

**Wiktoria Rogalska**

University of Łódź

**FROM NECROMANCER TO MOTHER:  
THE ANALYSIS OF A CYBORGIAN FEMALE IN *RAISED BY WOLVES***

**Keywords:** cyborg, reproduction, motherhood, *Raised by Wolves*

**Introduction**

Science fiction as a genre allows its creators to explore radical ideas, such as the possible future of reproduction. Science fiction texts attempt to analyse the potential outcomes based on the technological development in contemporary Western society as well as the reinforced traditional religious values. Writers, especially feminists, draw attention to the fact that technological advancement begins to impact the conventional understanding of borders between human and nonhuman beings as well as possible reproduction strategies. The functions previously reserved for women/mothers and men/fathers transform and develop into novel forms of existence, challenging the normative boundaries of species. Moreover, the fact that the future existence of a cyborg- and human-made child is possible, makes it crucial to consider the biological and emotional changes that these artificial women/mothers may experience.

One of the science fiction series that discusses the implications of technological advancement and the reproductive procedures was the TV show *Raised by Wolves*, created by Aaron Guzikowski. The series started to air on HBO Max in 2020 and continued until 2022, releasing two seasons before its cancellation. The series revolves around the story of two atheistic androids,

Lamia/Mother (Amanda Collin) and Father (Abubakar Salim), who settle on Kepler 22-b after the religious conflict between the Mithraic and the Atheists made Earth inhabitable. The androids are programmed to repopulate the planet with the human race to allow it to flourish again in the new environment still undefiled by religious extremists. Lamia and Father are partially successful, as they are able to fertilize six embryos. As the years pass, the androids have six children; however, suddenly they start to die, one after the other, leaving Campion (Winta McGrath) as the only survivor from the first generation. Their family's life is further disrupted when a Mithraic Ark lands on the planet, and the believers decide to settle there, and turn it into the home of their god, Sol. The situation known from the history of the Earth is starting to repeat itself. Moreover, according to Guzikowski's interview with Deckelmeier for *ScreenRant*, the religious motifs and this theme of repeating history of the humankind was an intentional choice in order to develop the world-building elements ("Aaron Guzikowski Interview: *Raised by Wolves*").

Moreover, Guzikowski also mentions in that same interview that the relationship between his own children and technology was the inspiration for creating *Raised by Wolves*. The aspects of the unknown future that people can only speculate about based on the current socio-political situation and its influence on parenthood and technological development, may connect the TV-series with the possible predictions for the future of humanity and the actual place of the human subjects in it.

This paper aims to showcase how *Raised by Wolves* challenges the traditional narratives regarding reproduction and motherhood by suggesting that these concepts can be redefined through the use of technology. Although Lamia (also known as Mother) is not a (traditionally understood) human female, she becomes a mother in the world where after a religious war and an environmental crisis, humans are forced to leave Earth in order to find a new planet. Lamia, as a cyborgian figure and a mother, reshapes the definition of nonbiological reproduction and questions the boundaries between human and

nonhuman beings. As a figure, Lamia becomes the exemplification of a merger between technology and inorganic biology. She starts off her maternal journey with the human children who all but one die, next in act of protecting her family, she kidnaps five children from the Mithraic Ark, lastly she experiences pregnancy and gives birth to a snake-like offspring, whom she then needs to destroy because it poses a threat to the rest of population on Kepler-22b. Moreover, the foetus/child she creates is a fusion of a cyborg and a “devolved” human; it becomes a being that is simultaneously machine and a carbon-based organism. However, it is vital to point out that although Lamia was created to be a perfect mother, she still experiences human struggles to fulfil her maternal aspirations, and eventually decides to destroy her own biological offspring who becomes the danger to the family she created (“The Beginning” 41:34–44:00). Although Lamia, as a cyborgian figure, was initially created not to conform to the established by humans ideals regarding the normative patriarchal society and the female gender roles, she still falls victim to the stereotypical ideas of motherhood.

### **Imagining a Cyborgian Figure as a Metaphor for Womanhood**

It is crucial to establish the distinctive characteristics of a cybernetic figure in order to understand Lamia’s origin. According to Donna Haraway’s essay “A Cyborg Manifesto,” a cyborg is “a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as creature of fiction” (149). Haraway emphasises that a cyborg is a hybrid being that transcends the borders between a machine and a biological organism as well as reality and fiction. It is crucial to point out that Haraway’s cyborg may have two interpretations. First, a ‘cyborg’ can be understood as a metaphor of nonhuman beings/organisms interconnected with nature, such as animals or plants; or technological inventions and machines that are integrated by people into their realities.

Second, in rather ambiguous/abstract terms, in her essay, she emphasises that 'cyborg' is a state of mind; it is an extended metaphor for people of different races, sexes, and bodies to identify themselves as parts of the real world, not just imaginary desires. Real examples of cyborgs mentioned in the text are women of colour, and people with disabilities, especially considering the ones who decide to use prosthetics. These humans are labelled as 'others' because they do not conform to image of the normative society.

Referring to these instances, in Haraway's view, cyborgs should exist without preassigned gender as they are "creature[s] in a postgender world" (150). Gender imposes particular roles and norms on the characters, whereas the cyborg is supposed to be without predisposed origin. By definition, "the postgender world" assumes that a cyborg has no connections to gender roles and norms established in the patriarchal society. Cyborgs become agender, and therefore, are able to fulfil the roles of women or men/mothers and fathers, as they do not identify with these categories.

Also, cyborgs have no emotional connection to the Biblical origin story and the Garden of Eden; therefore, the concept of innocence is insignificant to their history and the fight for survival (175). Haraway points out that "cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them [cyborgs] as other" (175). While discussing the lack of connection to religion, it is vital to note that the cyborgian characteristics Haraway lists are similar to real-life atheists' viewpoint, as they also believe that there is no higher power that rules the world and is responsible for human existence. Evolution and the ability to adapt to the current circumstances are the reasons why humans survived, not fate or God's plan.

The application of Haraway's text is crucial to understand the motifs behind Lamia's primary creation, and further transformation. Mother becomes of a prime example of a rebellious cyborg that transgresses the physical and emotional borders between human and nonhuman beings.

*Raised by Wolves* introduced Lumia as a mother cyborg, who, after reprogramming, was capable of nourishing and caring for human embryos using her robotic body. Before she was sent to Earth and forgot about her military background, she was a Necromancer, a machine created by the Mithraic and used for war crimes. Her main purpose was to locate and eliminate the Atheists with the use of her powers. Her entire body was built to be indestructible and self-restorative. Furthermore, her eyes were her main weapon as they could shoot destructive laser rays. In order to control her power around the children, she has interchangeable optical parts, which operate as eyes but do not possess the same murderous superpowers. In general, Lamia uses her power to protect her children; however, it is crucial to point out that she still is a murderous weapon. In the first episode of the series, after discovering that the Mithraics are planning to kidnap her son Champion to raise him as a follower of their religion, she begins her attacks on the Ark of Heaven, a Mithraic starship. In a sequence of scenes, the viewers can observe as Lamia kills the Mithraic android and burns off the faces of the soldiers who attempt to assault her and her family. After entering the Ark, she proceeds to use her ultrasonic scream to liquify the bodies of other attackers, and finally, she tears out the eyes of the pilot. As it is described, although Lamia's primary function is to care for her children and home, she is a brutal machine that does not feel empathy for people who try to take her loved ones away ("Raised by Wolves" 42:42-47:47).

Moreover, Lamia only saves five children from the Ark (48:05). Her particular choice of taking only them may have been motivated by the fact that when she and Father initially landed on Kepler-22b, they had six embryos ready for fertilization, and as it is established, only Champion survives under the critical living conditions. Hence, Lamia saves those five to repeat her first failed attempt at motherhood.

Lamia's limited choice as to saving only those five children could be connected to the conversation between Lamia and the Atheist leader Champion Sturges in the episode "Infected Memory," which reveals Lamia's origins as a

Mithraic machine of war, reprogrammed by Atheists to be a caregiver. Viewers can notice that in the early stages Lamia was caring and loving towards unidentified or Mithraic children, but as soon as Campion Sturges revealed that the child she is holding was of an atheist origin, Lamia broke the child's neck as she was still in the early stages of her reprogramming (31:20–32:20). Although it is not explicitly showed in the series, one can assume that Sturges's project of changing a Mithraic murderous machine into Mother must have been composed of many experimental checkpoints. One of them was the situation mentioned above, because Lamia is capable of having this maternal instinct as long as she does not know that the child is an atheist. The process of Lamia's reprogramming was vaguely similar to the act of mechanical 'rewiring of values' as Sturges needed to technologically manipulate Lamia's system to turn her into a caring and selfless mother who would not discriminate between her children based on their religious believes. According to Haraway, cyborgs as "the illegitimate offspring of militarism [...] are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential" (151). These machines can never be fully controlled by their creators because at a particular point of their programming, cyborgs become stronger than non-cyborg humans. Lamia had two human 'creators' who attempted to exploit her power – the Mithraic and Sturges. As a Necromancer, she was constructed by the Mithraic military service, and then reprogramed by Sturges ("Memory Infected" 24:51–25:10). It should be noted that while her original form was changed by Sturges forcefully by reprogramming her system, Lamia still is not faithful to any of the creators. Intentionally or not, she killed the children on the Ark, and if Sturges' programming worked, it should not have happened.

One of the main storylines in the TV series is the conflict between humans, worshipping the sun deity Mithras, and Lamia and Father, who are atheists. Humans seem to consider themselves superior to machines because mentally and physically, they belong to the category "human"; they have origins, history and religion, which provides them with a sense of arrogance: Hunter, one of the

Mithraic children, explains, “you see, androids, they were built to protect us, to do our dirty work, so we can stay pure” (“Pentagram” 27:38–27:43). The aspect of overpowering can be seen in a disagreement regarding childcare. According to the group of believers, it is unnatural for cyborgs to raise children and it should not be accepted under any circumstances, as only human parents are capable of establishing a loving and caring relationship with their offspring. As Lamia explains, “For instance, [Mithraics] believe that allowing androids to raise human children is a sin, which forced them to send an ark” (“Raised by Wolves” 15:24–15:30). It is crucial to note that religiously affiliated people are in opposition to the atheist faction, represented by the two cyborgs. As Haraway claims, cyborgs do not know their origin and therefore religion or politics; hence, they are not controlled by the words of the prophets (religious or political representatives). In effect, Lamia does not understand the worshippers of Mithras as in her point of view religion is the cause of all the conflicts and general scientific regression. From the very first episode of the series, she preaches the total exclusion of religion. She teaches her children that “the civilization [they are] seeding here will be built on humanity’s belief in itself, not an imagined deity” (“Raised by Wolves” 15:57–16:04). She believes that religious prophets only reinforce the idea that faith and deities are responsible for human existence and advancement, and therefore, these same religious followers believe that humans deserve to be treated as the masters of the planet. If one considers the implications of Lamia’s creation, and her reprogramming, the fact that she is not faithful to these earthly masters connects her to the atheistic cyborgian figure.

The conflict between the religious settlers and cyborgs is further complicated by Lamia’s pregnancy because previously this process of reproduction was reserved for living beings. Haraway claims that “cyborg replication is uncoupled from organic reproduction” (150). The process of ‘cyborg reproduction’ or creating a hybrid of human and machine is not (or at least should not be) necessarily similar to human sexual procreation. However,

in the TV-series, Lamia transgresses these boundaries linked to human/nonhuman (machine) and physical/nonphysical dichotomies. When talking to Father about the impregnation procedure, she said that “we [Lamia and Campion Sturges] communed in a virtual space. And while we did, information was downloaded into my drives. Instructions for how to build a new kind of being. It was as if my sensors began to multiply, and my programming seemed almost infinite” (“The Beginning” 15:08–15:30). Lamia describes the act of procreation as a technological process—a data transfer from one medium to another; however, it is crucial to mention that in the episode “Lost Paradise,” when Lamia and Sturges have sexual intercourse, the visuals create a rather passionate scene. In this simulation of memories, Lamia is human, and their scene of ‘transferring the data’ resembles a romantic and sensual scene between two lovers whose intertwined bodies float in the air while they are being soaked in a white fluid (resembling the fluid that runs in Lamia’s body) (“Lost Paradise” 32:07–34:02).<sup>1</sup>

Lamia and Sturges’ intercourse and Lamia’s pregnancy transgress the border between natural sexual act and a mechanized vision of motherhood. Furthermore, the fact that a cyborg whose inner organs are supposed to be technical parts can procreate and carry the pregnancy to term means that Lamia’s body functions similarly to a human woman. In “A Cyborg Manifesto,” Haraway notices that the border between a human and a machine is further challenged by “creatures simultaneously animal and machine” (149), and that is precisely what the act of procreation showed in the series between Lamia and Sturges creates. The foetus/child is the fusion of what appears to be natural procreation and machine-dependent existence (at least in the early stages of foetal development).

Haraway’s cyborg theory allows us to recognize Lamia as a cyborgian figure, transgressing the borders of human understanding of dichotomies human/nonhuman (machine), and physical/nonphysical reproduction strategies. She is simultaneously a murderous machine and a mother who takes

care of her loved ones. Lamia develops as a character in the series and her mind as well as her body is capable of transformation. What is more, Lamia is a complex and rather complicated character which could imply that as the plot goes on, she gains experience that allows her to explore her monstrous, technological and maternal sides.

### **Lamia, the Monstrous Mother of a Cyborgian Child**

Rosi Braidotti in her text “Mothers, Monsters and Machines” analyses the connections between a monstrous mother and a machine. She argues that femininity is associated with monstrosity because they both represent the binary opposition to ‘man’; femininity and monstrosity are considered as ‘other’ to the standardized phallogocentric view that ‘man’ is the normative symbol of humanity (80). Braidotti states that “monsters are, just as bodily female subjects, a figure of devalued difference” (80). Because these subjects deviate from the norm, they are considered representatives of ‘other’, or as Kristeva would define it—an ‘abject’. In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Kristeva states that ‘abject’/‘abjection’ is a part of being a human that is considered simultaneously fascinating and repulsive. Moreover, it cannot be eradicated because it allows humans to create cultural, social and physical boundaries of what they consider known, secure, and acceptable (2). Therefore, as Braidotti notes that femininity and monstrosity are seen as the polar opposites of ‘man’, she surmises that

[w]oman as a sign of difference is monstrous. If we define the monster as a bodily entity that is anomalous and deviant vis-a-vis the norm, then we can argue that the female body shares with the monster the privilege of bringing out a unique blend of fascination and horror (81).

Braidotti claims that the sole existence of women is monstrous as they are the ‘others’ of men. The female body becomes the uncharted territory as it provokes the mixed feelings of horror and fascination over the unknown. In the science fiction genre, the quest to tame the figures of ‘others’ is linked to female monstrous figures. Veronica Hollinger in her text “Gender in Science Fiction”

claims that there are “two appropriately ‘monstrous’ figures, the alien, and the cyborg, through which to explore the perspectives and experiences of hegemonic culture’s traditional ‘others’” (132). Because cyborgs also belong to the category of ‘other’ just as women and mothers, they become the ‘sign of monstrous difference.’

Braidotti argues that “the monster is the bodily incarnation of difference from the basic human norm; it is a deviant, an a-nomaly; it is abnormal” (78); hence, the connection between mothers and monsters is founded on the mutual transgression of traditional bodily human/nonhuman boundaries. When it comes to the border between monsters/mothers and machines (cyborgs), Braidotti notes that as a result of the advancement in the technological/scientific field, people have gained control mechanizing human artificial reproduction. According to Braidotti, “recent developments in the field of biotechnology, particularly artificial procreation, have extended the power of science over the maternal body of women” (78), and she continues that,

[t]he possibility of mechanizing the maternal function is by now well within our reach; the manipulation of life through different combinations of genetic engineering has allowed for the creation of new artificial monsters in the high-tech labs of our biochemists (78).

Technological advancement as a cause of mechanizing the maternal function and the control over reproductive rights of women is founded on the basis of the understanding that machines/monsters are considered to be ‘other’ and inferior to Man. Moreover, those scientifically created monsters are capable of reproduction, and they become the manipulators of life, and consequently, death. Because the maternal function can be replicated by non-human creations, women as the preliminary ‘life- and death-givers’ are seen as incubators because female bodies and their reproductive organs are considered as “the passive receptacle for human life” (79). The female body exists purely for the reproductive purposes and as an incubator, both functions, if technologically possible, could be entrusted to the non-human/machine.

Hence, as Braidotti sees it, even if a woman becomes pregnant, her position in the social hierarchy does not improve as socio-culturally pregnancy is considered a monstrous state and, therefore, she is seen as the inferior 'other.' From a physical standpoint, it is so because of the fact that a woman is capable of transforming her body to create an environment to grow a foetus, which makes her "morphologically dubious" (Braidotti 80). It means that a woman is able to break the fixed bodily form for a longer period, disrupting "the distinct shapes as which marks the contour of the body" (80), a transformation of which men are incapable. This ability to shapeshift puts women in the space of 'the monstrous' because their bodies are not defined by fixed boundaries.

The discussion of bodily transformations goes further as the foetus grows inside the mother. The approach toward the foetus is ambiguous as a result of unforeseen consequences of the birth of the child. According to Braidotti, there is a myth that a woman due to her sexual desires cannot give birth to a healthy (not monstrous) child. She provides examples from Greek mythology, religious studies, and Freud's psychoanalysis. They all attempt to prove that women are responsible for creating monsters, and deformed children, which are the effects of women's incompetence, their relationship with the devil or their sexual desires/imagination, respectively. Braidotti states that "it is as if the mother, as a desiring agent, has the power to undo the work of legitimate procreation through the sheer force of her imagination" (86): it is assumed that women are capable to transform foetuses in their wombs into monstrous beings. Braidotti connects sin, sexual desires to women's pregnancies to further accentuate the fact that religion and patriarchal thought seem to encompass even the anatomical/physiological process in the female body.

Moreover, cyborg symbolizes the redefinition of motherhood because, as Braidotti writes "in the age of biotechnological power, motherhood is split open into a variety of possible physiological, cultural, and social functions" (94). It means that a cyborgian figure, which is not connected physically or emotionally with any biological, cultural or religious affiliations, possesses the capability to

redefine the diverse interpretations of motherhood. Furthermore, cyborgs as creatures that are not connected to the normative gender norms and roles may redefine the meaning of being/becoming a (non)human not only for themselves but also for their children. Their offspring may be biologically, culturally and socially 'other' and 'same' as human—such binary opposition is possible according to Haraway, who argued in “A Cyborg Manifesto” that cyborgian reproduction produces “creatures simultaneously animal and machine” (149).

It is particularly fitting to analyse Lamia’s pregnancy according to Braidotti’s theory of “Mothers, Monsters, and Machines” because Lamia represents all three categories. She is a murderous machine that was created for mass extinction; however, she is also a mother to six human children, and one of unknown cyborgian origin. The scenes that portray Lamia alone or interacting with her foetus serve as an example of how the figure of cyborg may redefine motherhood, and therefore, amplify the number of the reproductive possibilities of the humankind.

Lamia is a figure that represents two conflicting roles—a Necromancer and Mother, a death- and life-giver, respectively. The fact that Lamia’s character from the very beginning is established as a figure that is contradictory and connects all different aspects of being a mother, a monster and a machine allows us to explore her biological and emotional development in regard to the cyborg theory (Haraway) and the maternal functions (Braidotti).

Lamia experiences biological, physical and emotional aspects of motherhood because she becomes pregnant herself. At first, the origin of the foetus is unknown. In the beginning, Lamia assumes that “[she] made it [herself]” (“Umbilical” 18:26); however, it is later revealed that the visualisation of *Campion Sturges* activated a process in Lamia’s body that made it possible for cells to duplicate. As mentioned, after sexual intercourse, Lamia gets pregnant, and according to her, “it was as if my sensors began to multiply, and my programming seemed almost infinite” (“The Beginning” 15:08–15:30). Lamia becomes the patriarchal nightmare, as in a way, she did create the foetus

herself. Although the creator triggered an operation in her system, one can assume that because it was in a virtual reality, it was Lamia who unconsciously triggered her pregnancy. However, as the plot develops, there appears a suggestion that Lamia was sexually assaulted by a mysterious creature which bears similarities to monstrous (deformed) animals that attacked the settlement in the first episodes. In the episode "The Beginning," Mother is almost pushed into a crater by a hooded individual; however, Lamia is faster and rips out its heart. After uncovering the masked being, Lamia and Father note that its face, although deformed, resembles a human face. In their bag, Father finds a skull whose carbon build is not only that of a human but also local to the planet. It means the initial assumption that Kepler-22b was not inhabited by a humanoid species was false. Moreover, this discovery further points to the suggestion that it was that hooded being that manipulated the pod and thus Lamia's simulation ("The Beginning" 27:00–29:15). As a result, Lamia's foetus is of human and cyborg origin, and was conceived in the simulation. The possibility that the human race may not only reproduce with machines but also do it in the virtual sphere redefines the fixed nature of biological reproduction.

When it comes to the maternal aspects evident from a physical examination of Lamia's body, she embodies many biological and physiological characteristics of an expecting mother. In her pregnancy, Lamia's body transforms and merges the traits of a typical human pregnancy with animalistic body. She develops a pregnancy bump; however, the process is accelerated in comparison to the human pregnancy period. Furthermore, she does not have breasts but rather six separate mammal glands, which she uses to feed the foetus fuel-blood through her extended umbilicals ("The Beginning" 38:52). Considering human/nonhuman anatomy, she does not have the reproductive organs needed for impregnation and carrying the pregnancy. However, the embryo has started developing; therefore, one should assume that the foetus grows in a space similar to the uterus.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to remember that Lamia is still a murderous machine with an addition of maternal instinct. In “Umbilical,” she has a conversation with Tempest, one of her adopted children, about the danger that she may pose as an expecting mother whose main priority is to care and provide for her foetus. Mother warns her daughter that she could kill and cannibalise her if she does not find another source of food (12:46–13:42). This maternal need to provide for the child is rooted in the primal survival instinct, and as the foetus grows and feeds on human/animal blood and Lamia’s fuel fluid, it is even more visible that the offspring is of human and cyborg origin.

While discussing the ‘origin’ of the foetus, it is also crucial to mention the fact that although Lamia describes it as a mechanical data transfer and multiplication of cells, in the episode, the viewers can see that it as intercourse between Lamia and Sturges. As mentioned previously, Braidotti notes in her essay that it was believed that women’s sinful desires could influence the foetus’s anatomy/appearance (82). Thus, Lamia’s sexual awakening could be interpreted as a reason for demonization of her offspring (“Lost Paradise” 32:07–34:02). Moreover, in the last episode of the first season, “The Beginning,” as Lamia gives birth to her child, the viewers can see that it resembles a deformed snake hybrid (37:48–39:00). While Lamia, as a cyborgian character in the series, has no connection to religious beliefs, the figure of a snake evokes particular biblical imagery connected to the Fall of Man. What is more, this analogy is crucial to consider because Lamia’s first and only purpose was to save humanity and allow to renew the race yet, instead, Lamia’s monstrous offspring may potentially destroy humanity again.

The fact that Lamia becomes the ‘creator and destructor of life’ is also symbolic to her being a Mother. Braidotti, referencing Kristeva and her definition of ‘abject’, argues that the maternal site fulfils dual function, “as both life- and death-giver, [and] as object of worship and of terror” (82). Abjection of the maternal is connected to the significance of the mother as a figure that possesses control over life and death; this figure can simultaneously symbolise

the beginning of life and the inevitability of death. Moreover, as Lamia is a monstrous mother, she transgresses the boundaries of the normative motherhood, and is capable of imposing death onto her own child as she bears the responsibility for bringing it to the planet. Nevertheless, it is an emotional decision because the child is still her creation and killing it will transform her into a 'creator of death.' Lamia plans to lure the child into one of spaceships and travel down one of the earth pits in order to destroy it. She claims that "[she] can make it fall and make sure it doesn't come back in the lander. And [she] will never be anything but a creator of death" ("The Beginning" 41:37).

What is more, as Lamia embodies the title of 'creator of death,' it is crucial to mention the initial purpose of hers and Father's journey to Kepler-22b. They were supposed to renew the human race; yet Lamia notices that she is not able to perform her role as the mother of the new humanity because she inevitably must kill the creature she constructed in her womb.

Lamia is burdened with making such a decision about killing her biological offspring because it endangers the children of humanity for whom she is responsible. It is also crucial to remember that this snake-like child is not what she was expecting: she exclaims that "It wasn't [their] creator. Something else put that inside [her]" ("The Beginning" 40:01). Lamia is aware that the pod has been infected with a virus and this creature is an effect of a (sexual) assault/manipulated data transfer. The fact that even her own pregnancy has been subject to an orchestrated experiment further extenuates Lamia's role as 'an incubator' for the future of humanity—her womb and romantic feelings towards Campion Sturges have been used to ensure the survival of the parasite.

## **Conclusion**

The main purpose of this article was to showcase the example of a cyborgian female figure that becomes a symbol of redefinition of womanhood and motherhood. Lamia, as a machine that was programmed to become a 'perfect mother' according to traditional standards, struggles with conforming to the

fixed gender norms and roles reinforced in the patriarchal society, in this case by the religious group—the Mithraics. As Lamia transgresses physical, biological and emotional boundaries, which results in her conceiving a child with a human specimen in the virtual space, the fixed borders of the normative definitions of motherhood, pregnancy and reality of life and death become inessential. It also puts into question the reproductive possibilities between humans and machines and the status of the resulting offspring.

Authors such as Haraway and Braidotti recognize the significance of the figure of ‘other’ as the one that transgresses the boundaries of human understanding in social, biological and cultural spheres. The Mother as well as the offspring become ‘objects’ because of the origin of what they represent to human beings—the complete elimination of borders between human and nonhuman as well as monstrous and maternal, in the case of Mother.

Moreover, as the maternal function is mechanized to such an extent that a cyborg may become pregnant, it is crucial to consider what role women may have in this reality and how their roles as mothers may change in regard to these artificially created children who are actual hybrids of humans and machines. The abjection of the maternal is still present, as the mother is always seen as the monstrous feminine, even during her pregnancy. Hence, although Lamia was to be a representative of the new version of motherhood, and embrace its cybernetic aspects, she fell victim to patriarchal standards imposed on women to gain control over reproduction. Furthermore, it may be concluded that Lamia was doomed from the very beginning of her mission because she was reprogrammed by her creator from the archetypical role of a murderous female-machine to another archetype—that of a Mother, whose womb has been used without her knowledge and consent.

### **Endnotes**

1. It is crucial to mention that while in the episode “Lost Paradise” Lamia believes that she gets pregnant after her sexual encounter with Champion Sturges, later it is suggested that the pod, and hence, the simulation were infected by a type of virus. It may seem that Lamia was actually sexually assaulted by some other nonhuman being, and it is

strongly implied that it may have been the monstrous creature that attacked the settlement in the early episodes. Moreover, in the episode "The Beginning," it is also suggested that these creatures are devolved humans. As this part of the plot is revealed in the last episode, there is no more confirmed information.

### References

- Braidotti, R. 1994. "Mothers, Monsters, and Machines," *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 75–94.
- Creed, B. 1986. "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection," *Screen* 27: 1, 251–265.
- Deckelmeier, J. 2020. "Aaron Guzikowski Interview: Raised by Wolves," *Screen Rant*, [screenrant.com/raised-wolves-aaron-guzikowski-interview/](https://screenrant.com/raised-wolves-aaron-guzikowski-interview/) DOA 1.12.2024.
- Haraway, D. 1985. "A Cyborg Manifesto," *Socialist Review*, 149–81.
- Hollinger, V. 2003. "Feminist Theory and Science Fiction," in: E. James & F. Mendlesohn (Eds.), 125–136.
- James, E & F. Mendlesohn (Eds.) 2003. *Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kristeva, J. 1982. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. L. S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Raised by Wolves*. 2020. Created by Aaron Guzikowski: 1.1: "Raised by Wolves", 1.2: "Pentagram", 1.3: "Virtual Faith", 1.4: "Nature's Course", 1.5: "Infected Memory", 1.6: "Lost Paradise", 1.8: "Mass", 1.9: "Umbilical", 1.10: "The Beginning."

### Abstract

In her text "Mothers, Monsters and Machines" (1997), R. Braidotti recognizes the unifying factor that connects the monstrous feminine with a machine. She compares the female body to a child-producing machine, which she sees as an incubator for 'the future of humanity.' Taking into consideration today's technological advancement and science fiction speculations, the idea of artificial motherhood is no longer an unrealistic scenario. Also, Donna Haraway, while coining the concept of the cyborg in her "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985), considers the reproductive possibilities of female cyborgs. As she notices, the cyborgian female, created to surpass human expectations, rebels against the known rules and standards. Yet, the present text argues that a cyborg may still succumb to the idealized version/imposed standards of patriarchal views regarding motherhood.

The paper aims to analyse the character of Lamia, a female-gendered cyborg in the TV series *Raised by Wolves* (2020-2022), which showcases the portrayal of an influential mother figure. Despite the stereotypical gender patterns, and religious and racial prejudices, she experiences all the stages of motherhood, while still being a cyborg and a "Necromancer". However, she also become the victim of the normative/patriarchal thought/control over reproductive possibilities in virtual space.