth Method: Transforming the Default Terministic Screen

Qualifying the term monster and then inverting it such that those who appear to be monsters are the heroes and vice-versa prepares viewers for a transformation of that default terministic screen into a more feminist one. Such transformations of default terministic screens will always be varied in content and execution, but in order for them to be transformations and not just entirely different terministic screens, they must, in some way, at least briefly acknowledge the default terministic screen before they set it aside. When considering Whedon’s pre-Avengers television oeuvre as an extended argument, we can see such engagement with the default terministic screen through the presentation of it in Buffy, the qualification of it in Buffy and Angel, and the inversion of it in Angel. Whedon’s final two series from that original oeuvre, Firefly and Dollhouse,
build on that qualification and inversion. However, even if only considered on their own and not as part of an extended argument, *Firefly* and *Dollhouse* do each engage with the default terministic screen, even if only briefly or not immediately, as they seek to transform it in a feminist manner by removing the Othering term *monster* as a noun and retaining only the adjective *monstrous*.

The Myth and Reality of Monsters in Firefly

The space-western *Firefly* (2002-2003) begins this transformative process by presenting a premise that does not contain the Monster in the way that *Buffy* and *Angel* did. The supernatural, in fact, is absent from this universe. The audience is asked to consider a world without categorical monsters (vampires, demons, etc.) while also being asked them to identify with protagonists who, while not physically monstrous, are considered monstrous by society due their criminal actions. Set in space in the future after a civil war that began when the outer planets threatened to secede from the Alliance (the central government), *Firefly* follows the captain and crew of the Firefly-class transport ship *Serenity* as they attempt to grant themselves some semblance of the freedom they had previously sought to gain through secession. Since the primary goal in living aboard *Serenity* for the captain, Mal, is to stay as far away from the Alliance as he can, he and his crew are often in the position economically to have to accept any jobs they are offered regardless of their legality.\(^\text{30}\) The criminal nature of many of these jobs

\(^{30}\) This policy leads the crew and its passengers to self-identify as criminals: for example, in the first episode. “Serenity,” the second-in-command, Zoe, refers to herself and her shipmates as “crooks,” in the second episode, “The Train Job,” the captain, Mal, refers to himself and his crew as “thieves;” in that episode as well as the sixth, “Our Mrs. Reynolds,” Jayne, the muscle, and Kaylee, the mechanic, both refer
marks the protagonists as only ambiguously good instead of categorically good. Like in the case of the inversion of monstrosity in *Angel*, the humans of *Firefly* behave in ways that can be considered monstrous; however, unlike the humans in *Angel*, these characters are the protagonists because of and in spite of the ways in which they behave, which further qualifies the term *monster* by challenging the notion that violations of society’s mores indicates the presence of monstrosity.

However, this choice in protagonists is not the major way in which Whedon pushes forward his argument concerning the Monster’s identity or the lack thereof. One of the other main risks that comes with the crew’s chosen lifestyle (due to living away from the major hubs of civilization) is the chance of encountering Reavers. Thought to be “men gone savage on the edge of space,” Reavers are considered campfire-story monsters by most Alliance citizens; however, people like Mal who crew ships that travel farther out from the core planets than other ships do recognize that Reavers are both real and as monstrous as stories suggest (“Bushwhacked”). In the episode, “Serenity,” a Reaver ship passes by *Serenity*, and everyone aboard holds their breath hoping the Reavers “aren’t hungry.” Simon, a passenger aboard *Serenity* who thought that Reavers were just stories, asks Zoe, Mal’s second-in-command, what will happen if *Serenity* is boarded. She explains that “If they take the ship, they'll rape us to death, eat our flesh, and sew our skins into their clothing. And if we're very, very lucky, they'll do it in that order.” A few episodes later, in “Bushwacked,” Zoe's explanation of Reaver behavior is verified. When

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to what they do as “crime;” and, by the ninth episode, “Ariel,” Simon, a doctor who is a passenger, has proposed a heist, and another passenger aboard the *Serenity*, the preacher Book, refers to Simon's foray into the crew's line of work as “moonlighting as a criminal mastermind.”

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the crew boards a derelict vessel, they discover dozens of mutilated bodies hanging from
the ceiling and one hiding survivor that has been driven insane. This presence of the
Reavers as apparent monsters in this storyworld not only firmly engages with the default
terministic screen concerning monster (their bodies betray their immoral action and intent), but it also puts the crew's role as figurative monsters into perspective.

This engagement with the default screen is, nevertheless, always troubled: although the evidence that the Reavers leave behind on that ship in the third episode, “Bushwacked,” paints them as monsters, characters in the Firefly universe do not believe creatures such as monsters actually exist. Whedon uses this tension between the evidence of monstrosity and the Reavers’ existence as myth to trouble their categorization as solely human or solely monster. In addition to this, the various ways in which the characters describe the Reavers further complicates their categorization as monsters. For example, after witnessing the after-effects of what Mal has called a Reaver attack in “Bushwhacked,” Shepherd Book, a religious man who is temporarily living aboard the ship, and Jayne, the ship’s muscle, discuss whether or not the evidence they found was left by men or monsters. Book argues that it was men: “Whatever horror he [the survivor of the Reaver attack] witnessed—whatever acts of barbarism—it was done by men, nothing more.” Jayne, however, says that “Reavers ain't men.” When Book disagrees, claiming that they are just men “too long removed from civilization” and that God could “heal” them, Mal breaks into their conversation and attempts to draw a firm line between men and Reavers: “Jayne's right: Reavers ain't men. Or they forgot how to be. Now they're just nothing. They got out to the edge of the galaxy, to that place of nothing, and
that's what they became.” Because Mal does not think that Reavers have any moral code, he claims they have no “philosophy,” believing they lack humanity completely. Mal thinks the Reavers are “too busy gnawing on your insides” to think or feel at all. Because Mal considers the Reavers to operate much like the Alliance thinks he does—as “lowlife vultures picking the flesh off the dead”—he wants to draw a clear distinction between his role as a figurative monster and the Reavers’ apparent role as actual monsters, even if they are not real monsters in the supernatural sense (“Serenity”). This is important to Mal because, although he may break the Alliance's laws, acting in a way that the Alliance views as monstrous, he and his crew follow a moral code, and he believes the Reavers lack that. In this way, Whedon uses Mal’s distinction between his “monstrous” behavior and that of the Reavers to reinforce that the default terministic screen is problematic. By emphasizing the idea that “monsters” cannot be categorized as monsters solely based on their actions (wherein whoever is judging the actions gets to determine what counts as monstrous behavior due to their own personal beliefs or their society’s mores), Whedon demonstrates that such categorization must also be based on the intentions behind those actions as well.

A fuller transformation of the default terministic screen happens in Firefly’s sequel, the movie Serenity. There, Whedon reveals the true nature of both the Reavers

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31 For example, in the episode “The Train Job,” Mal, Zoe, and Jayne accept a job from Niska, a notorious crime lord, to steal cargo from the Alliance. Once Mal and Zoe discover that the cargo is vital medicine needed to treat a debilitating disease in the town they are hiding out in, they return the medicine to the town's sheriff, thereby making a very dangerous enemy in the angered Niska. When the sheriff confronts Mal about the theft stating that “These are tough times. A man can get a job. He might not look too close at what that job is. But a man learns all the details of a situation like ours... well... then he has a choice,” Mal simply replies “I don’t believe he does.”
and several members of the Alliance in order to shift the role of the Monster fully to humanity—this time not through deals with demons but through Othering and the revelation of the actions that become conceivable due to it. During the movie, River, another passenger aboard Serenity, leads the crew to the planet Miranda where they discover that everyone on the planet is dead. The only activity their scanners pick up is from a beacon that is broadcasting a holographic message left by an Alliance scientist. In the message, the scientist explains what happened to the population of Miranda:

There's been no war here and no terraforming event. The environment is stable. It's the Pax. The G-23 Paxilon Hydrochlorate that we added to the air processors. It was supposed to calm the population, weed out aggression. Well, it works. The people here stopped fighting. And then they stopped everything else. They stopped going to work, they stopped breeding, talking, eating. There's 30 million people here, and they all just let themselves die.

The scientist goes on to explain that a small portion of the population had the complete opposite reaction to the Pax: it caused them to become the uncontrollably violent Reavers. This holographic message provides a history for the Reavers where there was only legend and speculation before—a history wherein there are no categorical monsters, only men that have been transformed into monsters by other men.

By revealing that the Reavers are humans who were turned into monsters by a group of Alliance-funded scientists (who thought they had the right to override the agency of more than 30 million people), Whedon demonstrates that the Reavers are and are not monsters: although they behave and look like monsters, they are neither a separate species nor are they in control of their actions. Compared to the monsters in Buffy and Angel, the Reavers are just as terrifying and immoral; however, unlike those monsters,
the Reavers do not exist as a natural kind that humanity has happened to encounter: just as in *Frankenstein*, the Reavers are monsters that humanity created. By revealing the Reavers to be monsters created by men, Whedon shifts the Reavers away from the category of *monster* because they are not responsible for their monstrous behavior, and that responsibility—that choice—was already made a necessary aspect of the terministic screen due to the qualifications to that screen made by characters like Angel, Spike, and Mal. In doing so, Whedon also demonstrates that monstrosity thrives within humanity, becoming apparent when people either chose to give into it or when they externalize their “inner monster” to someone or something else.

Through the revelation that the monstrosity of the Reavers is a side-effect of an Alliance-directed experiment unwittingly run on the population of Miranda, Whedon indicates to the audience that although the Reavers may act the stereotypical part of the Monster, it is the Alliance itself that represents the Monster most clearly. In both *Firefly* and *Serenity*, Whedon makes clear that the Alliance has no problem applying static labels to anyone that does not conform to what they, as the ruling body, consider proper. When the Alliance looked at Miranda, for instance, they saw a splotch of blight where they were trying to “shine the light of civilization,” and they tried to tame that blight with the Pax. The Alliance's ideology restricts them from seeing anyone who is different from them as anything other than some kind of monstrous. When the Alliance looked at the settlers of Miranda who were struggling with lawlessness and settlement issues similar to those of the Wild West, they didn't see context or struggle or even person, and that is the same way they viewed every other outer planet and the Independents during the War. It is
even how they recast history. According to a teacher at an Alliance school during the opening of *Serenity*,

The Central Planets formed the Alliance. Ruled by an interplanetary parliament, the Alliance was a beacon of civilization. The savage outer planets were not so enlightened and refused Alliance control. The war was devastating, but the Alliance's victory over the Independents ensured a safer universe. And now everyone can enjoy the comfort and enlightenment of our civilization.

The Alliance's word choice (beacon, savage, enlightened, victory, safer, comfort) creates a dichotomy connected to right and wrong—a terministic screen that places people into two mutually exclusive and categorically self-evident camps. While this type of terministic screen is common in war, on Miranda and the other planets, war can no longer be used as an excuse for Othering. In trying to tame the population of Miranda, the Alliance instead killed them or turned them into monsters. In their willingness to ignore agency, to murder, to deny their involvement, and to not consider any of it a human-rights violation, the Alliance itself becomes the monster it has been trying to destroy.

Despite the disastrous effects that resulted from the experiment on Miranda, the Alliance does not stop its meddling with Miranda or with its cover-up. River, too, it turns out, is a creation of the Alliance: the school she attended as a young adult was actually cover for a lab that experimented on select children, turning them into highly trained sleeper assassins and psychics. When triggered, River loses agency and becomes a weapon wielded by the government. Unfortunately for the Alliance, while they were experimenting on River, they accidentally exposed her to the secret of Miranda. Once triggered during *Serenity*, River not only briefly becomes their weapon—scaring herself
and the crew—she also remembers the name of the planet. To prove to herself and the crew that she is not the monster they all now fear she may be, River leads them to Miranda where they discover the truth of River's condition and the Reavers' existence.

After that revelation, Mal brings together his crew back aboard Serenity to discuss what they are going to do now that they know:

This record here's about twelve years old. Parliament buried it, and it stayed buried until River here dug it up. This is what they were afraid she knew. And they were right to fear. There's a universe of folk who're gonna know it too. Someone has to speak for these people.

Y'all got on this boat for different reasons, but y'all come to the same place. So now I'm asking more of you than I have before. Maybe all. Sure as I know anything, I know this they will try again. Maybe on another world, maybe on this very ground swept clean. A year from now, ten? They'll swing back to the belief that they can make people...better. And I do not hold to that. So no more runnin'. I aim to misbehave.

Mal recognizes that the Alliance's belief that they can and should “make people better” complicates connecting the civilized and legal body with the moral right: their belief that they can and should “make people better” forcibly takes agency away from others.

Although the Alliance’s cover-up requires “misbehaving” to correct, the crew is able to bring the truth of Miranda to light. Thus, ironically, it is not those who seek to “enlighten” that do the enlightening; it is from within the underbelly of society—those who the Alliance seeks to “better”—that enlightenment comes. Mal and his crew understand that no one (neither “folk” nor the Alliance) can or should have their agency ignored. In Firefly and Serenity, it is the criminals, the “bad guys,” who understand that civilization does not stop men from being monsters. Just like Buffy, Mal and his crew
recognize that facades can disguise the monstrous—that decisions about who deserves rights based on categorical distinctions deal justice and injustice blindly.

Therefore, the truth in the secret of Miranda is that humans who deny their own monstrosity restrict other humans to monsterhood. It is the same truth as Oschner’s: there are no external monsters except those we create. For both Oschner and Whedon, the only monsters that exist are the humans who, through denying their own monstrosity, name people who are different from them monster and treat those people as if they are utterly Other. Although Whedon argues throughout all of his work that every individual is responsible for their own actions and beliefs regardless of the tenets their society ascribes to, in Firefly and Serenity, Whedon demonstrates the danger of being passive in regards to that responsibility. In doing so, Whedon provokes his audience to accept that there are no monsters except those we turn ourselves into, but it is not until Dollhouse—where there are no ostensible monsters at all—that his rhetorically feminist argument about using terms that Other, like monster, becomes explicit.

The Previously Antagonist Heroes of Dollhouse

Whedon's last series in that initial oeuvre, Dollhouse (2009), extends his rhetorically feminist argument that acting monstrously is a choice that is made by people and people alone by limiting the cast of characters to a set of humans who all behave monstrously at some point or other. Although this complete internalization of monstrosity is the next logical step for Whedon’s extended argument to take, his strong following was initially repulsed by Dollhouse, finding neither its premise nor its characters identifiable.
As Whedon Studies and philosophy scholar Madeline Muntersbjorn explains in “Disgust, Difference, and Displacement in the Dollhouse” (2010):

When the show first aired in February 2009, many of us [Whedon's fans] were not only disappointed, we were disgusted. For all its action-packed shininess, “Dollhouse” seemed to be a euphemism for high-end whorehouse catering to creepy clients with deep pockets and shallow morals. The show was dark and disturbing...(n.p.)

Viewers—as Whedon fans made clear not to call themselves Dollhouse fans—even developed a neologism to describe Dollhouse: squicky (which, Muntersbjorn notes, combines the terms squeamish and icky). Furthermore, Muntersbjorn also notes that early on such fans claimed that they did not “enjoy the first episodes...but watched only because they had faith that the Creator would transform this disgusting dross into the television brilliance for which he is so beloved” (n.p.). As Muntersbjorn argues, Dollhouse did get better, but neither Muntersbjorn nor fans back away from their claim that the depravity of Dollhouse continued to cause discomfort since, as Muntersbjorn writes, Dollhouse is “not so much a dystopian fantasy with a heart of gold, but a bleak portrait of wretched humanity with very little heart whatsoever” (n.p.).

Set in present-day Los Angeles, Dollhouse revolves around an underground elite human-trafficking business that attempts to disguise its depravity with fancy furnishings, high-tech facilities, and a mission statement that claims that they give people what they need. The Dollhouse runs on technology (the “tech”) that was developed by the Rossum Corporation and is able to wipe memories and personality from a human body and then imprint that body with a different set. Rossum uses the tech to program their “actives,” or “dolls,” for whatever missions their clients desire—anything from being programmed to
be someone’s idea of the perfect lover to being programmed with the skills necessary to rob a bank. When not on an engagement, the dolls are kept in their “wiped” state and are considered to be blank slates. While wiped, the dolls stay inside the dollhouse facility where they are kept healthy, in shape, and busy with various exercise and art activities during their supposedly five-year work contract. Although no one could dispute that the dolls are well cared for while in the Dollhouse facility, during their time at the Dollhouse they are not treated as full human beings. Lacking freedom and agency, the dolls are more like the toys they are named after than the people they are: they are treated as Other.

Because of the nature of the Dollhouse and the blank-slate quality of the dolls themselves, none of the characters on Dollhouse are ideal candidates for identification. Although Adelle Dewitt, the director of the L.A. Dollhouse, thinks she is giving clients “what they need” and that she is doing everything in her power to protect the dolls under her care, her stance is an attempt to deny that she is dealing in human trafficking on a day-to-day basis and that the dolls are company property to be maintained. Whedon uses Adelle's objectification of human beings to demonstrate the monstrosity inherent in the Othering process. By objectifying humans into the dolls, she begins to dehumanize them. Furthermore, Adelle is not the only member of the L.A. Dollhouse administration that is culpable for this objectification. Topher, the chief programmer, is also uninterested in whether or not what he is doing to the dolls when he wipes and imprints them is ethical. Instead, Topher is merely fascinated by his own ability to develop the tech beyond where other programmers have. Similarly, the clientele of the L.A. Dollhouse are not any better than the corporation they hire: their willingness to pay any amount of money to have a
person programmed to their specifications makes them more than just complicit in the 
.negation of that other person’s agency and individuality—and it makes them just as 
monstrous. Even the FBI agent who is trying to uncover the dollhouse system is 
eventually corrupted by that very system. At first, only the dolls themselves are 
sympathetic, but they are sympathetic in theory alone. In practice, it is difficult to identify 
with a character that has no character—with each episode, the characters who have 
become known within that episode are reset and only the doll-state version remains and, 
then, only until that doll is re-programmed. By creating of a cast of humans that is largely 
more monstrous than many of the monsters from Buffy and Angel, Whedon challenges his 
audience to identify with characters they consider “squicky.”

As Dollhouse progresses, Whedon begins to show his audience glimpses of the 
humanity of the L.A. Dollhouse administration and staff. For example, the L.A. 
Dollhouse is revealed to be less monstrous than the other dollhouses in the system when 
Bennett, the programmer from the D.C. Dollhouse, watching the L.A. dolls wander about 
in their wiped state, observes to Topher, “You let them roam. They roam like free-range 
chickens. We keep ours more like veal” (“Getting Closer”). Whedon uses Bennett's 
observation about the differences between the L.A. Dollhouse and the D.C. Dollhouse to 
demonstrate that other dollhouses view their actives as animals. Although Adelle and her 
staff must objectify their dolls in order to sell them as products, they still recognize them 
as individuals and do not dehumanize them to the extent that Bennett and others are 
willing to. Similarly, when Rossum decides that the dollhouses are going to begin selling 
off some of their dolls to high-end clients, Adelle refuses to let them sell any of the L.A.
do
lls because she recognizes that those bodies “belong to other souls” (“Epitaph One”). 
Although the L.A. Dollhouse administration and staff remain “squicky,” when Whedon constructs them as the lesser monster, he encourages his audience to identify with them despite their monstrosity.

During the final episodes of seasons one and two, “Epitaph One” and “Epitaph Two,” Whedon pushes this argument further by transforming the L.A. Dollhouse staff into the show's heroes. “Epitaph One” and “Epitaph Two” take place ten years into Dollhouse’s future when Rossum has developed the tech to the point where they can use it to create immortality for a select few and enslavement for everyone else. The impact of Rossum's programmed enslavement on the world’s population is two-fold, much like the impact of the Pax on the population of Miranda: some of the world’s population has been programmed to be extremely violent (the Butchers) and some are passive like the original dolls (the Dumbshows). In this future, Matthew Harding, one of Rossum's high-ranking officials, backs himself up on a hard drive so that he can live forever within any body he chooses. Once in someone else's body, Harding uses that body unscrupulously until it wears out. Whenever he is ready for a new body, he has his lackeys round up a bunch of Dumbshows. After he inspects the line-up of naked bodies that have been brought before him, he chooses another body to transfer into. Whedon uses the character of Harding to demonstrate the monstrosity inherent in the total objectification of another human being. Because Harding sees any human other than himself as a shell that he can choose at whim to use and then discard, his attitude toward the enslavement of human beings exhibits what complete and total monstrosity looks like within a human. Much like some of the
demons in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, Harding and the rest of Rossum feed off of other humans without regard for the individuals themselves. Therefore, although Rossum's employees look human, they do not behave that way. Unlike the Butchers and the Reavers, they choose to act monstrously.

Although the L.A. Dollhouse administration and staff were complicit in what ends up being a softer sort of objectification ten years earlier, in this future, Adelle, Topher, and many of the other staff and dolls of the L.A. Dollhouse fight against Harding and the rest of Rossum. In fact, even though Topher originally discovered the means with which Rossum mass re-programmed the world, he immediately regrets his discovery and tries to stop it, unsuccessfully, from falling into Rossum's hands. By the time of “Epitaph One” and “Epitaph Two,” Topher has been nearly driven insane by guilt and remorse but, despite his mental instability, works to create a device that will be able to reverse the mass programming Rossum executed. Once Topher completes his work, he realizes that the device he has made will have to be activated manually and that the person who does that activating will be killed in the process. In the final scenes of *Dollhouse*, Adelle shepherds the people the resistance has rescued out into the light of day so that they will be in range of the pulse that Topher's device will emit. Although Adelle and Topher began *Dollhouse* as the show's monsters, by the end of the series, the audience and characters mourn with Adelle when Topher sacrifices himself to correct the injustice he helped create. When Whedon transforms the original antagonists of *Dollhouse* into the show’s protagonists, his more rhetorically feminist argument that there are no monsters,
just humans who choose to behave monstrously when they consider and treat other
individuals unequally as Other, comes to fruition.

**Conclusion**

Over the course of Whedon's four series, the apparent monster becomes more and
more human: the vampire of *Buffy* and *Angel* gains a soul, the Reavers of *Firefly* are
revealed to be human, and the monsters of *Dollhouse* are just people—no difference of
species, no myth. What also happens over the arc of these series is that the actual monster
becomes humanity itself: in *Angel*, Wolfram & Hart, although made up of demons or
humans who have made deals with demons, is a law firm, a human entity; the Alliance of
*Firefly* is a government made up of and by men; and in *Dollhouse*, the employees of the
Rossum Corporation are just people, misguided as they may be. In making these two
moves across these four series, the Monster is internalized within Man, leaving no room
for evil to be housed within and blamed upon some unknowable Other. The monstrous,
these series persistently argue, is a force present within everyone: in worlds without
monsters, humans can choose to behave monstrously; in worlds where monsters exist,
they are not confined to monsterhood. In this way, these series do not seek to whiten a
gray world. They do not seek a cure for the monstrous nor an excuse for it in the way that
the Alliance does. Even when a cure is sought in *Dollhouse*, it is not a cure that seeks to
eliminate the monstrous; rather, it reinstates choice. And that is what Whedon’s
narratives insist upon: every one of the characters, no matter where they begin, can
choose who and what he or she wants to be. In this way, these series model feminist rhetorical principles: they recognize agency and model empowerment.

As such, when monstrosity becomes understood to be a choice, the discernment needed to distinguish between human and the monstrous not only falls on the characters within the stories, like Buffy, but on the audience as well. In *Language as Symbolic Action*, Kenneth Burke writes that “all terminologies must implicitly embody choices between the principle of continuity and the principle of discontinuity” (1344). In the presentation of Whedon's worldview through these narratives, the terms *human* and *monster* are both continuous and discontinuous: there is overlap and there is disconnect. If, as these narratives argue, good and evil are both internal and both dependent on choice, we are both human and monster, changing faces as we see fit. The shifts made in Whedon's oeuvre's terministic screens—the presentation of the default terministic screen, the qualifications of that screen, the inversion of that screen, and the transformation of that screen—offer proof for this argument; however, those shifts do not necessarily carry over to the audience: with whom the audience chooses to recognize as consubstantial (the second step, to be discussed in the next chapter) determines where each viewer sees the boundary between humanity and the Monster residing. In this way, each of the television shows in Whedon’s *pre-Avengers* television oeuvre operates in a rhetorically feminist manner: other perspectives and other terministic screens are presented and encouraged, but it is left up to the audience to choose whether or not to change their own perspective and terministic screen in response to them.
Although the choice of whom to identify with is left up to viewers, these narratives make sure to provide the audience impetus to evaluate the terministic screen they use. In *Dollhouse*, the behavior of the Rossum Corporation not only demonstrates how dangerous forcibly setting terms like *human* and *monster* can be but also how dangerous it is to accept someone else's terministic screen without questioning it. In order to not be complicit in a scheme as unjust as Rossum's, we must be aware of what terministic screen we adopt. Through persuasive presentation of the perspectives of varying levels of monsters, these narratives encourage the audience to recognize the equal capacity for good and evil in all the characters, and those viewers who are persuaded by the argument may not just let Angel and Spike in: their terministic screen may shift more than they may have realized. If they are persuaded, they, too, may collapse the external distinction and recognize the important difference between *monster* and *monstrous*. Although Whedon’s entire oeuvre works toward building that argument, the *Buffy* episode “The Wish” renders it well on its own while also making a strong case for why the audience fundamentally needs to be willing to identify with the Other.

In the third season episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* “The Wish,” Sunnydale is rendered as it would have been if Buffy had not come: overridden by the forces of darkness, members of the Scoobies have been turned into vampires or are fighting a hopeless battle against them, and Buffy, who is eventually summoned to Sunnydale, enters the town a cold and bitter person, having lived an alternate life fighting against vampires and demons in a different place without a support network. Alternate-universe Buffy, not recognizing the vampires she is fighting as people who, in the real timeline,
are her friends, dusts them without a thought. Her ability to kill vampires that the audience recognizes as her friends without even considering whether she should or not makes “The Wish” uncomfortable for viewers. As Mary Alice Money argues, the episode forces viewers to “consciously or subconsciously...consider the possibility that other disposable or dangerous representations of the Other [the monsters in the normal timeline] just might be capable of humanity also” (102). She goes on to explain that

...just as real humans can become demonic, so can obnoxious and noxious beings become human and even heroic. Increasingly, the heroes begin to recognize the Other figure as an individual person of a certain race, gender, or culture. And as soon as viewers recognize the patterns of undemonization, Joss Whedon brings about another metamorphosis of character patterns within Buffy the Vampire Slayer (107).

By demonstrating that the story’s heroes could be other than they are, “The Wish” demonstrates that human and monster are not static. By demonstrating that the personhood of the characters the audience knows and cares for could be disregarded with the same ease that the personhood of monsters has been, the danger of Othering becomes clear.

Although the decision of whether or not to accept this argument falls on each individual viewer and is likely assessed per character, those who identify with characters like Spike and Angel are shifting their terministic screen in response to it. Whereas a television show having such an effect is generally restricted to the internal life of its fans, the influence of these shows has proven to reach beyond that. This can be seen through another argument Whedon consistently and more explicitly makes through his work: one concerning feminism directly. As a self-proclaimed feminist, Whedon has continually
used his position as auteur to create strong female characters, and that feminist agenda—an agenda that is essentially the same as the monster agenda is but one that is more easily applicable by viewers to real-world scenarios—has had visible impact on his audience and the world. For example, starting in 2006, Whedon's fanbase, the Browncoats, began an event originally called “Can't Stop the Signal.” Naming their event after the tagline of the movie Serenity, fans “organized screenings of Joss Whedon's Serenity to raise funds and awareness to support Equality Now in their work for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women around the world” (“Home Page”). Since 2006, this organization, now named Can't Stop the Serenity, has raised over $1,000,000 for Equality Now and other charities (“Home Page”). Driven by their love for Whedon's universes, the Browncoats have taken Whedon's arguments to heart. On top of normal (and above and beyond) fan activities, such as organizing conventions, creating fan fiction and documentaries, and raising money and awareness in order to convince Universal and Fox to create Serenity, the Browncoats have taken the call-to-action inherent in Whedon's oeuvre out of the story and into their daily lives—and notably, in the case of Equality Now, into the lives of women around the world. Inspired by and dedicated to the worlds and stories that Whedon has created, the Browncoats attempt to affect change in other people’s terministic screens through introducing them to some or all of Whedon’s work.

Since challenging terministic screens that allow Othering to take place is at the heart of most everything Whedon has created—from portraying class and gender issues in Roseanne to humanizing toys in Toy Story and showcasing the heart of a super villain in Dr. Horrible's Sing-a-long Blog—it is not surprising that Whedon’s work has been
recognized for its transformative potential. In fact, Whedon has been honored by organizations such as Equality Now for the work he has done to challenge Othering. For example, on May 15, 2006, Equality Now honored Whedon at their benefit “On the Road to Equality: Honoring Men on the Front Lines” for the work he has done specifically fighting gender stereotyping. Co-founded in 1992 by Whedon's mother Lee Stearns, Equality Now works with national human rights organizations and activists to document violence and discrimination against women and to mobilize international forces to stop such human rights abuse. According to their mission statement, Equality Now was founded in response to human rights violations against women being denied national and international attention while “hundreds of millions of girls and women around the globe continue to endure debilitating and often fatal human rights abuses.” Committed to “voicing a worldwide call for justice and equality for women,” Equality Now is especially concerned with issues such as “rape, domestic violence, reproductive rights, trafficking of women, female genital mutilation, and the denial of equal access to economic opportunity and political participation.” At their benefit “On the Road to Equality: Honoring Men on the Front Lines” in 2006, Equality Now honored Whedon for the female characters he has and continues to create.

In the acceptance speech Whedon gave at that event, he explained his motivation for creating those characters. Mimicking a press junket (where interviews with different publications happen consecutively throughout a day), Whedon gave several responses to the question he gets asked most frequently: “So, why do you write these strong female characters?” At first, as he often does, he cited the women in his life. As the question
continued to be asked, he found ways to discuss how the men in his life and their
acceptance and support of strong women have influenced him, how the audience’s
responses to the characters have motivated him, and how the characters themselves have
done so as well. Eventually though, Whedon expressed frustration about still being asked,
and his response cited societal stagnancy:

Why are you even asking me this?! (This is like interview number 50 in a row.) How is it possible that this is even a question? Honestly, seriously, why are you—why did you write that down? Why do you—Why aren’t you asking a hundred other guys why they don’t write strong women characters? I believe that what I am doing should not be remarked upon, let alone honored and there are other people doing it. But, seriously, this question is ridiculous and you just gotta stop.

By the end of the fictional junket, Whedon had his response pegged down to one line:

“Because you’re still asking me that question.”

In between his frustration and his final curt response, Whedon gave an answer
that covers both his feminist agenda and his argument about monstrosity—because it is a
response that reflects Whedon's beliefs about Othering of any sort:

Because equality is not a concept. It’s not something we should be striving for. It’s a necessity. Equality is like gravity: we need it to stand on this earth as men and women, and the misogyny that is in every culture is not a true part of the human condition. It is life out of balance and that imbalance is sucking something out of the soul of every man and woman who’s confronted with it. We need equality, kinda now.

Whether it is women being discriminated against or others who are different being
categorized as monsters, any act of Othering creates instances of inequality—an
imbalance that pushes the creator of the terministic screen away from human and toward
monster; it is an imbalance based on defining oneself in relation to others with a
comparative adjective—one indicating the self as somehow superior; it diminishes the
Other through a subjective judgment, often without objective evidence; it does not bother
to try to see or understand the Other—it sees only itself.

That is what Whedon understands about Othering—and it is the same thing
feminism understands about it. For instance, back in 1929, in her book-long extended
essay *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf describes gender discrimination as being the
result of men seeing women as if they were looking at themselves in an enlarging mirror
(36). Such men, when looking at a woman, see themselves rather than seeing her. They
see difference instead of similarity. They see themselves as bigger, stronger, smarter, or
faster. When their lens becomes a looking glass, it distorts, limiting its user from other-
oriented anything. Anytime a person treats another individual as an enlarging mirror—a
chance to self-aggrandize—they stop relating beyond the self: others become superficial
reflectors, not flesh and bone and soul. To see only difference, and to see only difference
specifically in relation to the self, is a monstrous act. What Whedon's oeuvre does—in
terms of all sorts of discrimination—is to recognize the danger in accepting a terministic
screen without questioning it. By recognizing the discontinuity and continuity of terms
such as *human* and *monster* or *woman* and *man*, Whedon and his audience recognize the
responsibility inherent in labeling. It is not that we can exist without terministic screens—
as Burke makes clear, they are the tool with which we process information—but what all
the various practitioners of feminism discussed here seem to hope is that we will be
persistent in questioning the terms we use, especially when we apply them to others.
As such, Whedon’s work in general and his pre-Avengers television oeuvre in particular not only showcase how third-person identity constitution functions in regards to how identity is constituted through various interactions with the default terministic screen, it also demonstrates how thoroughly feminist that use of third-person identity constitution can be: by questioning terms, the unjust inequality of Othering is revealed and the necessity of recognizing equality is affirmed. This affirmation of equality further situates Whedon’s science fiction within the realm of feminist rhetoric since it operates similarly to invitational rhetoric, which according to rhetorical theorists Foss and Griffin is “an invitation to understanding” that relies, among other things, on the feminist principle of “equality” (5). For Foss and Griffin, equality is of primary concern to invitational rhetoric because they believe that a commitment to the recognition of equality and to the creation of the means for it to exist can aid in the “elimination of the dominance and elitism that characterize most human relationships” (4). Like bell hooks, they believe that “feminists seek to replace the ‘alienation, competition, and dehumanization’ that characterize relationships of domination” with principles that align with cultivating the recognition of equality (4; hooks qtd in Foss and Griffin 4). Through its offering of the perspectives of unknown others, through its demonstration of the equality between those who have been labelled human and those who have been labelled monster, and through its use of third-person identity constitution to strategically manipulate the default terministic screen, Whedon’s pre-Avengers television oeuvre cultivates that recognition of equality and demonstrates its necessity, and it is through

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such constitution of identity that Burkean identification (the next step in third-person identity constitution) can occur.
Chapter 3:
“How About We Show Them a Little Compassion?”:
The Grammar of Consubstantiality and the Malleable Relativity of Being Alien

While the previous chapter focused on the first step of third-person identity constitution (the presentation of the conceptual Other’s default terministic screen or a shifted version of it), this chapter focuses on the second step: the establishment of consubstantiality. This second step is pivotal to third-person identity constitution because, without establishing consubstantiality, identification and any resultant persuasion will be unlikely to occur. As Burke argues, it is only through the recognition of consubstantiality—“common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, [and] attitudes”—that individuals can come to identify with someone or something else (Rhetoric 21). Therefore, in order to encourage that identification, third-person identity constitution must make evident the similarities that exist between the audience and that third-person Other—what circumstances they share, what common concepts and ideas they hold, what sensations and attitudes connect them. By doing so, third-person identity constitution establishes the potential for the recognition of consubstantiality and invites the audience to identify with that Other.

A prime example of establishing consubstantiality is found in Charland’s previously discussed analysis of the Peuple Québécois. He argues that the second ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric—the second step of second-person identity

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constitution—is accomplished through the “positing of a transhistorical subject” (140). By suggesting that shared ancestry exists between the Peuple Québécois (the transhistorical subject), the original French settlers of Québec (the shared ancestors), and the current citizens of Québec (the intended audience), the second ideological effect establishes consubstantiality (140). This establishment of consubstantiality through the suggestion of shared ancestry directs the attention of the audience toward the similarities shared by the groups rather than their differences, a suggestion which attempts to persuade the audience—a set of disparate “they”s—to identify as the Peuple Québécois—to become a “we” through the adoption of a proffered identity.

While the establishment of consubstantiality in the third-person identity constitution of science-fiction texts that attempt to remediate the relationship between self and Other operates similarly, the intention behind that establishment of consubstantiality is different: rather than attempting to persuade the audience to adopt a proffered identity (the purview of second-person identity constitution), these instances of third-person identity constitution encourage the audience to identify with a third-person Other. Because of this lack of a proffered identity, such instances of third-person identity constitution operate more like that of Anderson’s previously discussed first-person identity constitution: there is no “identification as” since the rhetor is not creating an identity for the audience to adopt but is instead presenting a third-person Other in a way they hope the audience will recognize as consubstantial. Texts that operate in this manner involve explicit recognition of the audience’s agency—their choice in regards to whether or not they will identify with someone else (rather than the rhetor attempting to identify
them as something else), making this manner of engaging in identity constitution rhetorically feminist: such engagement recognizes and empowers the audience’s right to self-determination, acknowledging that recognition of consubstantiality neither can nor should be forced—only encouraged. Therefore, texts that want to engage in third-person identity constitution in this manner can only establish the foundations for consubstantiality and hope that, through encouraging its recognition, the audience will choose to identify with the third-person Other.

The establishment of that potential for consubstantiality can occur in such texts in many ways. For instance, in each of the series discussed in the previous chapter, several persuasive devices were used to attempt to invite identification (and, thus, trigger shifts in the terministic screen). For example, one of the first ways that the default terministic screen concerning the Monster began to shift in Buffy was due to identification via a token: Angel’s soul.32 Because Angel’s soul marked him as both different from other vampires and similar to the human protagonists, that token encouraged the audience to identify with him—if they judged that soul and the conscience it provided as proof enough that Angel was more similar in nature to themselves than to the vampires he was fighting against. Furthermore, the revelation that the soul Angel possessed was his own from before he was sired revealed that Angel possessed shared ancestry with the audience, which increased the potential for recognition of consubstantiality through the same device (identification via shared inheritance or ancestry) Charland recognized as

32 In Angel, this same device is used to cement the idea that Angel is not necessarily unique—that the terministic screen concerning the Monster in general must be adjusted. Due to Doyle’s hybrid nature (he had a human mother and a Brachen demon father), his DNA functions as a token as well. In some ways, the chip used to render Spike harmless to humans in Buffy functions similarly.
being used concerning the Peuple Québécois. This invitation to identify was then strengthened through the use of second-order identification: because Buffy came to recognize Angel as consubstantial, the audience—who, in theory, exhibited default identification with her in her role as the protagonist—were encouraged to, then, also share Buffy’s recognition of Angel’s similar nature. This was especially the case because the audience observed the process through which Buffy came to know and, eventually, judge Angel. Because Buffy choose to see Angel as a man and not as a monster, the audience's default identification with her encouraged second-order identification with him, all of which allowed for the shift in the terministic screen that prepared viewers for default identification with him as the protagonist in his eponymous spin-off series.

Taken together, these devices with which identification with Angel was initially encouraged represent partial aspects of a larger persuasive device: identification via the

33 A stronger example of this device occurs in Firefly when the Reavers are revealed to be of the same species as the audience and the protagonists (rather than being the campfire monsters that the stories about them, their appearance, and their behavior had so far presented them as being).

34 This device is also used in Firefly to encourage the audience to identify with the crew of Serenity despite the fact that they are criminals. Because of this, default identification is a very powerful device: as Burke notes “even without being subjected to ... deliberate persuasion, we spontaneously identify ourselves with some groups or other, some trends or other” and, in doing so, “act upon ourselves” (Dramatism and Development 27-28).

35 As Burke argues in relation to his discussion of the tragic principles as they appear in Shakespeare's Coriolanus, “The hero acts; in the course of acting, he organizes an opposition; then, in the course of suffering the opposition (or seeing ‘in terms of’ it) he transcends his earlier position—and the audience, by identification with him, undergoes a similar ‘cathartic’ transformation” (Language as Symbolic Action 95).

36 Because Buffy did not originally know that Angel was a vampire, she did not initially treat Angel as a monster. However, when Angel's face involuntarily morphed during the seventh episode of the series, revealing the demon within him, Buffy recognized that he was vampire and chose not to slay him (as the mythos of the show said she must). Despite Angel's physical markings as a monster (a pivotal aspect of the terministic screen governing monstrosity in the show at that point in the series), Buffy classified Angel by the actions she had already seen and continued to work with the man Angel's soul—that token of humanity—allowed him to be.
individuation and/or transformation of complex others. Perhaps the most potent device regarding identification that serialized texts are uniquely suited to use, identification via the individuation and/or transformation of complex others reveals the consubstantiality between the audience and the third-person Other by encouraging the audience to consider the third-person Other as a complicated individual with understandable motivations and intentions and, therefore, as being much like themselves. Due to television’s serial nature (even if the series itself is not fully serialized), this device can be used over the course of an entire series, developing the character of the third-person Other both in the present of the series and through flashbacks as well as the revelation of backstory via exposition. It is particularly potent because through its use, a character who is initially marked as unknowable due to their Otherness can become known.  

A prime example of this device being used in Whedon’s pre-Avengers television oeuvre is with the character Spike. Originally cast as a one-arc villain, Spike returned to Buffy during its fourth season as a permanent cast member in response to positive reactions to his initial run in season two. By the end of the sixth season, some members of the audience had begun to identify with his character more so than they did with

37 “Becoming known” and being “knowable” are highly relative terms. Anyone who is not the self will always, to some extent, be unknowable, regardless of similarities. However, considering someone or something to be inherently and completely unknowable problematically denies all similarities and chances for solidarity, cooperation, intimacy, and more. Recognizing the limitations of understanding another while still attempting understanding (partially through the recognition of similarities) allows us to develop relationships that can be respectful and appreciative of difference and diversity; failing to recognize similarities because of the presence of difference limits the development of constructive relationships at all.

38 Another prime example of this is the transformation that the L.A. Dollhouse staff and administration go through over the course of Dollhouse such that they move from being the antagonists to the protagonists.

39 This information is provided in the DVD featurettes “A Buffy Bestiary” and “Spike Me.”
Buffy’s. As Whedon Studies scholar Gwyn Symonds explains in “‘Bollocks!’: Spike Fans and Reception of Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” online fan posts documented this shift: Symonds reports that one fan wrote “I know, I know. I'm SUPPOSED to be watching for Buffy but—get real” (n.p.). In fact, during the last two seasons of Buffy, Symonds argues that “Buffy is judged by how she treats Spike,” which often led to “fan irritation with the text and the behaviour of the ostensible heroes” (n.p.). During those last few seasons, Spike inverted the norm for identification: in regards to his character only, some of the audience stopped feeling consubstantial with the heroes who, unlike the audience, continued to see Spike as a monster, and, instead, identified with him. Symonds explains that the character of Spike led audiences to believe that “redemption can be earned, even if you start out from the soulless side of Whedon’s continuum” (n.p.). In fact, according to Symonds, many fans, such as those on the BAPS listserv (a listserv for Spike fans specifically), demanded Spike's redemption from Whedon and his creative team. This strong audience reaction occurred in response to how Spike embodied the dissonance caused by a terministic screen that considered human and monster to be discrete categories when the individuation and transformation of his character clearly blurred that dichotomy.

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40 This may also be due to the fact that Buffy had become a darker show in general, seeing as Buffy, who had died again and come back to life by that point—and, therefore, was now undead too—could technically also be considered a monster. This idea of the Slayer as a monster (a further blurring of the terministic screen) is then further developed during the final seasons when it is revealed that Buffy is part demon: the line of Slayers from which she comes was created by merging a Shadow Demon and a woman in order that the Slayers would inherit the demon’s physical strength and power.

41 BAPS’s motto was “Spike will be redeemed, dammit!”
As the audience increasingly identified with Spike—due to the individuation of him as a character—their terministic screen concerning monstrosity shifted toward understanding monstrosity to be the result of individual choice: the audience could see that Spike’s redemption was in progress—and they saw him as redeemable—but because Spike was still ostensibly a monster (and, before season seven, one without a soul), his path toward redemption was not acknowledged by Buffy, her friends, or even Spike himself. Thus, in the case of Spike, the audience's terministic screen shifted towards Whedon's before Buffy's did—and it shifted before even Spike’s did: for at least a full season after Spike’s return to Sunnydale, Spike wanted to be the monster Buffy and her friends still saw him as. However, as Spike began to recognize himself as capable of redemption—as he began to see himself as a man and not as a monster—that transformation of his own identity further established his potentially consubstantial nature, both for the audience and for Buffy. By treating Spike as a complex individual—one who was often motivated by love (see previous chapter)—and by allowing the audience and the characters on the show to view his own transformation concerning his identity, goals, and desires, Whedon and his creative team used identification via the individuation and/or transformation of complex others to encourage identification with Spike as a similarly complex and understandable individual.

As seen through the character of Spike, early portions of Buffy, and strategic shifts in the terministic screens governing Monster in the rest of Whedon’s pre-Avengers oeuvre, consubstantiality can be established and encouraged through many different devices: default identification, identification via a token, second-order identification,
identification via shared inheritance or ancestry, and identification via the individuation and/or transformation of complex others. Because consubstantiality can be recognized due to an endlessly proliferating set of sharable circumstances, situations, beliefs, values, and more, attempting to delineate all the devices that can be used to establish consubstantiality would likely be foolhardy; however, attempting to reveal the grammar that underlies any device used to establish consubstantiality would not. By coming to understand that grammar, we can come to understand what makes any attempt to establish consubstantiality function. Therefore, in this chapter, I work to reveal that grammar of consubstantiality.

In order to reveal that grammar, I shift my focus from one instance of the conceptual other (the Monster) to another (the Alien). By examining the grammar of consubstantiality in relation to the Alien instead of the Monster, I hope to accomplish two things: (1) to demonstrate that every aspect of third-person identity constitution applies to any instance of the conceptual Other (regardless of whether the Monster, the Alien, or the Machine is being used to investigate it), and (2) to provide the best lens possible for

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42 For instance, consider Gene Roddenberry’s *Earth: Final Conflict* (1997-2002), a science-fiction television series based on the premise that Taelons, an alien race, have come to Earth in friendship (and exhibit that friendship through actions such as curing diseases) but are being resisted due to (ultimately accurate) suspicions concerning ulterior motives. The series relies on all five previously discussed devices, but, arguably, the most important device it relies on is identification via the revelation of fundamental interdependence. Leading up to that revelation, the series relies on default identification with the Human Resistance, second-order identification with a human-Alien hybrid—who possesses a token of humanity because he was born of a Resistance mother—and eventual second-order identification (through that hybrid) with the complexly individuated Taelon Da’an. Ultimately, the series reveals that *homo sapiens* share some genetic (Avatus) ancestry with the Taelons, who turn out to be an evolved but now infertile species related to two other species who are also nearing extinction (the Kimera and the Jaridian). It soon becomes clear that the alien species are biologically fundamentally interdependent: the only way that the remaining members of each evolved branch of the Avatus-Kimera evolutionary track can survive is by joining with each other and with Humans (who represent a co-evolution from the Avatus). In this way, *Earth: Final Conflict* exhibits more than just the five previously discussed devices.
understanding each of the three steps of third-person identity constitution. The Monster is particularly instructive for the first step because of how morality and physicality are interrelated within its default terministic screen, providing visual clues in addition to behavioral ones regarding whether or not someone is considered to be a monster while also providing multiple aspects of the default terministic screen that can be shifted. The Machine is best for explaining the third step—the goal of persuasion—because the conceptual Other’s relationship to the real world is more direct, often operating as a cautionary tale concerning our current and future relationship to technology. In regards to the second step, the Alien serves as the best lens for understanding the grammar of consubstantiality because the term alien can be considered to be the progenitor for all conceptual Others due to its original, more generic use as foreigner or stranger. Because of that, the default terministic screen concerning the Alien involves less explicit baggage than that of the Monster (which is marked as necessarily immoral) while also being more universal than that of the Machine (which often has a more personified than metaphorical relationship with reality). Therefore, understanding what the term alien means and implies can help reveal the underlying antagonism embedded in all default terministic screens concerning the conceptual Other as well as the grammar of consubstantiality that must be used to address it.

To begin that investigation of the grammar of consubstantiality, I examine both the definition of the term alien and the ways in which aliens have historically been presented visually, relying on examples from both science-fiction film and television. Although I argue that science-fiction television, particularly when serialized, provides a
better example of how a feminist approach to third-person identity constitution functions than science-fiction film does,\textsuperscript{43} I rely heavily on cinematic representations of the Alien in this section due to the medium’s historical and cultural primacy: the cinematic alien provided the first broadly and popularly consumed visual representations of the Alien, significantly influencing the default terministic screen and, in the process, all subsequent televisual representations. Just as the culturally salient \textit{Harry Potter} franchise and the culturally pervasive creature of Frankenstein functioned as touchstones that helped reveal the default terministic screen concerning the Monster, these cinematic representations of the Alien do the same. Through analyzing them as well as the definition of the term \textit{alien}, I demonstrate that the default terministic screen concerning the Alien showcases an Us-vs-Them anxiety that underlies each manifestation of the conceptual Other, and I argue that remediation of that anxiety must come from the transformation of the default terministic screen into one that reflects the grammar of consubstantiality, a grammar which makes way for the recognition of consubstantiality by revealing its innate relativity.

\textsuperscript{43} Even with a film that offers a sympathetic treatment of the Alien, such as Steven Spielberg’s \textit{E.T. the Extra Terrestrial} (1982), the limited duration of the medium limits the extent of the audience’s potential identification with the Other. In the case of \textit{E.T.}, despite the audience being encouraged to recognize “him” (as he is identified by the children who find him) as unthreatening and to sympathize with him, the audience never comes to know E.T. As an individual and a representative of a different species, E.T. is largely opaque. While many audience members could certainly recognize their consubstantiality with E.T. due to the situation he is in (his isolation, his desire to return home), that recognition of consubstantiality is limited to the period of time with which E.T. is in that situation, and the film ends when the situation does. Because of that limited duration, science-fiction films that include the Alien or some other representation of the conceptual Other tend to keep that Other relatively unknown and focus more on how one or more of the human characters reacts to the experience of being confronted by alterity. Although this limits the audience’s potential identification with the Other, it in no way marks agent-based cinematic science fiction (or agent-based anthologized televisual science fiction) as inferior to more fully serialized television, as not feminist, or as not including third-person identity constitution as part of its rhetorical structure; however, it does make them less likely to best demonstrate a fully embodied feminist approach to third-person identity constitution, marking them as not the best exemplars in this instance.
Due to the importance of relying on that grammar, one of the goals of science-fiction texts that rely on a feminist approach to third-person identity constitution must then be to encourage the audience to recognize the relative nature of a term like *alien*, a recognition which can lead to identifying both with that alien and as being capable of being seen as alien. I argue that all attempts to establish consubstantiality—regardless of which devices are being used—are grounded by that recognition of the relative nature of both self and Other. Because of that, in the most fully realized instances of identification, establishing consubstantiality encourages the audience to consider themselves as a potential Other, demonstrating that the distinction between self and Other is capable of being collapsed. If such a move occurs, not only is perspective-taking and compassionate empathy encouraged, but the problematics of Othering become clear through the revelation that the self could just as easily be Othered (a recognition of the ways in which the self is or may someday share circumstances similar to the Other). This recognition reveals that being unwilling to consider other perspectives and being unwilling to recognize the inherent worth of Others is what allows for practices such as bullying, discrimination, violence, murder, and genocide—practices that rely on considering the Us vs. Them relationship inherent in the self-Other dichotomy to be invariably fixed.

Although many texts could be used to demonstrate how such consubstantiality can be established and the recognition of it encouraged in relation to the third-person Other (as has been seen through Whedon’s pre-*Avengers* television oeuvre), this chapter ends with an analysis of Rockne O’Bannon’s *Farscape*. This is due to the fact that *Farscape* presents a particularly vivid example of the relativity inherent in the
relationship between self and Other: *Farscape’s* main character is the only human in the majority of the series, and he is often put in situations that position him as alien. Through that positioning, I argue that *Farscape* ends up constituting the self as Other and the Other as self, resulting in the alien and the human becoming capable of seeing through each other’s eyes, a development which encourages a reliance on compassionate empathy. Using the pilot episode (as well as other key aspects of the series) to walk through the means with which the grammar of consubstantiality is invoked, I argue that *Farscape* is not only a prime example of the second step of third-person identity constitution but also that it showcases why Burkean identification, through its invocation of consubstantiality, is an important tool for the creation of texts that reflect and model feminist principles such as compassionate empathy and the recognition of inherent worth.

**The Alien and the Grammar of Consubstantiality**

In order to understand how Burkean identification can lead to texts that model feminist principles, it is important to consider the Alien category of the Other because the antagonistic principles that require remediation are embedded in the very definition of the term *alien* itself. According to the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), the adjectival form of the word *alien* (from which the noun is derived through the absolute form) has the following non-field specific definitions:

1. Belonging to another person, place, or family; strange, foreign, not of one's own
2. Of a foreign nation and allegiance
3. Foreign in nature or character; belonging to something else; of foreign or other origin
4. Of a nature or character differing from…, far removed from, inconsistent
That the term *alien* refers to beings or things that are “not of one’s own,” “of a foreign nature or character,” “belonging to something else,” “of a nature or character differing from…[and] inconsistent with,” “of a nature repugnant, adverse, or opposed to,” and that are “unkindly, unsympathetic, [and that gaze] with the ‘cold stare’ of the stranger” makes the presumption that science-fiction’s aliens are antagonistic seem a sensible conclusion: antagonism is inherent in the definition. Explicitly, that antagonism is found in the words “adverse” and “opposed to,” but it is also found in the more simple negations, such as “not” and “un-,” that necessarily indicate the presence of opposition. Both the explicit and implicit antagonism in the definition of the term *alien*, therefore, not only inherently complicate any potential recognition of consubstantiality—and, therefore, identification—with the alien but also reveal the binary nature of identification itself. The alien must either be “of one’s own” or “not of one’s own.” The very definition of *alien* reveals what Burke makes clear about identification: it always confronts “the implications of division” (*Rhetoric* 22). Failing to identify with someone or something else inherently means identifying both against it and with someone or something else. That binary nature, then, is what causes the antagonism inherent in the human-alien binary (as well as the human-monster binary, human-machine binary, etc.). This binary creates a default terministic screen concerning the Alien that necessarily involves that antagonistic principle, making identification with the Alien essentially impossible.
without some sort of shift in the terministic screen such that the antagonistic principle embedded in it abates or disappears.

The aliens of many films from the 1950s are prime examples of how this antagonistic principle functions, especially since they represent some of the earliest visual portrayals of the Alien that the general public saw. Such aliens, as “a mainstay of the B-movie science fiction/horror film,” were presented, according to Dr. Lincoln Geraghty in his 2009 *American Science Fiction Film and Television*, “in stark contrast to the human” (20). This stark contrast portrayed the alien as, in Geraghty’s words, “irredeemably other” and representative of fears both external and internal to American society at the time (20). Alien-invasion films of the 1950s that depicted the alien in this way, such as *The Thing from Another World* (1951), *War of the Worlds* (1953), and *Invaders from Mars* (1953), communicated that the alien should be considered an uncompromising

44 While this portrayal of the Alien as irredeemably other was pervasive in films from the 1950s, it is worth noting that it was not universal. As Geraghty points out in this same section, fellow scholars Mark Jancovich and Derek Johnston argue that there were also “stories of alien visitation [that] were not necessarily horror stories about invading monsters, and many alien visitors were actually saviors of humanity” (qtd. in Geraghty 20). In fact, in their chapter “Film and Television, 1950s” in the 2009 *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, Jancovich and Johnston cite the appearance of Superman, an alien from the planet Krypton, in various media such as comics, films, radio plays, and television during the 1940s and 1950s as an example of this (73). Furthermore, they note that even among the more standard 1950s alien-invasion fare there do exist more complicated presentations of the Alien—presentations that blur a straightforward interpretation of the Alien’s nature as purely sympathetic or malevolent. In fact, one of the most canonical films of the time, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), features the alien Klaatu, who Jancovich and Johnston call one of the “best-remembered sympathetic” aliens of all time (73). Jancovich and Johnston note that, as a “dignified figure who visits Earth to warn us of the dangers of nuclear aggression,” Klaatu is often seen by critics as “a positive alternative to the alien invasion movies” of the time (73). It is worth noting two things about Klaatu though: 1) he can pass as human (he, himself, is not visually marked as different), and 2) as Jancovich and Johnston recognize, Klaatu’s warnings are “also a threat” made because humanity has been deemed “too irresponsible to handle nuclear power” and, therefore, “must surrender itself to a robot police force which will punish aggression with global extinction” (73-74). Despite this, Klaatu does offer a more complex understanding of the Alien than is normally thought of when 1950s aliens are brought to mind. Similarly, the Metalunans of *This Island Earth* (1955) and the “it’s” from *It Came from Outer Space* (1953) are also more complicated presentations of the Alien: like Klaatu, they are clearly rational, intentioned beings who are able to communicate (as well as appear human if they so choose), and this makes their nature and intentions less easy to presume.
threat by presenting the Alien, like the Monster, as wholly other visually: the Thing is a plant-based creature, the Martians of War of the Worlds appear essentially headless with a tri-lensed eye (their only facial feature) located in the middle of what could be considered their chest, and the invaders from Mars are green and bug-eyed or tentacled. Furthermore, just as with the Monster, these aliens are presumed to be, due to those physical differences, wholly other morally: the majority of the humans in these films consider the aliens to be unquestionably malevolent—and in so, capable of jeopardizing “the future of the [human] race” (Biskel qtd in Geraghty 23).

This presumption that such aliens may represent a species-wide threat exists because of the ways in which these representations of the Alien fulfill tenets of the OED’s definition of the term: the aliens of these films belong to another place; they are strange; they are foreign; they are not of one's own; they are of a foreign allegiance; they are foreign in nature or character; they belong to something else; they are of foreign or other origin. Furthermore, because their origins differ from the humans they come in contact with, those humans often presume them to fulfill the other aspects of the OED’s definition of alien: they presume them to be of a nature or character differing from, far removed from, and inconsistent with human nature; they presume their nature to be repugnant, adverse, or opposed to human nature; they are presumed to be unkindly, unsympathetic, and to gaze with the “cold stare” of a stranger. And because of the way in which that antagonism is embedded in the definition, in these films, the presence of the Alien incites fear and retaliation. For example, one of the most well-known films from the time, Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956), incites that fear and retaliation by
presenting the alien as not only an external threat but also, as Geraghty notes, “a discernibly internal one by focusing on the invasion of the human body by an alien force” (22). In Invasion of the Body Snatchers and other films like it that present versions of aliens that can take over humans (or shapeshift into representations of them, as takes place in It Came from Outer Space and This Island Earth), the presumed threat of the alien crystallizes: that which is alien represents an impending loss or co-option of human identity, such that the Alien functions like a contagion needing to be eliminated in order for human nature to persist.

This implied threat often results in the Alien functioning as a common enemy, a move which Burke recognizes as one of the most common (albeit problematic) ways that people are brought together. In texts that rely on this tactic, this common threat often helps humanity consider their differences with each other as petty compared to the differences between their shared humanity and the alienness of that threat. In pulling together against that common foe, the current issues plaguing humanity when it comes to discrimination, oppression, and the like are often (at least for the length of the narrative) set aside. Independence Day (1996), for instance, operates in this manner: Geraghty argues that in it and films like it “to defeat the oncoming swarm, they [Americans] must assume their own sense of collective responsibility and join together,” setting aside “xenophobic distrust” of other humans in order “to unite and form a global village” (89). In fact, Geraghty notes that, like in the 1950s, “Aliens and the continued threat of

45 For example, in his discussion of Hitler’s rhetoric in Mein Kampf, Burke notes that “It may well be that people, in their human frailty, require an enemy as well as a goal” (The Philosophy of Literary Form 219).
invasion, contamination and the other” had also become “well-worn narratives in film and television science fiction toward the end of the [twentieth] century” and that “science fiction...appeared to [have] come full circle (not for the first time),” having “returned to the bug-eyed monster type story typical of the 1950s” (87). Such films, then—regardless of their time period—have, according to Geraghty, “created and recreated ever-more-terrifying extraterrestrials that play on our fear of the unknown” and, thus, encourage the Othering inherent in them (75). This is especially the case when it comes to Alien (1979): the portrayal of the Alien as the invasively violent facehuggers, chestbursters, and full-grown xenomorphs demonstrates how likely we are to imagine what we do not know or understand as utterly and terrifyingly Other. In fact, due to how fully the xenomorph represents (at least early in the Alien franchise) the antagonism inherent in the default terministic screen, it makes sense that Geraghty argues that the “eponymous alien has epitomised our idea of the alien ever since” (75).

The default terministic screen so evident in that original portrayal of the xenomorph reveals what Dr. Isiah Lavender III calls the “fundamental fear of contagion,” which he argues drives fear of the other (and specifically fear of the “racial other”) (120). In his 2001 Race in American Science Fiction, Lavender cites Sander L. Gilman’s Difference and Pathology (1985) as proof of this, noting that Gilman “contends that ‘contamination’ by the ‘other’ results in ‘the human disposition to structure

46 Lavender’s project is one that is invested in the importance of discussing race specifically—especially because science fiction so often elides the issue in order to present a future based on tenets of secular humanism. Although I am not specifically addressing race in this project (and am explicitly generalizing away from in a way that could be considered similar to that ellison), I find Lavender’s argument about how race functions both visibly and invisibly incredibly important in and of itself as well as in regards to understanding how the Other functions at the conceptual level that I am focused on.
perception in terms of binary difference,’ such as black and white” (120). As was seen through the visual representation of the default terministic screen concerning both the Monster and the Alien, Lavender argues that the Other is identified by “markers such as skin color or genetic content” and that such markers “become focal points of discrimination” (120). Furthermore, Lavender argues that “fear of the other becomes contagious through the perception of visual differences” such that “fear of difference and change” is based on the “potential for harm that contact with the other represents” (121). Thus, Lavender concludes that these “contagious ailments...provides an otherhood map that negotiates connections between community, communication, and communicability,” marking the Other as an outsider with whom communication is impossible or dangerous (120). This relationship between the fictional Other and fictional humans mirrors what happens when conflict between groups or individuals takes place in reality as well: Lavender argues that when “immutable boundaries between various ethnic groups are made permeable, people will fight to keep the meaning of their place in the world intact,” and will do so by maintaining those boundaries through markers such as visual difference, biological difference, or cultural difference (153). Lavender goes on to suggest that Western culture, in particular, has demonstrated a “historical need to first create the other and then to attempt to harm, destroy, dehumanize, and exploit it, whether the other is human, alien, or artificial” (161). Such acts, Lavender concludes, showcase that “humanity has proven its capacity for monstrosity through its inability to live with difference” (139).
This “inability to live with difference” and the Othering that occurs because of it is why Burkean identification is so important. In order to embrace difference—in order to overcome that “inability to live with difference”—identification is crucial. If science fiction or feminism (or any other such force) wants to attempt to remediate the antagonism behind the self-Other binary, I would argue that it must embrace identification by working to encourage individuals to recognize the Other as possessing similarities. These similarities cannot and should not replace the important and unerasable differences between individuals, but, I would argue, they should supplement them—and they may prove to be an essential step in encouraging people who exhibit an inability to live with some sort of difference(s) to embrace difference and not discriminate, shun, ignore, or merely tolerate it. In this way, the recognition of similarity and the identification it can bring are rhetorically feminist: it is only through being willing to try to understand each other that feminist rhetorical principles like the recognition of inherent worth, equality, compassionate empathy, perspective-taking, and self-determination become possible in situations where they otherwise would not.

In order for such similarities to be recognized, the Other must be perceived—to at least some degree—as consubstantial with the self, which essentially amounts to perceiving the Other through a reversal of the default terministic screen created by the definition of *alien*. Instead of being necessarily antagonistic, the the Other must be seen as

1. Belonging to another person, place, or family; strange, foreign, not of one’s own
   Like one’s own

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2. Of a foreign nation and allegiance
   In allegiance with
3. Foreign in nature or character; belonging to something else; of foreign or other origin
   Familiar in nature or character; belonging to; of similar origin
4. Of a nature or character differing from..., far removed from, inconsistent with
   Of a nature or character similar to and consistent with
5. Of a nature repugnant, adverse or opposed to
   Of a nature welcomed, aligned with, supportive of
6. Unkindly, unsympathetic, with the “cold stare” of the stranger
   Kind, sympathetic, with the “warmth” of kith

Such a transformation of that definition reveals, then, the underlying grammar of consubstantiality: consubstantiality is recognized when another is seen as in possession of a sympathetic nature or a character that is similar to and consistent with one’s own. Recognition of consubstantiality, then, is not a recognition of sameness but a recognition of a shared nature or circumstance. Because of this, recognizing consubstantiality—as well as identifying with someone else—does not necessarily impact the identity of either individual; rather, it is a recognition of potential connections between them, potentially leading to relationships where compassionate empathy, the recognition of inherent worth, equality, self-determination, and more are more likely to develop.

This understanding of consubstantiality—derived from that inverse definition of \textit{alien}—is consistent with Burke’s own use of the term. Burke does not believe that recognizing consubstantiality represents a defining of that person but rather a defining of their roles and place in the world. This is because Burke recognizes that, although we most often use the word \textit{substance} (from which \textit{consubstantiality} is derived) “to designate what some thing or agent intrinsically \textit{is},” \textit{substance}, considered
“etymologically,” “is a scenic word”: “Literally, a person’s or a thing’s sub-stance would be something that stands beneath or supports the person or thing” (GoM 21-22). Because a person or thing’s sub-stance is actually an amalgamation of everything that “stands beneath or supports” them, Burke believes that we can never quite say who someone or something is, despite our instinct to define and label. For Burke, when we “tell what a thing is,” we “place it in terms of something else,” and that “idea of locating, or placing, is implicit in our very word for definition itself: to define, or determine a thing, is to mark its boundaries” (GoM 24). Because of this, Burke understands that any attempt “to define” a person or thing must be done only “in terms of its context” or, in other words, that “we must define it in terms of what it is not” (GoM 25). This defining “in terms of what it is not” is evident in the negations present throughout the definition of alien: that which is alien is determined by the fact that it is not considered to be part of those that define it. The definition of alien, then, is not substantive; it is relational, and relations are relative and malleable, which makes consubstantiality also relative and malleable.

This relative malleability inherent in consubstantiality is also consistent with Burke. For instance, consider how Burke demonstrates the ways in which disparate peoples became recognized as consubstantial with one another: in his discussions of how totemism and communion were thought to work, for instance, he describes how the sharing of a substance, often food, was used to signal partnership or inclusion.47 Such ritualistic acts, Burke argues, demonstrate that “belonging” is rhetorical and, therefore,

47 For instance, see Burke’s discussion of totemism on page 274 of The Philosophy of Literary Form as well as his discussion of communion on page 336 in The Philosophy of Literary Form. For more insight into this subject, see Burke’s discussion of thinking in terms of tribes or classes in relation to substance on pages 26-29 of A Grammar of Motives.
contingent and not *a priori* (*RoM* 28). Furthermore, Burke argues that the differences that are used to determine whether or not such belonging exists are “not felt merely as between this entity and that entity”: a rhetoric of belonging, although it may begin with specific individuals, tends to end up considering differences as being “between classes of entities” (*RoM* 176-177; 177). This categorical delineation creates the notion of antithesis inherent in the identification-division dichotomy. Although Burke recognizes that such dichotomies are a natural and necessary function of language, he proposes that “we supplant the notion of Antithesis with the notion of mere difference,” noting that such antithetical distinctions tend to be evidence of “cultural lag” due to “some significant changes in our social ways” not yet being fully recognized or accepted by society-at-large and, as such, that “our devices for controlling” or maintaining that cultural lag “will naturally be preserved in our speech and our institutions” (*ACR* 103-104). This recognition of the tendency for cultural lag to occur as well as what effect language has on the rhetorics of belonging or exclusion that result from it are also what, I argue, much science fiction recognizes and seeks to address: when such science fiction confronts the notion of antithesis—evidenced by the cultural lag that language choices such as *monster* or *alien* or *machine* preserve—it does so by inviting its audience, through its narrative structure and character development, to identify with an entity from another class and, in doing so, asks that audience to recognize themselves as consubstantial with that other entity. If identification results from that invitation, the link between the entities is, by definition, no longer antagonistic—becoming instead evidence of a rhetoric of belonging.
This move toward a rhetoric of belonging has often been made in science-fiction film and television by presenting the singular alien (or a specific set of aliens) as a friend. This was especially the case in 1980s cinema: as Geraghty argues, “films such as Spielberg's *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) and *batteries not included* (1987),” offered “visions of wonder and hope through the use of friendly and benevolent aliens” (15). Unlike alien-invasions films from the 1950s, such films, Geraghty notes, harkened “back to the golden age of Flash Gordon and serial science fiction, showing that America could benefit from extraterrestrial life” (15). In fact, in a section titled “The Benevolent Alien,” Geraghty argues that “between 1977 and 1988, there is a clear historical period in which enlightened alien beings bring salvation to America after the 1970s and its rash of dystopian science fiction films” (70). In such films—including *Cocoon* (1985), *Close Encounters* (1977), *The Last Starfighter* (1984), *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, and *batteries not included*—positive alien encounters tend to take place between children and aliens or the elderly and aliens (70). In such films, the open-mindedness of these children or senior citizens comes from their shared circumstances with the aliens: like the aliens they encounter, they are estranged or disempowered by society. This shared

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48 Such portrayals of singular or sets of benevolent aliens also occurred through network sitcoms. Examples of this include *My Favorite Martian* (1963-1966) and *Mork and Mindy* (1978-1982). These sitcoms familiarized audiences with their alien characters by placing those aliens in familiar situations, utilizing the specific expectations of the sitcom to further familiarize the audience with that new character, and relying on humor to understand and alleviate difference. For instance, as Geraghty notes, *Mork and Mindy* episodes either centered “on the alienness of Mork, where he struggles to fit into normal suburban life” or “on his extraterrestrial background,” wherein the episode made “jokes out of the fantastical nature of the science fiction genre” (61). Furthermore, comedies such as *Men in Black* (1997) and hybrid sitcom/dramas such as the television series *Alien Nation* (1989-1991), also tended to rely on humor to help familiarize the audience with alien characters that were presented as friends or, at least, neighbors (see Geraghty’s discussion of *Alien Nation* on page 83).
circumstance⁴⁹ is what Geraghty argues “allows humans to recover or discover their essential humanity”—wherein that “essential humanity” is evidenced through their potential for and demonstration of compassionate empathy toward others (72).

Although such portrayals of “what used to be the threatening alien Other as friend” attempt to combat the antagonism inherent in the definition of alien, Dr. Vivian Sobchack warns against assuming that these portrayals of the Alien are necessarily progressive, finding them too often problematic due to their emphasis on similarity (253). According to Sobchack, the move toward a rhetoric of belonging that these films make either posits that “‘aliens are like us’ or that ‘aliens R U.S.’,” resulting in “Alien Others” becoming “less other”—regardless of whether they originated as “extraterrestrial teddy bears, starmen, brothers from another planet, robots, androids, or replicants” (293). For Sobchack, such representations portray aliens in such a way that they “have become our familiars, our simulacra, embodied as literally alienated images of our alienated selves” rather than as unique others constituted by vibrant differences (293). For example, she argues that films that rely on the rhetorical move of “aliens are like us”—such as “Close Encounters, E. T., Starman, Cocoon, and Enemy Mine”—absorb difference into “the

⁴⁹ In her 1987 Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film, Dr. Vivian Sobchack argues that this focus on shared circumstances between the human and the alien became a focal point in 1980s cinema due to a sense of alienation becoming commonplace in American society. Looking back at the decade from her view at the end of it, Sobchack argues that Americans had come to live in “a culture where nearly everyone is regularly alien-ated from a direct sense of self (lived experience commonly mediated by an electronic technology that dominates both the domestic sphere and the ‘private’ or ‘personal’ realm of the Unconscious)” (229). Because of this, Sobchack suggests that “when everyone is less conscious of existence than of its image, the once threatening SF ‘alien’ and Other become our familiars—our close relations, if not ourselves” (229). This recognition of the similarity between our own alienation and the Alien’s situation is also shared by Dr. M. Keith Booker, who notes in his 2004 Science Fiction Television that “Spock was the most beloved character in all of the Star Trek franchise, not in spite of being half-alien, but precisely because his alienness spoke to a sense of alienation that was central to the life experience of so many of the series’ followers” (58).
homogeneity of a new universal ‘humanism’” (293). Because of this, Sobchack believes that ascribing that “aliens are like us” maintains human primacy through the reliance on a logic of resemblance: humanity becomes the model to which aliens must assimilate (294). Because she believes that this rhetorical move treats humanity as the original model, Sobchack finds it problematic: she argues that “it constitutes… hierarchical relations based on homo-geneity”— with an emphasis on the homo of homo sapiens. Furthermore, she believes that this hierarchical relation—one that she believes privileges humanity while seemingly granting no privilege at all—weaves “a myth of universal and nonhierarchical homogeneity” while in actuality preserving “the subordination of ‘other worlds, other cultures, other species’” to that of a “white American culture” seeking to “colonize outer space” and its aliens—until those aliens begin to see themselves as Starman eventually does: as in the process of “becoming a planet Earth person” too (297). Because such hierarchical privilege has been silently subsumed into what appears on the surface to be a constructive treatment of the human-Alien relationship, Sobchack finds films like Starman that rely on the rhetorical move of “aliens are like us” to be far more “conservative” than they may have been originally intended to be (293).

Furthermore, Sobchack argues that the other move toward a rhetoric of belonging made by 1980s films such as “Liquid Sky, Repo Man, and The Brother from Another Planet”—that of “aliens R U.S.”—is only slightly less problematic since its focus remains, also, on similarity. Unlike in the case of “aliens are like us” though, “aliens R U.S.” is modelled on a logic of similitude rather than resemblance (297). This logic of similitude allows “aliens R. U.S.” to be more progressive than “aliens are like us”
because the inherent logic in similitude allows the statement to be “reversibly articulated as ‘We are aliens’” (297). For Sobchack, this logical model makes the relationship between humans and aliens more relative and less hierarchical, but she believes that this model also potentially engages in mere relativism—wherein the differences that separate us are, in Foucault’s words, merely “small differences among small differences” (297; qtd in Sobchack 297). For Sobchack, this potential for mere relativism erases “alienation by articulating it as a universal condition in which we are aliens and aliens are us” (294). This makes the rhetorical move still problematic for her because, as with many of the other feminist and identity-politics theorists and critics previously mentioned such as Lavender, Sobchack believes that this relativization erases difference in favor of recognizing similarity, enabling “the representation of alienation as ‘human’” and constitutive of “a myth of homogenized heterogeneity” (297). In other words, she believes that in recognizing our shared heterogenetic situation that the similarities inherent in it are then valued over the important differences between us that must be recognized in order for diversity to remain.50

50 Sobchack finds this to be especially problematic for science fiction because she believes that when we give alien creatures “voice and function” that we “make them comprehensible and reduce” them to “smaller human dimensions” (92). Because of this, she believes that science fiction, to quote Michel Ciment, “too often fails to break away from an anthropomorphic view of the cosmos” and, in so doing, fails to imagine the alien “without falling back on human standards” (qtd. in Sobchack 92-93). In light of this concern about anthropomorphization, Sobchack argues that “creating truly alien beings” is a weakness of science fiction: for, as Raymond Durgnat argues, “It’s hard enough to understand certain assumptions of the Samoans, the Balinese or the Americans, and all but impossible to empathize into the perceptions and drives of, say, a boa constrictor. How much more difficult then to identify with the notions of, say, the immortal twelve-sensed telepathic polymorphoids whose natural habitat is the ammonia clouds of Galaxy X7??” (93; qtd. in Sobchack 93). However, since I am interested in the conceptual Other as it serves to mediate humanity’s xenophobic relationship with itself, I am less concerned with our ability to truly imagine something absolute in its Otherness than Sobchack and the other scholars she mentions are.
From her perspective in the late 1980s, Sobchack does, however, recognize that, despite her concerns, there is worth in both of these rhetorical moves: she argues that they do reverse the “xenophobia” of the more common alien-invasion narrative and that, although she wishes that they better imagined possible futures rather than focusing on the present, they represent a “new form of ‘realism,’ which is “responsive to and complexly mimetic of a ‘genuine historical (and socio-economic) reality’” (301). She notes that science fiction “has attempted to map the new world space we inhabit, to imagine other forms of being, to give us a picture of multinationalism, to represent narratively the altered significance of difference, sameness, boundaries, [and] marginality” (301). Due to that mapping of our world, Sobchack recognizes that science fiction is operating in a more progressive manner (albeit not specifically in the way she was looking for). In its embrace and examination of alienation, Sobchack suggests that science fiction makes an attempt “at what Jameson calls ‘disalienation’,” which is, in his words, “the practical reconquests of a sense of place, and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory and which the individual subject can map and remap along with the moments of mobile, alternative trajectories” (301; qtd. in Sobchack 302). In science fiction’s attempt at this disalienation—this strategy for imagining alternative possibilities—Sobchack sees science fiction as making a “progressive move” that “allows for the possibility of some new form of empowerment, if not that empowerment itself” (302). Furthermore, she suggests that if science-fiction film were to follow science-fiction literature in its “intersection of feminism and SF” that the science-
fiction cinema that would result might similarly be “generically deconstructive, but also generically reconstructive” (305).

I argue that this feminist-driven constructiveness can and does happen in much science fiction and that one of the primary ways that science fiction is able to accomplish that constructiveness is through a recognition of the inherent relativity and malleability of consubstantiality: the recognition of the necessarily dual nature of “aliens R U.S” and “we are aliens” as well as the inherently dynamic and unstable categories of self and Other, neither of which are ever monolithic or given but always partial and variable. While Sobchack believes that recognition of similarity comes from a recognition of a shared state of alienation—a recognition of the ways in which we are or feel isolated—I would argue that a recognition of similarity is not only that but also at the same time a recognition of inclusion, a rhetoric of belonging. By recognizing the relative malleability inherent in our shared state of alienation, our shared circumstances can be embraced within a rhetoric of belonging while still maintaining a rhetoric of diversity that recognizes that the important differences that make us distinct and that cannot and should not be erased should be celebrated as part and parcel of what makes a rhetoric of belonging and inclusion necessary and important to a vibrant society. While I believe that there are many science-fiction texts that exhibit this rhetoric of belonging and its invitation to recognize consubstantiality with the Other, I argue that Rockne O’Bannon’s *Farscape* is a prime example because it encourages the recognition of such consubstantiality while at the same time understanding the importance of its dependence.
upon the recognition of each individual’s inherent worth, shared circumstances, and diversity.

The Malleable Relativity of Otherness: The Alien and Human through Each Other’s Eyes

Rockne O’Bannon’s fan-favorite and award-winning *Farscape* aired on the SciFi Channel for four seasons (1999-2003) before concluding in 2004 with the miniseries *Farscape: The Peacekeeper Wars*. Featuring the animatronics and puppetry of the Jim Henson’s Creature Shop, *Farscape* imagines a diverse universe of unexpected alien species and a lone human stranded among them. Through this imagining of a non-human-centric universe, *Farscape* illustrates the necessarily dual nature of “aliens R U.S.” and “we are alien”: the human protagonist, John Crichton, both comes to identify with aliens and is identified as alien. This recognition of the malleability relativity of Otherness allows *Farscape* to remediate the human-alien binary, destabilizing not only who can be seen as alien (making it a relative term) but also stripping the hierarchical dimension from being human/alien by demonstrating the worth inherent in everyone, including those expected to be inferior. This transformation of who the alien is in any given situation, like the transformation of Wikus into an alien in *District 9*, is done in two main ways: 1) the audience is encouraged to identify with aliens through second-order identification and identification via the individuation and/or transformation of complex others, all of which begins through default identification with the human protagonist, and 2) the conception of the alien and the human as distinct from one another is destabilized and relativized by
the human character being identified as alien and as inferior. By transforming the relationship between the human and the alien, *Farscape* demonstrates the role Burkean identification and consubstantiality play in encouraging others to develop feminist rhetorical principles such as compassionate empathy and the recognition of inherent worth.

This transformation of the relationship between the human and the alien from an antagonistic one to a consubstantial one begins through default identification with the protagonist. The first episode of the series, “Premiere,” opens with the image of Cape Canaveral and then pulls back past John Crichton, whose eyes we had been looking from—establishing him as the protagonist and, therefore, encouraging default identification with him. This is, then, further encouraged by Crichton falling into stereotypical assumptions and default cultural presumptions concerning what it means to be a man in America: he is white, he is muscular, he cares about sports, he likes to build things, he jokes around with other guys, he grew up wanting to be an astronaut, he excels at math and science, he wants to be like his father. In fact, Crichton is a scientist who is about to go up in space to test one of his theories about interstellar travel while at the same time following in his astronaut father’s footsteps. In a culture steeped in patriarchy, racism, and gendered stereotypes, Crichton fits default assumptions about who would be the hero, particularly in a science-fiction series centered on space travel.\(^{51}\)

\(^{51}\) Consider, for instance, Charlton Heston’s Taylor from *Planet of the Apes* and William Shatner’s Captain Kirk from *Star Trek: The Original Series*. 
After default identification with Crichton is established, that role is strengthened through his displacement from Earth, which puts both himself and the audience in a similar state of confusion. This shared state of confusion is produced quickly through several events beginning immediately after Crichton’s spacecraft, the *Farscape One*, begins its mission. While Crichton is running his experiment, the international version of NASA, the IASA, realizes that an electromagnetic wave will enter his path. Although they try to warn Crichton, the electromagnetic wave creates interference, and the *Farscape One* gets sucked into what Crichton later discovers is a wormhole. After a few disorienting seconds, Crichton finds himself on the other side of the universe in the middle of a fire fight between two large spacecraft and several smaller fighters, trapped amidst a hostile situation with no clear way to contact home or return there. At this point in the episode, both Crichton and the audience do not know what is going on, and Crichton begins to function as the audience’s surrogate.

That surrogate relationship is strengthened once Crichton finds himself among aliens. After the *Farscape One* gets clipped by a ship in the battle, it is pulled aboard a Leviathan named Moya, a member of a species similar in nature to a whale that often lives in a symbiotic relationship with other species through functioning as a living spaceship. Once on board, Crichton stumbles from his spacecraft, gets flashed by a DRD (a Roomba-looking robot), and is then herded by a group of DRDs onto Moya’s bridge where he sees two aliens: a 812-cycle-old blue-skinned Delvian priestess whose physiology is that of a plant named Pa’u Zotoh Zhaan and a 30-cycle-old Luxan warrior with tentacle-like limbs on his face and his skull named Ka D’Argo. Both are speaking to
each other vehemently as they attempt to control Moya’s functions during the battle, but
Crichton cannot understand anything they are saying. When D’Argo and Zhaan notice his
presence, he timidly says “hi” and starts to introduce himself, but, before he can finish,
D’Argo barrels up to him, lifts him up by his neck, and speaks to him aggressively in a
language Crichton does not know. Partially strangled, Crichton tries to explain that he
cannot understand D’Argo, and, in response, the DRD that escorted Crichton onto the
bridge injects his foot with translator microbes. Seconds later, Crichton is able to make
out the end of what Zhaan is saying to him—some sort of negative stereotype about a
lack of intelligence, violence, and Luxans—and D’Argo, now comprehensible to
Crichton, asks him about his ship. Zhaan explains that they do not understand what
technology Crichton used to appear from nowhere and that they want to know if they can
use it to escape from the space battle they are in. D’Argo, still holding Crichton up by the
neck, says “Tell us or die with us” before throwing Crichton across the room and going
back to his station, leaving the Crichton-audience surrogacy in the same confused and
suspenseful state.

Although the appearance of these two new humanoid creatures could provide new
characters for the audience to identify with, their alienness and aggressiveness toward the
audience surrogate likely encourages the continued default identification with Crichton’s
character. At this point, both the audience and Crichton must interpret the situation and
judge the new individuals using their terministic screens and present circumstances to do
so. Since Crichton is now able to begin to comprehend what is happening around him due
to the translator microbes, he observes, watching from the floor as the two aliens
frantically try to get the ship to respond and, to do so, speak to another alien on the ship—the many-armed, highly intelligent Pilot (the name serving both as his individual name and as the name of his species) who has been physically grafted into and mentally and emotionally bonded to Moya, his symbiotic host Leviathan. Pilot explains that they cannot control the ship while the control collar placed on Moya by the Peacekeepers, those whom they are in battle with, remains attached to her. As D’Argo indiscriminately rips out Moya’s synapses in an attempt to disable the collar, Crichton slowly tries to sneak away but is smacked in the face as Dominar Rygel the XVI, a 26-inch tall amphibian and the deposed sovereign of the Hunerian Empire, speeds into the room on a hovering device and, too late, tells Crichton to “get out of the way.” Rygel reports to D’Argo and Zhaan that no one else is on board and that he found the manifest stating that they are scheduled for transport to a “lifer’s prison.” This new information—that Crichton is on board a ship with escaped prisoners—provides the audience with more information to reinforce their identification with Crichton while also providing additional reasons to make negative assumptions about the alien life being encountered.

Rationales to justify such assumptions continue when Rygel, after making his report, flies over to Crichton and conspiratorially tells him not to worry—that he’ll protect Crichton now if Crichton protects him later. Further confused about what is going on and whose side he should be on, Crichton continues to watch as Zhaan rapidly presses buttons, D’Argo continues to yank out synapses, and Pilot announces that hull integrity is “reaching critical compromise.” When something Zhaan or D’Argo does finally works, the control collar inhibiting Moya’s movement releases, and D’Argo orders Pilot to
prepare for “starburst.” Moments later, the ship vanishes from the battle, Moya emerges from starburst in an empty part of space, and Pilot informs D’Argo and Zhaan that one of the “prowlers,” an enemy ship from the battle, got carried along with them. D’Argo tells Pilot to “net it and bring it aboard,” Zhaan announces that “at least we are free,” and Rygel throws up from going through starburst, the vomit landing on Crichton’s face and body. After getting covered in Rygel’s bodily fluids, Crichton jumps up and, in exasperation, exclaims “What is the matter with you…” and, after struggling to find the correct word, “people?” At this, D’Argo flicks out a long tongue-like extremity, which, upon hitting Crichton on the back of his neck, stuns him, and Crichton falls to the floor. When Crichton wakes up later, muttering to himself “Oh please, let it all be a dream, a very bad, very twisted dream,” he finds that it is not only not a dream but that he is also now naked and behind bars. Now imprisoned by former prisoners, Crichton finds himself in a position that seems to legitimize any assumptions either he or the audience might now have that the alien, identified first by looking Other, is also wholly Other morally.

While Crichton’s terministic screen, as an astronaut and scientist, had been “aliens R U.S.”—as is demonstrated through his later pronouncement to himself in that opening episode that “Boy, was Spielberg ever wrong. Close Encounters, my ass”—what Crichton finds on the other side of the wormhole is not what he had been led to expect by those more optimistic movies of the ’80s. Although, there is not one particular way science fiction has envisioned the alien—it has envisioned it as everything from Klingons, Spock, Alf, Marty the Martian, Yoda, the Ferengi, E.T., the xenomorph, Jabba the Hut, and more—when Crichton finds himself aboard Moya, seeing aliens for the first
time, he is shocked. This may partially be due to the nature of the alien itself: to be alien
is to be unknown. To consider that any representations of the alien should correctly
prepare us for first contact is to some extent arrogant and, at the very least, against the
nature of the term itself. The main reason for Crichton’s shock, however, is the disruption
to his terministic screen that was influenced away from representations of the alien as
they appear in movies such as Predator and Alien and toward more friendly and
welcoming aliens. Despite the expectations that Close Encounters provided, the aliens
Crichton meets seem far from interested in making friends. From D’Argo’s violent
interaction with Crichton to Crichton’s imprisonment, they treat him aggressively and
without interest in who he is, where he is from, or what he needs beyond what they think
he can offer them—as can be seen through D’Argo and Zhaan’s requests for technology
and Rygel’s request for quid pro quo. These aliens are not the Vulcans of the Star Trek
universe, ushering humanity into a new age of space travel: they seem neither benevolent
toward Crichton nor interested in him—in fact, he is treated by all of the several different
species aboard as if he is the only alien among them—in fact, he is treated in much the
same way that aliens in television series and movies are often treated by humans—
interrogated, examined, and confined.

This treatment of Crichton as the alien begins the destabilization of the alien-human
relationship from a hierarchical one to a relative one. This destabilization is aided
by the assumptions made about Crichton by the aliens aboard Moya. As is often the case,
this begins with a judgement of moral difference (and moral degradation) due to his
visual appearance. Unbeknownst to Crichton, he appears not as generically alien to
Zhaan, D’Argo, and Rygel but as a specific type of alien: a Sebacean. This species of alien makes up the bulk of the Peacekeepers, the galactic military force that put the control collar on Moya and imprisoned the aliens aboard her. The aliens aboard Moya are only able to ascertain that Crichton is not Sebacean by running tests on his blood and DNA, which they do after knocking him out and before imprisoning him. This inability to distinguish between Humans and Sebaceans is further made evident when, aboard the Peacekeeper Carrier that had been in battle with Moya, the captain, Bialar Crais, has his subordinate playback a video of the collision Crichton’s ship got into shortly after arriving through the wormhole. Angered that his brother had been killed by this collision, Crais has his subordinate zoom in onto the pilot’s face until he can see Crichton, whom both he and his subordinate assume to be Sebacean and whom the Captain decides to hunt down and kill.

Crichton, too, cannot distinguish between Humans and Sebaceans, which he discovers once he wakes up from the nonconsensual testing and finds himself behind bars. When he asks Rygel why he is locked up and explains that he is not there to harm them, Rygel responds by saying “We can no more trust you than we can trust that,” pointing to a helmeted and armored soldier in the cell with Crichton. As Crichton looks over, he seems relieved once the soldier—not a he or a she to Rygel but a that—lifts off the helmet and reveals itself to be what looks like a human female. As Crichton quickly finds out though, Aeryn Sun is Sebacean, and it is the Sebaceans, who are indistinguishable from Humans to the naked eye, that are the threatening aliens and not the other aliens he’s met that appear more alien-like physically. For example, when
Crichton walks over to her and introduces himself, she starts beating him and, after slamming him to the ground, demands to know why he’s out of uniform and what his rank and regiment are, believing him to be a Sebacean Peacekeeper like herself.

Furthermore, later, after Crichton and Aeryn escape from their cell, Aeryn tells Crichton that she’s going to sabotage Moya. Crichton balks at this: “Sabotage? Give me a break. They haven’t hurt us. How about we show them a little compassion?” Looking confused, Aeryn replies “Compassion? What is compassion?,” and Crichton, now also confused, says “Compassion? What, you’re kidding, right? It’s a feeling that you have when you see someone else’s pain and instead of taking advantage of their weakness, you help them.” Aeryn immediately replies “Oh, I know this feeling,” and Crichton says “Yeah, well, it’s a fairly common human feeling.” But instead of assenting to this common value, Aeryn says “Hmmm. I hate it.” Bewildered, Crichton says “You know what? I’m on the wrong team here. I’m just going to stay” and starts to walk in the other direction.

Despite looking human, Aeryn and other Peacekeepers like her do not share the moral traits that Crichton connects to human nature. The visual similarity between Sebaceans and Humans does not indicate moral similarity but, rather, conceals moral difference.

This destabilization of the default terministic screen in combination with default identification with Crichton encourages the audience to adopt Crichton’s more consubstantial terministic screen, one that relies on compassionate empathy—the ability to sympathize with and recognize the other’s situation as potentially similar to one’s own. This recognition of the potential for consubstantiality is more important to Crichton than more superficial similarities are: despite Aeryn appearing Human, when she does not
look upon others with compassion, he believes himself to be on “the wrong team.” For Aeryn, there is a clear “Us” and a clear “Them” established by physical and situational similarities, but Crichton, even after having been imprisoned, examined, and treated discourteously by the others, does not see the situation he and Aeryn find themselves in as necessarily antagonistic. In fact, for Crichton, such situations are consistently neither necessarily antagonistic nor representative of decisions that must be guided by a logic of either/or: Crichton consistently finds ways to choose both/and and forges a path forward for those around him to do the same. For instance, once the Peacekeepers catch up with Moya and have D’Argo, Crichton, and Aeryn all in chains, intending to execute them, Crichton finds a way to save both D’Argo and Aeryn, despite the ways in which they have treated him and their strong distaste for having anything to do with each other. When Crichton, Aeryn, and the crew of Moya successfully escape from the Peacekeepers (and are clearly now in possession of the shared circumstance of all being Peacekeeper fugitives), Crichton continues to behave as the peacemaker and the community builder, eventually establishing the new crew of Moya as a family.

As the audience travels with Crichton and the community that forms around him, they are further encouraged to come to understand the alien differently because he comes to understand the alien differently. As Crichton develops relationships with each member of Moya’s crew (and Moya herself, albeit more obliquely), second-order identification is encouraged: Crichton’s relationships become the audience’s. And as back stories and new

52 This execution order includes Aeryn because the Peacekeepers consider her to have been irreversibly contaminated by her contact with an unknown alien species (Crichton). This reaction to the Alien harkens back to the default terministic screen and the discussion of the Alien/Other as contagion.
situations are encountered that reveal unknown information about the characters, identification via individuation and/or transformation of complex others is also encouraged. For example, D’Argo moves from his original antagonistic treatment of Crichton to becoming Crichton’s best friend and, by the end of the series, the godfather of his child. D’Argo also moves from being understood in terms of stereotypes about his species—the Luxans—as well as those concerning that of an accused wife murderer to being understood as a loving husband and father who entered into an interspecies marriage and who was framed for his wife’s murder through the use of stereotypes about Luxans and their hyper-rage, which can result in unbridled violence and end in blackouts and memory loss. D’Argo, like the other aliens aboard Moya that Crichton meets, it is not what he first seems—and is not so different from Crichton that similarities are impossible to recognize and that friendship remains out of the question and continued antagonism necessary.

Furthermore, the two-pronged strategy of second-order identification and the individuation and/or transformation of complex others is not only used with D’Argo and the rest of the original crew of Moya that Crichton meets but also with each new member of the crew that comes aboard, which happens on a seasonal basis: in the fifteenth episode of the first season, Moya’s crew gains Chiana, a Nebari juvenile delinquent; in the sixteenth episode of the second season, Stark, a partially deranged Stykera who shared a cell with Crichton during the nineteenth and twentieth episodes of the first season, returns and joins the crew; in the third episode of the third season, Jool, a young Interion who was being held in stasis, is brought aboard Moya due to her genetic
similarities to Crichton; and, in the first episode of the fourth season, Noranti, a 293 cycle-old Traskan who was rescued by Crichton at the very end of the third season, becomes a crew member, much to the crew’s initial confusion and irritation. By offering continual encounters with the alien through the original crew of Moya and frequent additions to that crew—as well as aliens whom the crew meets in passing on other ships, stations, and planets—Farscape balances the known and the unknown—the familiar and the new—continuing to introduce the audience to new instances of the Alien while also allowing most all instances of the Alien to become known and recognized as potentially similar.

In fact, Farscape relies on such identification strategies substantially: not only individuating its ever-growing body of core protagonists but also most all of its antagonists. Over the course of the series, villains such as Bialar Crais—the Peacekeeper captain who pursues Crichton to avenge his brother’s death—come to be known and understood differently by the protagonists. For instance, when Crais’s vendetta against Crichton leads to him acting against orders continually, he finds himself without Peacekeeper support and, near the end of the first season, in the hands of one of the other enemies of Crichton and Moya’s crew. Needing sanctuary, he becomes a prisoner aboard Moya and comes to recognize that his vendetta against Crichton was based on faulty suppositions and his own guilt for the death of the brother his father had charged him to

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53 Sikozu, a Kalish bioloid, also joins the crew temporarily and reluctantly during the fourth season before shifting her alliances. Because of those shifted alliances and her antagonism toward the crew (she considers herself far superior to them all), her character arc blends that of the more clearly consubstantial crew members and that of the antagonists. However, this changes during the comic-book series that takes up the storyline after the miniseries. During that, she returns to Moya of her own volition and rejoins the crew.
protect. Eventually released from his cell, he becomes the pilot of Moya’s newborn offspring, Talyn—albeit initially against the will of Moya and her crew. Although never entirely trustworthy, Crais, nevertheless, largely functions during the second and third seasons as an ally, both asking for help from Moya and her crew and coming to their rescue. His realization that he should not have been hunting Crichton, his increasingly common situation with the crew, his unreturned feelings for Aeryn Sun, and the tempering of his more aggressive and selfish tendencies through becoming a father-figure to Talyn all lead to Crais becoming a more understandable and sympathetic character.

Furthermore, this transformation of the series’s original villain is ultimately fully redemptive: at the end of the third season, he and Talyn sacrifice themselves in order to save Moya and her crew. This individuation and transformation of Crais’s character moves him from being the primary antagonist to the reluctant ally and, finally, to the savior. Such shifts in the consideration of a character who was once treated as purely antagonistic strongly suggests that the potential for shared circumstances and similar values exists between everyone and anyone—even between those who seem to be most clearly misaligned—and that everyone, then, must possess inherent worth, regardless of whether that worth is obvious, expected, or doubted.

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54 In the twenty-first episode of the third season, “Into the Lion’s Den, Part Two: Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing,” Crais says “I live—I plan—I do—all in the service of my own interests. In that, I believe, I am not unique in the universe.”

55 This individuation and transformation of the antagonist also takes place with the common enemy that Crichton and Crais shared—Scorpius. In fact, only the ultimate antagonists of the final season and the subsequent miniseries—the Scarrans—remain un-individuated, which may simply be due to the series being cancelled. However, even then, not all Scarrans are portrayed antagonistically: there are some who work to achieve peace with the Peacekeeper Grayza (another adversarial character who is never treated in a fully sympathetic manner but who does become at least somewhat understandable and
This recognition of the inherent worth of others is also made evident because Crichton’s worth itself is often doubted. Although he tends to be operate as both a community builder and a negotiator—often holding the crew together—he and the rest of the Human species are not seen by the aliens he meets in the way that Humans have generally imagined themselves to be: inherently superior. The crew of Moya constantly undermines that assumption of human superiority, questioning Crichton’s intelligence and abilities on a regular basis. In the first episode, “Premiere,” for instance, D’Argo says of Crichton that “this one is some kind of higher-brain function deficient—how he escaped the sieving process, I do not know,” and Aeryn, upon meeting up with the other Peacekeepers, tells Crais that she believes Crichton when he says that killing Crais’s brother was an accident because she does not believe he is “brave enough or intelligent enough” to attack a Peacekeeper prowler intentionally. Although in much science fiction—as Sobchack notes—humanity ends up being privileged, the other species in Farscape do not conceive of the Human as privileged or superior: Crichton must constantly prove himself.

In fact, despite all of the times Crichton comes up with a plan to save the day, he is still treated as inferior by the crew well into the series. For instance, in the fourth episode of the second season, “Crackers Don’t Matter,” Moya travels through an area of sympathetic because, despite her methods, she seeks peace and tries to work with some of the Scarrans to prevent a galaxy-wide war).

56 This especially true of science fiction that is not serial in nature, such as films that are not part of a series and standalone novels.

57 This is a trend that begins in the first episode, where he saves the day twice: once freeing D’Argo and Aeryn from the Peacekeepers and once coming up with a flying technique and the math behind it to help Moya escape from the Peacekeeper vessels that are attempting to confine and recapture her and her crew.
space that the crew has been warned contain pulsars that produce a type of radiation that can cause irrational behavior in “lesser species.” Although Moya’s crew members do not think this will be a problem for anyone other than Crichton, everyone besides Crichton quickly begins behaving irrationally while also voicing negative opinions about Crichton and the Human species directly to him. For instance, when Crichton asks Pilot to run a scan on the pulsar light so they can understand it better, Pilot, instead of responding, reflects on Human inferiority:

Pilot: I'm only judging on my experience with you, but I've never seen such a deficient species.
Crichton: Have you run the scan on the pulsar light yet?
Pilot: How do humans make it through a cycle, even half a cycle, without killing each other?
Crichton: We find it difficult. Have you run the scan?
Pilot: You have no special abilities. You're not particularly smart, can hardly smell, can barely see, and you're not even vaguely physically or spiritually imposing. Is there anything you do well?  

In that same episode, Aeryn Sun offers a similar opinion of Crichton’s inadequacies:

“Why don't you make another speech, you self-important, deficient little man. All you ever do is talk….you're just this test monkey that screwed up your first experiment.”

Eventually annoyed by such comments, Crichton asks “Does this strike any of you superior beings as a little bit ironic?” And when Chiana, rising to the bait, asks “What?,” he responds “That I'm the deficient one, and I'm still saving your butts.” This reversal of the expectation of inferiority and inadequacy not only demonstrates that the crew still at

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58 To which Crichton good-naturedly replies, “Watch football.”
least subconsciously views Crichton as an inferior alien, but it also demonstrates the relative malleability of their hierarchical assumptions: despite seeing themselves as superior to Crichton, they fall under the influence of radiation that is only supposed to affect “lesser species.”

When Moya’s crew judges Crichton to be less developed based on stereotypes concerning unknown species (including that humans are not spacefaring and that they have physical limitations) instead of judging Crichton and humanity based on the work Crichton does, the ideas he comes up with, and his adaptability and leadership skills, Crichton’s expectation of Humanity’s place in the larger universe comes to be destabilized—and it remains so. Even by the final season, that expectation of human superiority is absent. In the eleventh episode of the that season, “Unrealized Reality,” a race called the Ancients force Crichton to confront the power of wormholes and his knowledge of them. In response, Crichton does not see himself as special or powerful, saying instead “I am not Kirk, Spock, Luke, Buck, Flash, or Arthur frelling Dent. I’m Dorothy Gale from Kansas.” Unlike the various leading men of science fiction,59 Crichton sees himself not as a hero but instead as someone who, like Dorothy of The Wizard of Oz, got swept up in something beyond him and is just trying to find a way home. And whereas Moya’s crew is wrong about Crichton’s abilities and is blinded to some extent by their stereotypes about non-spacefaring aliens, their conception of Crichton as an alien—along with the fact that he has to continually prove himself—

59 I would argue that Arthur Dent of The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy is also more like Dorothy and Crichton than the others.
encourages the audience to reimagine “alien” as a relative term rather than one Humans apply to somehow inferior others. Because of this, what Farscape demonstrates so well is that anyone can be alien (as the definition of the term suggests) and that aliens are not inherently threatening nor morally inferior (as the default terministic screen assumes and the definition of the term implies). Crichton recognizes this relativity, and, like Dorothy, with whom he identifies, he gathers diverse companions around him out of an innate sense of compassionate empathy and an ability to recognize the shared circumstances and natures that can create a community of both diversity and belonging—a community that recognizes the inherent worth of all.

This ability to recognize the worth of others and to understand alterity as being malleable and relative is made particularly evident by the role reversal that happens in the second episode of the series. In “I, E.T.,” Moya submerges herself in a bog on an Earth-like planet—which Crichton compares to both Louisiana and Dagobah—to muffle a Peacekeeper beacon aboard that is transmitting her location and to give the crew a chance to remove it. The beacon is located in Moya’s primary neural nexus, so Crichton, Aeryn, and D’Argo leave the ship in order to find a mineral anesthetic that Pilot and Zhaan believe can be used to numb the area. While tracking a concentrated source of the mineral using a particle analyzer, Crichton enters a barn where he encounters a young boy who looks almost human except for his long, pointed ears that fold back against his head. When the boy, Fostro, suggests that Crichton—whose ears are clearly visible and not shaped or attached like his own—is “from space,” Crichton replies, smiling, “yeah, I guess I am.” After that, the boy runs away to find his mother, Lyneea, a scientist, who
says she does not want to be interrupted because she is in the middle of studying “what could be a very real extraterrestrial event.” When she stumbles upon Crichton, whom Fostro has, in a moment of panic, immobilized with a stun gun, she is surprised and concerned. Crichton quickly tells her that he’s not there to harm them, and Fostro tells his mother that Crichton’s “from space” and that he “must have come down in” the object she had been “tracking.” As Crichton begins to introduce himself, Lyneea, clearly shocked, says “I'm talking to an alien? You're an alien, and I'm talking to you? In my kitchen?” After Crichton explains why he is there, Lyneea begins to get excited that there are other aliens nearby and that, due to her tracking, she knows where Moya is. Crichton, interrupting her, says “Look, I understand what a phenomenal moment this is for you,” and, Lynnea, assuming that Crichton is from a spacefaring species, says “Do you? Can you? I mean, to you, space travel is commonplace—but to us, here? I mean—in one flash—” And, to her surprise, Crichton finishes her thought: “You've learned that you're not alone in the universe, that space travel is possible, that a zillion of your empirical facts about science, religion are wrong or—completely suspect.” As they look at each other, he smiles and says “I do understand.”

In what represents a complete role reversal from the first episode, Crichton finds himself in the position of being the first contact another species makes with aliens. Although he had already been treated as an alien by Moya’s crew and the Peacekeeper forces that saw his unidentified status as a contamination, he is now put explicitly in the position of the Alien and is able to use his more consubstantial terministic screen and the assumptions that guide it to make that first contact positive. Making sure to indicate that
his intentions are friendly, Crichton quickly moves the relationship between him and Lyneea and her son from one that could be dominated by fear of the unknown and antagonism toward the Other to one of consubstantiality by demonstrating similarity and understanding: as someone who just went through first contact, he knows how it feels and what its implications are. Recognizing the fellowship between them as scientists who, in Lyneea’s words, had looked “up at the stars at night and dream[ed] about this moment,” he does not try to take advantage of her assumptions about his superiority or potential hostility but instead asks for help, explaining that he “figured… [she’d] be somebody who’d understand” them and not “hurt” them due to the radio telescopes visible on the house—or, at least, that he’d “hoped” she’d be. Just as he found the experience of meeting aliens to be bewildering, so, too, does Lyneea. When Crichton says “I'm not exactly what you expected, am I?,” she replies that she “always thought that when we finally made contact—first contact—that the beings we'd meet would be so radically different” but that Crichton is “so much like” them. Crichton, agreeing, says “Yeah, it’s a real kick in the pants, ain't it?.” Her recognition of the fact that he is not radically different from her—that he is so much like her own people—physically, situationally, and motivationally—makes clear that Alien can be “of a nature similar to”: not only is another alien species recognized as being similar to humanity, but Crichton, clearly identified as an Alien, demonstrates that similarity and establishes a cooperative and understanding relationship due to it.

While this combination of Crichton’s role as protagonist, audience surrogate, and moral and intellectual leader may seem to emphasize the human over the alien and the
similar over the different, implying human superiority, Crichton is not treated by the series as representative of his species. Instead, Crichton is treated as singular and, in particular, as a model of the traits and actions that represent humanity’s greatest potential: the enactment of feminist rhetorical principles such as compassionate empathy. This becomes particularly evident when the crew of Moya comes to Earth during the thirteenth episode of the fourth season, “Terra Firma.” During that storyline, humanity is not idealized: they are fighting amongst themselves, paranoid about alien life, and trying to leverage contact for national benefit. D’Argo even comments to Crichton that Humans “don't like aliens” and that, actually, they don’t seem to “like anybody.” Crichton—who consistently refuses to assume the worst, attempts perspective-taking, adapts, tries to understand others as well as other cultures, recognizes similarities, recognizes the worth of others, and builds communities—he is not representative of what every human would do but instead what they could: he consistently acts with what he initially defined as a common human response—compassionate empathy. Rather than being representative of his species, he is representative of their greatest potential\textsuperscript{60}—the potential that feminism

\textsuperscript{60} This treatment of enacted feminism as humanity’s greatest potential is often accomplished in science fiction through alien perspectives concerning what makes humanity special. For instance, the time-travelling Time Lord of Doctor Who (1963–1989; 1996; 2005–present), the Doctor, functions in many ways as the protector of Earth largely because he admires that potential, relies on it, and encourages it. While that is ubiquitous throughout the series, a prime example can be found in the two-part episode arc “The Hungry Earth” and “Cold Blood.” In them, the Silurians, a reptilian species that inhabited and reigned over Earth before hibernating underground to avoid a catastrophe, is awoken accidentally by a deep drilling project. Seeing the Earth as rightfully theirs, some of the Silurians threaten war, so the Doctor attempts to negotiate peace between the Silurians and the Humans. When the first round of negotiations ends, he tells them “Not bad for a first session. More similarities than differences” (“Cold Blood”). Later, however, negotiations temporarily crumble because of violence on the part of some of the humans involved in the mining project. Chastising them, the Doctor says “In the future, when you talk about this, you tell people there was a chance, but you were so much less than the best of humanity.” That best of humanity—that ability to
recognizes and champions—the ability of individuals to recognize those who are different from them as potentially consubstantial, inherently valuable, and worth coming to know and understand and build vibrantly diverse communities with.

**Conclusion**

Although *Farscape* is an exemplar of a series that both presents and models that feminism and the consubstantial terministic screen that allows for it, it is not the only science-fiction text that reveals the malleable relativity of otherness and that relies on a grammar of consubstantiality. There are many texts—including Whedon’s pre-*Avengers* television oeuvre—that do one or the other or both. For example, Geraghty argues that the film *virus* (1999) reverses the default terministic screen by painting the Human as the threat to the alien and that *Alien: Resurrection* (1997) obscures any clear delineation between Human and Alien by presenting the Human character Ripley as the biological mother of an alien. Furthermore, both Booker and Geraghty argue that the *Twilight* recognize “more similarities than differences”—is why the Doctor—a being with considerable power and near immortality—values humanity.

Another prime example can be seen in *Babylon 5* (1993-1998), a space opera that takes place on the eponymous space station that is referred to as “the last best hope for peace,” the fifth Human-built station designed to serve as the diplomatic headquarters for species across the universe. Delenn, the Minbari ambassador aboard the station attributes the station’s chance for success on what she sees as humanity’s potential: its willingness and desire to build diverse communities. She explains that...no one else would've ever built a place like this. Humans share one unique quality: they build communities. If the Narns or the Centauri or any other race built a station like this, it would be used only by their own people, but everywhere humans go, they create communities out of diverse and sometimes hostile populations. It is a great gift and a terrible responsibility, one that cannot be abandoned. (“And Now for a Word”)

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61 According to Geraghty, “the twist of the film is that the virus of the title does not refer to the alien signal but to the humans that it seeks to wipe out: for the alien invader the humans are a virus” (88).  
Zone (1959-1964) consistently undermined stereotypical understandings of the alien,\textsuperscript{63} that Outer Limits (1963-1965) continued to do so,\textsuperscript{64} and so on.\textsuperscript{65} Furthermore, there are many devices, such as cloning, body swapping, transferred consciousness, and various forms of telepathy (such as the Vulcan mind meld) that science fiction uses to encourage the perspective-taking necessary for consubstantiality to be recognized. Farscape, in fact, of identity’ in the last film invert those established in previous ones; Ripley is both alien and human, clone and mother” (87).

According to Geraghty, Rod Serling’s The Twilight Zone was “a television series that did not depict humanity as superior to the alien other” and that often “presented the alien as a persecuted figure oppressed by intolerance” (21). Furthermore, according to M. Keith Booker in his 2004 Science Fiction Television, one of the show’s “favorite motifs” was “reversals in which the seemingly simple opposition between earthlings and aliens is undermined, often by leading audiences inadvertently to view this opposition from the point of view of the aliens” (13). According to Booker, these “reversals were highly effective” at a time when “many traditional ‘Us. vs. Them’ boundaries were being challenged” by such things as globalization and the civil rights movement (14). In fact, Booker argues that “the amazing hold of cold war rhetoric on the popular American imagination can probably be explained by the fact that Americans were eager for the kind of simple good versus evil oppositions that this rhetoric offered amid a climate in which so many traditional oppositions were losing their imaginative grip” (15).

This embrace of the humanity of the Other was continued in The Outer Limits, which Geraghty argues relied on aliens in a similar way to The Twilight Zone:

...alien creatures were not simply monstrous others but frequently acted to relativise established definitions of normality. If they were visually different, to the human, these differences were defined as alternative rather than inferior. As a result, the aliens were not just painted men in jumpsuits; rather, the production team showed great imagination in the make-up and costuming departments as the producers tried to imagine creatures completely different from their human counterparts. Such diversity worked to displace humanity from the centre of the Universe. The aliens were not simply humanoid or monstrous others, and their sheer diversity as creatures presented humanity as simply one species among many. Furthermore, many of the episodes concerned the threat of science going wrong or with humans destroying themselves with nuclear warfare, radiation poisoning and genetic mutation.... In this context, the alien was not simply a figure of suspicion and fear, but was often a potential saviour—so long as humans could learn to live with a being that looked so different from themselves. (31-32)

For example, Geraghty also sees such moves being made by V. During the course of the original V, the “human resistance, the heroes of the narrative, continued to outwit and uncover the Visitors through a series of attacks and counter-propaganda that prompted a number of Visitors to swap sides and join the humans” (82). Furthermore, “Back stories started to develop (the birth of an alien/human hybrid for example) that enabled audiences to interact with characters on a weekly basis, becoming more sympathetic with the minutiae of their daily lives and not just with the overall invasion narrative” (82). Similarly, Booker argues that Space: 1999 (1975-1977) was explicit about such relativity: in it, one of its characters, Koenig, explains to a new crew member, Maya, that “we’re all aliens until we get to know one another” (80).
does many, if not all, of these, as do many other science-fiction texts that came before and after it. As such, *Farscape* and much other science fiction not only showcase how third-person identity constitution functions in regards to how consubstantiality can be established and identification encouraged, but they also demonstrate how thoroughly feminist that use of third-person identity constitution can be: by encouraging and modeling the use of a terministic screen grounded in the grammar of consubstantiality, the inherent worth of all can be recognized and affirmed.

This affirmation of worth further situates *Farscape*, science fiction, and third-person identity constitution within the realm of feminist rhetoric since rhetorical theorists Foss and Griffin argue that recognizing the immanent value of others is a necessary component of a feminist approach (4). For Foss and Griffin, every individual is “unique and necessary,” and they recognize that a person’s worth “cannot be determined by positioning…[them] on a hierarchy so that they can be ranked and compared” (4). Like Starhawk, on whom they base this aspect of their proposal for invitational rhetoric, they believe that an individual’s value cannot be “earned, acquired, or proven” but is, instead, innate (qtd in Foss and Griffin 4). Therefore, through its reliance on a more consubstantial terministic screen that encourages the audience to recognize the inherent worth of others, *Farscape* demonstrates why that recognition is such a necessity: only as a community are the protagonists and the antagonists that come to join them able to flourish. As *Farscape* ends up demonstrating, recognizing the potential for consubstantiality with others can create such communities, can stay hands from violence and tyranny, and can change perspectives. By relying on third-person identity
constitution to encourage the audience to recognize the relative malleability of otherness, *Farscape* demonstrates the ability of Burkean consubstantiality and identification and science fiction to create feminist rhetorics and to encourage the audience to adopt the principles associated with them—and, potentially, as the next chapter discusses, to be persuaded to respond to the final step in third-person identity constitution: the invitation-to-perspective.
The final step in third-person identity constitution—after constituting the Other and establishing consubstantiality—is perhaps both the easiest and hardest to articulate. In some ways, it is merely the goal of persuasion itself. However, when both Charland and Anderson’s articulations of that final step for second-person identity constitution and first-person identity constitution are compared, the complication of whether or not the audience has “the illusion of freedom” in choosing that goal arises (or, more accurately, what differs is how the rhetor approaches the audience’s agency regarding the matter). For Charland’s constitutive rhetoric (second-person identity constitution), the presumption is that if the audience has gone along with the first two steps, they will go along with the third as well—under the illusion that they choose the end goal that has been presented by the rhetor’s call-to-action. On the other hand, in Anderson’s account of first-person identity constitution (because the second step self-consciously operates as identification with rather than being masked as identification as), the audience has more choice in determining what that end goal is. This allows such rhetoric to be deemed successful if the audience responds in a myriad of ways rather than just one, even if those responses are not what the rhetor may have desired them to be.\textsuperscript{66} Furthermore, in this

\textsuperscript{66} Although one of feminist rhetoric’s ideals is to avoid attempting to control or dominate an audience, I do not believe that pursuit of this goal actually can or does strip the rhetor of having preferred outcomes. Instead, I believe that it merely values the rhetor’s desire as equal to that of the audience.
scenario, that final step can be the result of anything from explicit calls-to-action (which would have results such as joining a cause, voting, donating, or other direct action in the world) to softer calls-to-action, including what I will term invitations-to-perspective, which may have results such as understanding or empathy rather than something more directly observable. When operating in this second way, the final step of identity constitution is perhaps what marks rhetoric that relies on Burkean identification as having the most potential to be rhetorically feminist: by recognizing the audience’s agency and empowering the audience to choose for themselves what an appropriate response would be, such rhetoric treats the audience as equal to the rhetor and encourages the audience to take part in the shared power that such equality can bring. This chapter, then, investigates how the third step of identity constitution functions in that feminist manner in the third-person identity constitution of science fiction through analyzing Ron Moore and David Eick’s re-imagined Battlestar Galactica (2004-2009). Unlike the other shows that have been discussed thus far (all of which rely on more implicit invitations-to-perspective, as is most common in the genre), Battlestar Galactica offers an explicit invitation-to-perspective, which makes it a more directly observable example of this final step.

To understand how this final step functions in science fiction such as Battlestar Galactica, it is important to at first at least briefly understand how the first two steps of third-person identity constitution have already occurred. Like with the Monster and the Alien, the default terministic screen concerning the Machine (the conceptual Other of members’ desires instead of superior to them (and that the rhetor remains, theoretically, open to the potential of those other responses).
 initiates Battlestar Galactica’s use of third-person identity constitution. This default terministic screen concerning the Machine showcases anxieties about the causal relationship between technological advancement and humanity's demise. Because this default terministic screen is common in science-fiction storytelling, Battlestar Galactica’s opening—with its nuclear holocaust triggered by machines that have risen up against their human masters—is not unexpected. Importantly, however, rather than merely cautioning against developing such technology, Battlestar Galactica attempts to remediate that anxiety by persuading its audience to identify with those machines. In doing so, Battlestar Galactica, like the other texts that have been discussed, questions the binary between self and other by blurring the distinction between them and granting privilege to neither. Thus, due to the way in which the Machine’s identity is constituted and the ways in which the audience is invited to identify with those machines, these first two steps lead to the third. That third step, then—an explicit invitation-to-perspective that is established by the structure of series—prompts Battlestar Galactica’s audience to consider the relevance of the relationship between the human and the Machine within the storyworld to such relationships outside it. This explicit invitation-to-perspective, then, not only makes Battlestar Galactica a particularly apparent example of the third step, but it also, in turn, showcases how important Burkean identification can be to the creation of texts that reflect and model feminist rhetorical principles such as equality and empowerment.

In order to understand how Battlestar Galactica is able to use Burkean identification to reflect and model such principles, the reasons behind the human-machine
animosity in the story are important to understand. According to the 2010 prequel series
*Caprica*, human-machine animosity began about fifty-eight years prior to the start of
*Battlestar Galactica* when humanity first created the cylons: artificial intelligence cast in
bipedal chrome. According to the *Caprica* episode “There is Another Sky,” Daniel
Graystone, who developed the cylon technology, designed it such a way that each cylon
would operate as an artificially sentient being whose sole purpose was to be a slave.
According to Graystone, as a “tireless worker,” a cylon would not “need to be paid,”
would not “retire or get sick,” and would not “have rights or objections or complaints.”
Furthermore, Graystone claimed that cylons would be programmed to do “anything and
everything” asked of them “without question.” Graystone’s assumptions about
humanity’s control over the cylons, however, proved to be shortsighted.67 Within years of
their creation (after the end of *Caprica* but before the beginning of *Battlestar Galactica*),
the cylons rebelled against their human masters and nearly won the war they waged
against them by disabling humanity’s ships and defense systems with computer viruses.
Through their use of humanity’s technological dependence as a weapon, the cylons

67 Although this short-sightedness can be directly attributed to humanity’s misuse of the cylons as
slaves, it is also more complicated than that. While publicly working on the cylon technology in order to
win a government contract, Graystone also privately worked to further it in order to create an artificial body
within which he could preserve Zoe, his teenage daughter who passed away near the beginning of the
series. The conflicting goals inherent in designing a technology that would be utterly obedient and
designing one that would house the personality, mind, and emotions of a teenager created the opening for a
more independent and not necessarily mature AI to surface. This AI, governed by the recreated Zoe, then
further developed the technology until it exceeded Graystone’s control. While additional complications
(such as differences in religion) also led to the cylon uprising, all the various factors that combined to
create the break between the cylons and the humans have a commonality: they all stem from some
individual or group of individuals trying to control another—regardless of whether those others are the
cylons, Zoe, or the those targeted by the religious zealots Zoe became involved with. In this way, Daniel
Graystone, the other scientists developing the technology, and every person or organization that purchased
cylons all act in a manner that feminists tend to connect with the patriarchy: a manner that relies on
oppression, domination, control, and ignoring or denying the agency of others.
created technophobic anxieties among the human survivors. Although peace accords
were signed to end the conflict,68 this anxiety instilled a cautiousness in humanity
concerning technological advancement that remained in place for many years. Once
peace became normative again, however, that cautiousness began to fade and
technologies like those that the cylons had once used against humanity were again
designed and implemented.

The miniseries that begins Battlestar Galactica is set forty years after the cylon-
war armistice on a space station that was created for cylon-human diplomatic ventures.
During the forty years following the peace accords, however, no cylon ambassador ever
came to meet with their human counterpart. Uninterested in a peaceful co-existence, the
centurions (the original chrome cylons) used those forty years to develop the humanoid
bodies that make the cylons that play major roles in the series so indistinguishable from

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68 At the time, the cylons’ motivation for signing the peace accords was unknown (seeing as they
were winning the war and nothing had taken place to change their relationship with their former masters).
However, during Battlestar Galactica, it is eventually revealed that the war came to an end because the
Final Five (a group of humanoid cylons that were developed by a previous human civilization) arrived and
convinced the cylons to cease hostilities. It turns out that the cylons were only willing to do so in exchange
for the Final Five’s help in finishing developing the humanoid bodies that the centurion models had been
unsuccessful in creating thus far. Because of the role the Final Five played in trying to mitigate human-
machine animosity as well as the role they played in helping along the circumstances that allowed for the
genocide to take place at all, the Final Five both help and hinder identification with the Machine. However,
since most all of their efforts are offscreen and not revealed until late in the series (and through mostly
exposition alone), this complicated role is not as significant as might be expected. Ultimately though, the
Final Five do operate as characters with whom the audience is likely to identify. This is due to the fact that,
for the majority of the series, both they and the audience believe them to be human. This misunderstanding
of their nature is caused by one of the humanoid cylons (a number one model who goes by the name John
Cavil) essentially brainwashing them. Cavil, who was frustrated with his “parents” for not sharing his
hatred for humanity, used this tactic to try to convince them, through what he assumed would be their
unpleasant experience as pseudo-humans, that humanity was not worth saving. Although this tactic failed
and the Final Five do largely become characters that help audience identification with the cylons to occur,
because this chapter is not focused on the means with which consubstantiality is revealed, I will largely
avoid discussing the complicated nature and actions of the Final Five further.

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mankind. As the miniseries of *Battlestar Galactica* opens, one of those humanoid cylons shows up to meet a human officer aboard the space station for the first time. While this is happening, another humanoid cylon of the same model (the Six who comes to be known as Caprica Six later in the series) is down on the planet Caprica and triggers a nuclear holocaust. That attack, along with others made at the same time, wipes out most all of mankind on the various planets inhabited by humans as well as on most of the ships that have began to rely on networked technology again. The rest of *Battlestar Galactica* concerns the aftermath of those attacks, following the survivors of that holocaust aboard or guarded by the battlestar *Galactica*, which was being decommissioned at the beginning of the series due to its age and lack of networked technology. These survivors, who continue to be pursued by the cylons, spend the series fighting to stay alive and searching for a new planet to call home. By the end of the series, that new home is Earth, and the survivors that land there—which, at that point in the series, include both humans and cylons—are cast as the audience’s ancestors: during the final five minutes of the show, the series jumps thousands of years into the future to present-day New York City.

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Eight models of humanoid cylons were developed by the centurions and the Final Five (although only seven models appear during the series due to the Sevens being “boxed,” or discontinued, early on). Each model number has a unique set of personality traits and physical traits. At any given time, there could be hundreds of any given model number in existence. Each iteration of a model number (such as one of the Threes) generally does not have a name but, rather, goes by their model number (“Three”) unless they are or have been undercover as a specific human (such as when one of the Threes poses as the journalist D’Anna Biers). However, some of the most prominent humanoid cylon characters in the series are ones that use a unique identifier, with some of them retaining their human name (such as the Eight who goes by Sharon) and some picking up a name based on their experiences (such as Caprica Six). Furthermore, each humanoid cylon’s identity remains intact even if the body of that cylon dies: due to technology that allows for “resurrection,” the memories of such cylons are generally immediately downloaded into a new body of the appropriate model number and that unique cylon exists once again.
and ends with images of 21st century Americans and examples of robotics from around the world.

In this chapter, I use that metaleptic70 jump from the story’s end to the audience’s present as a lens through which to view Battlestar Galactica as a piece of rhetoric—one that attempts to persuade the audience to both remediate and intervene in privileging binaries such as the one occurring in the series between human and machine. I argue that by becoming the audience’s past and flashing forward at the very end to the audience’s present, Battlestar Galactica becomes the literalization of what I deem to be science-fiction's rhetorical function—that of future memory.71 Although seemingly an oxymoron, future memory is a term that, in its juxtaposition of past and future, captures how science-fiction narratives create memories of a potentiality—a record of mistakes that can be unmade. When the creators of Battlestar Galactica literalize that rhetorical function through that metaleptic jump, they strengthen their argument concerning the human-

70 Metalepsis, according to John Pier in the Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory, happens when “narrative levels [fold] back onto the present situation of the narrating act, uprooting the boundary between the world of the telling and that of the told or even, in extreme cases, effacing the line of demarcation between fiction and reality” (303). Battlestar Galactica represents one of those “extreme cases” where the storyworld and the audience’s world collapse into one another. The act of folding the “narrative levels back onto the present” happens throughout the series (as will be discussed in the following section of this chapter); however, the culmination, or collapse, of the “demarcation between fiction and reality” happens in what I have been referring to as that metaleptic jump—the flash forward to the audience’s present during the final moments of the series.

71 The phrase future memory is similar to other descriptions of science fiction that have been put forth by those within the academy (for instance, postmodernist critic and theorist Fredric Jameson conceives of science fiction as an archeology of the future) and beyond it (for instance, actor and author Wil Wheaton titled his reflections on his Star Trek: The Next Generation experiences as Memories of the Future, Volume One). I began to consider future memory as an apt description of science-fiction's primary rhetorical function after a talk given by Dr. Guy Beiner at the Ohio State University. Although that talk concerned the use of memory in Irish folk history, during the Q&A afterwards, Beiner mentioned science fiction in passing, referring to it as “future memory.” Even though my use of the term should not be considered an accurate reflection of Beiner’s, I think it is important to acknowledge that it was his conception that first led me to consider future memory to be the rhetorical function I was encountering in texts like Battlestar Galactica.
machine binary into an explicit invitation-to-perspective. This invitation-to-perspective makes clear the need for intervention but leaves whether or not such intervention happens and, if it does, how so up to the audience. Through this recognition of the audience’s choice and agency in the matter, *Battlestar Galactica* operates as a feminist invitation to question and intervene in problematic hierarchies.

In order to demonstrate how *Battlestar Galactica* operates in that manner, I not only evaluate those final moments of the series but also additional episodes, including a close-reading of the third-season episode “Unfinished Business.” Furthermore, in order to best articulate the means of persuasion used to create *Battlestar Galactica*’s main invitation-to-perspective and its modeling of it, I partially rely on a vocabulary borrowed from narratology and film studies. Therefore, beginning with the first section of this chapter, I seek to demonstrate the means with which *Battlestar Galactica* creates its explicit invitation-to-perspective. To do so, I track the tightening relationship between the audience’s world and the storyworld, all of which culminates with that metaleptic jump. In the second section, I reflect on that explicit invitation-to-perspective itself, considering how the actions that led up to that metaleptic jump suggest the need to remediate the problematic hierarchy between human and machine. To do this, I consider that human-machine animosity in light of its general function in the genre as well as in light of its specific function in *Battlestar Galactica*, which I argue is compatible with feminist theorist Donna Haraway’s cyborg theory. Finally, in the third section, I look at how *Battlestar Galactica* models responses to future memory by demonstrating how the characters in *Battlestar Galactica* use their own memories of the past (as presented
through flashback) to construct their future. I argue that these characters provide models that the audience can use when considering their own response to *Battlestar Galactica*’s invitation-to-perspective in regards to constructing and accepting responsibility for the future of the real world. Thus, throughout this chapter, I argue that *Battlestar Galactica*’s explicit invitation-to-perspective demonstrates how science-fiction's rhetorical function as future memory operates as the third step in identity constitution; and, moreover, in doing so, I also argue that it demonstrates Burkean identification’s ability to create a rhetoric steeped in the feminist rhetorical principles of recognizing agency and empowering choice in others.

**Battlestar Galactica and Future Memory**

In order to effectively persuade the audience toward that explicit invitation-to-perspective—in order to persuade the audience that lessons from the storyworld should be applied outside it—a direct relationship between the storyworld of *Battlestar Galactica* and the audience’s reality must be suggested by the text. This suggestion is first fundamentally established by what narrative theorists characterize as *the principle of minimal departure*. This principle is part of the contract established between the author and audience for any fictional text and works such that both parties assume that, unless indicated otherwise, the storyworld mirrors the world of everyday experience. For example, in regards to most any novel that has apparent and significant differences from reality, the audience will assume by default that the law of gravity still governs that storyworld despite other differences unless they are given explicit reason not to. It is this
default, cognitive behavior that allows the audience to make sense of the narrative being told without either the author or the audience having to build each storyworld encountered from scratch. Like all authors of fiction, then, the creators of *Battlestar Galactica* necessarily rely on the audience’s engagement with the principle of minimal departure to establish their storyworld.

In addition to more general assumptions concerning the principle of minimal departure, such as the law of gravity, the audience of *Battlestar Galactica* is also led to believe that this default relationship exists through more explicit engagement with the principle of minimal departure. This more explicit engagement takes place through subtle hints that are provided by the creators of *Battlestar Galactica*, all of which suggest that the storyworld is in some definitive and not just metaphorical way supposed to be seen in direct relation to the audience’s reality. Some examples of such hints include the following: that the survivors of the genocide are referred to as humans,\(^{72}\) that the characters in *Battlestar Galactica* speak English without any explanation being provided for why (such as *Farscape*’s translator microbes), that the fleet’s technology is recognizable as adaptation of current technology (such as the battlestar *Galactica* itself, which is essentially an aircraft carrier modified for space travel), and that references are made to characters and concepts from mythologies and religions that are a part of the audience’s world (such as the goddess Hera, the planet Jupiter, tenets of Mormonism, and

\(^{72}\) They are also referred to as Capricans, Taurans, etc., but these signifiers only establish the planet on which they were born, not what species they are.
Buddhist prayers). These hints paired with the principle of minimal departure do much to establish the storyworld’s relationship to reality.

In general fiction, that combination of hints and general engagement with the principle of minimal departure would likely fully establish the storyworld’s relationship to reality; however, in genre fiction, these elements are often bolstered by genre expectations as well. These expectations are what give genre fiction its often negative reputation as formulaic but are also what govern the audience’s response to the story (through the fulfillment or the subversion of those expectations). For science fiction, such expectations can vary greatly due to the proliferation of subgenres; however, these subgenres do operate under the same general expectations as each other (which is what binds them together as science fiction). Those general expectations, according to Peter Stockwell in his entry on science fiction in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, include that science-fiction narratives are “typically set in the future or in space... [and encompass] narratives of counterfactual history, virtuality, and an extreme defamiliarisation of contemporary society” (518). This assumed existence of science-fiction narratives as some combination of spatially or temporally distant, historically counterfactual, virtual rather than physical, or veiled commentary on the present indicates that a direct accessibility relation—in this case, a spatial-temporal accessibility relation—between the storyworld and the audience’s world exists. In the case of

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73 In her 1991 *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*, narrative theorist Marie-Laure Ryan explains that an accessibility relation actualizes a non-actual possible world within the text into a storyworld by demonstrating the possibility of that world through making its premises accessible to the audience. Although Ryan describes multiple kinds of accessibility relations, she notes that the most fundamental accessibility relation linking any narrative to the actual world is that of logic—specifically, for
*Battlestar Galactica*, the primary genre expectation that is relied on to first establish that spatial-temporal accessibility relation is the assumption that if a science-fiction narrative takes place on a spaceship (rather than modern spacecraft) that it also takes place in the future.

Although this genre expectation implies a direct spatial-temporal accessibility relation and although such expectations combined with the principle of minimal departure lead the audience to assume by default that this accessibility relation does exist, no such relationship is actually necessitated by those indicators. In order for *Battlestar Galactica*’s accessibility relation to become explicit, the spatial-temporal distance between the storyworld and reality must be defined. Although this type of defining is often present in science-fiction narratives, *Battlestar Galactica* does not initially provide exact information concerning where in time and space the storyworld takes place: there is no voice-over during the credits (e.g., *Star Trek*), textual introduction (e.g., *Star Wars*), or early exposition (e.g., *Serenity* and *Farscape*) to establish that the storyworld has any direct spatial or temporal relationship to the audience’s world. Instead, the creators of *Battlestar Galactica* leave a gap concerning that spatial-temporal distance and allow the audience to fill in that gap with genre expectations, which results in the default assumption that the storyworld represents a possible future. The creators of *Battlestar Galactica* then strengthen that assumption about the spatial-temporal distance over the course of the series (up until the final reveal) by directly referring to Earth as part of the instance, the law of the excluded middle (essentially that propositions must either be true or false). In this case, the accessibility relation that I discuss is one that not only actualizes the storyworld but literalizes it as future memory by defining how *Battlestar Galactica*’s universe relates to the audience’s reality both spatially (where) and temporally (when).
storyworld’s mythos and then as part of the storyworld’s past. This strengthening of the default assumption concerning the accessibility relation establishes for the audience that the storyworld is a glimpse of a possible future—one that genre expectations suggest can be avoided.

This strengthening of the default assumption concerning the accessibility relation begins when Earth is first referenced during the miniseries that marked *Battlestar Galactica*’s debut. After a particularly narrow escape from the cylons, services for the dead are held aboard the *Galactica*. Near the end of the service, after the priestess Elosha has said “So say we all” (an equivalent to the Christian, Hebrew, and Muslim “amen”) and the gathered have mumbled back the phrase, Commander Adama, the military leader of the rag-tag fleet that has formed around the *Galactica*, barks the phrase at the crew over and over again until they repeat it back to him with confidence. Then, looking back and forth between the flag-covered bodies74 and the living men and women in front of him, Adama asks, “Are they the lucky ones? That's what you're thinking, isn't it?.” He goes on to describe the desperation of the survivors’ situation and then voices two questions to this newly exiled people: “Where shall we go? What shall we do?” It is his answer to these questions which marks the first time in the series that the creators of *Battlestar Galactica* make the relationship between the storyworld and the audience’s world direct. In an effort to give hope to his people during this speech, Adama asks Elosha to recount the scriptural myth of the lost thirteenth colony. In response to this,

74 This military tradition is another resonant similarity between the audience’s world and the storyworld.
Elosha intones “The scrolls tell us a thirteenth tribe left Kobol in the Early Days. They traveled far and made their home upon a planet called Earth, which circled a distant and unknown star.” Immediately, Adama responds “It's not unknown. I know where it is!” and promises that Earth will be found and will become humanity’s “new home.” Although the next scene reveals that Adama lied about knowing Earth’s location in order to give his people hope, from that moment in the cargo bay on, Earth becomes the answer to the question “where shall we go?”

Later in the series, the storyworld's possible Earth—that mythological Earth—becomes the characters’ past when the fleet finds and follows a map to Earth that uses the constellations of the audience’s night sky as navigational tools. When the fleet finds this Earth, they discover that the planet is an empty wasteland, destroyed over two-thousand years prior to the series’ present by a nuclear holocaust akin to the one that began the miniseries. Although the crew is not able to determine much about this Earth, they do discover that it was populated by humanoid cylons at the time of its destruction.\textsuperscript{75} While on the planet, members of the crew also encounter an artifact that the audience is likely to recognize as belonging to American culture (the melody of “All Along the Watchtower”). Both of these details strengthen the assumed accessibility relation between the storyworld and the audience’s world: the audience assumes that this planet is supposed to represent “their” Earth and that two-thousand years in the storyworld’s past “they” created artificial intelligence that led to humanoid cylons. The Pythian scripture prevalent in the series—

\textsuperscript{75} Included among these humanoid cylons were the Final Five, for whom time was slowed by interstellar travel as they journeyed from this planet to Caprica to try to prevent the prophesied holocaust that began the series.
“all this has happened before, and it will all happen again”—seems to have accurately foretold this revelation: the same thing that happened to the crew of the battlestar _Galactica_ happened to “us” two-thousand years earlier. Thus, this storyworld Earth conforms to audience assumptions based on genre conventions: it is speculative—a novum based on the premise that “we” created artificial intelligence that rebelled against us, destroying both ourselves and Earth in the process. This, then, is science fiction as future memory. The rhetoric of that persuasive moment makes the argument that this destroyed Earth represents the mistakes that “we” could make if we do not learn from them, and the mistakes our descendants, the crew of the battlestar _Galactica_, are continuing to make because they did not learn from “our” shared past either.

The assumption that this destroyed Earth is a representation of the audience’s potential future, however (as previously noted), proves to be incorrect. During the final arc of _Battlestar Galactica_, a new planet is found, and the image shown of it from space confirms that this planet is the audience’s Earth, not the other. Genre conventions and context clues, like the map of constellations, had incorrectly filled in the spatial-temporal accessibility relation the creators of _Battlestar Galactica_ had left ambiguous. However, even once this new Earth is revealed and the spatial aspect of that accessibility relation is established directly for the first time by the image of it from space, the exact temporal relationship between the storyworld and the audience’s world remains ambiguous. As discussed previously though, during the final five minutes of the series finale, that temporal—and what will also be identified as causal—relationship becomes clear.
In that final episode, after the crew has scattered in different directions across the African safari and other parts of the world to work on building new lives, a proleptic shift—a flash forward—with a textual overlay reading “150,000 years later” cuts to present-day New York City. This proleptic shift, then, is the means with which the creators of *Battlestar Galactica* confirm for the audience that this storyworld Earth is, indeed, the audience’s Earth—just 150,000 years in the past. When the creators of *Battlestar Galactica* explicitly establish this spatial-temporal accessibility relation, they finally entirely undermine the audience’s assumptions concerning the temporal relationship between the storyworld and the audience’s world. This undermining of the temporal relationship also collapses the assumptions concerning the linked causal relationship—that the story is the result of human-machine animosity on “our” part and “our” descendents’ continuation of it. The new causal relationship that results from the reveal of the actual spatial-temporal accessibility relation is what, then, leads to *Battlestar Galactica*’s literalization of science-fiction's rhetorical function as future memory.

That literalization occurs when the intended causal relationship is made evident during the final scene of the series. Once the proleptic shift to New York City has happened, the audience is told that one of the children that settled on Earth from the *Galactica* crew has just been unearthed and that present-day scientists have described her remains as belonging to the audience’s Mitochondrial Eve. By thus claiming what has been presumed to be a futuristic story as ancestral memory, *Battlestar Galactica* is able to literalize science-fiction's rhetorical function as future memory: the storyworld becomes the audience’s past, but, because the universe of *Battlestar Galactica* operates
under a premise of cyclical time, the storyworld also remains a prediction of the future. When a montage of modern-day robots is accompanied by Jimi Hendrix’s cover of Bob Dylan’s “All Along the Watchtower” (the melody of which becomes a cultural artifact that is recreated in every manifestation of Earth), that literalization manifests as an invitation-to-perspective: *Battlestar Galactica* prompts the audience to consider whether they, as the 21st century humans referenced, will allow the same human-machine animosity that governed *Battlestar Galactica* to happen again. By recognizing the audience’s agency and empowering them to use it in relation to an explicit invitation-to-perspective, *Battlestar Galactica*, thus, uses Burkean identification between these “ancestors” and the audience to share power with that audience, allowing them to determine what the next shared steps for both the story and the real world will be.

**Battlestar Galactica and Human-Machine Animosity**

Once *Battlestar Galactica* prompts its audience to consider the question of whether human-machine animosity will happen again and what role they will have in it, the series can be reread through the lens that question provides. This rereading reveals how important Burkean identification is to the text. Because human-machine animosity has become cyclical due to the humans treating the cylons as inferior and, then later, the cylons treating the humans as inferior, the series attempts to remediate that relationship by replacing hierarchical discrimination with identification. Because of this, *Battlestar Galactica* exists as a piece of rhetoric that argues that, in order to avoid the mistakes of “the past,” the audience must refuse to engage in the privileging binary that creates and
sustains that animosity by recognizing both the synthetic (machine) and the organic (human) as of equal and separate value. The creators of Battlestar Galactica ultimately make this argument to the audience by inviting them to identify with humanoid cylons—a representation of the cyborg that engages fully in both the synthetic and the organic.

Like the Machine in general, the cyborg is generally used in science fiction to represent human anxieties concerning the causal relationship between technological advancement and humanity's demise. Consequently, there are few positive constructions of the cyborg in mainstream culture. Instead, conceptions of the cyborg tend to not only be negative but also antagonistic. The Borg of the Star Trek universe are a characteristic example: they value the synthetic over the organic and over the human qualities associated with being organic. For instance, although the Borg's technology enhances them, it denies them individuality, and, although the Borg's pursuit of perfection makes them aware of the uniqueness of Others, their pursuit is marked by genocide—the assimilation and erasure of the Other rather than co-existence with it. The Borg and their mantra “resistance is futile” represent the normative construction of the cyborg—one that expresses human fears that technological advancement will inevitably lead to disenfranchisement, the surrendering of individuality, and the loss of personal agency.

In order to convince the audience that the synthetic should be considered to be neither threatening nor inferior to the organic, Battlestar Galactica first engages with the

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76 The Borg are first introduced as a collective that operates through a hive mind in Star Trek: The Next Generation. The Borg are not an alien species: they are members of various species that other Borg have forcibly assimilated into the collective. When the Borg assimilate others, they modify the bodies of their new recruits with synthetic parts that connect the individual to the hive mind and enhance their strength and mental capabilities.
mainstream conception of the cyborg before remediating it (just as Whedon’s oeuvre does with the Monster). In *Battlestar Galactica*, the cylons originally represent the concern that human-machine animosity will become inevitable, and the scriptural passage “all this has happened before, and it will all happen again” echoes the cycles of violence between humans and machines that occur during the series. Much like the Borg, the more robotic centurions, after rising up against their human creators, developed cyborg models capable of infiltrating and destroying human society. These cyborg models (the humanoid version of the cylons), considering themselves to be humanity's children, believed that the only way for them to “come into their own” would be for their “parents….to die” (“Bastille Day”). In order to achieve this goal, the cylons triggered the nuclear holocaust that destroyed all but about 50,000 humans before they began hunting down the survivors. Like the Borg, the humanoid cylons thought they needed to destroy mankind in order to create a place for themselves in the universe: their original plan was to wipe out humanity, not co-exist with it.

Despite the prevalence of this type of cyborg in the genre (and in *Battlestar Galactica* itself), not all fictional conceptions of synthetic life in science fiction are treated as threatening. When synthetic life is not being used in science fiction to represent the fear of technological advancement, it is often used to question the limits of humanity. There are many conceptions of robots—specifically ones that can be considered liminal cyborgs—that complicate the human-machine animosity so often represented by purer cyborg manifestations. These variations on the robot motif tend to be androids: machines modified to look human. Although androids are not biological organisms modified by
technology, they can be considered liminal cyborgs because of the ontological doubt they themselves feel (they often try to become as close to human as they can) and the ontological doubt they cause (they often make the audience question what the “measure of a man”⁷⁷ is). Because of this, sympathetic liminal cyborgs encourage the audience to expand their conception of humanity to include the synthetic life-forms that so long to be human too.

A prime example of this are the aforementioned androids, who, as ontological cyborgs, generally would prefer to be human than machine. Since they are rarely able to accomplish this goal, they tend to end up seeking middle-ground instead; however, this middle-ground is generally sought not because they find the combination of human and machine necessarily desirable but because it is the closest they can get to being human. Data, the android officer aboard the starship Enterprise in Star Trek: The Next Generation, may be the most well-known example of an android seeking to become a “real boy.” Often compared to Pinocchio and the Tin Man by other characters in Star Trek: The Next Generation, Data searches for what it means to be human, and his desire to become human marks him as a sympathetic liminal cyborg. However, although Data causes other characters—and members of the audience—to question whether or not biological components are necessary to being human, his existence does not inspire other

⁷⁷ “The Measure of a Man” is a Star Trek: The Next Generation episode wherein the android Data, who is a Starfleet officer, ends up undergoing a trial to determine if he is the property of Starfleet or if he has rights. The major issues that arise during this trial include his synthetic nature, whether or not he is sentient, and whether or not androids will ever be able to be mass produced (and, if so, if treating them as property constitutes the enslavement of an entire species, which would be a poor relationship to initiate with a potential example of the “new life and new civilizations” with whom Starfleet has claimed their mission seeks to create alliances).
characters to seek to become part synthetic. Liminal cyborgs like Data create sympathy rather than animosity toward machines, but, in seeking to become human, they often treat their synthetic nature as an obstacle rather than as an asset in that pursuit. Therefore, in this conception of synthetic life, humanity is privileged, and the synthetic is ignored, disdained, or at least undervalued.

In the finale of *Battlestar Galactica*, a version of the cyborg is created that is able to maintain the sympathy of the liminal cyborg while still participating fully in both the biologic and the synthetic. This more utopian cyborg is *Battlestar Galactica*’s re-conception of contemporary humans as cyborgs. When the plan to destroy humanity is undermined by romantic relationships developing between humans and cylons, the animosity between the groups becomes somewhat mitigated—especially once the cylons discover that the only way for them to reproduce (rather than just replicate) is to couple with humans, and specifically (at least in their estimation), for a child to be conceived in love. Although the original creation of the humanoid cylon was fraught with trauma—the centurions experimented on and murdered humans during the creation process—the centurions experimented on and murdered humans during the creation process—the creation of an eventual self-sustaining cyborg race through the joining of the remaining

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78 It should be noted, however, that one of Data’s closest friends, Lieutenant Commander Geordi La Forge, is synthetically modified. Blind, La Forge uses a VISOR that was developed to allow him to see. This VISOR gives La Forge enhanced vision in many ways, but, similarly to Data, this does not stop him from ultimately moving on to a more, at least visually, human solution eventually.

79 In the episode “The Farm,” it is revealed that the cylons had developed breeding farms where they used hundreds of human women unsuccessfully as incubators. Due to this failure, the cylons, hypothesized that true love must be necessary for conception to take place, which is why they placed so much importance on their early attempt to trick the human *Galactica* crew member Helo into falling in love with Sharon, a Number Eight. Once Sharon and Helo do end up falling in love with each other, their child, Hera—the only successful human-cylon hybrid in the series—is born. Later in the series, another cylon conceives a child, but the child is not carried to term. In “Deadlock,” Caprica Six, the cylon mother who miscarried the child, claims that the miscarriage is the result of the child’s father, Saul (one of the Final Five), loving another woman instead of her.
humans and remaining cylons represents a fundamental interdependence that values and incorporates both peoples. In the mythos of *Battlestar Galactica*, the audience, then, is that race of cyborgs: the offspring of a Mitochondrial Eve that was both cylon and human. The various constructions of the cyborg in *Battlestar Galactica* leading up to this more utopian cyborg race, therefore, attempt to both address and remediate the anxieties that popular conceptions of the cyborg exhibit. By first engaging with the most popular construction of the cyborg and then ending with a revelation that the audience is the offspring of a cyborg born of a cylon mother and a human father, *Battlestar Galactica* challenges viewers to reconsider the nature of the cyborg and dismantle any stereotype-driven judgments about such synthetic-organic hybridization.

Although the remediation of the cyborg that *Battlestar Galactica* seeks to achieve is fairly uncommon in mainstream science fiction, the utopian cyborg is not new as a concept: it is based on feminist science fiction and is theorized by Donna Haraway in her 1985 essay “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century.” Haraway’s conception of the cyborg considers both aspects—the human and the machine—to be of equal and inseparable value. This makes

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80 During the course of the four seasons, there are many specific versions of the cylons that help or hinder this remediation. Hindering this effort is the aforementioned John Cavil, who wants to be solely machine and tries to convince the other cylons to continue to fight against the humans. Eventually, however, some of the cylons rebel against him and join the Fleet. Many of these renegade cylons are Number Eights and Number Sixes who, through the resurrection process that the cylons use in order to replicate, are influenced to consider humans more sympathetically by Sharon, Boomer (another Eight), and Caprica-Six’s romantic relationships with their human partners. The sleeper agents and the Final Five all also invite strong identification since the audience first knows them as humans and then travels with them as they figure out how to reconcile their memories of being human with the new knowledge that they are cylon (the Final Five’s backstory furthers such identification as well). However, the metaleptic reveal that the audience is cyborg is the strongest invitation to identification because, in theory, the audience does not have to be persuaded to identify with themselves.
Haraway’s cyborg a useful tool for understanding what *Battlestar Galactica* seeks to accomplish since Haraway uses the cyborg to redefine the postmodern individual in a way that disallows privileging binaries (such as man/woman, human/machine, and white/not-white). Like *Battlestar Galactica*, Haraway considers all 21st century humans to be cyborgs. She argues that her conception of the cyborg can be used to understand how “the production of universal, totalizing theory is a mistake that misses most of reality” and that “taking responsibility for the social relations of science and technology means refusing an antiscience metaphysics, [and] a demonology of technology” (181). According to Haraway, we must embrace “the skillful task of reconstructing the boundaries of daily life, in partial connection with others, in communication with all our parts,” and cyborg imagery suggests the “way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves” (181). Because Haraway feels that explanations based on binaries are limited (“a mistake that misses most of reality”), her image of the cyborg becomes a constructive way to consider that reality, and, in the case of *Battlestar Galactica*, a constructive way for the audience to avoid repeating the mistakes made with regards to human-machine animosity in the story.

Notably, however, the mythos of *Battlestar Galactica* seems to suggest that the mistakes of the past cannot be avoided. The pervasive scriptural passage “all of this has happened before, and it will all happen again” implies that a cycle of human-machine animosity is unavoidable: once it has happened, it will continue. Yet, *Battlestar Galactica* is riddled with attempts to reconcile past memory with future action in a way that will avoid the fulfillment of that prophecy. These attempts to change fate are made by the
humans when they decide to run rather than fight, by the cylons when they attempt an occupation rather than a second holocaust, and, eventually, by both, when the renegade cylons join and are accepted by the colonial fleet. In general, however, the attempts made by characters in *Battlestar Galactica* to prevent another cycle of violence fail.

This cycle of failures ends though when, just prior to the *Galactica* landing on the audience’s Earth, the human character Baltar interrupts the final conflict within the storyworld between the humans and the cylons. Shouting at the leaders of both groups, Baltar asks “You wanna break the cycle? Break the cycle of birth? Death? Rebirth? Destruction? Escape? Death? Well, that's in our hands, in our hands only. It requires that we live in hope, not fear” (“Day Break”). This call to “live in hope” requires that both cylons and humans accept responsibility and agency—not only for their current predicament but also for its solution. This call is then echoed in the final moments of the finale when, just before images of modern-day robotics flash on the screen to “All Along the Watchtower,” the inevitability of the cycle is questioned. As the news article about Mitochondrial Eve is discussed, two ontologically ambiguous characters (referred to as angels at one point) consider the audience’s Earth in relation to its prior incarnations:

Messenger Six: Commercialism, decadence, technology run amok… remind you of anything?
Messenger Baltar: Take your pick: Kobol, Earth—the real Earth before this one [the destroyed Earth], Caprica before the fall.

Messenger Six: All of this has happened before.
Messenger Baltar: But the question remains, does all of this have to happen again?
As Messenger Six and Messenger Baltar continue their conversation, they are optimistic that present-day humans will not repeat their ancestors’ mistakes (most significantly, Messenger Six answers Messenger Baltar’s question with “This time, I bet ‘no.’”). When successive images of actual, modern-day versions of humanoid robots appear on the screen, Messenger Six and Messenger Baltar's hope and optimism is directed toward the audience: only the audience can determine the answer to the question, and to do so, they must embrace their own agency, accept responsibility for their role in determining the future, and then choose to intervene constructively in the present. If the audience is persuaded to identify with this representation of themselves as cyborg, then Burkean identification will have led to an invitation-to-perspective that not only involves the feminist rhetorical principles of recognizing equality and inherent worth but that empowers the audience to choose for themselves how to respond and move forward.

_Battlestar Galactica and Making Use of Memory_

This invitational moment in itself marks both _Battlestar Galactica_ and its use of Burkean identification as rhetorically feminist, but _Battlestar Galactica_ also engages in the feminist rhetorical methodology of modeling in order to demonstrate to the audience the ways in which future memory can be responded to. In the final moments of the series, _Battlestar Galactica_ not only aims to teach its viewers a preventive lesson about the problematic privileging that the human-machine binary could create, it also problematizes the normative understanding of the past-future binary through its literalization of the storyworld as future memory. By problematizing that normative
understanding of time, the creators of *Battlestar Galactica* provide the audience with guidelines for how to break the cycle and how to constructively engage with the past-future binary: the audience should use future memory the same way the characters in *Battlestar Galactica* use their own memories. Because the human-cylon vendetta of *Battlestar Galactica* and the audience’s potential human-machine animosity exhibit the same temporal complexities that characters in *Battlestar Galactica* face when they try to move beyond the past, the creators of *Battlestar Galactica* are able to use flashbacks as a rhetorical strategy that demonstrates the various ways people can respond to memory, offering up among those options an example that neither ignores nor caves into human anxieties that “history repeats itself.”

This use of flashbacks can be considered rhetorical because, as French philosopher Gilles Deleuze argues in his 1985 *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, during the flashback “we witness the birth of memory, as [a] function of the future which retains what happens in order to make it the object to come” (52). Instead of perceiving flashbacks as something which merely recount untold story, Deleuze argues that the audience witnesses memory as part and parcel of future time. According to Deleuze, “memory could never evoke and report the past if it had not already been constituted at the moment when past was still present, hence in aim to come” (52). For that reason, Deleuze considers memory to be “behavior” (52). He believes that “it is in the present

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81 Although Deleuze is discussing flashbacks in relation to cinema, his insights concerning flashbacks apply to their use in television as well. Although television series do not always need to rely on flashbacks (since the audience has experienced with the characters some portion of the character’s past and because many shows include reminders of important previous details from other episodes before the episode begins), when television does rely on flashback, the rhetorical strategy is the same.
that we make a memory, in order to make use of it in the future when the present will be past” (52). Because the present—in its turmoil or apparent absence—can be frantic and intangible, Deleuze believes it is made into memory for use in the future. In this sense, memory is what allows individuals to make sense of the present, and it is in this manner that memory is used in the third season of *Battlestar Galactica* to demonstrate its rhetorical power and effects.

This investigation into the use of memory begins at the end of the second season of *Battlestar Galactica* due to what Deleuze refers to as the *crystal-image*: an indecipherable movement between the past and the present or the present and the future. In the second half of that season’s finale, “Laying Down Your Burdens, Part Two,” a crystal-image occurs right before the end of act five: the character Baltar lays his head down to rest on his desk, and, seconds later, he lifts his head back up again. The dialogue that follows that simple movement suggests what a caption soon confirms: a year has passed. In an almost indiscernible cut from a close-up of Baltar’s head resting on his desk to the same close-up one year later, the storyworld jumps forward a year into the future. Act Six, which follows just minutes later, consists of scenes that indicate that fundamental changes have occurred during that absent year—characters who firmly disliked each other act like friends (Starbuck and Tigh), characters who were friends no longer speak (Starbuck and Apollo), the battlestar has emptied, the character Callie is noticeably pregnant, and more—all culminating with the onset of a cylon occupation. That one cut—the crystal-image—acts as a catalyst, setting up season three's
investigation of how to bring oneself into a different relationship with the past in order to escape the fate prophesied by the Pythian scripture.

Season three’s investigation of how to break that cycle takes place in regards to the occupation and the missing year, all of which comes to a head in the ninth episode of the season, “Unfinished Business.” Up until that episode, the action of the third season consists of the end of the occupation and the fallout from it. Because some of the crew formed a resistance cell on New Caprica during the occupation and others collaborated with the cylons, several episodes during the first part of the third season focus on how members of the crew work to reconcile their recent antagonism with a return to being members of the same crew. Once that reconciliation has officially taken place, the episode “Unfinished Business” focuses on dealing with unofficial reconciliation of those issues as well as the reconciliation of the past and present in relation to the unseen year that the Baltar crystal-image condensed. This episode marks the first time in the series since the crew landed on New Caprica that they have had a chance to breathe—at least for the moment, they are not being pursued, occupied, or trying to decide whether or not to deal out retribution to collaborators—but, as its title suggests, “Unfinished Business” has little plot of its own. It is not an episode focused on the present of the series, but an episode focused on returning to the present in order to move into the future—just as the audience is asked to do in regards to future memory.

This focus is evident in the very premise of “Unfinished Business”: that military tradition includes the notion of having a “dance,” a set of boxing matches, to release and dissipate tensions and grudges that have developed among crew members. Nothing
outside of those boxing matches—at least not during the present—happens in the episode besides a scene that explains the character Starbuck's late entrance to the hangar deck. Besides boxing and minimal dialogue, the episode is made up of flashbacks to that unseen year. Although, as Deleuze notes in *Cinema 2*, flashbacks are often considered to be “unsophisticated” or merely “conventional” devices, he argues they can avoid this type of existence if they get “justification from elsewhere” (53). In “Unfinished Business,” the flashbacks used escape that mere conventionality by getting their justification from three places: 1) the crystal-image near the end of season two that provides narrative impetus (the audience is missing a year); 2) the premise of the dance itself since it indicates untold backstory and festering emotions (gaps to be filled in); and, 3) action- and affection-images (visuals of movement and emotion, respectively) within the dance that lend themselves to recollection-images (visuals of the remembered) that lend themselves to fleshed-out flashbacks (extended recollection-images that leave the rememberer behind). Furthermore, the flashbacks in “Unfinished Business” have rhetorical justification: they begin the process of demonstrating to the audience how individual characters in *Battlestar Galactica* choose to respond to memory.

Although that rhetorical function is important as a final justification for the flashbacks, the primary way in which those flashbacks are immediately justified in the episode is through the action- and affection-image to recollection-image to flashback cycle. The action- and affection-images of note within “Unfinished Business” that trigger that cycle consist of images for only a confined subset of characters: Apollo, Starbuck, Admiral Adama, and Chief Tyrol—all of whom participate in the dance. These
character's recollection-images transition from the present to the past via two methods: first, movement in the present is replaced by similar movement in the past (for example, Apollo circling an opponent in the ring shifts to an Apollo-recollection-image of square dancing with Starbuck a year earlier); and, second, present affection-images sparked by viewing or interacting with another person shift the present to a recollection-image involving a similar emotion with that person in the past. Except for the only recollection-image from Tyrol's perspective, each recollection-image is directly triggered by guilt or some other emotion relating to an unreconciled event from the unseen year: each image represents unresolved conflict. Tyrol's recollection-image—the exception—is instead the direct consequence of an action-image occurring within the ring during his bout with Adama. Besides providing more untold backstory, the Tyrol-recollection-image represents Tyrol's dawning realization of what motivates Adama's pugilistic determination and viciousness: Adama’s guilt over the past year. However, despite the importance of the Tyrol-recollection image to the plot of the episode, the focus of most of the flashbacks in the episode is largely on Commander Adama (albeit in relation to Chief Tyrol) and on Starbuck and Apollo (in relation to each other).

In the case of Adama, all of his flashbacks surround the self-reproach and anger he feels due to his belief that, in some way, it is his fault that the cylon occupation occurred—because he became “soft” on the crew and “soft” on himself. Each of Adama’s flashbacks is triggered by the sight, sound, or touch of Tyrol. For Adama, the match with Tyrol comes to embody an outlet for all the rage and guilt he feels over that missing year. The easy fluctuation that occurs between the present and the past during this match
culminates with Adama's near knockout. Once Tyrol helps Adama up off the canvas, Adama steps away from recollection, shifting his focus to the present and speaks to the crew. His speech, which acknowledges the past and then sets it aside, ends the dance and restores the focus of *Battlestar Galactica* to the present action of the series.

Adama's actions and speech, however, do not resume the present for everyone. This limited result is largely due to the fact that most of the triggered flashbacks in “Unfinished Business” do not belong to him: they belong to Starbuck and Apollo. Because the two characters have been gearing up to spar, they ignore Adama’s dismissal of the dance and enter the ring anyway—both characters continuing to recall memories from that missing year. When both Starbuck and Apollo’s flashbacks are taken in tandem, the fragments coalesce, provoking longer and longer flashbacks until the Starbuck-Apollo story from that past year has been revealed. Once that story has been told in full, brief images of Starbuck and Apollo’s relationship from before the Baltar-crystal-image appear without regard for chronology, flashing on to the screen in response to the punches being traded by the characters. These flashbacks continue elucidating—both for the audience and the characters’ themselves—the mind and heart of each character until Starbuck and Apollo have clinched each other in a hold. Once both characters stop trying to escape that hold and relax, the flashbacks come to an end, and the hold becomes a crystal-image, indiscernible in mood and emotion from the embrace that occurred between the two characters in the last flashback seen. Thus, the dance, through its triggering of memory, has brought these two characters back from antagonism with each other to their previous affection for each other.
Although flashbacks are not often used in *Battlestar Galactica*, they continue in regards to Starbuck and Apollo’s past periodically throughout the rest of the series. Although once the crystal-image at the end of “Unfinished Business” occurs Starbuck and Apollo’s relationship is able to move from anger back to affection, they remain unable to move past their oscillation between friendship and romance. The reason the dance and the flashbacks associated with it are not enough motivation for Starbuck and Apollo to move on is that the memories of that unseen year are not the only memories they have to face. Haunting them is Zach—the deceased brother of Apollo and fiancé of Starbuck—and, more importantly, the circumstances through which Starbuck and Apollo came to be friends. Immediately attracted to each other, Starbuck and Apollo’s relationship was barred from developing beyond friendship because they met before Zach's fatal accident while he and Starbuck were engaged. Unwilling to acknowledge a past where they almost betrayed Zach, Starbuck and Apollo revisit that initial crisis when they marry other people on New Caprica (during that unseen year) and then again when they cheat on their significant others in response to the feelings they acknowledge for each other when they are on New Caprica (prior to those marriages). Throughout the series, Starbuck and Apollo try to forget and ignore rather than learn from their past—but despite their best efforts, they are unable to do either and end up making the same mistakes over and over again. Because of this, Starbuck and Apollo’s relationship becomes key to understanding how memory functions in the series: Starbuck and Apollo repeat history very similarly to the way in which the humans and cylons do. By demonstrating what happens if the same mistakes continue to be made, Starbuck and
Apollo become an example of what happens when people fail to respond constructively to the lessons inherent in memory.

This emphasis on such failures expresses some common human anxieties regarding the power and reach of the past: that the past cannot be escaped, that humanity is doomed to repeat mistakes, and that individuals are forced to live in the shadow of what has already been done. Just as is shown through the cyclical relationship between the cylons and humans, these anxieties are also shown through Starbuck and Apollo’s relationship: they live in the shadow of Zach, they repeat the same mistakes (both by being largely unwilling to address their feelings for each other and by not following through when they do address them), and they seem incapable of moving past those feelings. Although the seeming inevitability of such anxieties is eventually questioned by characters in the finale, at this point in the series, the characters in *Battlestar Galactica* and the audience have little reason to hope that the Pythian scripture will be proven untrue in any circumstance.

Despite the fact that the Pythian scripture seems to remain true for Starbuck and Apollo, “Unfinished Business” does begin to offer the finale’s eventual hope in regards to resolving the conflict between the humans and cylons. Through the speech that Adama delivers to the crew from the ring after fighting Tyrol, “Unfinished Business” suggests a way out of the cycle. During this speech, Adama offers his explanation for why the occupation happened (that is, why the fleet was unable to fight off the cylons) and explains what he expects of the crew from now on:
When you step on this deck, you be ready to fight, or you dishonor the reason why we're here. Now remember this: when you fight a man, he's not your friend. Same goes when you lead men. I forgot that once. I let you get too close—all of you. I dropped my guard. I gave some of you breaks—let some of you go—before the fight was really over. I let this crew and this family disband, and we paid the price in lives. That can't happen again.

Explicitly, Adama says the past must be avoided, but he implicitly incorporates his past mistakes and successes into his conception of the future. For even though Adama describes the closeness he experienced with his crew as something that cannot happen again, he has already incorporated such intimacy into his understanding of their situation: Adama refers to the crew not as just his subordinates but also as his family. In the course of his speech, Adama incorporates the past into his understanding of the present—embracing it instead of treating it as an outside, meddlesome force that undermines and overshadows everything that happens after it. Adama's solution does not deny the past (like Starbuck and Apollo’s solution does) nor does it refuse to move past it (like the humans and cylons’ solutions generally have); Adama’s solution acknowledges the past and then carries on. By using memory to construct a future that has learned from the past, Adama provides both the fleet and the audience with an answer for how to reconcile the past with the present—and the audience is provided a model for how to respond to future memory constructively.

Through its investigation of memory, Battlestar Galactica makes evident the rhetorical goal of much science fiction. The time-circuits that the creators of Battlestar Galactica have the Starbuck-Apollo relationship, the human-cylon vendetta, and human-
machine animosity travel exhibit the same temporal anxieties on different levels. Through such examples as Starbuck and Apollo’s failed relationship and Adama's successful leadership, *Battlestar Galactica* provides its audience with examples they can choose as models for once the finale places the story's ambiguous ending in their hands. By explicitly asking the audience to respond to *Battlestar Galactica* as a memory of a future that can be avoided, the creators of *Battlestar Galactica* invite that audience to consider enacting change in the present by learning from an imagined past. In order for the audience to end the story in the way that Adama ends “Unfinished Business,” they must keep in mind the portents of the prototypical cyborg as well as the Pythian scripture, but they must also recognize that neither component in binaries such as past/future and synthetic/organic should be privileged. As Baltar argued in the final episode, if the audience wants to “break the cycle,” then it is in their “hands only,” and it requires living “in hope, not fear.” By explicitly recognizing the audience’s agency and power, *Battlestar Galactica* becomes an exemplar of what science fiction seeks to achieve rhetorically: *Battlestar Galactica* stages an intervention in the real world by asking the audience to take responsibility for humanity’s future.

This strong rhetorical push along with the feminist rhetorical principle of remediating privileging binaries seen not only in *Battlestar Galactica* but also in the other series that have been discussed makes each of these series strong exemplars of third-person identity constitution as an essential feature of a Burkean feminist rhetoric. Furthermore, *Battlestar Galactica*’s recognition and empowerment of the audience’s agency further situates it within the realm of feminist rhetoric since it, like the other
science-fiction television shows discussed, is operating in the manner of rhetorical theorists Foss and Griffin’s invitational rhetoric. This is due to the fact that, in addition to the principles of equality and immanent value, Foss and Griffin argue that self-determination is a necessary component of an invitational approach (4). For Foss and Griffin, self-determination “involves the recognition that audience members are authorities on their own lives” and, therefore, “accords respect” to the audience’s “capacity and right to constitute their worlds as they choose” (4). Through its invitation-to-perspective, *Battlestar Galactica* both recognizes and respects the audience’s “capacity and right” to “constitute” their own reality and demonstrates why that recognition and respect is such a necessity. Due to this as well as due to the other ways in which *Battlestar Galactica* uses third-person identity constitution, the series makes clear how science fiction can operate as a species of invitational rhetoric that relies on Burkean identification to accomplish its goals. This existence as a species of invitational rhetoric as well as what science fiction, both on its own and through its use of Burkean identification, has to offer feminist rhetoric in general will be explored in greater detail in the next, and final, chapter.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

We see personlike shapes all around us: but how do we relate to them? All too often, we see them as just shapes, or physical objects in motion. What storytelling…teaches us to do is to ask questions about the life behind the mask, the inner world concealed by the shape. It gets us in the habit of understanding that the inner world is differently shaped by different social circumstances.

—Martha C. Nussbaum, “Exactly and Responsibly” (350)

Getting into “the habit of understanding that the inner world is differently shaped by different social circumstances” is what the third-person identity constitution in the science-fiction television shows previously discussed and feminist rhetoric both do. By relying on Burkean identification to present third-person Others in ways that demonstrate not only their inherent worth and equality but also their potential consubstantiality, these television shows invite the audience to both appreciate and understand that differences need not divide us nor be merely tolerated but can bring us together in ways that better the world. By relying on feminist rhetorical principles to present these third-person Others and their narratives, these television shows empower the audience to determine for themselves whether or not they identify with those third-person Others and whether or not that identification ends up being transformative. That invitational move on the part of these series models for the audience the kind of behavior that can lead to productive attempts at inclusion and ethical communication: the rhetor does not assume hierarchical
superiority over the audience and recognizes the audience’s agency and choice; multiple perspectives are offered, and the worth of those varying perspectives are affirmed; and understanding is attempted and desired. Because of this, these science-fiction texts that rely on Burkean identification to present their third-person Others are not only feminist in the rhetorical principles they espouse but also in their modeling of those principles and through the manner with which they choose to accomplish the presentation of them. In fact, these texts do not just function as feminist rhetoric in a broad sense but, specifically, as a species of invitational rhetoric.

As mentioned before, invitational rhetoric was proposed by Sonja K. Foss and Cindy L. Griffin in their 1995 article “Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric.” Influenced by Sally Miller Gearhart’s 1979 call for the womanization of rhetoric as well as other feminists and scholars who recognized what Foss and Griffin refer to as the “patriarchal bias that undergirds most theories of rhetoric,” Foss and Griffin sought an alternative to, but not a supplanting of, traditional rhetoric, aiming for a rhetorical approach that could be relied on in situations where “controlling others” need

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82 Foss and Griffin list several scholars who recognized that patriarchal bias and, in some cases, investigated alternative rhetorics that did not fit well within the traditional understanding of the term. Among their examples, in addition to Gearhart, are Gregory J. Shepherd and Cheris Kramarae (2).

83 This distinction is an important one, which, having often been ignored or disbelieved, has led to many critiques of invitational rhetoric from scholars who felt that rhetoric as a whole was under attack. Such critiques have tended to involve either a defense of rhetoric’s ethics (see footnote 11) or a defense of persuasion and change (see footnotes 4 and 5). However, these are not the only critiques that invitational rhetoric has faced. Other critiques have included discussions concerning whether or not invitational rhetoric engages in essentialism, discussions concerning whether or not a civil tongue can or should be required by feminism, and discussions concerning whether or not material conditions can make invitational rhetoric impractical or inappropriate. For a more thorough understanding of the general debate that has surrounded invitational rhetoric, see Dow (1995), Mallin and Anderson (2000), Ryan and Natalie (2001), Pedrioli (2004), Meyer (2007), Petre (2007), Bone, Griffin, and Scholz (2008), DeLaure (2008), Gunn (2008), Lozano-Reich and Cloud (2009), Foss and Foss (2011), Gorsevski and Griffin (2014), Kirtley (2014), Lloyd (2014), Chávez (2015), and Swiencicki (2015).
not be the goal (1; 5). Because rhetoric has traditionally prided itself as a methodology that eschews “physical force and coercion,” Foss and Griffin sought an approach that would not mirror the methods rhetoric saw itself as an alternative to (3). Concerned that much rhetorical theory relied on antagonistic principles—ones that tend to be inherent to patriarchal conceptions of power, including competition, domination, and oppression—Foss and Griffin sought to base their alternative rhetoric on feminist principles that would “explicitly challenge” the antagonistic principles they found to be problematic (4). Arguing that efforts to “dominate and gain power over others cannot be used to develop relationships of equality,” they sought to replace what bell hooks saw as the “alienation, competition, and dehumanization” characterizing much rhetoric with the feminist principles of “equality, inherent worth, and self-determination” (qtd in Foss and Griffin 4; 4).

These three principles have not only become the representative principles of the various manifestations and forms that make up feminist rhetoric but have also helped to reveal the feminist approach involved in the use of third-person identity constitution in much science fiction. As was seen through Joss Whedon’s pre-Avengers television oeuvre, the presentation of the third-person Other through the transformation of

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84 Despite critiques of essentialism and of an uncritical use of feminism by scholars such as Dow and Condit (2005) and Schiappi (1995), invitational rhetoric and its three primary feminist principles have become representative of feminist rhetoric, both in the broader literature (where it is often one of the primary examples cited—if not the only one) and within feminist rhetoric itself. As Glen and Lunsford argue in the anthology of feminist rhetoric that I used to open the introductory chapter, a rhetoric that rejects “combat and dominance in favor of sharing perspectives, understandings, and power” does so through focusing on “inherent worth, equality, and empowered action (for rhetor and audience alike)” (14). Although Glen and Lunsford do not identify that rhetoric as specifically invitational, the component pieces and feminist principles they mention are those of invitational rhetoric. Whether claimed or not, invitational rhetoric’s legacy is at the heart of feminist rhetoric.
terministic screens demonstrates the necessity of that first principle, the recognition of the equality of others. Furthermore, as was seen through Rockne O’Bannon’s *Farscape*, the recognition of the Other as potentially consubstantial allows for the second principle, the recognition of the inherent worth of others—as well as the creation of diverse, vibrant communities built upon that recognition. Finally, as was seen through Ron Moore and David Eick’s reimagined *Battlestar Galactica*, identification with the Other through the recognition of the Self’s own otherness allows for the third principle, the recognition of everyone’s right to self-determination—as well as the recognition of the power inherent in agency, particularly in regards to choosing futures well, wisely, and in full knowledge of the existential responsibility inherent in choosing. Taken together, these three exemplars demonstrate, through their reliance on those three principles, that science fiction’s use of third-person identity constitution can and often does operate in a feminist manner.

Those three principles are so fundamental to feminist rhetoric in general and invitational rhetoric in particular because they were chosen by Foss and Griffin specifically to re-balance the traditional—and often hierarchical—relationship between the rhetor and the audience. Believing that neither the rhetor nor the audience’s worth can nor should be “determined by positioning individuals on a hierarchy so [that] they can be ranked and compared,” Foss and Griffin sought to base invitational rhetoric on feminist principles that would require the rhetor to no longer consider the audience to be “naive” and in need of enlightenment but instead to consider them as equals, in full possession and control of their own agency and valuable perspectives (4; 3). Thus, invitational
rhetoric does not seek domination or control—treating the audience as something to be conquered or won over—but operates as “an invitation to understanding as a means to create...relationship[s] rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination” (5). In order to create and maintain such relationships, Foss and Griffin argue that we must eschew “forms of communication that seek to change” others (4). Because of this, traditional rhetoric’s reliance on persuasion and change—whereby the rhetor seeks to gain “some measure of power and control over the audience”—are inappropriate for invitational rhetoric (6). Therefore, instead of seeking change, the rhetor taking an invitational approach seeks shared understanding (6). This, however, does not mean that

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85 Although Foss and Griffin saw invitational rhetoric as not engaging in persuasion, many scholars, such as Fulkerson (1996), Vorster (1999), Mallin and Anderson (2000), and Condit (2006), have disagreed, seeing persuasion in a broader light than Foss and Griffin seem to. Like these scholars, I believe invitational rhetoric falls within the purview of persuasion, seeing persuasion as encompassing acts of identification as well as more explicit attempts at persuasion. While Foss and Griffin are correct that invitational rhetoric is different than what has generally been meant by “rhetoric,” I would argue that it still falls within our ever-widening understanding of the rhetorical and the persuasive. As Condit (2006) states succinctly, “one cannot not persuade” (10). However, invitational rhetoric is, as Pedrioli (2004) puts it, “suggestive” and “not argumentative in nature” (187n15).

86 Another major critique of invitational rhetoric is due to Foss and Griffin aligning intent to change with coercion. Many critics concerned with this issue, such as Briner (1996), Condit (2006), Jørgensen (2007), and DeLaure (2008), have found the eschewal of change limiting and damaging to feminist rhetoric’s potential. However, many of these scholars, as well as Van Emerson (2010), Swiencicki (2015), Stolley (2017), and others, still find invitational rhetoric laudatory and have found ways to modify it to allow for change. Like many of these scholars, I would argue that intent to change is not itself patriarchal or coercive; however, I do agree with Foss and Griffin that if intent to change is approached through the rhetor imposing their will on others and assuming that they can unilaterally change the audience, then intent to change is representative of Foss and Griffin’s concerns. In these cases, the intent to change others may involve seeking to dominate or even oppress them and, at the bare minimum, involves a lack of awareness and respect for the autonomy of others. Therefore, I would argue that it is not the desire for change that is necessarily patriarchal and in need of avoidance but rather the insistence on and belief in the ability and desirability to control others that does.

Furthermore, Sonja Foss and Karen Foss address this critique of invitational rhetoric in their 2011 article “Constricted and Constructed Potentiality: An Inquiry into the Paradigms of Change,” which proposes two dialectical rhetorical paradigms: one in which the focus is on material conditions and one in which the focus is on symbolic resources. The first aligns more with traditional persuasion and the second, with invitational; however, Foss and Foss believe that both paradigms influence each other and can work together, depending on what is trying to be accomplished. Furthermore, in their textbook Inviting Transformation: Presentational Speaking for a Changing World, they identify four types of rhetorics that seek change—conquest, conversion, benevolent, and advisory—in addition to invitational rhetoric.
change cannot result from invitational rhetoric. Rather, it means that, when it does, that change is self-directed—and that it may not merely occur within the audience but also within the rhetor, who must go into invitational rhetoric willing to risk that their own point of view may change as a result (6). By rebalancing the rhetor-audience relationship—through a recognition that both are on equal footing and should treat each other that way—Foss and Griffin sought to move away from a patriarchal relationship between the two that devalued the lives and perspectives of those with different views or beliefs than the rhetor (3).

This commitment to shared understanding and the eschewal of more paternalistic rhetorical forms is a large part of what aligns invitational rhetoric so well with science fiction in general. Due to science fiction’s societal role as entertainment, the rhetor who engages in science fiction does not seek to change an audience but to produce a text that an audience open to the perspectives they offer will choose to consume. Furthermore, due to science fiction being part of that entertainment class, audiences can choose to take the stories at face value alone: as just stories and not rhetorical offerings. Only those who are open to the rhetoric within the story fully respond to the new perspective science fiction offers through its novum (or novi). Therefore, although the rhetor controls the story, the

87 Just as the audience is always in possession of agency regardless of the rhetor’s recognition of it, change is also always self-directed. This recognition of the audience’s self-determination does not create a new situation but rather empowers and respects the audience.

88 Other entertainment-based narratives can also function as invitational rhetoric, but fictional narratives specifically designed with perspective offering in mind (such as science fiction) are more likely to. A prime example of another type of fictional narrative operating in this manner is offered by Arvind Singhal, Hua Wang, and Everett M. Rogers in their 2012 chapter entitled “The Rising Tide of Entertainment-Education in Communication Campaigns.” In it, they describe entertainment-education as invitational in nature and as “effective for raising awareness and knowledge, changing individual attitudes and behaviors, and creating conditions to change social and cultural norms” (323).
audience controls interpretation and engagement with the rhetoric within it: the rhetor offers new perspective, and the audience chooses whether or not—and how—to respond. Sometimes that response is easy to see: many of the Browncoats that support Whedon’s work not only support his storyworlds but also support efforts in the real world to combat women’s inequality. Other times, there may be no clear response besides that of fandom, like the highly circulated petition that resulted in the miniseries *Farscape: The Peacekeeper Wars*. Sometimes the ask of the audience by the rhetor is fairly evident: the final moments of *Battlestar Galactica* suggest that our future—at least in terms of our relationship to technology—is in our hands and that we must take that responsibility seriously. But, more often than not, there is no direct ask beyond the offering of perspective itself—the hope that the perspective will be heard and considered. As an invitation-to-perspective rather than a call-to-action, science fiction’s worth is not determined by the strength of the ask nor by the extent of the audience’s response to it but rather by the quality and artistry of the offer itself. While authors of science fiction often see themselves as activists—architects of a better future—they operate rhetorically in a manner that respects and empowers the audience, not seeing their role as

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89 For example, canonical science-fiction authors P.K. Dick and Ursula Le Guin, who have both written extensively about why and how they engage in science fiction, see their work as activism. For instance, Dick argues that science fiction “has always been a protest medium” that calls “attention to reality” and that, for the author of science fiction, writing “is a protest against concrete reality” that “sing[s] to us of hells far worse than what we actually endure, or better worlds, or just worlds in which these elements are simply not present: worlds based on other premises” (“Pessimism in Science Fiction” 54; “Pessimism in Science Fiction” 55; “Who is an SF Writer” 74; “Who is an SF Writer” 74). Similarly, Le Guin, one of the first and most pivotal feminist science-fiction authors, argues that science fiction “presents alternatives to the status quo which not only question the ubiquity and necessity of extant institutions, but enlarge the field of social possibility and moral understanding” such that “the impulse to make change [becomes] imaginable” (219-220).
that of converting the unenlightened but rather that of building fellowship with those who are eager and willing to listen and share—and maybe act.

This desire for the building of communities based upon the sharing of perspectives is at the heart of invitational rhetoric. In fact, it is representative of the two primary forms that Foss and Griffin argue invitational rhetoric takes: that of offering perspective and that of creating the external conditions necessary for others to present their own perspectives. According to Foss and Griffin, those two forms rely on the use of narrative, on a willingness on the part of both parties to be open to change, and on listening (7; 7; 11-12). In the case of the first form—the offering of perspective—rhetors “tell what they currently know or understand,” presenting “their vision of the world and show[ing] how it looks and works for them” (7). This is the most prominent way in which science fiction engages in invitational rhetoric. In each of the examples previously discussed, the third-person Other—the Monster, Alien, or Machine—is presented in a manner that can be recognized as consubstantial, presenting a vision of the world in which more progressive values, including the embrace of a range of differences, can exist. For instance, the characters Angel and Spike of Buffy the Vampire Slayer were both marked as not only different but also immoral, but they became recognizable as consubstantial anyway—and it was not through being cured of that difference. That which made them different was also recognized as making them powerful, and that superior strength was continually relied on by their human compatriots. In fact, what changed was not that Angel and Spike stopped being different but that their difference stopped being seen as an impediment to fellowship. Similarly, the community built
aboard Moya on *Farscape* was one based on recognizing the way in which each character’s differences were valuable, and, in *Battlestar Galactica*, it was only through the embrace of difference that present-day humans became possible. By offering up their own worldview through the use of narrative, the rhetors involved in each of these shows invite the audience to consider the value in the perspectives being offered.

In the most ideal scenario, invitational rhetoric moves from that first form—the offering of perspective—to the next, not only creating “discovery and understanding” but also “mutual understanding of perspectives” (10). The second form of invitational rhetoric—the creation of an environment that makes that exchange possible—is founded on the three conditions of “safety, value, and freedom,” which come into being through how the rhetor treats the audience and how the audience members treat each other and the rhetor (10). When an audience is receptive to the rhetor’s offering of perspective as well as the invitation for an exchange of perspectives within that safe environment, they may offer their own perspectives as well, leading to that chance for shared understanding. While this is not the most prominent way that science-fiction texts engage in invitational rhetoric, they have the potential to operate in this way due to how the rhetor treats the audience and due to the fact that they often model the sharing of perspectives through their characters. However, whether or not science-fiction texts do operate in this manner depends on how they are used: if and what discussions are had surrounding them—and how. These discussions may happen within interpersonal communities or online through a range of sites, including those devoted to the series themselves, discussion-based communities like Reddit and Facebook, and news and opinion sites like *The Huffington*
Post and Jezebel. Such discussions occur largely spontaneously, with participants continually choosing to opt in or opt out. But these discussions can also happen more formally, as when they occur in the classroom or in other similar forums. However, regardless of how and why these discussions take place, the atmosphere created by that community will determine how invitational the experience is: the more aggressive and dismissive members are, the less invitational; the more open, the more invitational.

What makes science-fiction texts particularly capable of taking on both forms of invitational rhetoric is the relationship that Battlestar Galactica makes clear: although the story is told about a different world or a different people or a different time, it is a story about the present. When an audience recognizes that real-world applicability, the discussion of the conceptual Other (or other novi within the storyworld) can lead to discussions of similar real-world scenarios that rely on that shared narrative as a common ground for understanding how to engage in discussions of the present as well as why those discussions are important. The use of third-person identity constitution can help smooth that transition due to its reliance on a rhetorical form that is similar to what Gearhart termed “re-sourcement” and what Burke termed “perspective by incongruity” (Foss and Griffin 9). According to Foss and Griffin, these forms provide a “juxtaposition of two systems or frameworks” that generate “new vocabularies” and that open “up possibilities for future rhetorical choices” (9). These new vocabularies and rhetorical choices can lead to mutual understanding by acknowledging the audience’s terministic screen as well as the rhetor’s in ways that allow for a shift in understanding. By presenting the third-person Other in ways that originally acknowledge and align with the
default terministic screen and then shifting the presentation of the Other in ways that make the Other more recognizably consubstantial, science fiction relies on a process that disengages “from the framework, system, or principles embedded” in the original terministic screen and develops a terministic screen in response that frames the Other differently (9). This process respects both the audience and the rhetor, acknowledging both of their perspectives before and as the rhetor generates “new vocabularies” that allow for a new way to look at the situation (9). This new vocabulary—the new terministic screen governing the exchange—creates common ground, which engenders opportunities for more grounded and productive rhetorical listening and perspective exchange. The combination of this redefining of terms and science fiction’s veil over both the present and its rhetorical offerings allows the audience to choose whether or not to engage in the invitational exchange and whether or not to recognize its real-world significance. By inviting the audience to consider new perspectives through acknowledging the default terministic screen, creating common ground, and encouraging identification with its third-person others, science fiction becomes a space for reflection, understanding, sharing, and, potentially, acting.

Science fiction’s engagement in and potential use as invitational rhetoric demonstrates what Foss and Griffin foresaw coming from their proposal: invitational rhetoric has helped open the way for alternative considerations of rhetoric focused on ethical communication (15-17). By expanding “the notion of rhetoric to include invitational rhetoric,” Foss and Griffin not only put forth an alternative rhetorical approach but raised questions about the nature of rhetoric and our use of it (15). While
the response to their offering has been varied, it has been pivotal, with scholarship being produced concerning it throughout each and every year since its publication.\(^90\) Whether accepted, disdained, or celebrated, invitational rhetoric has made the field reconsider its ethics, which has resulted in defenses of the traditional approach,\(^91\) discussions of the ethical aspects of rhetoric’s foundations,\(^92\) and research into other alternatives that put ethics first.\(^93\) It has also led to a recognition of new rhetorical possibilities and historical and current rhetorical practices and agents,\(^94\) and, as previously mentioned, it has helped ground and reveal what we mean when we say we engage in feminist rhetoric. However, as also previously mentioned, invitational rhetoric has also been seen as a limited historical moment—a theoretical approach that sparked debate and then faded. While the immense amount of scholarship engaging with invitational rhetoric belies that, invitational rhetoric is certainly not at the forefront of how we normally teach rhetoric or

\(^90\) Over six hundred pieces of scholarship—articles, book chapters, books, dissertations, and theses—have included Foss and Griffin’s proposal in their citations. Some of these texts merely cite the article as an exemplar of feminist rhetoric or of alternative rhetorics, but many others engage with invitational rhetoric fully, either critiquing or defending invitational rhetoric itself, using invitational rhetoric as a springboard for an articulation of ethics or other alternative rhetorics, demonstrating exemplars of invitational rhetoric in practice, applying invitational rhetoric to other disciplines such as law, composition, and peace education, and more.

\(^91\) For example, see Fulkerson (1996), Pollock, Artz, Frey, et al (1996), and Aiken (2011).


I hope that my discussion of third-person identity constitution and science fiction has demonstrated that invitational rhetoric not only can be a more pivotal part of how we define our field but also that there is much to be gained from teaching, producing, and engaging in it, especially because, through its focus on perspective offering and listening, it is a tool that can be used in many different areas of study and advocacy and across identity politics, especially for those who are unable to serve as witness themselves but still want to participate in non-adversarial modes of intervention and mediation.

Furthermore, through my consideration of science-fiction texts as exemplars of both invitational rhetoric and Burkean rhetoric, I hope to have also demonstrated the compatibility of these two methodologies and, through that compatibility, that invitational rhetoric is a tool that can be studied, practiced, and incorporated in along with the rest of our tools. By using Burkean concepts to analyze how the feminist rhetorical principles that ground invitational rhetoric are relied on and modelled by these texts, the ways in which invitational rhetoric can be used practically become more evident: we can construct rhetorical texts using, for instance, third-person identity constitution in ways that affirm the equality, the inherent worth, and the right to self-determination of others;

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95 For instance, Knoblauch (2011) argues that, although alternatives such as invitational rhetoric have been proposed, they are not being taught. She conducted a survey of composition textbooks that revealed that, even when alternatives such as invitational rhetoric and Rogerian rhetoric are mentioned, they tend to only be discussed in a cursory fashion, often in the introduction before moving onto a more traditional understanding of argument and persuasion. Knoblauch (2012) proposes an invitational pedagogy, which she believes will help lower student resistance to questioning beliefs. Other scholars have also attempted to apply invitational rhetoric to the classroom, including Makau (1996), McPhail, Scott, and German (2002), McDaniel and Brunson (2005), Novak and Bonine (2009), Kirtley (2014), Ramos (2015), Darr (2016), and Murray (2016). Most notable among such scholars may be Lloyd (2014), who proposes a perspectival model of argument.
we can use such texts to model those principles and offer diverse perspectives; we can create space for discussions concerning those texts and their real-world applicability that are based on the common ground provided by the texts and that make engagement in rhetorical listening and the productive exchange of perspectives more likely. By incorporating Burkean concepts such as terministic screens, identification, and consubstantiality into our understanding of how invitational rhetoric can be created and can function, both methodologies—Burkean and invitational—are strengthened: the ethical potential of identification and the inner workings of invitational rhetoric both become more clear. Through this combined Burkean and feminist approach to rhetoric, we can open up how we approach analyzing, producing, and using texts. And with that enhanced set of tools at our disposal, we may also open up many possibilities for engaging others—including students and peers—in potentially transformative encounters that can help us better understand each other and the world that we share.
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